how to win races and injure people

a novel

1998

NAVIGATION ?

SOME THOUGHT PROVOKERS

1. READING THE MAP ON THE RUN

Are you doing it the right way?

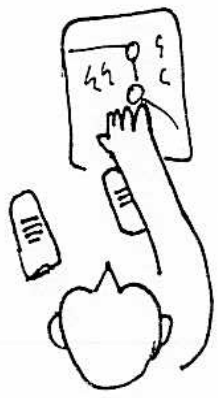
The single most important aspect of orienteering is the map, if you can't read it your really out of the game. Have a look at these steps to see whether you have got the basics covered

i. Work out what the ideal distance is for you between eye and map to focus clearly, quickly and be able to take in the information on the map. This is normally about 15cm. To 20cm. Have your forearm facing straight ahead, that will mean having your elbow tucked in towards your ribs (see picture below) Your feet should also be facing in the same direction as your forearm. The idea is that when you look up from the map/compass you are immediately heading in the direction your eyes want to, the same as your feet, torso, forearm.

ii. Fold the map so that the control line faces directly forward so that when you are orientated the direction of travel for your feet, upper-body and forearm are all straight ahead, not angling or twisting

iii. In a quick glance be prepared to take from the map the details that count..in some sort order of priority. In most cases that will be the brown and black features, the brighter greens and yellows are eye catching but in a short glance must be given a low value. One trick is to picture the contour lines as twice there normal thickness.

iv. Be ready to slow or even stop if you can't read enough of the details



head and map straight ahead but feet body and forearm somewhere else

15cm. –20cm. Head, forearm, body, feet and control line all facing the same way.

1. READING THE MAP cont.

THE VALUE OF STOPPING

It's easy to make a one minute mistake as you approach a flag, a few of these in a race and victory becomes even more elusive. One minute equates to about 150m. of normal running ,(6m/km.) if you **stop** to read the map that it will usually take no more than 10 seconds, often less, conservatively that equals less than 30 metres at the same kilometre rate. Is it worth stopping? That will always be your decision.

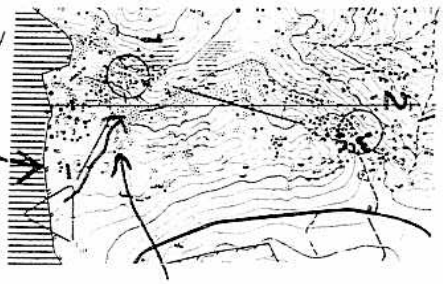
Orienteering is about navigating around a course, marked clearly on your map, as quickly as you can. So... learn to read on the run... stop when you have to take in the details... make navigation decisions that save you time... and your chances are far greater of orienteering faster.

2 . AT THE START

A routine is good to develop here. This is one that you could try

i. Orientate the map and your feet
ii. Find on the map the first contact point
iii. Choose your first line (see 3.*looking for the lines*)
iv. Navigate to the contact point and onto the first line

and YOUR AWAY (with a plan)



3 . LOOKING FOR THE LINES

This I believe is the premise of consistent high speed orienteering. It puts a purpose into your navigating and makes you orienteer in front of where you are, like all champions do.

On all maps there are "lines", these are usually gullies, spurs, watercourses, tracks, edges of vegetation changes, marshes and so-on. A line is a place of comfort, once your on one then you can take a mental breather yet up the physical tempo. When you are between lines you identify this as a demanding technical section which will require one of your many specific navigation skills, i.e. compass, angling, height judgment, direction changes etc. This section will be slower running with more precise navigating until you hit the next line, then your off again.

Lines can lead immediately out of the last flag and all the way into the next flag. Once you start seeing and using the lines and become familiar with the process, you can move onto the more advanced approach of cutting corners from one line to the next. However this is riskier so should only be used once your into the map and not at the start or after a mistake or in a tricky section.

Find the lines in your technique training at home. Marked are lines you could use on these two legs

4 . EXITING THE FLAG

How many times have you ran out of a flag for 50metres or so before you have zeroed in on the exact right direction? That could be a 5 or 10 second mistake. Do that a few times in a race and without noting it you have accumulated a 1 minute error!

