

Useful information.

When you enter an event it helps if you know what course you want to run, what age category you are and what type of event it is.

Which course should I run?

The great thing about orienteering is that you can run whichever course you want to but try to pick one that is suitable for your ability (not necessarily what others in your age category are running). If you have any questions, there'll always be someone you can ask at an event - whether that's one of our club volunteers, or just another junior.

At our local events there are usually Long and Short courses and an Orange and/or Yellow course available. If you are new to orienteering you may find it useful to run the Yellow/ Orange course before trying a Short course.

At other events there are usually standard colour graded courses. You can run whichever course you want but in some competitions if you want to be competitive there are recommended courses for different age categories. Below is a grid explaining the differences between courses and which age classes run which course.

	Course	Length	Description	Junior Age Classes	
	White	0.5-1.5km	This is usually the shortest course on offer and the courses are very simple and stick to main paths.		
	Yellow	1-3 km	These courses are slightly more technical than the white courses with controls slightly off the paths, but on easy to find line features such as streams or walls.	M10	W10
	Orange	3-5 km	On orange courses you will be presented with basic route choice options and will use simple compass skills.	M12	W12
	Light Green	3.5-4.5 km	On Light Green courses the technical and physical difficulty is increased again. The courses are slightly longer than orange and use point (e.g. boulders) and contour features.	M14	W14
	Green	4-5 km	These courses are at the most technical level (TD5) and are aimed at those wanting a relatively short run with a technical challenge.		W16
	Blue	5-7 km	The courses and those below are all still at the highest technical difficulty, but are longer and more physically challenging than green courses	M16	W18
	Brown	7km+	The brown courses are technically difficult and fairly long.	M18	
	Black	10km +	These are the longest courses at standard orienteering.		

What age class am I?

In orienteering competitors are grouped into age classes, based on the year they were born, and whether they are male (M) or female (W). As a junior you change age class every two years on the 1st January.

For example: 'W16' (girls who are under 16 on the 1st Jan that year) or 'M14' (boys who are under 14 on the 1st Jan). If this is all a bit confusing, you can just use this grid to find out your age class: *(correct for 2022)*

Age Class	M/W10		M/W12		M/W14		M/W16		M/W18	
Year of Birth	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004

Types of Orienteering

The type of terrain refers to what sort of ground the courses cover. Standard orienteering events are usually run in forests or on moorland but here are other types of events including:

- **Night** - Typically shorter distances than day events. These courses can be in standard terrain or urban (see explanation below). You will require a head torch, and wear something reflective.
- **Relay** - As the name suggests, a group of orienteers compete as a team, with one person running after the other.
- **Sprint** - These are fast-paced events that are only a few kilometres in length but have many controls often close together.
- **Middle** - Middle distance events are generally shorter in length than a long, there may be a lot of changes of direction with controls relatively close together. These races are generally held in terrain, like woods or moorland.
- **Long or Classic** - These are the longest of all orienteering courses, often having long legs and different route choice options through forest and across (sometimes wild) open terrain.
- **Urban** - These events are held in built up areas around buildings and parks. If you are under 16 you must be accompanied by an adult to run on some of these courses.
- **Score** - The aim for these events is to visit as many controls as you can in a set time period. Sometimes the course is designed so some controls (the furthest away or the most technical) score higher points. You have to work out the best route to visit the most (or best scoring controls) and get back to the finish within the time limit.

(Acknowledgement to South Yorkshire Orienteers for allowing use of text from their website)