

NOL Guidelines Update for 2020

Background

The National Orienteering League (NOL) guidelines were last published in January 2015. They form section 2.2 of the Orienteering Australia Operational Manual.

From 2020, NOL will be conducted over the first half of the year culminating in an exciting final weekend. This requires some changes to the NOL guidelines as follows:

1. Minimum number of NOL events.

The recommended minimum number of NOL events in a season is reduced from 15 to 10 (4 events at Easter plus a minimum of 3 x 2 event weekends). This is an effective reduction of one to the minimum number of elite events offered in the year as there are still 4 Australian Championship events which are not NOL events. There will be 12 events in 2020 and the same is proposed for 2021.

2. Number of events to count in season pointscore.

For juniors, the season total will sum the best scores from the larger of: a) 50% of events rounded up to a whole number, or b) 6 events (e.g. Easter plus 1 other weekend). For the senior individual competition 8 events will continue to count (e.g. Easter plus 2 other weekends) and for the senior team competition all events will continue to count.

3. Chasing start in final individual race

To make the conclusion of the season more exciting the last individual event of the season will be a chasing start, converting the season point score before the final race into time differences. The last event will count in everyone's points total whether they compete or not. The finishing order of competitors in the last race will be the order for that year's competition. The first across the line wins the season and so forth down the list.

The season pointscore before the last race will be calculated from the best 7 results for the seniors and the best five results for juniors. For 2020, the final race will be a middle distance race and each point difference will be converted to 30 sec in the chasing start. The series leader starts first. If second place is 4 points behind, they start 2 minutes behind the leader. To avoid overly long gaps between starters with low season points, those over 60 points behind (30 minutes) will start in a mass start. The details of points to time conversion may be changed for future years to suit circumstances of the final event in those years. If the series leader is not present at the last race then starting times are based on points relative to the highest ranked starter.

The results of the last event will be back calculated to points to give a final season point score. The first starter will be given 30 points and the course time difference of each athlete to the first starter will be used to calculate their points using the same conversion rate as used to allocate start times. So if the second

starter finishes exactly with the first starter they will have the exact same points total for the season, and so forth through the field. Those who DNF or do not attend the last event receive 0 points. If the first starter does not finish the race then the first starter who finishes is allocated 30 points and points are calculated from there.

This conversion of the chasing start back to points preserves the finishing order of the chasing start in the points table and enables those not present at the final race to still receive an overall placing for the season. Theoretically you can win the season without attending the last event but you would need a lead of close to 30 points or more. If the first starter finishes a long way down the field then there could be very large points allocated to the athletes that pass the leader.

4. Relay as last event of the season

The last event of the NOL season will be a relay to determine the winners of the teams categories. The current rule of double points allocation to relays will be continued.

5. Sprint finishes in the final weekend

For both events on the final weekend, in the situation of a close finish, the first across the finish line will be judged the winner, as judged in athletics by the torso that crosses the line first. Points for the last race will be rounded to the nearest integer but the season placing for those on identical points will be based upon first across the line. For example, if two athletes are equal fourth in points at the end of the season then the athlete that breasts the line first in the final race is given fourth place and the other athlete places fifth.

Other Changes since 2015

A few other minor changes to the guidelines have been made over the years since they were published. These were changes either made by the OA Board or made by the HP program after consultation with state NOL coordinators.

The changes are:

- To produce season points calculations more rapidly and easily, NOL points are calculated by a computer program written by David Shepherd. The program conforms to the published guidelines with the changes below.
- To be eligible for team points, competitors must enter using their NOL team affiliation and not their club or state affiliation. Reminders on this are sent to athletes and state team coordinators before entries close for each event.
- Junior performances no longer count toward the senior point score when juniors and seniors run the same course as this dilutes the influence of these events in the senior point score.
- Visiting athletes, particularly coaches in residence, are encouraged to compete in NOL to strengthen the competition. Anyone resident in Australia for four months who has joined an Australian orienteering club can compete for their state NOL team (see 2019 OA competition rules

section 6.9). They can also compete when they return for a second, shorter visit.

- When Oceania Championship events are included as NOL events the Head Coach will decide if both MW18 and MW20 count toward NOL points or if just MW20 points count, depending upon the strength of the MW18 fields. The decision will be communicated to athletes and state team coordinators before entries close.
- When Oceania Championship events held in New Zealand are included as NOL events then only Australian resident athletes will count toward NOL points. Normally, in the individual competition, all competitors can score points regardless of their nationality.