

While you join the call...



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We'll build a group word-cloud

Coaching orienteering

Tom Bray



GBR team at JWOC 2023 opening ceremony

Contents

1. British Performance Programme
2. Being an athlete
3. My reflections on coaching
4. The future

Bonus #1?

Bonus #2?

Don't worry, there are many maps in this presentation



A national governing body has 2 key roles:

1. Development

Get as many people orienteering

2. Performance

Enter a national team to international races

Inspire the next generation

BOF Performance Programme 2024



Level	Name	Age	# athletes	Races	Staff
1	Clubs				
2	Regional Junior Squads x 12	14-20			JROS Volunteers
3	Talent Squads x 3	16-18	55	EYOC	6 volunteer leaders Volunteers
4	Development	19-25 (ish)	26	JWOC WUOC JEC	Tom Bray Volunteers
5	Performance	25+ (ish)	15	WCs x 4 EOC WOC	Emil Wingstedt Andy Kitchin Rachael Handley

BOF Performance Programme



2023 in numbers

45 x L3 athletes

32 x L4 athletes

17 x L5 athletes

16 training camps (L4 & L5)

5 training camps (L3)

8 competitions

22 staff members (L4 & L5)

£110k...income from BO, Sport England, Trimtex (in-kind), Orienteering Foundation

Costs = 53% athlete : 47% BO (not inc. travel & flights)

An athlete pays £400-£1000 per competition + annual leave

- 4 senior competitions per year
- 2 junior competitions per year
- + training camps

Philosophy

- Create opportunities to train
- Create athletes that want **dual careers**
- Create athletes that love orienteering, and want to train 15 hrs/week

If the tide rises, all the boats get higher

Being an athlete



Love orienteering

Philosophy

- Create opportunities to train
- Create athletes that want **dual careers**
- Create athletes that love orienteering, and want to train 15 hrs/week

If the tide rises, all the boats get higher

That feeling of running in terrain, on rails, and spiking a control 😊

You can't just turn up to an international...geeking/prep is key

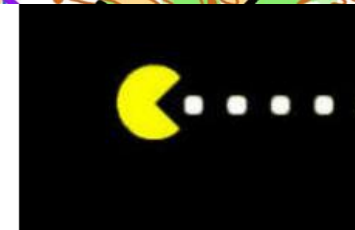
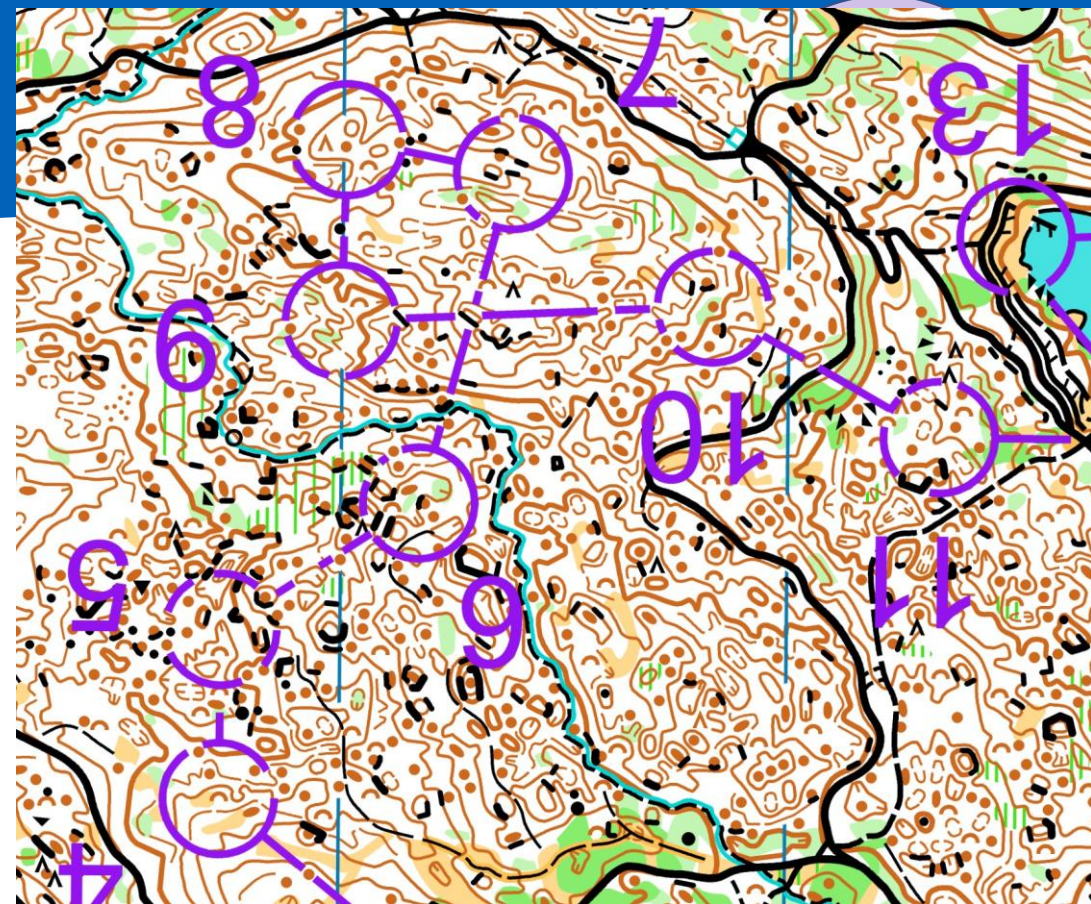
Tactics / game-plan

- 2 simple things you can do
 - Think about in the start box
 - Write on your hand
 - Refocus on mid-race

WOC MIDDLE OUR WINNING PLAN

Feedback from MATTHIAS after the race :

