

## Event Guideline G : Score Events

**This Guideline is only intended to provide advice to Organisers and Planners. No compulsion is intended, and it is accepted that the particular circumstances of an event may make it sensible not to take up all of the suggestions made.**

### 1 General Information

#### 1.1 Nature of event

1.1.1 Score orienteering challenges competitors to maximise their score in a pre-defined running time. There are three aspects to the competition:

1. Selecting a subset of all available controls to be visited;
2. Selecting the order in which controls are visited;
3. Route choice and navigation between chosen controls.

A competitor has to optimise all three aspects and may reconsider them as his run evolves.

1.1.2 Score events may be staged in any terrain commensurate with the Level of the event.

### 2 Organisational Requirements

#### 2.1 Responsibility

2.1.1 The responsibility for Score events follows that for cross-country events of the same Level.

#### 2.2 Officials

2.2.1 The officials for a Score event shall meet the requirements set out for the appropriate Level of event in Appendix C (Event Officials).

### 3 Planning Requirements

#### 3.1 General considerations

3.1.1 Guidelines for planning cross-country courses are given in Appendix B to the Rules. They have evolved to indicate best practice and except where modified in this guideline should be followed for Score events. They require planners to provide courses of varying technical difficulty and, indirectly through length, varying time for different age groups. Planning a single Score course to meet these conflicting requirements is difficult. Multiple courses with control sites and route choices of varying technical difficulty and with different time limits should be considered.

3.1.2 In a Score event, at the start and at most controls the competitor should be presented with a challenge to decide where best to go next. Competitors heading off in many different directions are indicative of a well-planned Score event. It is poor planning if it is obvious to competitors to take a series of controls in a particular order.

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- 3.1.3 In addition to route selection there should also be route choice between neighbouring controls, except for novices who would normally run cross-country courses at Technical Difficulty 2. For these novices it is useful to have a number of controls make up what would approximate to a course of this standard.
- 3.1.4 Score events are unsuitable for young novices normally participating on Technical Difficulty 1 courses. A standard cross-country course at this level should be considered as an addition to the Score course(s).

### 3.2 Time limit

- 3.2.1 The time limit for adult age classes is normally one hour. For younger or older age classes shorter time limits can be offered.
- 3.2.2 There should be a penalty for exceeding the time limit for the course. It should be such that it is impossible for a 'net gain' to be achieved by *significantly* exceeding the time limit. For example, if control values are in the range of 10-40 points, make the penalty 30 points per minute late. It needs to be made clear to competitors how this penalty is applied: 30 points per minute (or part thereof), or 1 point for each 2 seconds.
- 3.2.3 In an ideal Score event it should not be possible for a good orienteer to visit all controls in the allotted time. In a Score event one of the most important decisions for a competitor to make is which controls to omit. If some competitors can visit all controls in the allotted time then because they do not have to select a subset of controls to be visited, they are running in a different, easier event than the other competitors. They also miss the tactical decision of going for a control at the risk of losing some or all of those points by finishing late.
- 3.2.4 If the proposed area is so small that the best competitors might collect all controls within the time limit, the following strategies can be considered:
- (a) Use another area that is big enough.
  - (b) Use many controls. More work for the planner and often results in route choice being replaced by a control-picking exercise. Not recommended.
  - (c) Reduce the time availability. In small competition areas it is reasonable to reduce the time limit to 45 minutes; any reduction below that is likely to be unpopular with competitors.
  - (d) Divide the course into two parts, using the area twice. A method commonly employed is for competitors to collect all controls in part 1 and then as many as they can in part 2. This approach is flawed because part 1 becomes a free route selection cross-country event, missing the selection of a subset of controls aspect of a good Score event. Better is to have two parallel courses, each a part of a total course which cannot be completed in the time limit. Competitors may transition from part 1 to part 2 at any time and at any location. Once they have punched a part 2 control any further part 1 controls they visit are not scored.
  - (e) Run the event as a 'Spanish' score event in which all the controls have to be visited, but in any order, the competitor who completes this in the fastest time is the winner. This format removes many of the decision making strategies of a traditional score event but may be suitable for some events.

