

# Know your sport: Colour-coded Courses + Technical Difficulty

Courses at orienteering events combine physical activity with navigational challenge. To cater for all ages and abilities can be quite difficult or confusing. Guidance is therefore provided to try and give consistency enabling competitors to identify the correct course when entering.

The most common way is to use the nationally defined 'colour-coded' courses which provide a range of different lengths (for different fitness levels) and different 'technical difficulty' (TD). The general criteria are shown below but you will find some variations including such courses as 'Red', 'Short Blue' or 'Short Brown' at events with a large number of courses or where the area is restricted.

Examples of how 'technical difficulty' is determined is shown on the right. It is not always easy to meet all the criteria. Full details are available in documents on the British Orienteering website. See:

[http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/images/uploaded/downloads/events\\_appendix\\_b\\_2014.pdf](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/images/uploaded/downloads/events_appendix_b_2014.pdf)

## Guidance on the typical courses

		Course Length				
		Extra Short (XS) 0-2.5 Km	Short (S) 2.6-5.0 Km	Medium (M) 5.1-7.5 Km	Long (L) 7.6-10.0 Km	Extra Long (XL) 10.1 + Km
Technical Difficulty (TD)	1: Very Easy	↔	White			
	2: Easy		↔	Yellow		
	3: Medium		↔	Orange	↔	
	4: Hard	↔	↔	Light Green		
	5: Very Hard		↔	↔	↔	↔
			Green	Blue	Brown	Black

**White Courses (XS)** are very easy with all controls on paths. They are mainly used by 6-10 year olds and family groups.

**Yellow Courses (XS-S)** use simple linear features like paths, walls and streams. They are mainly used by under 12's and family groups.

**Orange Courses (S-M)** progress to basic use of the compass and route choice. They are ideal for novice adults or experienced youngsters. Long Orange courses are used mainly by novice adults wanting a longer run.

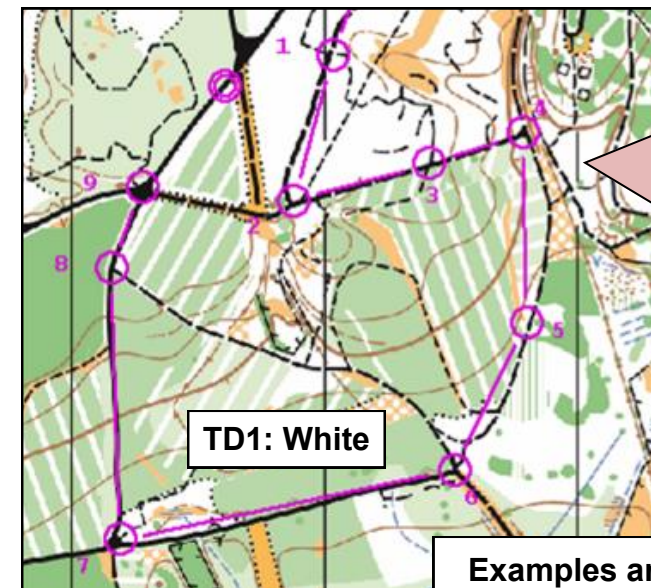
**Light Green Courses (S)** are ideal for improvers as the navigational difficulty begins to increase and uses simple contours and 'point' features.

**Green Courses (S)** are used mostly by experienced under 18's and adults wanting a short but challenging course with a very hard navigational difficulty.

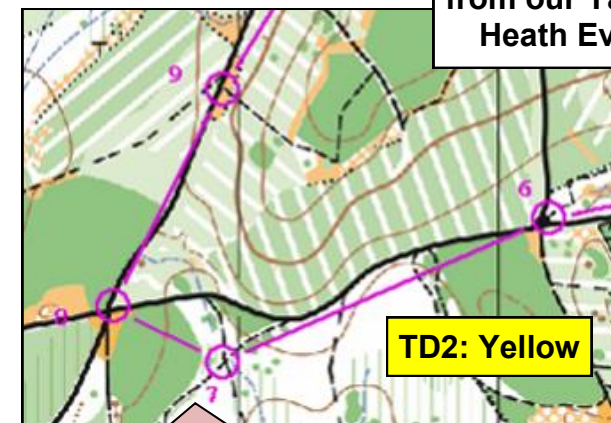
**Blue Courses (M)** are a longer, more physically demanding course in comparison to the green. The distances are more varied between controls and the course attracts experienced orienteers.

