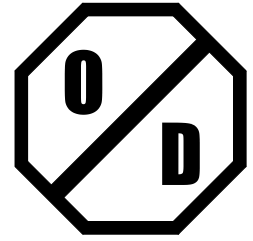**Octavian Droobers**
Orienteering Club
www.Octavian-Droobers.org

OCTAVIAN DROOBERS

PLANNER'S GUIDELINES

February 2020

Barry Elkington

INTRODUCTION

These notes give an overview of the things to remember when planning a Colour Coded Event. The aim is to help you not to make some of the same mistakes as your predecessors.

The Planner's responsibilities are many and varied and these notes can be used as a list against which to tick off each item as it is achieved.

One thing that is not attempted here is to give very much help with planning the courses themselves. Guidance on this is contained in the other sets of notes and guidelines mentioned, in books, and of course from the Controller.

If you don't have a set, then you can download copies of the latest BOF Rules and Guidelines and the BOF Course Planning Handbook from the BOF web site.

The OD web site also contains a set of useful information on planning the various Colour Coded courses, and the requirements for a West Midlands League event. If you have any questions about these then contact Barry Elkington.

Look at other events you attend and think about how to improve on the way things were done and the courses planned there. Also talk to who ever planned and controlled the previous event on the same area. He or she will remember any particular problems from last time, and any useful contacts.

On the day of the event you will have plenty to do, so always allow more time than you think things will take. However, do try and find time to talk to some competitors after they have run and find out their opinion of your courses. Ask them what routes they took (they may have had ideas that you hadn't thought of). Do remember though that the competitors aren't always right, particularly if they have had a bad run.

Thanks are due to Pete Guillaume for many of the items contained in these notes. Any further comments and suggested improvements would be appreciated and incorporated into future editions.

Barry Elkington. May 1990.

SECOND EDITION: Revised with minor amendments in November 1990.

THIRD EDITION: Revised in January 1992 following publication of the 1992 edition of the BOF Rules and Guidelines.

FOURTH EDITION: Revised in January 1993 with minor changes and the names of new committee members.

FIFTH EDITION: Revised in September 1996 with minor changes to reflect the 1997 edition of the BOF Rules and Guidelines and the names of new committee members.

SIXTH EDITION: Updated for MS Word: August 2001

SEVENTH EDITION: Major rewrite in March 2012 to incorporate all the technology and process changes in recent years.
EIGTH EDITION : Minor revisions to change to SI

PLANNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The planner is responsible for:

- Planning the courses

- Creating the Condes file with the courses and control descriptions (sounds technical, but don't worry as there is plenty of help available to do this)

- Getting the maps printed

- Getting the loose control descriptions printed

- Taped routes over fences, across fields, etc.

- Taping any Out of Bounds or dangerous hazards if required

- Sorting out the required SI units and banners

- Putting the controls out on the day

- Collecting them in again afterwards

THE CONTROLLER: There are always plenty of people around who can help you. In particular every event has a Controller appointed whose job it is to make sure everything, particularly the course planning, avoids any problems and adheres to the BOF Rules and Guidelines. Don't hesitate to contact him or her as soon as possible if you have any concerns.

During the planning process the Controller's role is to advise and offer opinions so that you finish up with courses that both you and the competitors will be happy with.

As the day of the event approaches the Controller's role changes to one of checking everything that you have done - maps, control descriptions, control site positions - to ensure there are no mistakes.

THE ORGANISER: Find out as soon as possible who the Organiser is.

WHAT IF? : Something unexpected happens. For example, your car won't start on the Sunday morning. The list could be endless, but at least give some thought to what you might do. Which other club member lives near enough to help you out? Would the Controller (plus a helper) be able to put out all the controls? Think about it beforehand, and above all, don't panic.

GETTING STARTED

TIMETABLE: Draw yourself up a timetable as to when you intend to get each task finished - use the one at the back of these notes as a guide to everything that needs to be done. This should avoid a mad rush the day before the event.

PERMISSIONING: Margaret Willdig does this for you and you should not have to worry about contacting landowners, councils etc. However, you should talk to Margaret to understand any Out-of-Bounds restrictions, sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), what times you may go in the wood to do the planning, and who holds the keys to any gates.