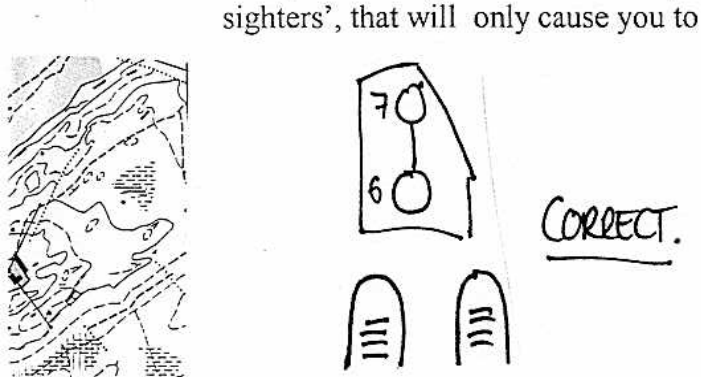
As for when you start (2) although usually dropping the contact point because you are already into the map (its good to find a contact point if you missed at the flag). You do need to have seen where your first line begins and whether you have to navigate to it. One added approach is to identify whether your exit direction is. i. **UP** ii. **DOWN** iii. **ACROSS** or iv. **BACK**

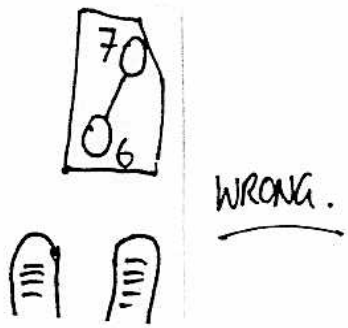
5 . COMPASS BEARINGS

Being a good compass runner requires a lot of practice and some basic skills. The most valuable distance to practice compass bearings over is about 200m. to 300m.

i. Compass bearings- thumb compass

This requires a correct fold of the map so that the control line runs at 90o to your body, that is straight ahead, not across your body . Your feet must be facing where the line points towards. When you look up to sight something look only a short distance ahead. Compass bearings are a dedicated precision skill over short distances, so don't use long sighters', that will only cause you to lose confidence in your compass skills.





ii. Compass bearings- base plate

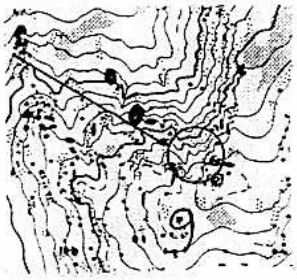
Everyone should know how to do these. The problem is not the skill but how often a bearing is ***not*** taken because it takes too long to organise yourself and this leads to orienteering on feel rather compass assisted orientation. The other concern is quick directional changes, is the base plate adequate and/or fast enough?

6 . APPROACHING THE FLAG

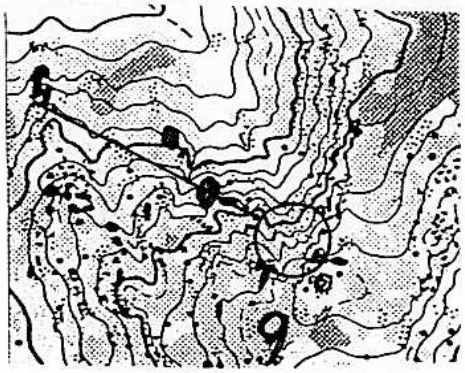
The control circle is a major risk area for most people. It requires a more dedicated approach and calm thinking to be consistently successful. You can use a few styles to nail the flag

