EMOA Officials Conference 2025

British Orienteering Rules Updates in 2024 and 2025

John Hurley

Allocation of Age Classes to Courses

- Recommendations updated to allow for equal winning times for M and W classes

- Allocation for W16, W18, W20, W21, W35, W45, W55 & W65 updated to next longer course.

- Allocation for M70 and M75 updated to next longer course due to evidence that these competitors have become fitter.

- See tables B.8.6 (Long) and B.9.6 (Middle)

Courses for older competitors

- New Guidance in Appendix B 2.6.3.
- Planners need to remember that elderly and/or infirm orienteers have difficulties crossing rough ground - going up and down steep slopes; scrambling over boulder fields and rocky ground; getting into and out of steep sided hollows, gullies, streams, etc; pushing through dense vegetation with low branches; and climbing over fences and stiles. Some competitors use a stick for balance which can also make movement more awkward in the terrain. Hence, as far as possible, such obstacles should be avoided/minimised on their courses.

Separation of Controls

- 30m (between any controls) and 60m (between controls on similar features) limits can be waived when planning White or Yellow courses (19.4).

- For sprint and urban map scales 1:5000 or larger, the minimum running distance between controls is 25m and the minimum straight-line distance is 15m. (19.5)

- For sprint and urban map scales 1:5000 or larger, there is no requirement for adjacent controls to be on distinctly different features. (19.5)

Special Symbols and Boundaries

- If the IOF **'Special Item'** symbols X and/or O (or any other non-standard symbols) are used on the Control Descriptions, then information about them should be supplied to competitors in the final event details. (22.3)

- Boundaries described by **"uncrossable"** or **"impassable"** symbols on an ISSprOM map must not be crossed. Similar boundaries shown on an ISOM map should not be crossed. (26.4)

- Includes symbols 301 body of water, 515 wall, 518 fence.

Entries and Systems

- For level B events : Entries must be taken by Age Class, though open **"Colour"** classes may also be offered. (14.5)

- Only electronic punching systems are to be used at level A, B and C events (23.3)

- Clarification on use of GPS devices : competitors may carry a GPS device but only to record data for post-race analysis. (8.4 – 8.9)

Last Control and Finish

- The route to the Finish from the last control must be taped for the whole route unless the Finish or the Finish funnel is clearly visible to the competitor from their last control. (27.2)

- Clarification on timing procedure at relays (27.5)

- Competitors must be informed beforehand about
  - Start: timed start or punching start.
  - Finish: run through, contactless or punching.
  - Course control sites: contactless or punching. (A.7.5.8)

Urban and Sprint Courses

- Appendix B Course Planning sections on Urban courses and Sprint courses have been combined (now in section B.10).

- Recommended urban course lengths (table B.10.11.5) have finally been updated to allow for optimum feasible route distance (not straight line distance).

- It is important that control sites take account of the sensibilities of the wider community. Thus, sites in cemeteries, on war memorials, on private fences and other sensitive sites should be avoided.   (B.10.4.5).

Rule Changes for 2026

- Rules Group were asked to provide details of possible further rule changes in 2026, but no information has been supplied.
- This may be covered by Barry **Elkington's** webinar, scheduled for Mon November 10th 7pm.

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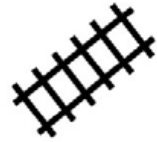
IOF Control Description Updates in 2024

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Symbol Usage Changes

- Copse symbol now indicates a small area of trees in open ground or a more runnable area of trees surrounded by thicker forest.

- Building symbol now also used for a pillar supporting a roof

- Top symbol (column G) also used for the upper of two levels.

- Beneath symbol (column G) also used for the lower of two levels

New symbols

- Map flip (turn the map over).
- Railway, tramway or other kind of railed track.

Other Changes

- Description Sheet should be printed in black or purple.
- If the clarification symbol in column C is not sufficient to unambiguously define the placement of the control flag then the feature is not suitable for a control site.