**Course Setting Guidelines from Orienteering USA** (formerly USOF) with notes

[https://orienteeringusa.org/resources/club-development/](https://orienteeringusa.org/resources/club-development/%20)

Look for a subheading "Course Design" for more links (below).

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yBcg0ulKeGxp9e8ab-XxCSpf4FZ-8Egl/view>

This is the concise distillation.

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**General Considerations For Cross Country Orienteering Courses: Design and Set Guidelines**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oujrPRphzRwr5cbdH2K6Cgp1DL97x4o-/view>

This is the good stuff. It explains how to think about course-setting. After you understand this document, the concise guideline above will be more useful.

This was written with national level events in mind. Some of our venues would never be chosen for a national meet and therefore present different concerns. We may have some elite competitors but not so many, therefore the 'winning time' may not be a great guide. The old distance guidelines in the concise version are still helpful.

White: 2-3 km

Yellow: 3-5 km

Orange: 4.5-7 km

Brown: 3-5 km

Green: 4.5-7 km

Red: 6-10 km

The distance given by OCAD and listed on the clue-sheet should be understood as the raw minimal straight-line distance. The actual "optimal" distance will always be more because of climb, vegetation, etc., so if OCAD says a Brown course is 5 km long you ought to shorten it. However. a White course of close to 3 km may be okay if it was flat and stayed on direct trails. Include the climb calculation then consult the table. At most of our venues, if the corrected optimal distance is at the low end of the range, it will be appropriate for advanced courses that take the runner off-trail, through varied terrain and vegetation. Don't worry that the raw OCAD distance (for the clue-sheet) falls below the range. Do worry if it exceeds the range.

In some ways, local events can be more flexible than the guide suggests, such as having courses with shared legs especially when the sharing is between advanced courses with very few runners. Also advanced courses may need a few "stupid" points (shared with easy courses) simply for traffic control, such as a point near a crossing on an otherwise dangerous ravine or deep creek. Don't 'tempt' runners into trying dangerous shortcuts or taking forbidden routes through out of bounds areas. Use a stupid point to steer them around it.

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Additional resources:

**International Specification for Control Descriptions**

[https://orienteering.sport/iof/rules/control-descriptions/](https://orienteering.sport/iof/rules/control-descriptions/%20)

From International Orienteering Federation these are the rules for cluesheets. (Note that IOF is no longer at [www.orienteering.org](http://www.orienteering.org)

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[control description-updated-A4-2019.pdf - OneDrive (live.com)](https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AJNtYrZLRCWuyhc&cid=663580750D0C0BCE&id=663580750D0C0BCE%2118465&parId=663580750D0C0BCE%2118466&o=OneUp)

These are relatively new and may not agree exactly with the CLUE program that we commonly use for creating beginner clue-sheets.

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**CLUE** program for creating cluesheets outside OCAD. Download available from DVOA.

<https://www.dvoa.org/events/evdir/clue/>

Stan Darnell

2/2/23