THE MAP: Contact the holder of the club's OCAD map file of the area (probably Bruce Bryant or Mike Hampton) and get hold of a copy.

CONDES: This is the software that enables you to produce the courses and the control descriptions. The club has a licence for this, so you will need to get the club licence key from Barry Elkington and then download and install the software from the Condes web site (`www.condes.net`), which also has some videos introducing you to how to use it. Several club members are very familiar with using this software and will give help and advice as required.

VISIT THE AREA: Take a trip to the area with the map and just walk around to get a general feeling of the place. Think about what the runnability is like, and where the best parts of the area are. Mark on the map any nice control sites you come across, and any to avoid. This should give you enough to return home and start the planning process.

START AND FINISH LOCATION: You will need to agree with the Organiser where the car park is going to be before you choose the start and finish location. Ideally these should both be close to the car park, but if you have to compromise it is better to have a long walk to the start, and the finish near the car park rather than vice-versa. When you are visiting the area, preferably with the Organiser and Controller, make drawings of the start and finish so that you can remember what layout you have decided upon.

PLANNING THE COURSES

ESSENTIAL READING:
The BOF Rules and "Appendix B: Course Planning" from the BOF web site.
Barry Elkington's "Course Planning Guides" from the Planner's section of the OD web site.
"Planning Colour Coded Courses for the West Midlands League", also on the OD web site.

FIRST DECISIONS: A good starting point is to talk to the Controller.

Decide which courses are needed - colour and approximate length. It is usual at OD events to provide the full range of courses that are needed for a West Midlands League event - White, Yellow, Orange, Light Green, Short Green, Green, Blue and Brown. (If there is a String Course is handled separately and is not your responsibility).

On some of the OD areas it isn't possible to plan a Brown course without a lot of repetition, in which case it is better to stop at the Blue and advertise this fact in the pre-event information.
You should always try and plan a White course because the children (and their parents) like it.

A summary of the range of lengths for each colour is in the West Midlands League document, and you should study the results of previous events held on the area (or one similar if you are lucky enough to be planning on a new one) in order to decide which end of the range you should be. Calculate the approximate course lengths you will need and make sure the Controller is happy with them.

ARMCHAIR PLANNING: A good way to start is to plan the easiest and shortest courses first and then work outwards. This ensures that the start and finish are in a suitable position for the technically easy courses. The Course Planning Guides provide details of suitable control sites, route choices, etc. for each course. On the longer courses plan good long legs first and then join them up with shorter legs. Courses of the right length and technical difficulty are the objective at this stage. The exact location of the controls can be adjusted later on.

Start by roughly sketching the courses on a printed copy of the map. Then, once you are reasonably happy with them, put them into Condes. At this stage it is important to let the Controller see your outline courses to ensure that you are on the right lines. An hour spent here could save many hours of wasted work later on.

HINTS ON GOOD COURSE PLANNING:
- Have legs of different lengths for technically difficult courses.
- Have plenty of changes of direction between legs.
- Avoid dog-legs - not just the obvious ones, you also need to consider the routes a competitor might take.
- Try to offer route choices - path versus straight line, long contour versus short climb.
- Avoid courses approaching the same control from opposite directions.
- Arrange for the feature to be seen before the flag where possible.
- Avoid bingo controls - pits in bracken, boulders in fight.

- Never have similar looking control sites within 60m of each other.

- Avoid fight - nobody likes it.

- Never place a control site in a dubious area of the map.

- Don't tempt competitors to cheat by crossing out-of-bounds areas.

COURSE LENGTHS AND CLIMB: The length of the course is the straight line distance from the start, through each control, and including the run-in to the finish. However, if a competitor could not possibly follow the straight line route (e.g. because of an out-of-bounds area or a lake) then measure round these obstacles.

The climb on the course is that which would have to be done when following the straight line route along which the length of the course was measured.

Courses that have more then 29 controls may not be suitable for competitors with older or hired SI cards and are best avoided. If you need a course with more controls, you will need to get the planner to obtain suitable SI cards for hire at the event.

MARKING THE CONTROL SITES: When you have armchair planned your courses go out to the woods and use half-inch PVC tape to mark the control sites. Use a colour that is easy to see (such as bright blue), and make them easy to see by attaching them so as to leave a tail rather than just a ring round a branch. Make a note of the position of the tape e.g. ground level, eye level, on the holly bush; and what the control description will be. This will form the basis of your 'controls list', which is essential when it comes to later checking.