**Brown (L) and Black Courses (XL)** are very physically demanding and have a very hard navigational difficulty. They are for experienced orienteers only.

## Technical Difficulty: Some examples



**Technical Difficulty 1:** The route is all along tracks and paths with no route choice. The controls are reasonably close together with a control at every Decision Point. Controls are at junctions, crossings or bends on paths or tracks. Features on paths (e.g. bridges, gates) can be used to give variety to the control descriptions. The banner and punches at a control are sited in the direction of the next control.

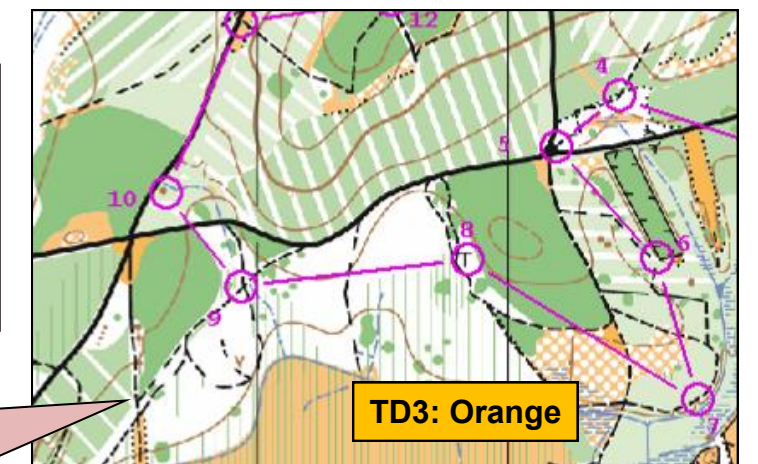


Examples are from our Yateley Heath Event

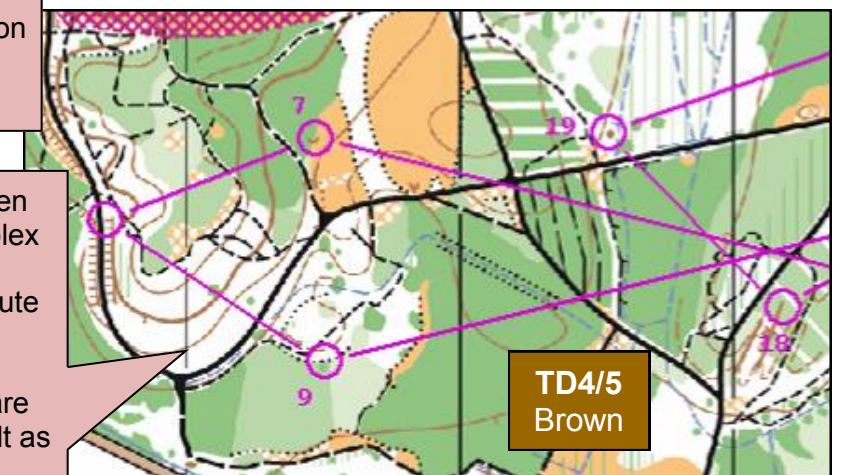
**Technical Difficulty 2:** The route can follow obvious line features such as tracks, paths, fences, walls and rivers. A control is not needed at every Decision Point, but there are at most two Decision Points per leg. Some controls may be on point features visible from the line feature.



**White Control 7 / Yellow Control 6:** a major path junction easily found by juniors



**Technical Difficulty 3:** Some controls are not on line features but a route on a line feature to an obvious attack point should be possible. There are simple route choices provided. Controls are on any line feature but also easily found prominent point or contour features.



**Technical Difficulty 4/5:** TD5 is not often found in local forests as it requires complex navigation on intricate contour features. Both TD4 and TD5 provide significant route choice with TD5 giving changes in techniques—long legs followed by short legs in complex terrain. Courses which are supposed to be TD5 are made as difficult as possible in the area being used

**TD4/5 Brown**