

## OST courses for 2021

After consultation with the Tasmanian orienteering community, the OT Board has decided to implement changes to the way OST courses are structured, and OST points calculated. Currently, OST points are allocated on an age class basis. From 2021 onwards, this model will be changed to a course-based structure, which allows any orienteer to run any course (subject to their navigation and fitness levels), and still accumulate OST points.

State Long, Middle and Sprint Championships and the Schools Championships will continue to be age-class based (see table below), and will not be included in the OST series.

A similar system operated until 2015. Previous OT guidelines stated that for OST events: 'Competitors [are] free to run whichever course they like regardless of age.'

There will, however, be some crucial differences to the model that operated until 2015. These differences are:

- The number of easy navigation courses will decrease from two to one.
- The number of moderate navigation course will increase from one to two.
- The number of hard navigation courses will decrease from six to five.
- Courses 1 and 2 will cater to a larger number of orienteers at the championship level (see table below).
- The current Course 5, on which the bulk of orienteers currently compete, will be split into a new Course 4 and new Course 5. These courses will be similar in length and navigational difficulty.
- In keeping with the prestige and high standards of championship events, athletes may need to compete on a more difficult course than the OST course they have been running if they wish to be eligible for an award in an A class (see table below). Note that B age classes are only offered in M/W12 and M/W14 age classes. Adults or adolescents wishing to run an easier or shorter course than their nominal age class should choose the appropriate Open A, B or C class.
- W18 and M18 classes are being re-introduced for championship events, in line with current Orienteering Australia guidelines. This allows for a more gradual transition to M/W20 and the junior elite category at national events.
- For the purposes of overall OST calculations, there will be an **overall male** and **overall female** winner for each course (in practice, Course 1 will most likely have only an overall male winner) and a **handicap** winner for each course.
- The handicap winner will be determined using the kilometre rate weighting already used to calculate Excellence Points. Note that this handicap is a constant throughout the year (i.e. based on age and sex) rather than a variable (i.e. based on recent performance). The handicap results will be calculated after each event and published on Eventor, alongside the overall male and female winner. Each course will therefore have three sets of results associated with it: Male, Female and Handicap.
- The exception to this will be the easiest course (a combination of the current Course 8 and 9) which will be a non-competitive class at OST events (in line with Sport Australia recommendations that sport for those under 13 be participation-focused rather than competition-focused). Shadowing will be allowed and encouraged for

younger or less experience orienteers. More confident young juniors can run the short moderate course (Course 7 - see table below) and be eligible for an OST award.

Table 1 below outlines the new course structure. Times and indicative distances are for a long distance event. Age classes have been grouped to be similar in their kilometre rates (as used in Excellence point calculations). The age classes are to be used for championship events but are indicative only for other OST events. Competitors are free to run whichever course they choose, regardless of age.

Table 2 below contains an analysis of the range of age factors and expected number of people on each course based on entrants from the 2020 Tasmanian Long Distance championship, 2020 Tasmanian Middle Distance championships, and the 2020 OST3 event at Coles Bay.

#### NOTES:

- Courses are not directly comparable to those currently being offered e.g. new Course 2 is intended to be somewhere between existing Courses 2 and 3.
- Work is currently being done on guidelines for setting and controlling moderate courses (Courses 6 and 7) to address some of the issues that have arisen in relation to course difficulty and consistency.
- Some orienteers have expressed concern that people may decide to run an easier course than their championship age class suggests, in order to gain an 'unfair advantage' in the OST points calculations. The Board believes that the risk of this occurring is minimal, and that the principles of fair play will apply. In reality, it is much more common for people to 'run up' on a harder course than to 'be a bandit' on an easier, less challenging course. One of the purposes of the course-based model is to allow people who do not wish to run their nominal age-based course for legitimate reasons – e.g. coming back from illness or injury, or simply not being experienced or confident enough – to do so without prejudice, or organizational headaches.

**Table 1: 2021 OST course structure**

COURSE	TARGET WINNING TIME (min)	NAVIGATION STANDARD	INDICATIVE DISTANCE (km)	SUITABILITY and NOTES	AGE GROUP CLASSES for CHAMPIONSHIPS
1	80 – 90	Hard	10	Experienced orienteers	M21, M20, M35, M40
2	65 – 75	Hard	8	Experienced orienteers	W21, W20, W35 M18, M45, M50, M55
3	55 – 65	Hard	6	Experienced orienteers	W18, W40, W45, W50 M16, M60
4	55 – 60	Hard	5	- Experienced orienteers - Orienteers transitioning from moderate to hard navigation	W16, W55 M65, M70
5	55 – 60	Hard	4.5	- Experienced orienteers - Orienteers transitioning from moderate to hard navigation	W60, W65, W70, W75, W80, WOpenA M75, M80, MOpenA

COURSE	TARGET WINNING TIME (min)	NAVIGATION STANDARD	INDICATIVE DISTANCE (km)	SUITABILITY and NOTES	AGE GROUP CLASSES for CHAMPIONSHIPS
6	45 – 50	Long moderate	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less experienced adults who would normally run the Long course at local events</li> <li>- More experienced M/W 14 competitors</li> <li>- Juniors who aspire to make the schools team in the junior boys or junior girls category.</li> <li>- Adults who prefer moderate navigation courses</li> </ul>	W14, WOpenB M14, MOpenB
7	30 – 40	Short moderate	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less experienced adults who would normally run the Medium course at local events</li> <li>- Juniors in their first year of M/W14</li> <li>- More confident M/W12 competitors</li> </ul>	W12, W14B, WOpenC M12, M14B, MOpenC
8	25 – 30	Easy	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Novice orienteers</li> <li>- Adults who would normally run the Short course at local events</li> <li>- M/W10 competitors</li> <li>- Less confident M/W12 competitors</li> </ul>	W10, W12B M10, M12B

**Table 2: Age factors and expected numbers on each course for the new OST structure**

Course	classes	Age factor	#2020 Long	#2020 Middle	#Coles Bay OST3	Total people	% of total on C1-5
1	M21	1	4	3	4	7	8
	M20	0.95	0	0		10	10
	M35	0.98	1	1		8	10
	M40	0.94	2	6	4		
2	W21	0.81	2	6	3	19	22
	W20	0.75	0	0	0	23	22
	W35	0.77	1	1	0	18	23
	M18	0.9	3	2	1		
	M45	0.89	4	3	3		
	M50	0.83	4	7	7		
	M55	0.77	5	4	4		
3	M16	0.85	5	5	5	18	21
	W18	0.7	1	1	0	25	24
	W40	0.73	0	2	1	21	27
	W45	0.68	3	5	3		
	W50	0.63	6	7	7		
	M60	0.7	3	5	5		
4	W55	0.58	4	5	2	21	25
	M70	0.56	7	8	4	25	24
	M65	0.63	6	9	7	16	21
	W16	0.65	4	3	3		
5	W60	0.53	6	7	5	20	24
	W65	0.48	5	6	3	21	20
	W70	0.43	2	2	2	15	19
	W75	0.38	2	2	2		
	W80	0.33	0	0	0		
	M75	0.49	5	4	3		
	M80	0.42	0	0	0		

As the table indicates, the new structure will result in a much more even split across the courses, relieve congestion across the current Course 5 (now Course 4 and 5) and result in a greater number of orienteers competing in Course 1 and Course 2.