« I had such a good flow, following my tactic : running like PACMAN, picking features by features, a good grip all the way. My plan was to never lose the control, I was going very fast, but all my focus was on being super precise and picking the next feature on the map ! »



Tactics / game-plan

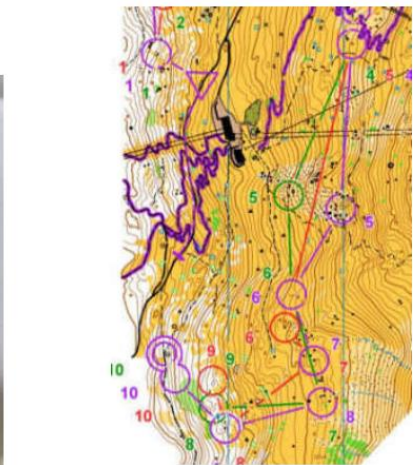
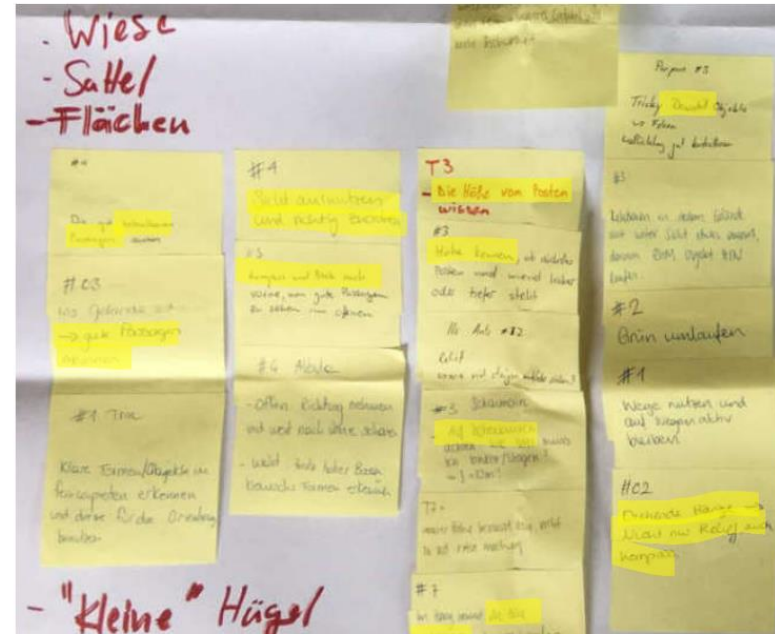
- 2 simple things you can do
 - Think about in the start box
 - Write on your hand
 - Refocus on mid-race

e.g.

“attack point, compass in”

“have a complete route” (sprint)