i. **Expand the details**

1:15000
hard



1:10000
not so difficult

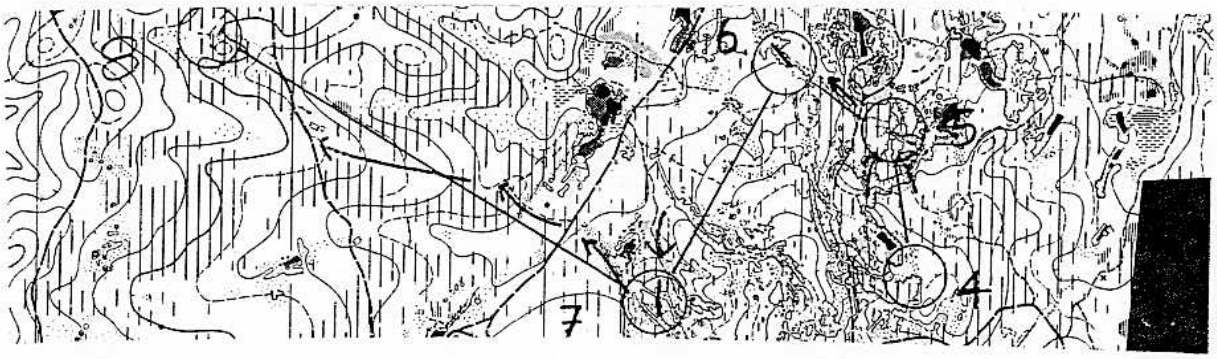


1:5000
pretty easy!

By magnifying the area or stopping, you can achieve far more clarity of map details

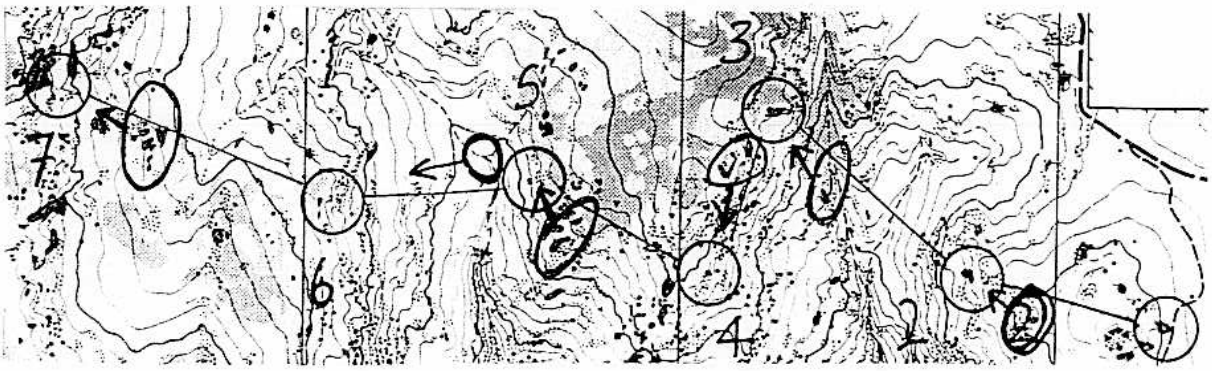
ii. **See the line**

This is the same approach as for 3. But on a smaller scale. Often hidden in control circles are lines leading right into the feature



iii. **compass**

Only to be used if you are a proficient short distance compass runner and never in isolation. However if trained and executed well this style will be super fast. You must always come in off a solid feature.



7 . IMPROVING YOUR SKILLS

Now that you have identified some of your strengths and weaknesses, you should be looking to train to improve on these. The first 10 of these could be

