



# **Orienteering Australia Junior Sport Policy**

This policy is based on a template and guidelines provided by the Australian Sports Commission, and consequently the format and paragraph numbering, etc differ from the standard used for other Operational Manual leaflets. The policy was developed through consultation with development officers at the 2003 and 2005 National Development Conferences.

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## JUNIOR SPORT POLICY

## 3.4

### 1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this junior sport policy is to assist in the provision of quality experiences in Orienteering for young people<sup>1</sup>. It will encourage the provision of safe, enjoyable and accountable environments for everyone involved in junior orienteering.

1.2 As *duty of care* issues become increasingly important, providers of junior orienteering activities must be familiar with, and put into practice, procedures to ensure young people have a positive experience in orienteering. The health and welfare of junior participants must be central to all objectives which include providing:

- fun experiences
- safe and supportive environments
- skill development, challenge and the joy of achieving
- access for all to participate
- a clear pathway for improvement
- equal opportunities for all young people.

1.3 This policy contains guiding principles to assist in achieving objectives. They are provided under the following topics.

- Getting Young People Involved for the Long-term
- Pathways through Physical Growth and Maturation
- Quality Coaching and People Making It Happen
- Forming Links
- Making Orienteering Safe for Young People and within the Law

### 2 Getting Young People Involved for the Long-Term

2.1 Getting young people active is important because it is an integral component of a healthy lifestyle. A sport such as Orienteering assists in preventing lifestyle diseases and promotes physical, psychological and social well-being.

2.2 Quality experiences in junior sport provide the entry to a lifelong involvement in sport for:

- enjoyment and recreation within a pleasurable social involvement, and
- fulfilling individual potential in sport.

2.3 An understanding of what young people look for in sport helps us provide positive experiences that encourage young people to remain active participants throughout their lives.

2.4 Orienteering provides an opportunity to develop physical, social and emotional abilities and therefore should be accessible to all young people. A wide variety of skills and abilities developed in participating in Orienteering transfer to non-athletic careers and sport influences social factors such as community pride, identity, and leisure.

2.5 Marginalisation still occurs on the basis of disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, geographical location, Indigenous background, social class and socio-economic status. A

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<sup>1</sup> In Orienteering, the age range for young people is from around age eight through to age 20.

less obvious factor that shapes participation, but one of growing importance, is the way young people perceive their body image and mental skills.

2.6 Recognising the difficulties from the perspective of young people, and the restrictions they have on being involved, allows sports such as Orienteering to meet the challenge of all young people having the fundamental right to be involved in sport. Meeting legal obligations related to equity of opportunity must also be considered.

2.7 Strategies for Getting Young People Involved

- 2.7.1 **Attracting young people** – develop promotion, publicity programs that appeal to young people
- 2.7.2 **Ability** – ensure equal opportunity for all; emphasise participation, fun, have a go
- 2.7.3 **Body Shape** – encourage participation by young people of all shapes, sizes
- 2.7.4 **Disability** – look for options of how people with disabilities might be able to participate
- 2.7.5 **Ethnicity and Indigenous Australians** – ensure there is no discrimination against any ethnic groups, that there are not barriers to participation and that all are encouraged to give Orienteering a go
- 2.7.6 **Gender, Sexuality and Equity of Opportunity** – remember gender equity; ensure young females have their own classes but provide option for females to compete in male classes, target young females as well as young males
- 2.7.7 **Geographical Location** – take steps to encourage orienteering activities in regional and rural Australia
- 2.7.8 **Socio-economic Status** – examine how support and encouragement could be provided to people in low socio-economic category

2.8 Strategies for Long-term Involvement

- 2.8.1 **Ongoing participation** – develop strategies to retain young people, especially look after post schoolies
- 2.8.2 **Providing options** – provide equal opportunity; differing levels of competition, emphasise participation, fun, have a go
- 2.8.3 **Motivation to keep involved** – provide good first experience; options to participate at desired level; create sense of feeling wanted, etc

**3 Pathways Through Physical Growth and Maturation**

3.1 Physical activity is essential for the normal growth and development of a child. However, there are potentially harmful effects for young athletes through the impact of intense training. This can adversely affect the dynamics and timing of growth and physical maturation. Determining when children are ready for more intense training and competition is a duty of care required of sports leaders.