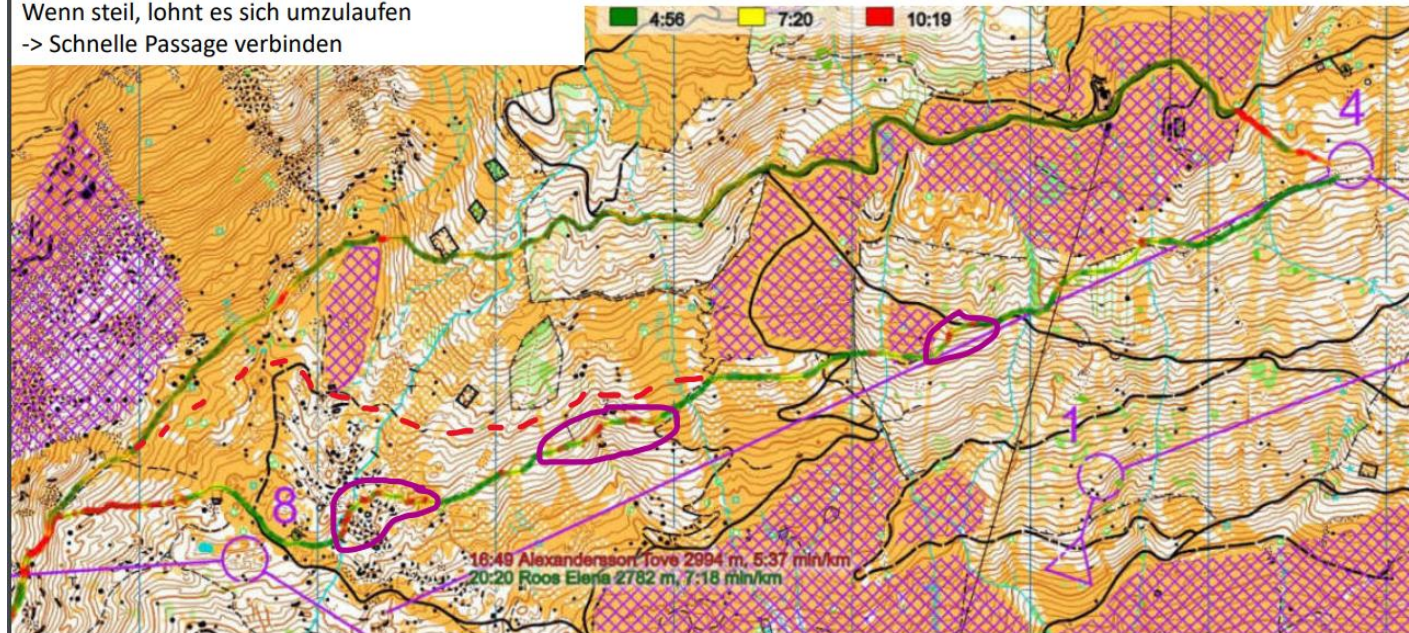
2021 – Camp Lenzerheide



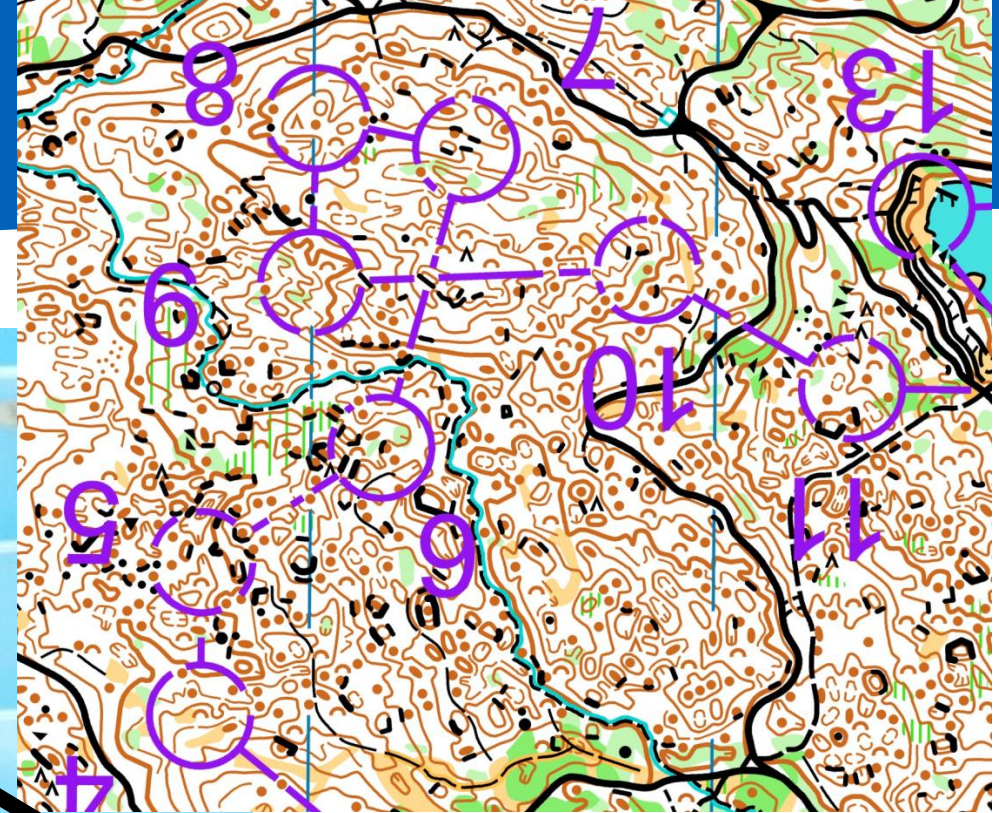
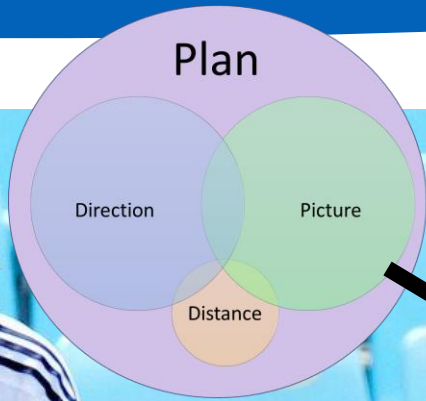
2023 – Long Ftan

Ele:

Wenn steil, lohnt es sich umzulaufen
-> Schnelle Passage verbinden



How to coach this?



My reflections on coaching

Orienteering is a learnable skill

- Your brain is like a muscle. If you exercise it, it gets stronger
 - Everyone can become amazing orienteers

