

# Beginner's Guide to Planning

Or

## Planning by a Beginner

By Adam Bennett

This is a summary of what I did while planning my first orienteering event – an informal event in January at High Stand with two courses (Green and Orange).

### Planning Visits

To plan the event, I visited the site 3 times and spent a few hours on Purple Pen devising and altering the two courses to try to make them the best I could.

Visit 1	Get a sense of the whole area, look for interesting features to use, start noting potential control points (the more the better)
Home after	Plot control points on Purple Pen, decide area to use for event
Visit 2	Scout area to use, note new control points found, think about road signs
Home after	Plot new points, add control descriptions, design courses, tidy up control code numbers
Visit 3	Place bamboo canes (with control code number) at all control points, check control descriptions are correct
Home after	Finalise courses, finalise control descriptions, finalise control code numbers, delete unused control points

### Course Design

There is a lot of useful information available from BOF about how to plan good courses if your event is held in a good area with lots of run-able ground and plenty of features.

High Stand is not like that. It's been extensively logged and has areas of dense spruce plantation. My challenge was just to find courses with enough interest and difficulty. There was relatively little opportunity to think about the considerations the BOF guidance covers.

When designing the courses I focused on:

- Green – Harder points, try to create route choice / navigational challenge, 3.5-5km
- Orange – Easier points, possible for novices to complete, mainly on paths, 2.5-3.5km

In total, I used a total 16 control points for the two courses (with 2 used by both).  
The Green was 11 controls / 4.6km with a mix of paths and scrubby undergrowth.  
The Orange was 7 controls / 2.2km mainly on paths.

I checked my proposed courses with Dick and Angela throughout the planning stages.

## Kit for the Day

A whole host of kit is needed to run an event and it all needs to be collected beforehand. Below is a list of what I used, divided into different functions:

Road signs	Arrow boards, string, scissors, spare kites
Control Points	Bamboo canes, kites, control boxes, rubber bands, eye protectors (camera film cases)
Start/Finish	Signs to start, finish banner + stakes, control boxes (clear, start, finish), course maps
Registration	Event info poster (courses, price, etc.), registration sheets + clipboard + pens, money box with float (£1 coins + £5 notes), dibbers + dibber hire sheet, first aid kit
Results	Mini printer or laptop, flyers for the next event
Personal	Warm clothes, food, drink, mobile phone, torch

## Timings of the Day

It took most of the day to setup and run the event. Below are the rough timings:

Putting Out Road Signs	– 0hr20
Putting Out Controls (16 controls)	– 1hr30
Running Event (Start/Finish)	– 3hr30
Collecting Controls	– 1hr00
Collecting Road Signs	– 0hr10
Total Time	– 6hr30

## General Thoughts

- More controls means more setup on the day; don't make unnecessary work for yourself.
- The control points should be at least 30m apart; don't site them too close together.
- Running the start and finish can be quite hectic, as everyone seems to come at once.
- Most competitors were experienced, but a few were novices who needed an explanation of the maps and how to use the dibbers before they could start.
- For families who want to run as a group, charge per map (rather than per person) and put age classification as 'Family'.
- Keep a count of the number of competitors that have registered for each course, so you know whether there are enough maps or if you'll need to re-use some.

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Since Adam wrote the above notes we have added 'white' courses

These have been put on in 2014 by Gerry Garvey, who has a copy of all the courses he has planned. All things considered it would be fine to use the same courses again if the car parking is at a similar location. (contact Gerry [ggarvey@sky.com](mailto:ggarvey@sky.com) )

The addition of this course, as mentioned by Adam above does mean that there will potentially be people who have never orienteered before. This means that it will be extremely helpful to have at least one extra pair of hands to register these people and explain everything.

Also extra people in general are coming to these Saturday morning events (anything up to 70 people). The main implication of extra people is the pressure on car parking. If you think car parking is going to be tight then it's also a good idea to get someone to help direct cars for about an hour whilst the main bulk of people arrive (10:30 - 11:30).

#### Short Green Course

Some of the organisers of these Saturday morning events have been also doing a short green course. These are essentially to accommodate older runners who want a technically difficult course but a shorter course. There is no obligation to put this course on, but it can be done by cutting a loop out of the green course and marking the map and course description appropriately so that no separate map or controls are needed.

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