3.2 Growth is a complicated process because parts of the body mature at different rates, and periods of growth vary considerably between individuals. This differential growth of various body parts has a major influence on the performance of motor skills.

3.3 Maturation is the genetically programmed series of changes leading to maturity. Tissues and systems mature at different rates and although every child passes through all the stages of maturation in the same order, there is great variation in developmental rates and the length of time taken to pass from an initial stage to a final stage. Chronological age is of limited value in determining levels of maturity for children.

3.4 Years 8 to 20 are a time of tremendous development for young people on all levels - physically, psychologically, emotionally and socially. Planning for the progressive development of sports skills in young people requires consideration of

- identifiable stages of development
- different levels of ability
- different rates in gaining sports skills
- different interests of young people in sport.

3.5 It is the responsibility of those involved with junior orienteers to manage the experiences available to them so that activities and challenges are offered in a planned and sequential manner.

3.6 Strategies for Sport Pathways

- 3.6.1 **Overall pathway** – outline activities for various age classes, very easy, easy, moderate, hard courses; differing levels of education and training, etc
- 3.6.2 **Programs for Talented Athletes** – develop Talent Identification and Development programs
- 3.6.3 **Programs for Competitive Juniors** – maintain School/State/National squads and conduct training programs and camps
- 3.6.4 **Programs for Broader Development** – introduce juniors to coaching, officiating, and administration

3.7 Strategies for Physical Growth and Maturation

- 3.7.1 **Accommodating Physical Growth and Maturation – Training/Practice** – discourage excessive training; encourage optimum training regimes, injury prevention,
- 3.7.2 **Accommodating Physical Growth and Maturation – Competition** – discourage competing at levels well above the standard applicable to age, excessive competition, too many hard events; encourage post event recovery programs

## **4 Quality Coaching and People Making It Happen**

4.1 Understanding the learning process and the developmental stages in this process are necessary for quality junior orienteering experiences. Young people have preferences for how they like to learn and their preferences might change depending on the type of task and their prior experiences.

4.2 Some might like to watch, listen and experiment and others may like to try an activity first and refine their learning through feedback. Young people typically learn more than one thing at a time. In the process of learning physical skills, young people also learn what behaviour is expected of them, how to work with others, and what they are good at.

4.3 Recognizing that learning is multi-dimensional is important. It highlights the complexity of acquiring skills and how broader social aspects of life impact on young people as they learn physical skills.

4.4 People in leadership roles in orienteering should plan for each session and the season ahead. Planning should address not only what is presented, but also how it will be presented to optimise learning, safety and enjoyment.

4.5 Participants in junior orienteering potentially come into contact with, and are influenced by, a diverse range of people including

- young people
- parents and carers
- teachers
- coaches
- officials (course planners, controllers, etc)
- administrators
- volunteers

4.6 These people are an important resource in junior orienteering because they provide the necessary infrastructure for its delivery. They also determine the social atmosphere of orienteering. The importance of their contribution cannot be underestimated because of the close relationship between the quality of leadership found in orienteering and the quality of the experience for young people.

#### 4.7 Strategies for Quality Coaching

- 4.7.1 **Planning** – have plans for coaching programs to meet at levels of need,
- 4.7.2 **Coaching Sports Skills** – have people with appropriate skills to be coaches; develop rapport with young people, have simple processes,
- 4.7.3 **Coaching Sports Behaviours** – coaches should set a good example and teach fair play, cooperation, self-control, self-confidence,

#### 4.8 Strategies for People Making it Happen

- 4.8.1 **Young People** – encourage Code of Conduct, fair play, team spirit, cooperation, volunteerism
- 4.8.2 **Parents and Carers** – encourage participation of parents and carers to be involved and to observe Code of Conduct
- 4.8.3 **School Teachers** – provide material to teachers and encourage them to obtain qualifications; recognise qualifications through accreditation, etc
- 4.8.4 **Coaches** - encourage Code of Conduct
- 4.8.5 **Communication** - provide praise and positive feedback,
- 4.8.6 **Setting an Example** – adults need to have a high standard of behaviour,
- 4.8.7 **Developing a Coaching Philosophy** – coaches must have respect for athletes
- 4.8.8 **Officials** - encourage Code of Conduct, observance of rules and guidelines
- 4.8.9 **Administrators** - encourage Code of Conduct
- 4.8.10 **Management** - understand the needs of young people,
- 4.8.11 **Working with Volunteers** – good communication, recognise contribution of volunteers
- 4.8.12 **Training Personnel** – provide effective training for personnel
- 4.8.13 **Leadership Succession** – as best as can be done, plan for leadership succession
- 4.8.14 **Volunteers** - encourage Code of Behaviour, opportunities to improve/increase skills

