

INTRODUCTION

The history of orienteering begins in the late 19th century in Sweden, where it originated as military training. The actual term "orienteering" was first used in 1886 at the Swedish Military Academy Karlberg and meant the crossing of unknown land with the aid of a map and a compass. The competitive sport began when the first competition was held for Swedish military officers on 28 May 1893 at the yearly games of the Stockholm garrison. The first civilian competition, in Norway on 31 October 1897, was sponsored by the Tjalve Sports Club and held near Oslo. The trail was long by modern standards, at 19.5 km, on which only three controls were placed.

At the end of World War I the first large scale orienteering meeting was organized in 1918 by Major Ernst Killander of Stockholm, Sweden. Then President of the Stockholm Amateur Athletic Association, Killander was a Scouting Movement leader who saw orienteering as an opportunity to arise youth interest in athletics. The meeting was held south of Stockholm in 1919 and was attended by 220 athletes. Killander is credited for coining the Swedish word orientering, from which the word orienteering comes, in publicity leaflets for this meeting. Killander continued to develop the rules and principles of the sport, and today is widely regarded throughout Scandinavia as the "Father of Orienteering".

The sport gained popularity with the development of more reliable compasses in the 1930s. The first international competition between orienteers of Sweden and Norway was held outside Oslo, Norway, in 1932. In 1933, the Swedish compass manufacturer introduced a new compass design. Until the introduction of the thumb compass, the protractor compass would remain the state of the art in the sport. By 1934, over a quarter million Swedes were actively participating in the sport, and orienteering had spread to Finland, Switzerland, the Soviet Union and Hungary. The nations of Finland, Norway and Sweden all established national championships. The Swedish national orienteering society, Svenska Orienteringsförbundet, the first national orienteering society, was founded in 1936.

Following World War II, orienteering spread throughout Europe, and to North America, Oceania, and Asia. This spread was due in part to post-war travels by European orienteers, therefore more military people were using orienteering as part of a training method.

In North America, the first orienteering event took place in the United States, at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, in November 1941. It was organized by Piltti Heiskanen, a visiting teacher from Finland. Swedish orienteer and business man Bjorn Kjellström, who moved to the United States in 1946, had a major influence on the sport there. In 1967, Norwegian Harald Wibye founded the first U.S. orienteering club, the Delaware Valley Orienteering Association, which 30 years later was the largest orienteering club in the United States. In 1971, a group of orienteers led by members of the then four year old Quantico Orienteering Club founded the United States Orienteering Federation.

The Canadian Orienteering Federation was founded in 1967, and the first Canadian national orienteering championship was held at Gatineau Park in Ottawa on August 10, 1968. The only World Championship to be held in North America took place at Harriman State Park, New York, USA, in 1993. In Australia, the first orienteering event was held in 1955.

Eleven countries sent representatives to an international conference in Sandviken, Sweden, in 1949 that aimed to bring more consistent rules and mapping standards to the sport. The Norwegians and Swedes began producing new multi-color maps with cartography designed specifically for orienteering, in the 1950s. The International Orienteering Federation (IOF) was established in 1961. The founding member societies represented the nations of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Finland, Hungary, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. By 1969, the IOF would represent 16 countries, including the first two non-European member societies representing Japan and Canada. 76 different national orienteering federations are member societies of the IOF today.

In 1972 Vladimír Pacl came from Czechoslovakia to Ronzone (Val di Non). He began to spread orienteering among local fans. He is practically the founder of this discipline in Italy, where it collects general appreciation and gratitude among athletes and sports executives.

The first world championships were held in 1966 in Finland. In 1968, the host nation had been Sweden and then the venue is moved outside of Scandinavia in 1970 with the organization of East Germany World championships that were held every two years from 1961 to 2003 and are now held every year.

In 1985 they were organized for the first time outside of Europe, in Australia, while in 1993 they were held in the United States of America and in 2005 in Japan.

With the 2001 World Championships in Tampere you enter into a new era with the use of large screens for the audience, gps-tracking and direct broadcast television, the use of mobile phones.

In 2013, Finland became the first country to have hosted four World Championships (the first in 1966, then in 1979 and 2001).

