

Orienteering Sport and Orienteering Map

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Abstract: Form of human movement in nature is the basis for development of most outdoor sport activities. Orienteering sport is very interesting individual sport which allows all participants not only to improve their physical performance but also to improve their map reading and navigational skills. Orienteering sport is specific because it is multidisciplinary and divided into 4 equal domains (foot orienteering, MTB orienteering, ski orienteering and trail orienteering). It is not a sport for passive bystanders because its attractiveness and acceptability is achieved through involvement. Orienteering mostly takes place on vast untouched wooded areas and over recent years, urban areas where sprint races are organized, which beside their attractiveness also have promotional character.

Participant's objective in orienteering competition or training is to finish the course (defined by control points) using the map and compass. Orienteering map is a thematic map of the covered area with purpose of use for sport activities and it can be considered as a form of specific cartography. Quality of orienteering map as such is vital because it must allow quick adaptation and visualization of the terrain to each participant. The map represents a synthesis of all relevant terrain features represented on a paper in specific scale. Legibility is achieved by proper generalization while putting focus on key relief forms and objects. Generalization depends on type of terrain, experience of the mapmaker, and is vital for good legibility and value of the orienteering map.

Orienteering course is defined by a series of control points placed on diverse details (relief, vegetation, hydrographic, etc.) of the terrain. Control point looks like a pole with red and white prismatic flag equipped with electronic station for time taking and chip identification as well as the backup perforation system. Each chip has unique id number and is used to identify competitors on start, control points and finish area. Time taking system along with its software allows us to check if competitor finished his course successfully, how long did it take him and generates automatic ranking lists.

On competition, athletes are divided into age categories allowing participation of 5-year-olds as well as 80-year-olds. Courses are designed with respect of age-related psychophysical limitations. Courses are varied by course length and technical complexity. To achieve success in orienteering sport athlete must possess high level of map reading skills, be able to maintain high level of focus while under extreme physical exertion, adapt to situation and make choices quickly and efficiently. Choosing the best route or direction of movement is crucial for completing the course in fastest time possible and achieving the best possible personal result.

Key words: orienteering sport, recreation, orienteering map