### 5 Forming Links

5.1 Consultation and co-operation are essential for effective and efficient participation in junior orienteering.

5.2 A number of agencies have responsibilities for organising, conducting and supporting orienteering including orienteering associations and clubs, schools, commercial and non-profit providers, government (local, state and federal), and non-government agencies.

5.3 All of these are partners in junior orienteering and their cooperation and goodwill is vital to the successful presentation of junior orienteering. Consultation and cooperation provide many benefits including

- identifying gaps and overlaps in delivery and resolving cooperative approaches to them
- consistency in the provision of junior orienteering with regard to age groupings, competition rules etc
- sharing sports resources.

5.4 Strategies for Forming Links

5.4.1 **Avoiding Gaps and Overlaps** – create links to the schools network; have competitions scheduled into schools programs

5.4.2 **Achieving Consistency** – maintain good links with other stakeholders

5.4.3 **Sharing Resources** – encourage cooperation in regards to sharing resources

5.4.4 **Building Links** – look for opportunities to form links with others working with young people, eg service clubs, Lions, etc and offer to provide services

## **6 Making Orienteering Safe for Young People and within the Law**

6.1 Sports organisers have a legal duty of care to not expose young people to risk in any aspect of providing the sports experience. This is especially important in Orienteering in that participants spend a lot of time alone in competition areas. Moreover, while serious accidents seldom happen, the competition areas have potential to be dangerous for young people, so officials especially course planners need to take special care with planning courses for juniors.

6.2 Areas of concern for which advice, training and procedures (written where possible) should be in place include:

- competition venues and courses
- training and preparing for competitions
- infectious diseases
- medical conditions
- drugs
- dealing with emergencies

6.3 To protect the welfare of young people in sport, organisations must be aware of the relevant legal issues and put safeguards in place. By doing this they will be protecting both junior members and the organisation.

The legislation relevant to the safety and welfare of participants in junior sport covers

- discrimination
- child protection
- drugs
- health and safety
- privacy.

6.4 All of this legislation emphasises the serious obligations undertaken by any person or organisation taking responsibility for the care and/or coaching of children. The community and the courts have a high expectation that officers of organisations and members of management committees are ware of their legal obligations and taking steps to ensure compliance.

6.5 Strategies for Making Sport Safe

- 6.5.1 **Competition Venues and Courses** – ensure course planning considers potential hazards, course lengths and navigational difficulty should be appropriate for age and experience,
- 6.5.1 **Training and Preparing for Competitions** – ensure training exercises are well planned and potential hazards are avoided, teach pre-competition exercises to minimise/avoid injuries,
- 6.5.1 **Infectious Diseases** – provide information on how to avoid infectious diseases, eg hepatitis,
- 6.5.1 **Medical Conditions** – discourage participation when ill, within the constraints of privacy, encourage notification of significant illnesses,
- 6.5.1 **Drugs** – actively discourage smoking, under age drinking of alcohol, binge drinking by those over legal limit, forbid alcohol at training camps, squad activities,
- 6.5.1 **Dealing with Emergencies** – encourage having first aid kits and qualified providers at all activities; procedures for dealing with emergencies such as missing people.

6.6 Strategies for Meeting Legal Obligations

- 6.6.1 **Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Child Protection** – ensure mechanisms for meeting member protection, especially child protection policies are in place and observed
- 6.6.1 **Drugs in Sport** – procedures for drug education and for obtaining advice on drugs
- 6.6.1 **OHS Risk Management** – mechanisms for informing service providers of OHS obligations
- 6.6.1 **Privacy** – ensure privacy obligations are met.

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