i. **Compass over 200m. to 300m.**

ii. **Recognising lines.**

iii. **Reading the map at speed.**

iv. **Contouring.**

v. **Having a start routine.**

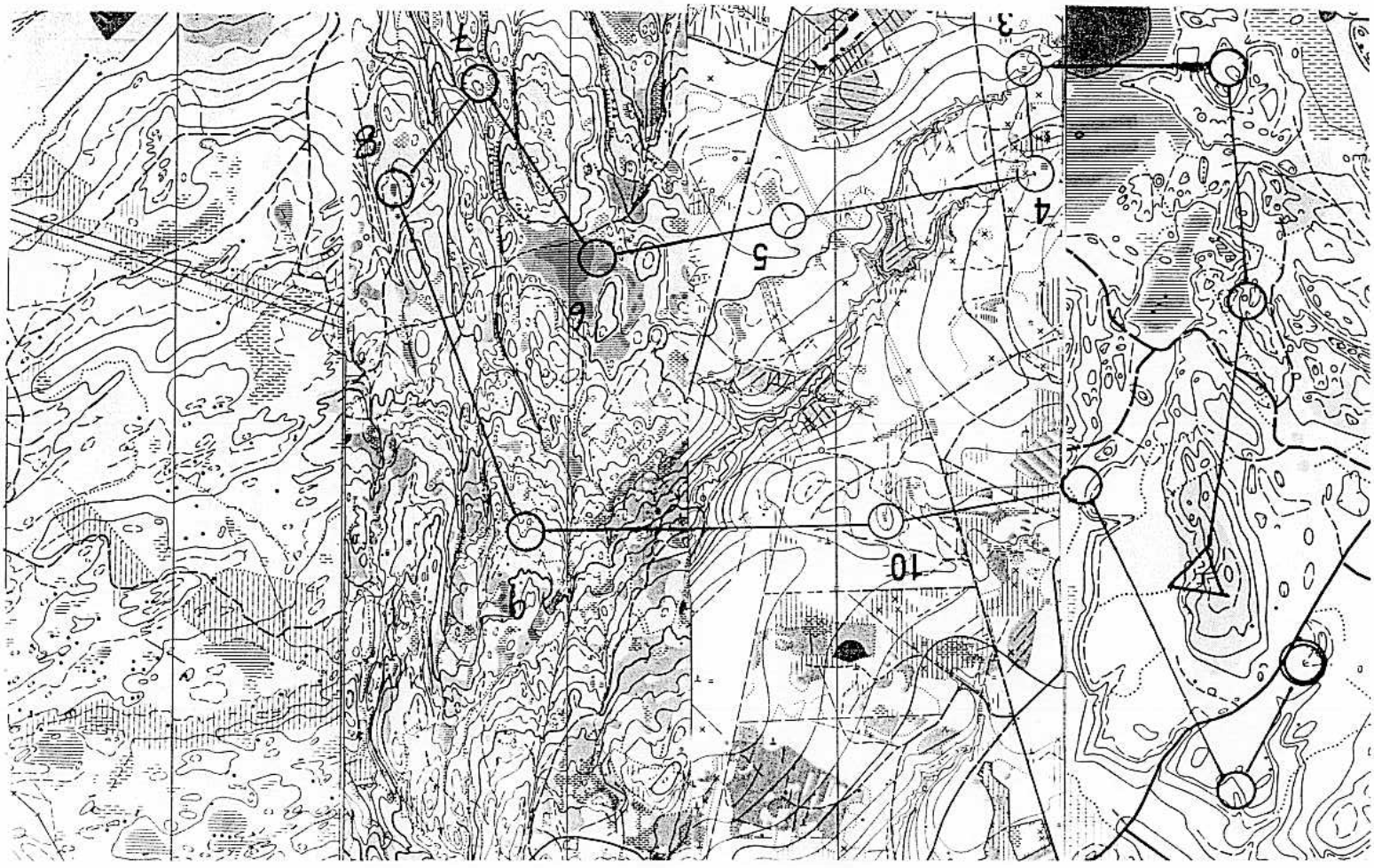
vi. **Having a pre-race routine.**

vii. **Exiting controls.**

ix. **diretional changes**

x. **placing values on the features on the map**

Technique training for 1998



RATE YOUR ORIENTEERING SKILLS

By analysing each race from this booklet that you compete in, you will discover areas to focus for training and improving.
Consider these following techniques and components of orienteering and rate your performance from the race you have just finished. Score yourself out of 10 (1 is extremely poor and 10 for reaching legend status)

GENERAL

Training and general well-being leading upto race _____.
Pre race preparation at event _____.
Race plan and tactics during race _____.
First control skills/execution _____.
First 35% of course navigation _____.
Middle section of course navigation _____.
Final 20% of course navigation _____.
Fitness over concluding part of course _____.
General fitness during race _____.
Did you feel as though you were running fast enough _____.
What was the one thing you would like do again if you could have this race re-run ? _____.
What is one thing you did extremely well ? _____.

SPECIFIC

Reading the map on the run _____.
Route choice decisions _____.
Control flow _____.
Seeing the lines _____.
Compass work _____.
Exiting controls _____.
Success at attacking the control _____.
Short legs _____.
Concentration during race. First1/3rd _____.
Middle _____.
last 20% _____.