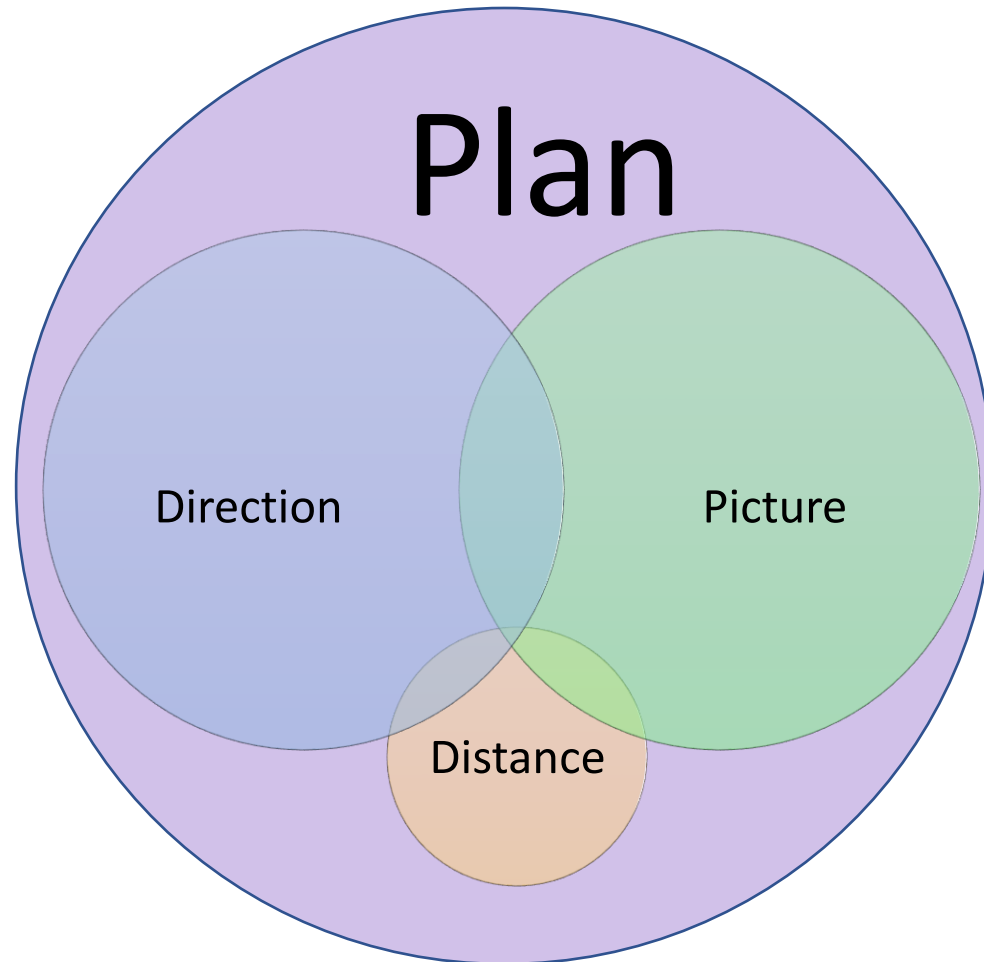
- **Attitude: pro not a punter**

- Learn to do it well
- Then learn to do it consistently
- Then learn to do it fast



- Practice makes permanent

Orienteering is skill based...use a simple model



Orienteering jargon brainstorm

- Attack point
- Catching feature
- Contouring
- Traffic lighting
- Bearings
- Control flow
- Pacing
- Route choice
- Plan
- Orientation of your map
- 3 points of contact (compass, veg, contours)
- Picture
- Using people
- Following people
- Focusing
- Aiming off
- Hand railing
- Eye railing
- Relocating
- Simplifying
- Checking control descriptions
- Geeking
- Direction
- Thumbing
- Ticking off features
- Execution
- Sighting
- Visualisation
- Map memory
- Distance judgement

Orienteering jargon brainstorm

• **Plan**

- Attack point
- Catching feature
- Traffic lighting
- Route choice
- Plan
- Following / using people
- Focusing
- Relocating
- Map memory

• **Direction**

- Contouring
- Bearings
- Orientation of your map
- Aiming off
- Hand railing
- Eye railing
- Direction
- Sighting

• **Picture**

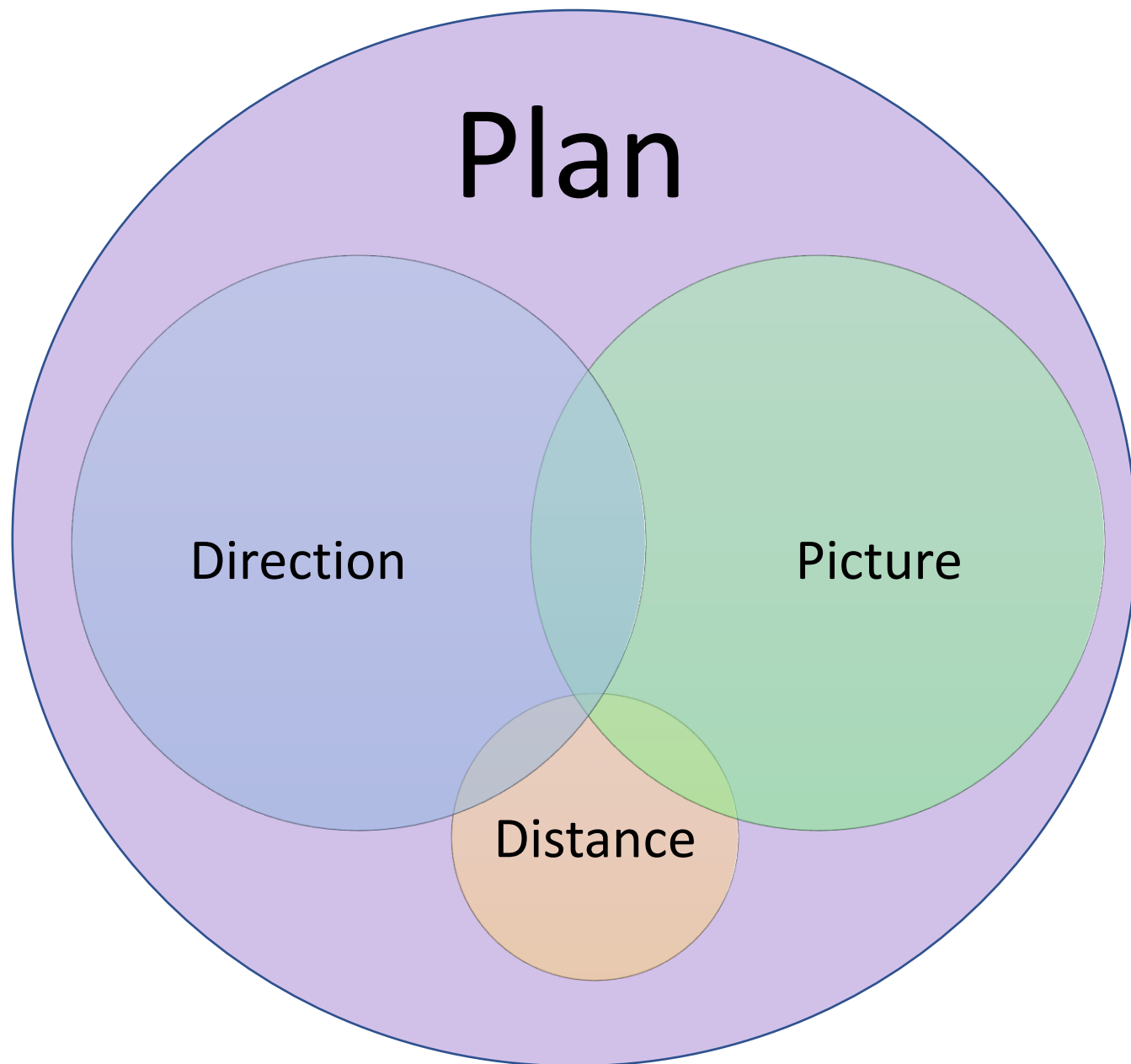
- 3 points of contact
- Picture
- Using people
- Simplifying
- Checking control descriptions
- Geeking
- Ticking off features
- Visualisation
- Reading contours

