

## 19 October 2019 Oak Point Orienteering Meet Course Setter Notes

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Welcome to Oak Point park in Plano. The park is located in the Rowlett Creek floodplain with the creek and related intermittent marshes and little creeks located in the middle of the park and higher ground to the east and west sides. There is an intensive network of paved biking and dirt hiking trails in the park, so you will never be far from a trail – even when you’re deep in the woods.

Since it has been dry recently, the intermittent marshes and little creeks were dry when I went out to plan the courses. Since the forecast (as of Monday, Oct 14<sup>th</sup>) is for showers on Monday and Tuesday followed by dry weather on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday – I anticipate that these areas will be dry but muddy. (So you should plan on bringing a change of shoes and clothes in case you get wet or muddy.)

The park contains woodlands and open fields. The woodlands include a mix of trees and undergrowth. The rough open fields recently received their once a year or every other year mowing. Since it is late fall, the woods and fields are more runnable than you will typically see during our Score-Orienteering event we hold every May. Thus, the advanced course orienteers will be getting off the trails for most of their points.

The event has the following courses:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Climb</b>	<b>Number controls</b>
White (both A & B)	2.0 km	5 m	12
Yellow (both A & B)	3.4 km	10 m	14
Orange	5.1 km	20 m	16
Brown	3.4 km	5 m	14
Green	4.7 km	15 m	16
Red	6.7 km	25 m	24

The map is a 1:7500 scale with 2.5 m contour interval. The orienteering clue sheet will be printed on the map. Loose clue sheets will also be available. The white and yellow loose clue sheets will also include English text control descriptions as well as the International Orienteering Federation (IOF) symbols.

There is the “Go Ape” adventure zip line in the woods south of the buildings. There are MANY small trails and tree platforms in this area – more than is possible to map. So, focus on the most major trails and tree platforms when you go through this area.

The area used to be farm fields and pastures. There are terraces on the higher land to the east of the park that are mapped as small earth walls. (A terrace is a mound of dirt that follows the contours to stop erosion.) There are also many ruined fences that can range from stretches of still upright fences to stretches of just a wire or two left off the ground.

The park has drinking water fountains that are marked on the map. In addition, we have placed a water point on the south side of the creek that all courses (except White) will go past.

Advanced control bags are hung low, almost touching the ground, in open areas.

There are some hazards you need to watch out for:

The creek bed is quite deep with steep earth banks in most places. You should only cross the creek at one of the bridges.

The rough open fields were mowed to a height of about 6-10 inches and include many stobs (short small stumps of brush, small trees, large weeds), that stick up and are trip hazards.

The ruined fences can be trip hazards. Also, the dirt trails have roots and stumps in them that can also be trip hazards.

The area has lots of scattered poison ivy – so I tried to set the controls to avoid the poison ivy at the controls and along the route choices. (There is at least one route choice on every course and I tried each of what I considered reasonable route choices and adjusted the control locations to avoid being in poison ivy or having to run through thick poison ivy.) However, since the poison ivy is scattered around, there is no guarantee that you won't get into some poison ivy – so all orienteers should wear long pants and some sort of ankle covering, such as gaiters or long socks. Most of the poison ivy is only a foot or two high, and can easily get onto your ankles if you don't keep them covered. In particular, poison ivy likes the partial shade areas at the edge of the woods and in clearings, so be careful when you go through these areas. (FYI, I am highly allergic to poison ivy and always shower after going in the woods using a grease cutting dishwashing liquid, such as Dawn, to reduce/eliminate any poison ivy oil I might have contacted.) Here's a link to some pictures of poison ivy in case you don't know what it looks like.

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/dangerous-plants/poison-ivy>

There will be multiple other people using the park on Saturday, including hikers, bikers, and possibly horse riders in the rough open field to the southeast. Watch out for bikers who can come upon you quickly on the paved path. Yield right of way, or avoid horses, in the unlikely event they are out at the park.

A large group of about 200 people have reserved the Plano Parks & Recs building, including the yard south of the building. This area is out of bounds and is marked with red vertical lines on the map.

Remember that there is a 3-hour time limit. You have to come back and check in – even if you don't complete a course so that we know you are back safe and not out hurt in the park.

But most of all – orient your map to the terrain, pick the best route for you from control to control, and enjoy yourself!