At this point you may find some intended control sites are unsuitable, requiring selection of another site nearby, or possibly a return to the armchair for a rethink and a return to the woods at a later date.

MAP CORRECTIONS: When you are out checking the control sites look out for any changes to the area which will need to be passed on to the mapper so that he can make corrections to the map. However, there is no need to mark on all the minor seasonal paths as these make the map cluttered and confusing and can actually make the orienteering more difficult. Don't expect the map to be perfect. Areas change all the time, so just worry about the major changes.

TAPED ROUTES: These may be needed for certain compulsory routes, at crossing points, or to indicate Out-of-Bounds or dangerous areas. Mark these on your map as you are checking the control sites.

ALLOCATING CONTROL CODES: Find out what control codes are available from the equipment officer (Graham Urquhart). Control codes should be allocated to control sites in such a way that the competitor is unlikely to mispunch by mistake, and that finding one control code does not help find another.

- Controls close together on the ground should have very different control codes - e.g. 134 & 168, not 134 & 143.
- Do not have a sequence of numbers on one course.
- Do not allocate consecutive numbers, or all those ending in the same digit, into one block of forest.

There is normally only control unit needed at any control site. However, you may want to put two units at the last control site if it is common to all the courses, in which case you need to use one of the control codes for which the club has two units. This is generally not required when touch free punching is enabled unless the expected number of punches at a site is over 400.

CONTROLLER'S CHECK: When you have decided on all your courses and tagged all the control sites send the Controller the OCAD map file and your Condes file.
The Controller will then check all the control sites to ensure the tags are in the right place. He can also provide a second opinion on the courses, pointing out if there are areas where they might be improved. (The Controller should make it clear whether any comments are merely suggestions for your consideration, or whether they are requirements, which must be complied with. In cases of disagreement over matters of compliance with the rules, fairness and safety, the views of the Controller should generally prevail.)

Following the Controller's check you should make any revisions that are felt necessary and repeat the process until you are both happy with all of the courses, the control descriptions, and the locations of the control sites.

USEFUL HINTS:

- If you get stuck with the planning put the maps away for a few days and come back to it with a fresh mind.

- The Condes files generated during the planning process should always have version numbers and be dated so that you don't accidentally go back and use the wrong file. It also means that when you are talking to the Controller you are both looking at the same version of the courses.

- If you move or discard any control sites, make sure that you remove the old tag. If you don't then you can be sure that a competitor will find it and assume that the control has been stolen.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE EVENT

EQUIPMENT: Make a list of all the equipment you need and tick it off as you acquire it - the list at the back of these notes forms a good starting point.

Contact the club equipment officers (Graham & Liz Urquhart) to make sure that they have everything you need. Arrange to collect it a couple of weeks before the event so that there is time to check it over and sort out any problems, mend things, etc. Controls will be set to the right time FOR THE EVENT when issued, taking summer time into account

INFORMATION FOR THE ORGANISER: The Organiser will need the following information to make the signs for the registration area and create the event information sheet that is handed out when competitors arrive. For each course its colour, length, climb, number of controls, and if it is a two part course with the maps printed back to back. The sooner you can give this to him, or her, the better.

INFORMATION FOR THE RESULTS TEAM: The Results Lea will need the course details exported from Condes as IOF XML in order to create the event in the results system. This should be emails as soon as the courses are final. The sooner you can give this to him, or her, the better.

RISK ASSESSMENT: You will need to help the Organiser complete this document before the event takes place to make sure you have reviewed the safety aspects of the event with regard to the course and the competition area. For example: road crossings, dangerous crags, rivers or ponds. Outline Risk Assessment Forms can be found on the OD website, but in every case the Organiser should personalise it for the specific event they are responsible for.

PHYSICAL THINGS TO GET TO THE ORGANISER: Make arrangements to get the maps and loose control descriptions to the Organiser, preferably a couple of days before the event.

PRODUCING THE MAPS and CONTROL DESCRIPTIONS

MAPS: Use the OCAD map as the base for the Condes file. As well as the courses you will need to put on any Out-of-Bounds areas, crossing points, taped routes, etc.
Also, divert the straight lines to go round uncrossable areas (out-of-bounds, lakes, etc).