• **Distance**

- Pacing
- Thumbing
- Distance judgement – “the force”

An outcome of good orienteering:

- Control flow
- Execution

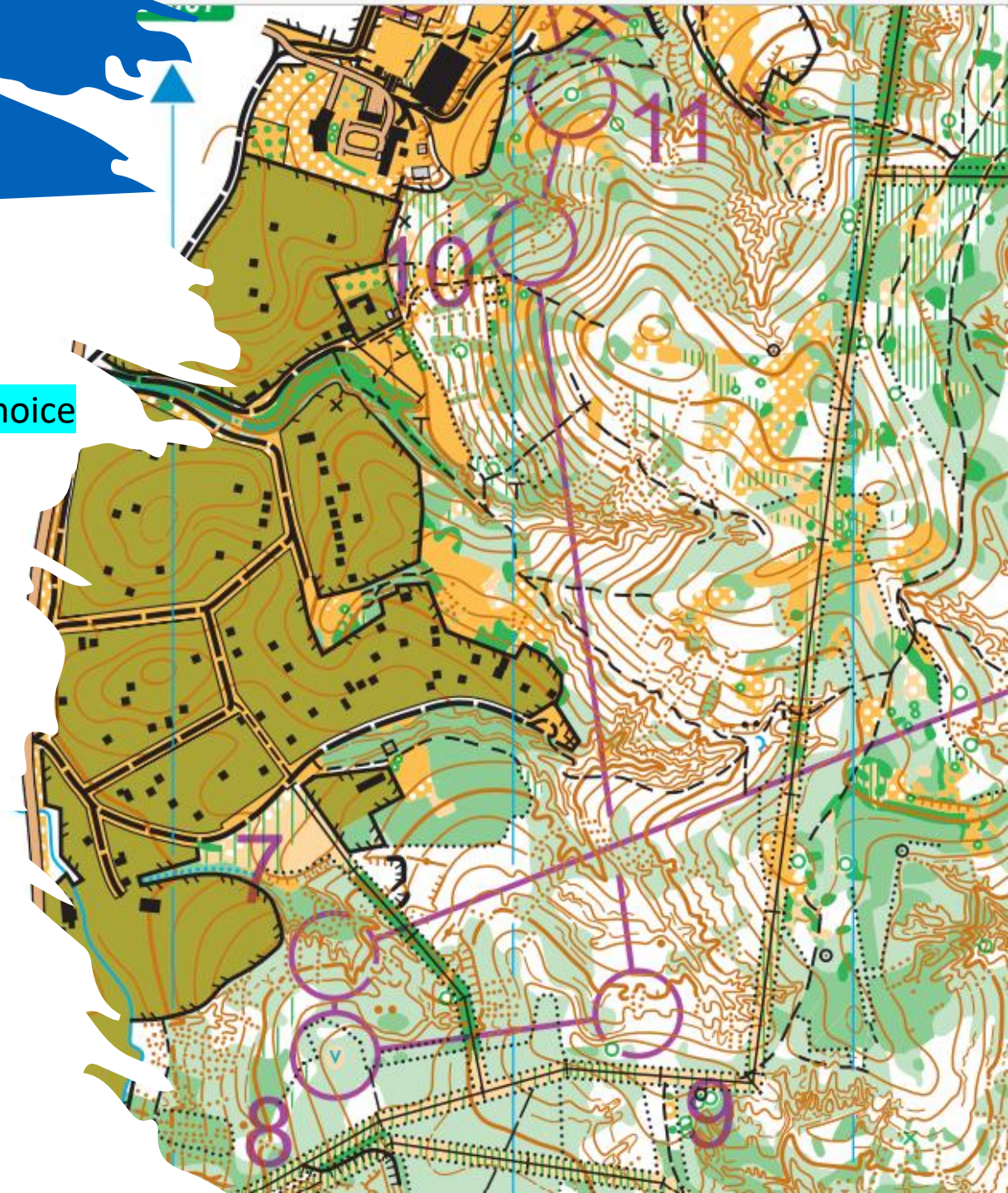


They only have to think about:

- Have I got a plan?
 - *Next beacon?*
- Executing: direction (compass) or picture (features)?
 - *It's always 'both'...but which is leading?*

