

# OA Tech Newsletter

Edition 1/2007

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## Closing date for next issue:

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## Age Classes

My major task as Technical Director over the last few months has been to oversee a number of changes to the OA Rules. In particular myself and others on the Technical Committee invested considerable time in finding a consensus view on the controversial subject of age classes. Regular readers of this newsletter will be aware that these ideas have been under consideration for the last year. The essential motivation is that many of our smaller (Group B) events such as Badge Events and State Championships were offering full age classes, with only 200 (or less) participants. The end result was that the average number of participants per class was approaching 3 for many of these events.

The final decision to reduce the number of age classes at Group B events was taken at OA's December Conference. The decision was made on the basis of increasing compe-

tion in many classes, reducing the organisational workload and reducing the cost of map printing & prizes. Thus, OA now recommends 10 year age groups for seniors, and has also widened (or in some cases eliminated) age restrictions on B classes. See the table below for the recommended class-course groupings. Five year age groups will continue at National Events (and State Championships which are part of a National Carnival), although the provision of B classes has also been reduced at those events.

It should be noted that these changes are recommended in Appendix 1 of the January 2007 version of the OA Rules, along with recommended class-course combinations and guidelines for the relative speed of different classes. OA is in no position to enforce these recommendations, other than to publicise these changes as widely as possible, and to request organisers to adhere to the recommendations. However, we believe it will make

it easier for people to adapt to the changes if they are implemented nationally in 2007.

I would appreciate it if event organisers could direct any comments regarding the suc-

cess or failure of these changes to myself.

— *Andy Hogg*  
OA Director, Technical

OA Recommendations for State Long Distance Championships and Badge events.

Course	Age Classes	Tech Diff
1	M21A	H
2	M17-20A, M35A	H
3	W21A, M45A	H
4	W35A, M21AS M16A	H
5	W45A, W17-20A, M55A	H
6	W55A, M65A, W21AS, M45AS	H
7	W65A, M75A, W16A, W45AS, M55AS	H
8	W75A, W55AS	H
9	M14A, M Open B, M Junior B	M
10	W14A, W Open B, W Junior B	M
11	W12, M12, Open Easy	E
12	W10, M10, Open VE	VE

## Technical News

In addition to the Age Class changes noted above, a number of other minor changes to the Competition Rules and National League Guidelines were approved at the OA Conference in December and are listed below:

- It is no longer compulsory to be a member of a state association to compete in the Australian Championships;
- More flexibility with map scales is permitted, so that Elites may now use 1:10,000 at the Australian Long Distance Championships, and sub-junior

classes may be offered maps at 1:5,000;

- The National Orienteering League teams competition has been divided into separate Mens and Womens categories;
- Minor changes to bring our rules into line with the latest IOF regulations regarding electronic punching.

These documents are available as part of the Operational Manual (follow the "Administration" link from the menu on the left of the front page).

— *Andy Hogg*

## Mapping News

There are a number of issues on the mapping horizon over the last six months:

**The OA Mapping website** has been significantly upgraded recently. I would appreciate feedback and suggestions for additions/inclusions. In particular, new guidelines for appropriate scale

and printing method now available on Mapping standards page <http://orienteering.asn.au/technical/mapping/mappingstandards/>

**Two changes** to the rules for printing scale for competitors at Group A events:

15.3 The map scale for the Australian Long Distance Championship race should be 1:15000. If the map is

particularly detailed, 1:10000 is recommended for classes M/W16 and M/W40 and over, and may be used for other classes with approval from the OA Director, Technical, The map scale for other Long distance races, Middle distance races and for Relays shall be 1:15000 or 1:10000. The scale for Sprint races should be 1:4000 or 1:5000.

15.4 For Long distance races the map for age classes M/W16 and under and M/W40 and above may be 1:10000, especially if the map is particularly detailed. The map scale for classes running a Very Easy course may be 1:5000.

**A review of technology** in mapping (especially GPS and digital photography) is being prepared for Eric's mapping workshop in July. A request for information from mappers has been circulated. Please email your experiences/advice to me.

**As reported** in the last Tech News, the IOF Print Tech has produced a colour test sheet for calibrating colour digital printers. The test sheet is an OCAD file available on the Printing maps page and should be printed direct from OCAD to your digital printer and compared with the offset printed version. Instructions for its use are also available on the web

page. I don't have copies of the offset version yet, but will get some and distribute. The OA produced a similar (but not as good) calibration sheet in 2004. Offset versions of that were distributed in 2004 and you may already have a copy, and they may still be available from State association secretaries or from me if you can't get one elsewhere. The OCAD file of the OA colour test sheet is also available on the Printing Maps section of the OA website. An OCAD file of a purple colour test sheet is also available for trialling different combinations of cyan and magenta to match the IOF purple on the OA colour test sheet.

**Ken Thompson** (OASA) has written very useful guidelines for course-setting using OCAD 9. These guidelines are available on the Mapping Standards web page.

**I will** be working in the Empty Quarter of Abu Dhabi for three months Feb-April (please don't ask why – not sure myself!) and won't have internet access during that time, so don't expect a response.