CONTROL DESCRIPTIONS: These are your responsibility and are covered in detail in Rule 8 and Appendix 1 of the BOF Rules and Guidelines. There are standards for the control descriptions and you will automatically get most of this correct if you use Condes for planning the courses. The choice of using text or pictorial descriptions is usually left to the Planner.

Top line = COLOUR
2nd line = length, climb and number of controls (climb can be ignored if it is insignificant).

The top description line states the location of the Start banner.

Each control description line then consists of:

Control number, control code, control description.

and each control description =

- Which feature if there is more than one feature of the same type in the circle e.g. West pit.
- Main feature on which the control is sited, as represented on the map.
- Dimension of feature if required e.g. 10m x 20m.
- Position on feature if required e.g. east corner.
So, for example, valid control descriptions are:

Middle crag foot.
West clearing, east edge.
Large depression, 10m x 10m.

Additional instructions can be included in the control descriptions. e.g. use marked crossing point; take care crossing road; follow taped route.

The final description line gives the nature of the route from the final control to the Finish.

At the bottom put the course closing time, and that everyone should report to the Finish, even if they retire.

The Controller will want to check the control descriptions once they are finalised to ensure there are no mistakes. Do not print any loose control descriptions until after the Controller has checked them.

Decide how many maps of each course are needed after talking to the club fixtures secretary (Bob Brandon) or Chairman (Liz Phillips) to find out expected numbers at the event. If you are uncertain, then play safe and err slightly on the high side.

BANNERS AND SI UNITS

PUTTING OUT BANNERS AND SI UNITS: If you are walking round a typical OD area then you may only be able to put out ten to twelve controls per hour. You should plan to complete putting out the controls at least an hour before the first start time so that you have a good safety margin and the Controller has time to finish checking them. This usually means that you will either have to put some of the controls out the day before (if the area is suitable), or get someone to help you on the day of the event.

Agree with the Controller what time and in which order you are going to put out the controls. Once this is agreed it is vital that you adhere to it, as otherwise the Controller may not be able to check them all.

All SI units (including Start, finish, Check and Clear) must be cleared by the planner before the event, using a purple SI Clear Backup card.

Before the event sort out the SI units into the sequence they will be put out in and put them into groups. This will save a lot of time on the day and should ensure you put out the correct number of controls.

PLACEMENT AND VISIBILITY OF THE BANNER: The rule is that the banner should be clearly visible once the correct part of the feature has been found.

Do not hide the controls!

A good rule of thumb is that either the feature or the banner should be visible when within 10% of the distance from the nearest sensible attack point. i.e. if the attack point is 100m away, either the feature or banner must be visible if you are within 10 metres of it. This is particularly true of pits and small depressions, and don't put the banners in the bottom of these even if the banner is visible. Early competitors will soon flatten the banners (accidentally of course) turning them into bingo controls.

Each control should be placed on a stake, the banner and a backup pin punch hung from the hook on the stake. The control must be punched either now or at a later check before the event starts to turn it on. This can be done up to 12 hours before the end of the event.

TAPE FROM THE LAST CONTROL(S) TO THE FINISH: This should be the Organiser's responsibility once you have told him what you want - as little as is needed to make sure people go where you want them to.

MISSING BANNERS/SI UNITS: Unfortunately, this sometimes happens during an event. Make sure you have a supply of SI units, stakes, pin punches and banners. To put out a replacement control, tape over where the number would be and write the missing number on the tape as a temporary replacement.

You should use gripples to tie vulnerable controls to solid objects if this is necessary. The gripple wire passes through the small hole away from the punching are of the control and passes down

through the stake. If you are in an area noted for banner stealing then try and persuade one or two people to act as a patrol around the woods, especially towards the end of the event.

COLLECTING THEM IN AGAIN AFTERWARDS: Mark up three or four maps beforehand with groups of controls close together, each control appearing on one of the maps. When the controls need collecting, give each collector a map and ask him or her just to bring in just those banners indicated on his or her map. (Also remind them to collect the bits of PVC tape at the same time.) This should enable you to get all the controls in very quickly.

ON THE DAY

FOOD AND CLOTHING: This will be a long day. Make sure that you have plenty of food, hot drinks and warm clothes.