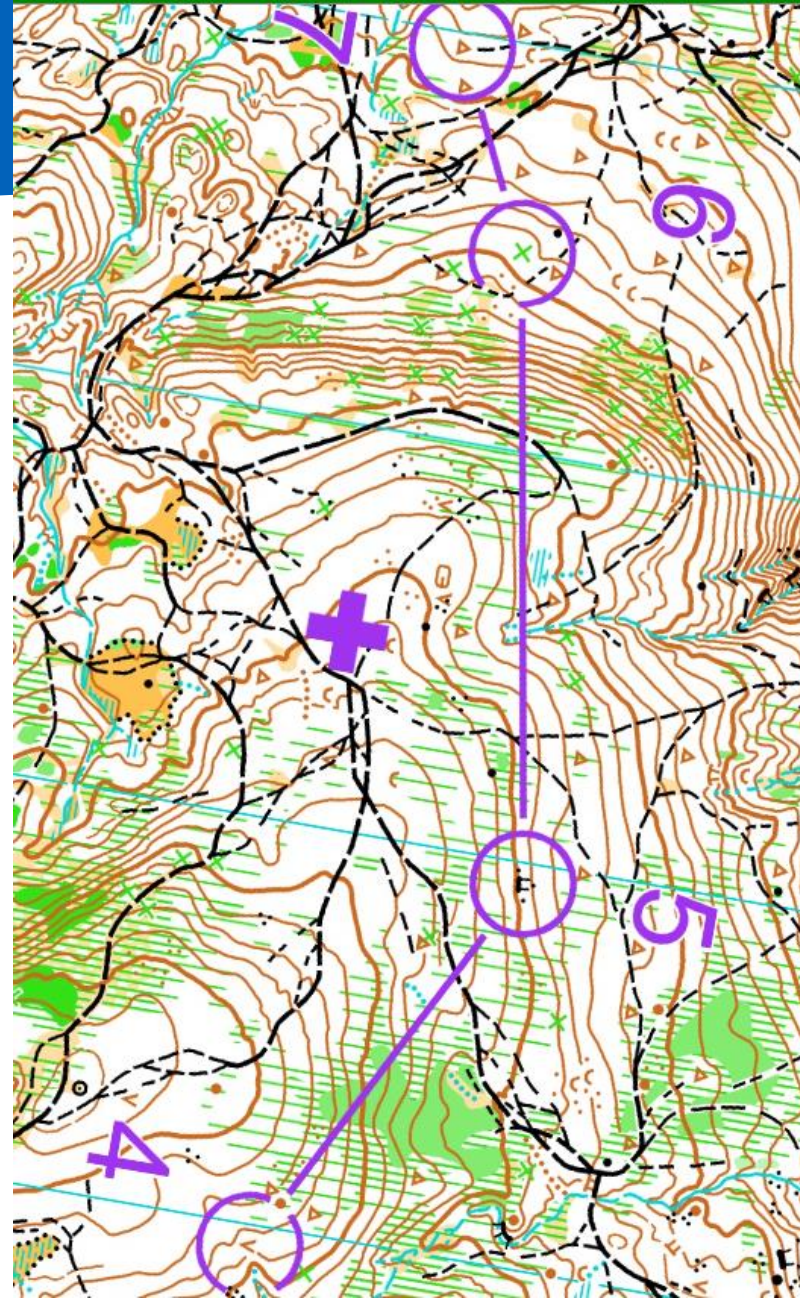
How to orienteer

1. Read the map
2. Pick a route Planning is different to route choice
3. Make a plan
 - a. Beacon features
 - b. For the whole leg
 - c. The final beacon is the “attack point”
4. Execute
 - a. 2 modes: **picture** (features), **direction** (compass), or both
5. Control
 - a. Final direction and picture from “attack point”



Read the map

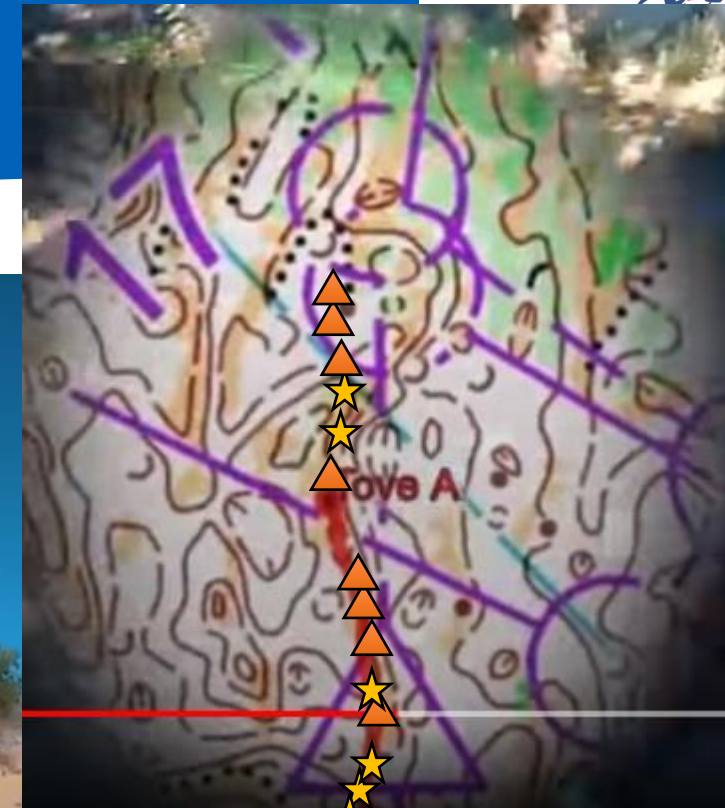
- The most crucial skill
- “Chunking” via glances on the run
- Not long looks sat-down in a chair
- Take information
 - At speed
 - Under race pressure
- What’s the big shape?
- Route?
- Beacons?
- Where’s the control?...final picture





