

Orienteering Event Formats – Long Distance Orienteering

Orienteering courses have a number of formats, strictly these are

1. Long Distance – uses bush or forest maps
2. Middle Distance – uses bush and forest maps
3. Sprint Distance – mostly urban, sometimes forest, now includes Knockout Sprint
4. Relay
 - a. Forest relays
 - b. Sprint relay

Appendix 8 in the Orienteering Foot Rules discusses the features of the various formats.

South Australian events follow the above, but we have variations. For example urban events vary from the above, being often Middle Distance length but less technical (Twilight Series for example), and some forest events are shorter than typical long distance but use that style.

This article focuses on Long Distance courses (subsequent articles will discuss other formats), and is relevant to both course planners and orienteers. These comments apply specifically to Hard Navigation courses, and less so to moderate. Because of the nature of Easy and Very Easy courses, the format of these is similar for all orienteering event formats.

Long distance orienteering is

1. A mixture of technical difficulties
2. Significant route choice including some large scale route choice
3. Long distance orienteering tests all orienteering techniques as well as speed and physical endurance.
4. Map scale is commonly 1:10,000, although elite courses are national level are mostly 1:15,000

For the more recreational orienteer, general endurance is still a factor as these courses are the longest distance you can expect to undertake. However the shorter hard courses should consider the physical abilities of those doing these courses and avoid the more physically difficult terrain and control sites.

Long distance courses typically have longer legs than the other formats, however a longer leg adds little to a course without offering route choice options. Some considerations for course planners to achieve good long legs are (and what will then face the orienteer):

1. Multiple route choice
 - a. Influenced by climb, vegetation, track and path options for parts of the leg, choice of approach to the control
 - b. Long legs add little to a course if they have minimal route choice
 - c. Offering good route choice options also splits competitors as they choose the variation that suits them best
2. Control placement is to achieve route choice challenge, not necessarily technical difficulty of control. The control is the end point of the leg, and may not in itself be difficult.
3. Age/fitness will affect decision making on routes
 - a. Willingness to climb, go through vegetation etc.
 - b. A leg which provides route choice for some classes may provide none for others
4. Require good map contact for whole leg where possible

However Long Distance courses need to be broken up by having variety provided by

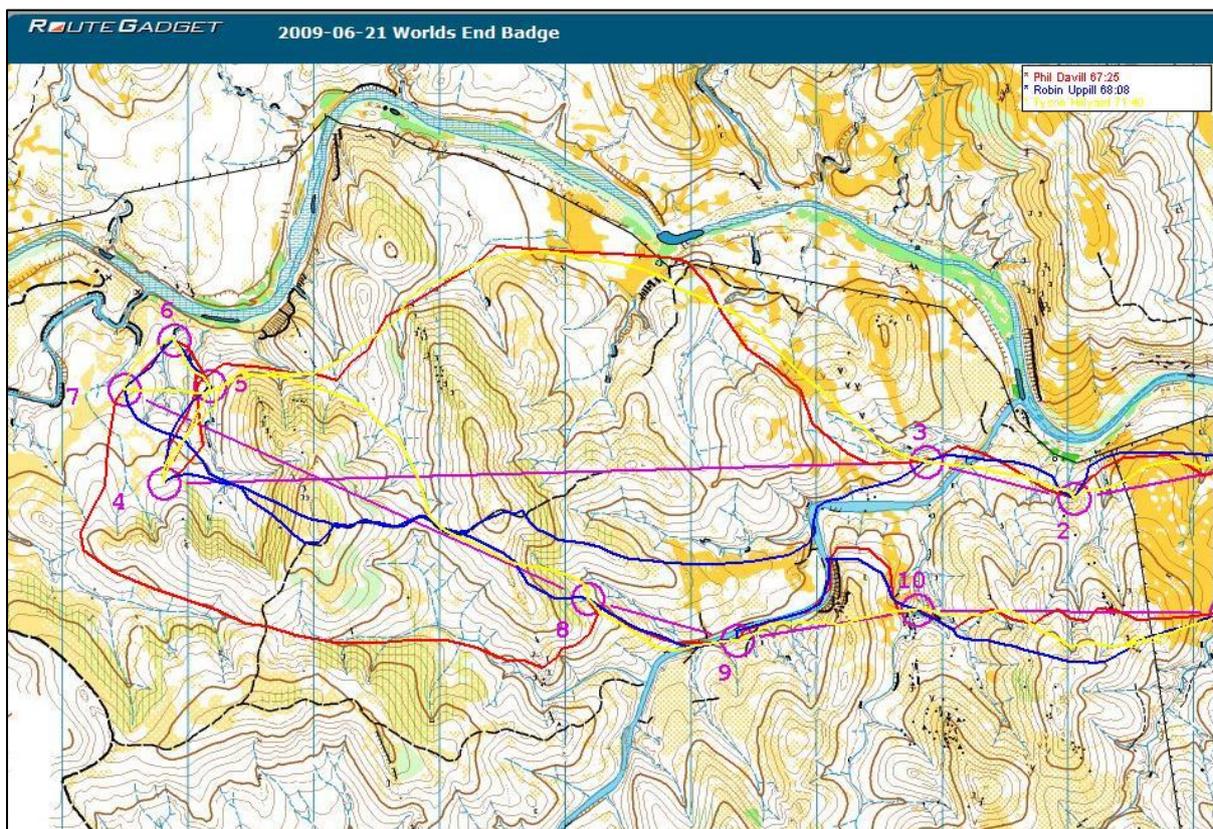
1. More technical sections with shorter legs, more typical of Middle Distance orienteering
2. Hence these sections of a course commonly use more difficult, technical control sites
3. More intense navigation over shorter legs
4. Direction changes at controls, e.g. on consecutive legs, hence competitors need to reorient themselves frequently

