

WHAT IS ORIENTEERING?

Long popular in Scandinavian countries, orienteering is a sport which is growing rapidly in the US and Canada. Orienteering is for all ages and degrees of fitness and skill. At its least demanding, a participant can leisurely tour the course stopping to pick flowers and observe wildlife, while competitive orienteering involves running from checkpoint to checkpoint through the woods over courses as long as 10 kilometers. It is a sport which challenges both the mind and body.

In a race (referred to as a meet) the organizer places control markers at designated land features which act as checkpoints for the course. Each orienteer is given a highly detailed topographic map with the various features (control points) circled. The object of the sport is to use the map & compass to locate each control point. Each point has a red & white triangular flag and distinctive punch which is used to mark the score card. If you or your Scouts find a control flag while camping or hiking please do not disturb it! The flags are put up shortly before a meet and taken down immediately afterwards.

Orienteering provides the suspense and excitement of a treasure hunt with red and white markers providing the reward every few hundred meters. Competitive orienteering is more demanding than road running not only because of the terrain, but because one must constantly be concentrating, making swift decisions, and keeping track of distance covered. The key to orienteering is more one's ability to think under pressure and make wise decisions than simply speed or endurance.

For more information on orienteering contact United States Orienteering Federation, PO BOX 1444, Forest Park, GA 30051