Read the map...lots

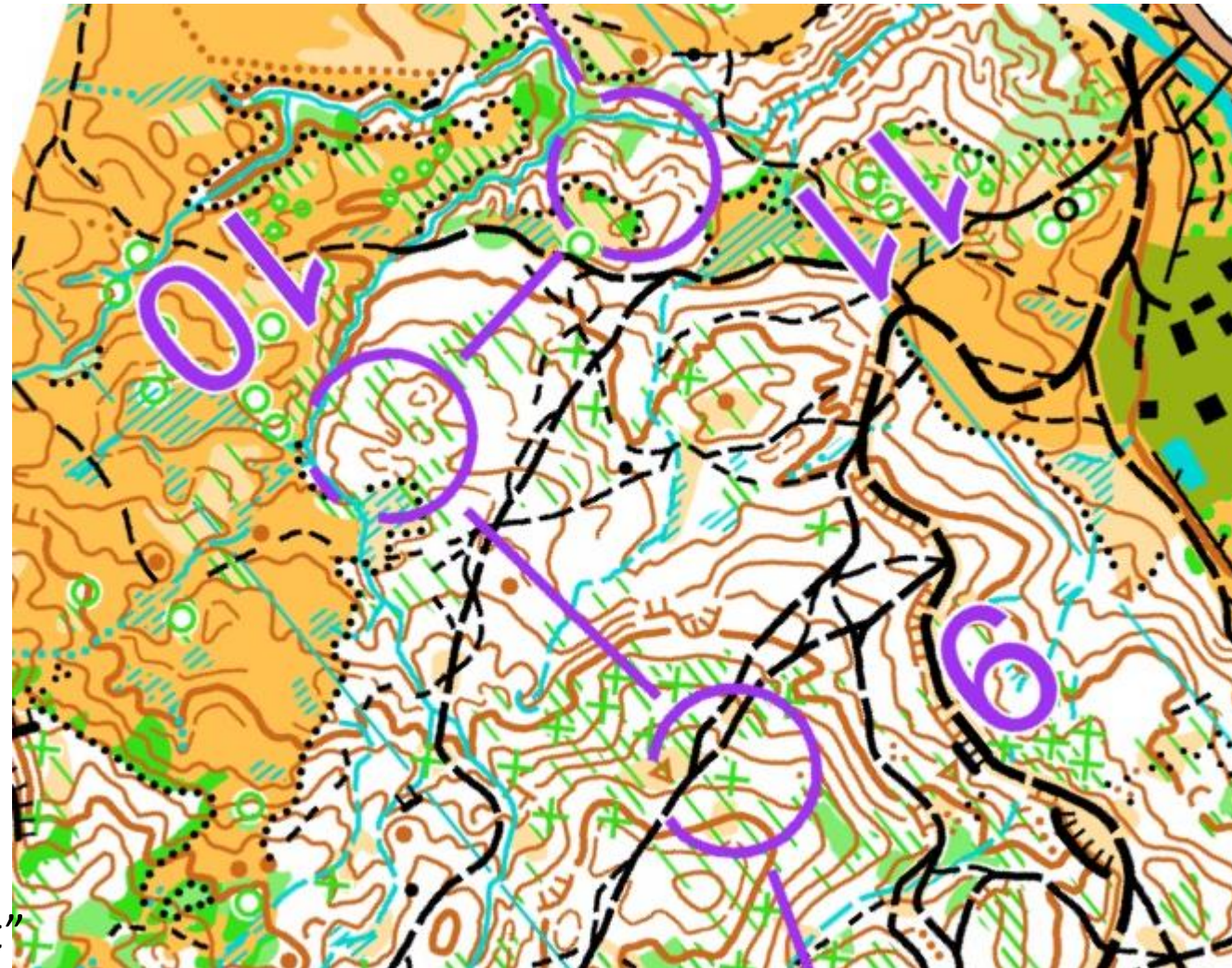
- Lots early leg
- Every 10s
- Read with 2 hands★
 - Purposeful map looks
 - Identify beacons
- Glance with 1 hand▲
 - Check compass. Check next beacon
- Compass in background
 - Direction back-up
 - Every time you read the map



Read the map

Leg #9 - #10

1. Read the map
2. Pick a route
3. Make a plan
 - a. Beacon features
 - b. For the whole leg
 - c. The final beacon is the “attack point”
4. Execute
 - a. 2 modes: **features**, **compass**, or both
5. Control
 - a. Final direction and picture from “attack point”