PUTTING THE BANNERS AND SI UNITS OUT: Controls should be vertical, with the banners hung over the top so that the cane comes up the middle.

There is normally only one SI unit needed at any control site.

It is also usual to have two Start and two Finish controls in case one fails.

You will need to pass the Clear and Check boxes and stakes you have prepared to the Organiser to place before the Start.

ALL CONTROLS MAP: Provide one of these for the download tent. This will help if any problems arise with competitors who have mispunched, as they can be shown which control they actually found.

TAPES: Put out any tapes needed for marked routes, at crossing points, or to indicate Out-of-Bounds or dangerous areas.

START THE EVENT: Once both yourself and the Controller are happy that all the controls are out you should confirm with the Organiser that you are now happy for the event to proceed. No one should have been allowed to start before you have done this.

You (or an assistant) should then remain in contact with the Organiser and finish officials for the duration of the event to handle any problems, e.g. controls reported missing; and to ask competitors what they thought of the courses.

MISSING BANNERS/SI UNITS: Unfortunately this sometimes happens during an event. Make sure you have a supply of spare SI units, stakes, pin punches and banners. To put out a replacement control, tape over where the number is and write the missing number on the tape as a temporary replacement. Let the results team know the number of the control used and the number of the control it replaces.

COLLECTING CONTROLS: Assuming you have marked up three or four maps beforehand when the controls need collecting, give each collector a map and ask him or her just to bring in just those banners on his or her map. (Also remind them to collect the bits of PVC tape at the same time.) This should enable you to get all the controls in very quickly.

Check that all the banners and SI units have been collected by laying them out in order. It is surprising how easy it is for one of the control collectors to miss or drop one.

All the controls must be turned off using the purple "Service Off" SI card when they have all been collected in and checked.

Also check that any tapes used for marked routes, at crossing points, or to indicate Out-of-Bounds or dangerous areas, have been collected.

AFTER THE EVENT

PLANNER'S COMMENTS: Please write these very soon after the event (some people even write part of it beforehand) and get them to the Organiser as soon as possible as this helps with speedy publication on the web site.

PLANNER'S EXPENSES: Preferably get these from the Organiser on the day of the event or soon after. If you fail, then go cap-in-hand to the club treasurer.

RETURN EQUIPMENT: Clean and sort the equipment and arrange to return it to the equipment officer as soon as possible after the event, along with a note of what has been broken, lost and stolen.

PLANNER'S LIST OF EQUIPMENT

- Latest versions of the relevant BOF Rules and Guidelines
- Barry Elkington's "Course Planning Guides"
- "Planning Colour Coded Courses for the West Midlands League"
- OCAD map file of the area
- Condes software
- Blue 1/2 inch PVC tape
- SI units (including spares)
- Banners (including spares)
- Control Stakes (including spares)
- Pin Punches (including spares)
- String, scissors, selotape
- White electrical tape and thick black pen
- Stakes and Tape for Out-of-Bounds areas

PLANNER'S PRE-EVENT TIMETABLE

- Understand land access restrictions.

- Get copy of the OCAD map file from the mapper.

- Install Condes on your PC.

- Visit the area.

- Agree start and finish locations with the Organiser.

- Read appropriate parts of the BOF Rules and Guidelines and OD Planning documents.

- Decide what colour courses will be provided and agree approximate course lengths with the Controller.

- Armchair plan the courses.

- Review armchair planned courses with the Controller.

- Visit the area to tape control sites.

- Talk to the mapper about any map updates needed.

- Revise courses and revisit the area as appropriate.

- Agree final courses and control descriptions with the Controller.

- Finalise the courses in Condes.

- Produce master copies of the control descriptions.

- Export IOF XML file of the courses from Condes and email to results lead to create the event

- Get all these checked by the Controller.

- Give course information to the Organiser.

- Get equipment from the equipment officer.

- Clear the backup on all controls including Start, Finish, Check and Clear using purple ecard

- Sort SI units into sequence ready for the event.

- Sort banners, pin punches and stakes into plastic bags ready for the event

- Prepare anti-vandal control kit.

- Order maps and loose control descriptions from the printer

- Collect maps and loose control descriptions from the printers.

- Give control descriptions and maps to the Organiser.

- Give Check and Clear boxes and stakes to the organiser

- Mark up maps for control collectors.

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