COMPETITION TYPES

Sprint

Very short races, with winning times in the region of 12-15 mins, often held in city parks and other more urban settings. Map scales are usually 1:5,000 or 1:4,000. Control sites can include benches, litterbins, sculptures, and other objects common to urban parks. The sprint distance may also be held in the forest, when it would be called a "forest sprint" as opposed to an "urban sprint". This distance was pioneered in the late 1990s as an elite event by the Park World Tour organisation who organised an independent "world cup" in park sprint orienteering. In 2001 in Tampere, the IOF included a sprint distance in the orienteering world championships.

Mixed Sprint Relay

At the 2012 IOF General Assembly in Lausanne, Switzerland, a new programme for the World Orienteering Championships was decided on, including the introduction of a new format, the Sprint Relay. The first implementation of Sprint Relay in the World Orienteering Championships will be in 2014 in Italy, after which it will be a permanent format on the programme.

At The World Games 2013 in Cali, Colombia, the current "Mixed Relay" was conducted based on the format of the Sprint Relay.

Long

Classic orienteering involves a race between controls in a preset order. The winner is the person who completes the course in the shortest time. This is called a "cross-country" course as distinct from a score course (see below). Courses are normally designed so that the fastest route is not straightforward to find on the map, or to follow on the ground. The classic race has a typical winning time of 75-90 mins. As of 2007, the IOF have dictated that the "classic" course should be redesignated the "long".

Middle

The middle distance is a shorter cross-country race than the classic (or long), with a winning time in the region of 30 mins and with an emphasis more on fine navigation than route-choice. When races of this distance were run in the mid-late 1990s, they were called "short" races, or "sprint-O". The short distance was introduced as a world championship discipline in 1991. More recently, though the IOF have renamed this distance as "middle".

Relay

A relay race is run by a team of competitors each running a course, and the result is based on the team's total time. Relays usually employ a mass start instead of a staggered start. To reduce competitors following each other, various spreading methods might be used. This is

called "gaffling", which is a Swedish word meaning "forking". The key principle is that every team must run every leg (between each pair of two controls), but not necessarily in the same order. The IOF have introduced the nomenclature to try to clarify the usage of the word "leg". In orienteering usage, leg normally refers to the part of a race between two control points. In relay (non-orienteering) usage, leg refers to the part of a race run by a single team member. The IOF prefer "lap" for this latter term, but despite this, in common parlance, "leg" is used for both terms.

VENUES

Year	Date	Venue
1966	01-02 October	 Fiskars, Finland
1968	28-29 September	 Linköping, Sweden
1970	27-29 September	 Friedrichroda, East Germany
1972	14-16 September	 Stare Splavy (Doksy), Czechoslovakia
1974	20-22 September	  Silkeborg, Denmark (CEE)
1976	24-26 September	  Aviemore, United Kingdom (CEE)
1978	15-17 September	 Kongsberg, Norway
1979	02-04 September	 Tampere, Finland
1981	04-06 September	 Thun, Swiss Confederation
1983	01-04 September	 Zalaegerszeg, Hungary
1985	04-06 September	  Bendigo, Victoria (Australia)
1987	03-05 September	  Gerardmer, France (CEE)
1989	17-20 August	 Skövde, Sweden

1991	21-25 August	 Marianske Lazne, Czechoslovakia
1993	09-14 October	  Harriman, New York (USA)
1995	15-20 August	  Detmold, Germany (EU)
1997	11-16 August	 Grimstad, Norway
1999	01-08 August	  Inverness, United Kingdom (EU)
2001	29 July - 4 August	  Tampere, Finland (EU)
2003	03-09 August	 Rapperswil / Jona, Swiss Confederation
2004	11-19 September	  Västerås, Sweden (EU)
2005	09-15 August	 Aichi, Japan
2006	01-05 August	  Aarhus, Denmark (EU)
2007	18-26 August	 Kiev, Ukraine
2008	10-20 July	  Olomouc, Czech Republic (EU)
2009	16-23 August	  Miskolc, Hungary (EU)
2010	08-15 August	 Trondheim, Norway
2011	13-20 August	  Savoia, France (EU)
2012	14-22 July	 Losanna, Swiss Confederation
2013	06-14 July	  Vuokatti, Finland (EU)

2014	05-12 July	  Lavarone - Asiago, Italy (EU)
2015	01-07 August	  Inverness, United Kingdom (EU)
2016	20-28 August	  Strömstad - Tanum, Sweden (EU)
2017	June-July	  Otepää, Estonia (EU)
