

BEYOND THE BASICS: USING THE COMPASS EFFECTIVELY

Compass is an AID to orienteering (map reading is the most important part).

Two different types of compass used for orienteering (based on personal preference):

1. Standard baseplate compass (protractor compass)
2. Thumb compass

Holding the compass correctly:

1. Horizontal.
2. At waist height.
3. Let needle settle a few moments before looking at it.
4. What could affect the mag needle: jewelry, belt buckle, power lines, cars.

Compass is used to:

1. Keep the map oriented.
2. Take a bearing from the map.
3. Follow a safety bearing.
4. Check direction of linear features you see in the field.
5. Measure distance on the map (using the mm scale or a personal scale).

Using the compass WHILE MOVING:

1. Progress from standing -> walking -> jogging -> running.
2. Precision compass: accurate bearing, slower speed, from attack pt to control.
3. Rough compass: accurate bearing, faster speed, control to attack point.
4. "Running on the needle".

When the compass is important:

1. Keeping the map oriented.
2. Featureless terrain.
3. Terrain with parallel features.
4. Terrain that all looks the same.
5. When visibility is reduced.
6. When there are so many details that reading them all would slow you down.

What to practice (just chose 2 or 3 things to concentrate on at today's event):

1. Use compass to keep the map oriented ALL THE TIME.
2. Hold the compass correctly when you are using it.
3. Know the safety bearing before you start.
4. Use compass to check the direction of any linear feature that you follow, or cross, (to make sure it is the one you think it is).
5. Try precision compass at least once.
6. Try rough compass at least once.
7. Advanced: try preparing map & compass for next leg, once control is seen.