— Noel Schoknecht  
 Chair,  
 OA Mapping Committee  
 sandyknoll@it.net.au

## IT News

### SPORTident

Resources have been added to the SPORTident page (under technical on the OA Web site as follows:

- OE User Guide for Enter on the Day
- Example OE and MT Import files
- Australian Club listing as an Excel file with the preferred format for including club codes in SI software
- User Guide for OE software for Enter on the Day events

Note that the preferred format for Australian Club data (only a few clubs shown) is as follows –

Club	City	Nat
AO	A	ACT
BF	N	NSW
EN	Q	Qld
TE	S	NT
OH	S	SA
AL	T	Tas
AW	V	Vic
BO	W	WA
NONE	AUS	AUS

This will assist in particular with compilation of NOL results. For overseas entries, clubs

may or may not be included.

For those involved in SI and Event Software and who have useful information to be included at the site, please forward to myself.

SPORTident have expanded the range of SI Control Cards available and now have an upgrade for the SI-Card6 (SI-Card6\*) and an SI-Card9 which can be used for orienteering, but are only compatible with SI-Control Stations BSF7/8. Existing SI-Card6s can be upgraded to SI-Card6\*. All their cards have discrete number ranges which enable the type of card to be identified. The potential use of the newer cards is something organisers of international events need to be aware of.

### Online Results Database

Thanks to the huge amount of work from Blair Trewin, the OA Web site now has a listing

of results of national and some international events (see under the Results menu).

The longer term aim is to create a more interactive searchable results system. This will initially commence with national event results. The system will be similar to that currently used in Queensland (see <http://www.oq.asn.au/sites/php/results/index.php>), where for example the results can be searched for those of an individual competitor. However one of the major issues compiling results consistently is the variations in usage of names for one person (incorrect spelling, shortened names etc).

— Robin Uppill

OA Director, Special Projects

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## Soapbox

### Start Draws

We all like to play on 'level playing fields' and when it comes to start draws that means either random or seeded draws (OA rule 12.5). Luck of the draw means that sometimes you will start first, and that's fine, except when the draw is done in alphabetical order. In no sense of the word is an alphabetical order random, and it should never be used. Random draws are not even hard work – using OE2003, it only takes a few seconds to create a random draw for all classes.

I've also often heard complaints from organisers that many elite competitors enter late. This is often 'encouraged' by organisers who give favourable starts (such as last) to late entries. Particularly on longer courses, this gives them the opportunity to catch other runners, be led into controls and run in packs. National League rules (12.15) have helped to solve this late entry problem by forcing these to start first.

— Bruce Arthur (VOA)

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## Map Scales

Andy

A very good technical newsletter. It is great to see that the Day 3 Easter mapping has been discussed. I had a great time on Day 2, read the map very easily. But on Day 3, with the 2.5m contours, I had much more difficulty reading the map because the detail was too intense. It is a real problem once you are age 48 and older and your eyesight starts to go. I had a couple of significant stuff ups. The first being to the first control because I missed seeing a very simple safe clearing and track option semi-hidden in the detail. It was very difficult switching the brain from the Day 2 mapping at 1:10000 to the Day 3 mapping at 1:10000 because the Day 3 map looked too much like a 1:15000 map at first glance.

Also the suggestion about 1:5000 for M/W12 and below is very good. It is interesting that in the Orienteering NSW E-news today there is an event at Balls Head on 17 September which has a new 1:3000 map for blue and green courses. When I am coaching adult beginners I regularly take 1:10,000 maps and enlarge them to 1:5,000 in black and white. This is cheap and easy and very

effective in coaching taking compass bearings and reading contours. A 1:10000 map (eg. Yarralumla Bays) with a lot of track detail in a relatively small area is really difficult for youngsters. We have small numbers in M/W10 and M/W12 and using 1:5000 would help in improving participation.

In relation to mapping features just over the boundary, I think that is a good idea. I have been mapping Gorooyarroo nature reserve and there are several prominent dams in private property and a major trig station just on the other side of the nature reserve fence. I have included these on the map because as I am field working it makes it much easier for me to use these as references to triangulate against as I map features in the reserve. But these should also help ensure competitors don't go off the map. On this map it would be easy for someone to miss-count tracks and fences and inadvertently go off the map.

— John Harding (OACT)

Dear Andy,

I was interested in the comment that OA may use 1:5000 maps for 10-14 year olds .

I think that this would be a good idea but we are missing the boat a bit. By 10 most kids have chosen a sport. If we are to compete with soccer (where they start pee wees at age 5) and other sports we need to have the kids doing orienteering when they are 5 and 6.

To encourage them at this age we need a course easier than blue but harder than string. I will call it "purple".

It could be of the same standard as a blue but be printed on a 1:2,500 scale map . ( Why stop at 1 : 5,000 ?) Possibly we could even remove the contours. Preferably it would just be a blown up map so that the symbols and lines would all be bigger too.

After all when my 5 yr old is given a book to read at school it is not just that the words are easy but THE PRINT IS LARGE TOO.

Please consider this proposal seriously as we need to encourage families and young kids into the sport or orienteering will fade as the current cohort of 45-60 year olds pass on.

— David Poland (OACT)