Courses that are a “circle” or large loop with many legs of similar distance may not generally offer the technical difficulty and variety required for Long Distance orienteering.

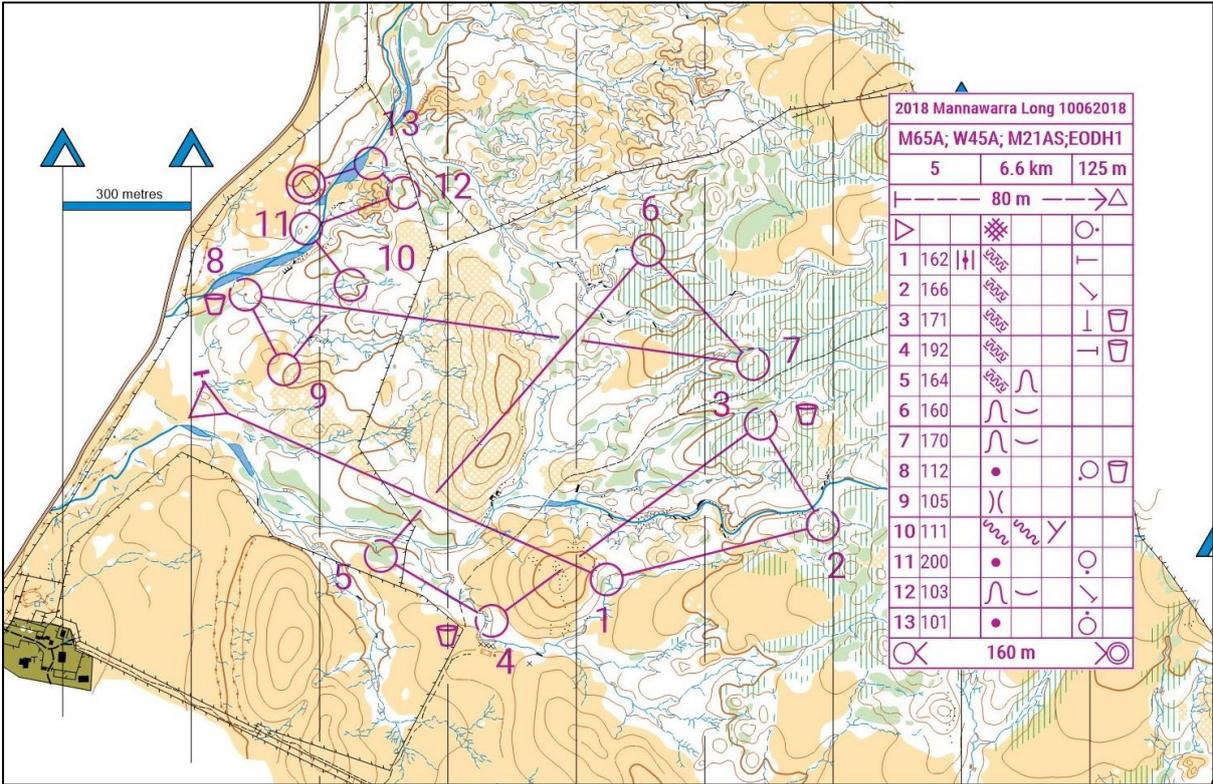
Moderate course can follow the same principles as above but route choice options include more obvious linear features, and control sites are less complex.

