

Harry Moss 2024 Course Setter Notes

Hello to everyone out there in orienteering land! Yes indeed, it's time once again for Halloween at Harry Moss! There'll be courses for all, so make plans to come on down. As with the previous years, our Halloween Special Friends will be back and looking forward to spooking you again. That means every course will be haunted.

Courses

Course:	Length:	Climb:	Number of controls:
	[km]	[m]	
White	2.81	6	15
Yellow	3.22	18	13
Orange	4.73	27	20
Brown	4.09	15	14
Green	5.54	21	20
Red	6.48	27	23

All six courses will use electronic punches. Each control will be marked by a standard orange and white orienteering marker and will have an electronic punch box. Because this is a small park, several controls are within 50 meters of each other. Be sure to check the control code number before punching the control. The start and finish will be at the south end of Harry Moss near the intersection of Fair Oaks Avenue and Merriman Parkway where we've had the start and finish in the past.

The Maps

The maps will be at a scale of 1:7500 with a 3-meter contour interval. It has been updated in the past few weeks to more accurately depict the trails and vegetation.

Terrain

Most of the park is in the White Rock Creek floodplain and is therefore flat. There is some gently sloping high ground in the northeast part of the park. The only steep slopes that should be encountered on the courses are a few water-carved gullies. A week before the meet, the seasonal watercourses and seasonal marshes are dry. The dry watercourses and ditches often look like dirt trails. If there is

significant rain in the days prior to, or during the day of the meet, then many of these low spots may be full of water or very muddy.

Some of the open areas along the paved White Rock Creek Trail have been kept mowed in the past but were not mowed this summer. Consequently, some of those areas near the bike trail may have tall grass and thicker undergrowth than the orange "open land" symbol suggests. Maybe the Parks Department will decide to mow in the next few days and the orange will be accurate.

Other areas of the park are only mowed once a year and can have grass and other vegetation ranging from ankle to waist high and even head high. The vegetation, particularly in the grasslands, changes year to year. Due to the summer weather, much of the vegetation is shorter or drier than usual, but may still partially conceal small trails.

Hazards

The woods contain some typical hazards for this region including poison ivy, green-briar thorns, and a few rusty barbed wire fences. All orienteers are encouraged to wear long pants and/or gaiters for leg protection. Beware of poison ivy along the trails. In forested areas, it can climb trees and be hanging overhead. Several kinds of trip hazards exist. Lots of debris litters the forest floors in the floodplain area, including dead limbs, vines and washed in trash like bottles and cans. The banks of White Rock Creek are high and steep in most places. The creek should only be crossed at one of the bridges

Horses

There is a horse barn adjacent to the park and a horse training area in the park. These are marked out of bounds. You may also encounter horses along the trails. Please get off the trails and allow the horses to pass safely without spooking them.

Cyclists

White Rock Creek Trail is used by cyclists who often ride fast and can easily come upon you unexpectedly, especially from behind. To be safe, travel alongside the paved path rather than on it, particularly if in a group. If you pause to read your map, DO NOT stand in the bike-path. Don't wander across the bike-path without looking both ways for bicycle traffic as well as for joggers. The Brown, Green and Red courses go through an area of complex mountain bike trails built and maintained by DORBA (Dallas Off Road Bicycle Association). Cyclists occasionally also ride the trails in the wooded area in the eastern part of the park. Please be respectful of any riders you see. Again, don't block the trail and stay alert.

Trails

Heavy weather over the last year blew down a lot of trees and some of them have blocked trails. Beginner courses (White and Yellow) take runners along trails with minimal obstacles. More advanced courses may take runners down trails with more obstructions that need to be climbed over or around. In some cases where storm debris obscures the mapped trail, orange ribbons mark the route or an alternate detour.

Athletic Fields

The Brown, Green and Red courses will go near some soccer fields and baseball fields. Please do not run through any fields where games are underway.

Roads and Bridges

This is a city park, so there are roads around and through the park, but you should NOT cross any major road while orienteering. Walnut Hill Lane is the largest road through the park and is elevated above the floodplain. You can run the courses by going under the Walnut Hill bridges. The ground under these bridges is bare of vegetation and should be runnable unless there is heavy rain during the week before the event. To get to the DORBA portion of their courses, runners on the Brown, Green and Red courses will need to cross White Rock Creek using the bridge on Greenville Avenue. Stay on the east sidewalk of the bridge, and do not cross the traffic lanes. Be vigilant of road traffic, run single file, and be very careful if traffic is present. Runners on the courses that go through the DORBA section will need to cross Walnut Hill by going under the Walnut Hill bridge on the DORBA trail or over Walnut Hill by using the paved bike trail on the western border of the DORBA area.

Special Features

Special man-made features are represented by an "X" or "O" on the map and clue sheets. An "X" can mean a sign, bench, picnic table, pole, post, mountain bike ramp, guy wire anchor point, or traffic barrel. An "O" can designate a pipe or post several inches in diameter or a piece of concrete conduit several feet in diameter. A blue 'X' represents a manhole set in concrete which can protrude above the ground a few inches or a few feet. Runners can expect to encounter other special features that are not designated by an "X" or "O". Runners will see these Special Features at random locations along the trails and not necessarily at a control. They are just there to enhance the Halloween at Harry's experience!

Major Construction Areas

The city of Dallas has completed installing a new paved bike-path, an extension of the Lake Highlands Trail. It is similar to the White Rock Trail that runs by our start area. This new trail starts near our start area, runs northeast under the Walnut Hill bridge and then east to Arborside Drive, the street that forms the eastern boundary of Harry Moss Park. As with the older bike path, runners should be alert along this bike path, especially near the Walnut Hill bridge where there is a blind curve.

In closing, remember while on the trails of Harry Moss,

Orienteer with care

while you are out there.

For the evil spirits,

they are everywhere!

Hope everyone has a safe and fun run, finds the courses challenging but not overwhelming, and enjoys Halloween at Harry Moss.

Stan Darnell Course Setter

Wayne Chaffin Assistant Course Setter