

PERMANENT ORIENTEERING COURSE

OAK MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

WHAT IS ORIENTEERING?

The skill which enables a person to navigate with a map. In the competitive sport the winner is the person who finishes in the shortest time. However, many orienteers are more interested in enjoying the outdoors, and walk at their own speed. There are orienteers 2 years old and orienteers 80 years old.

WHAT DO I DO IF I GET LOST?

First of all, you might think you are lost, but you are not really. Wherever you are, you can get back to the road in about 10 minutes, and wherever you are on the road you can get back to your car in about another 10 minutes.

How do you do it?

When you decide you are lost, head downhill, or if you have a compass, head north. This will bring you to a paved road in less than 10 minutes. If you do not recognize your location on the road, take a right turn and walk until you recognize some feature. You will be back to your car or the park office in a very short time.

HOW DIFFICULT IS THIS COURSE?

This course has been set up so that a complete newcomer can finish in one to two hours at a gentle walking pace. The whole course is on trails, so if you find yourself wandering through the woods, there is probably something wrong. The navigation is easy and should not distract from the pleasant surroundings. However, because Oak Mountain is hilly, there is considerable uphill walking.

THE MAP

The most difficult part of reading an orienteering map is understanding the contours. However, this course can be completed without any knowledge of contours. Pay attention to trails and to trail junctions. For those who have a compass, the vertical lines on the map are north-south lines with the black triangles pointing to magnetic north. As orienteering is an international sport, all maps are in meters.

The scale of this map is 1 : 7,500. This means that 1 cm on the map is 75 meters on the ground (1 inch = 208 yards).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE.

To reach the beginning of the course drive west half-a-mile from the park office until you reach the large car parking area on your right at the beginning of the Peavine Falls Road and a grass field on your left. There is a large sign which says 'Unimproved Mountain Road'. Park your car and walk up the road past the sign. In about 50 meters you will see the first control on your left. The controls are 4x6 wooden posts about 18 inches in height with a small orange and white orienteering sign. Each post is numbered. This control at the start of the yellow park trail and marks the beginning of the course.

For the rest of the course just follow the directions:

1 -Trail junction and road.

1 to 2 -Walk steeply uphill on the yellow trail and continue over a small knoll to a saddle.

2 to 3 -Leave the yellow trail and take the trail (not well traveled) which goes uphill and along the ridge. The trail is not very often used and is difficult to follow at times. Just follow the ridge to the SW. After a while the ridge will split. The control is in the middle of the split.

3 to 4 - follow the ridge to the right until it intersects the horse trail. Turn left onto the horse trail and follow it downhill. You will find the control in the saddle where the trail will make a turn to the right before proceeding up a steep hill.

4 to 5 -Follow the horse trail uphill. Turn to the left and follow the ridge to the NE. The horse trail will then leave the ridge and travel down to a saddle where #5 is located. Here in the saddle the horse trail and the yellow park trail unite and continue uphill to the SE.

5 to 6 -Continue uphill on the combined horse trail and yellow trail. Keep on the ridge to the junction with the green trail.

6 to 7 -Turn left on the green trail and proceed downhill to #7

7 to 8 -Continue downhill on the green trail to the junction with the road.

We hope you enjoyed this course.

This course was designed and set by Iain Wilson as an Eagle Scout project with the help of Graeme Wilson in 1991.

Control #7 was replaced in 2001 by Scout Troop 142 from Decatur, AL

If you would like more information on orienteering please contact:

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