The ability to achieve all the elements of Long Distance Orienteering may be influenced by the orienteering map to be used, as can be seen in the example courses

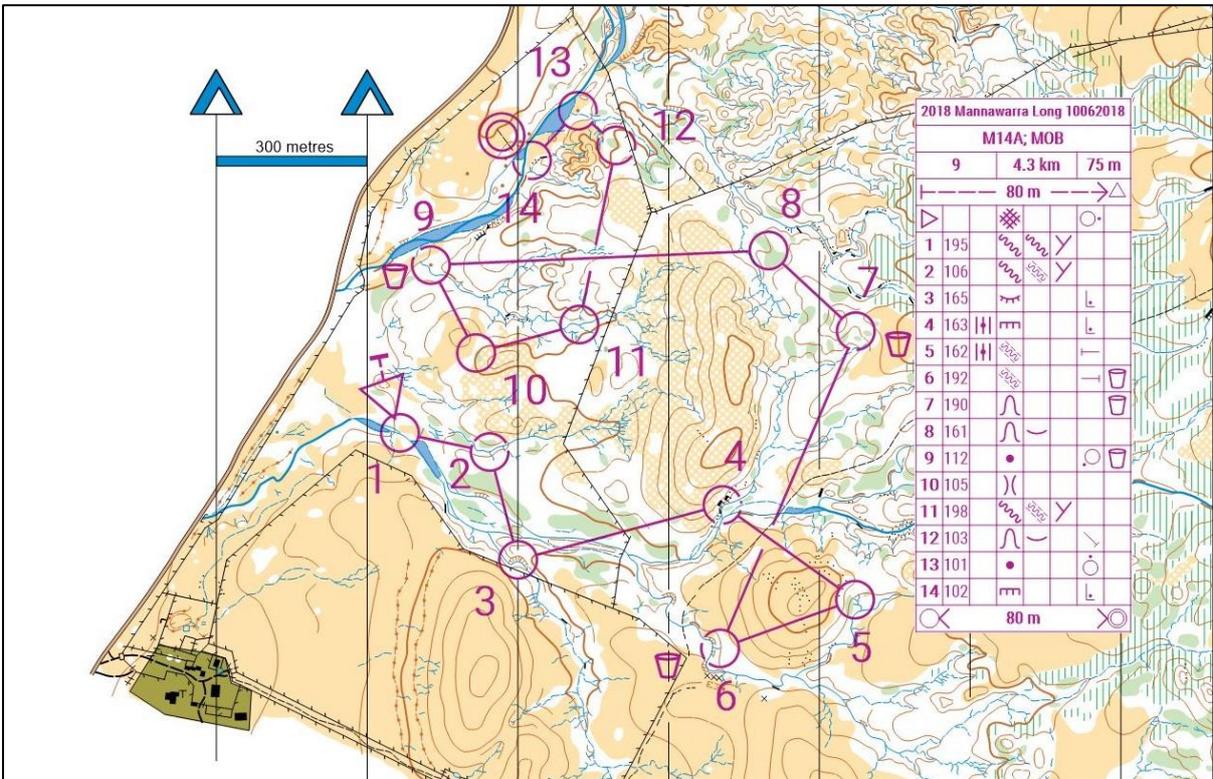
1. Worlds End South - part of Hard course– hilly terrain where climb significantly influences route choice on longer legs (3 – 4 and 7 to 8). On the 3 – 4 the shorter more direct route has more climb and may suit an orienteer who is fit but runs less. These 2 long legs are separated by a section of short legs with direction changes



2. Manawarra - Hard course – route choice on longer legs influenced by green, climb, tracks and the use of the linear features (water courses). Again longer legs separated by shorter technical sections especially at the end of the course.



3. Manawarra - Moderate Course - demonstrates how features of Long Distance orienteering is still applied to moderate navigation



4. Crooked Straight – long hard courses. Having significant longer legs with route choice is more difficult on this map. Hence the course is more technical than many longer courses. However a number of legs of varying length still offer significant route choice to right or left

e.g. 8 to 9 with a flatter longer left route vs a shorter right route with more climb, 14 to 15 similarly, in this case right is flatter, 18 – 19 – do climb early on the further out left route with some paths, or some early and in the middle on a more direct route, or later on the right hand route going back near the start.