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### 3.3 Start and finish

- 3.3.1 A start and finish close together and near the centre of the competition area will increase the first and last control options.
- 3.3.2 If start and finish are significantly separated this will bias the order in which competitors visit controls; competitors will begin with controls near the start and move on to finish with controls near the finish. If the Score event has a mass-start, this will bunch the field.
- 3.3.3 The finish arrangements should ensure that competitors who have already finished do not obstruct later finishers. This is particularly important for mass-start Score events in which competitors will arrive at the finish close together.

### 3.4 Control sites

- 3.4.1 In a Score competition a delay in finding one control when sound technique has been used to locate it can have a devastating effect on a competitor's finely judged route selection. Just because a competitor does not have to punch at a control must not be used as an excuse for an unfairly difficult control placement.
- 3.4.2 In a well-planned Score event competitors will arrive and depart from controls in many directions. The control feature and control marker should be capable of being approached safely and fairly from all directions.
- 3.4.3 Control locations should be commensurate with the technical difficulty of the course. It is preferable to have separate courses with control sites and legs between them at the appropriate technical difficulty. In most Score events there will be two control sets used for different courses: one for juniors and novices consisting of sites and legs of Technical Difficulty 2 and 3, the second for experienced orienteers with TD 3 to 5 legs.
- 3.4.4 Beware of planning a course consisting of a ring of controls about a central start and finish. Although competitors may leave the start in a variety of directions, their only route selection thereafter will be to decide whether to run the ring clockwise or anticlockwise.

### 3.5 Control codes, values and control descriptions

- 3.5.1 Controls may have different points values. This can be used to give additional complexity to the competition, but be careful not to over-emphasise this. Score orienteering is a navigational challenge, not an obscure mathematical exercise. Control values should not necessarily be correlated with distance from start or with difficulty to find. But be aware that high value controls near the start or finish will attract more competitors than other controls.
- 3.5.2 The values of controls should be instantaneously recognisable from their control code. An option is to give every control the value of its control code; in this method different subsets of controls are less likely to sum to the same score. Another option is to block values, e.g. all controls with codes between 30 and 39 are value 30, controls with codes between 40 and 49 are value 40, etc.
- 3.5.3 For courses involving transition (see 3.2.4(d) above), part 1 and part 2 controls must be clearly distinguishable through their control code; for example part 1 control codes may be in the range 100-199 and part 2 control codes in the range

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200-299. If (some) controls in part 2 are given higher scores than those in part 1, early transition is encouraged.

- 3.5.4 Control descriptions should be produced in accordance with Appendix A except that in the heading the course length and climb should be replaced by the course time limit.

### 3.6 Map

- 3.6.1 The map should be produced in accordance with Rule 5 and Appendix H.
- 3.6.2 The values of controls should be available on the map, either indirectly through control code when there is a simple relationship of value to code (see 3.5.2 above), or with the control value being printed with the control code adjacent to the control circle. This latter option causes more map detail to be lost under the overprint.
- 3.6.3 For two-part courses including a transition (3.2.4(d) above), an option is to have separate back-to-back maps for part 1 and part 2. If this is done the locations of part 2 controls may be included on the part 1 map and vice versa.

## 4. The Competition

### 4.1 Start times

- 4.1.1 Start times should be allocated in accordance with the guidelines for cross-country events at the same Level. As an alternative mass starts may be used. Note however that a mass start may lead to overcrowding at controls near the start and also that it will mitigate against families who utilise split starts; consider having two mass starts.

### 4.2 Information for competitors

- 4.2.1 Event information shall include relationship of control value to control code, time limit, time penalties and their application.
- 4.2.2 Competitors on TD2 Score courses may see their courses before the start.

### 4.3 Results

- 4.3.1 In a Score event (excluding the Spanish score format) results are determined by the score collected. Competitors with the same net score (gross score less late time penalty) can either be given a tied result or ranked in order of time taken.

## 5. Further advice

- 5.1.1 If you cannot find the answer to a question within the published Rules, Appendices and Guidelines then please contact your Association's representative on Rules Group, or failing that the Chairman of Rules Group via the British Orienteering National Office.