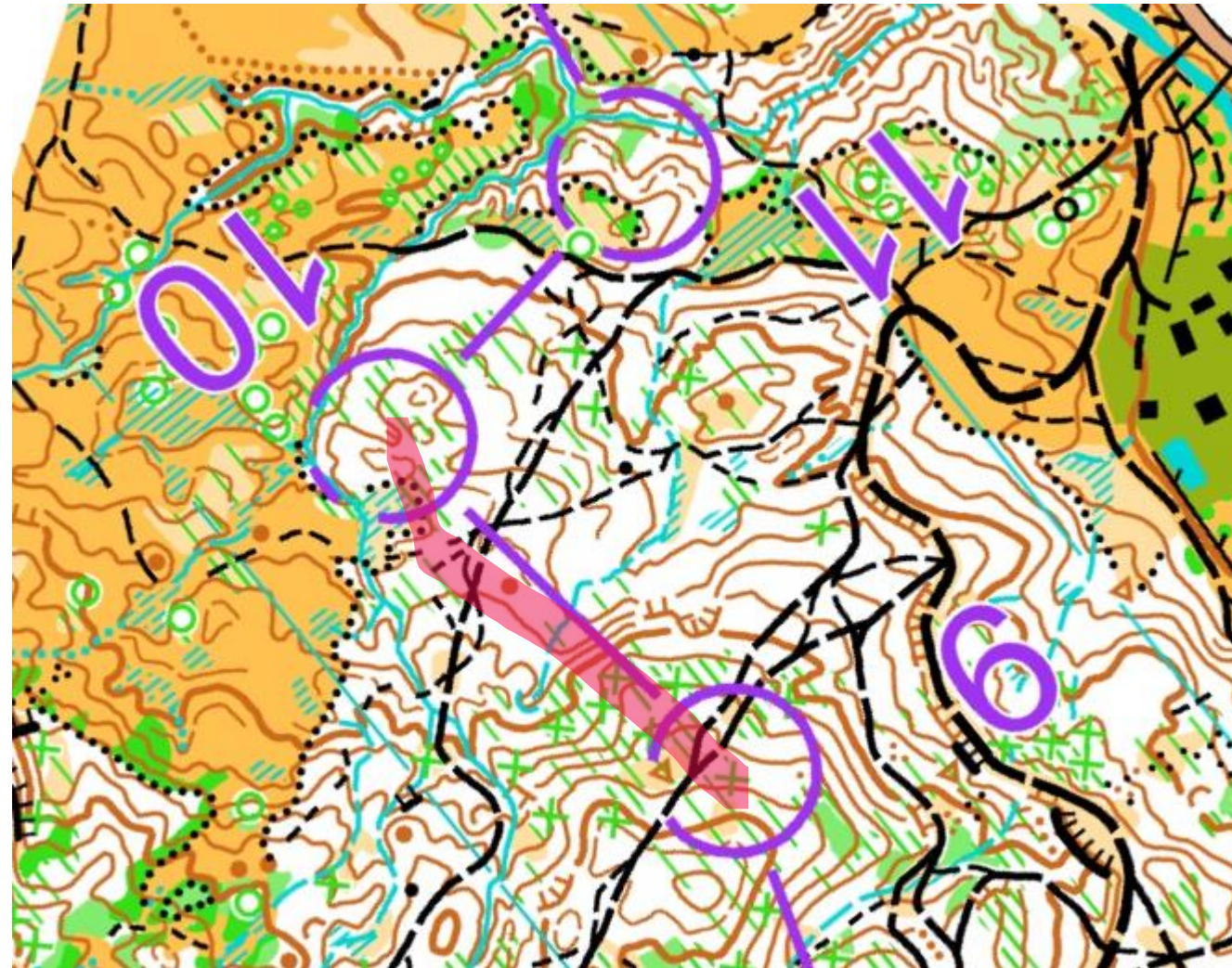


Read the map

Route = straight





Plan = beacons

1. Steep slope
2. Clearing
3. Corner of clearing

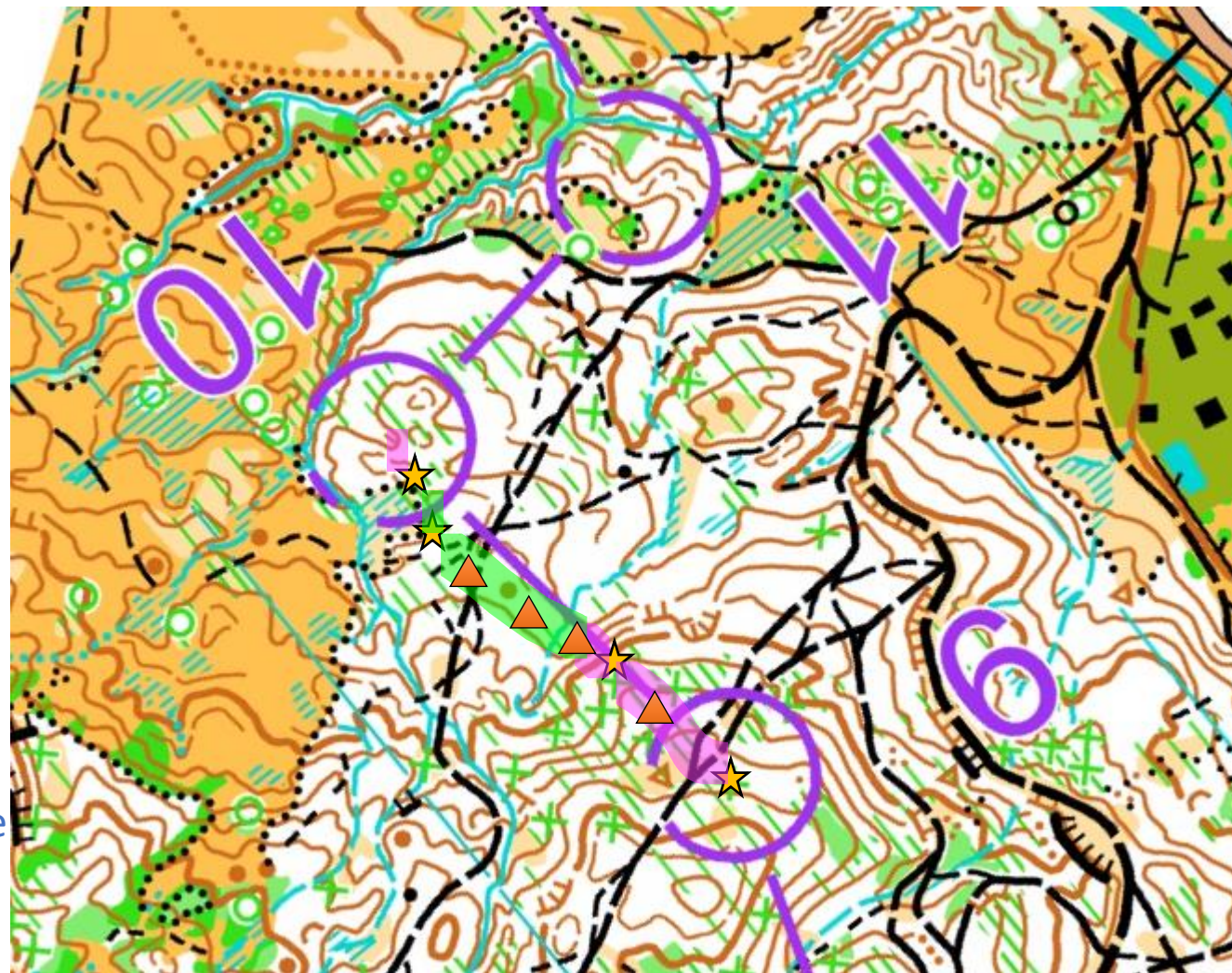
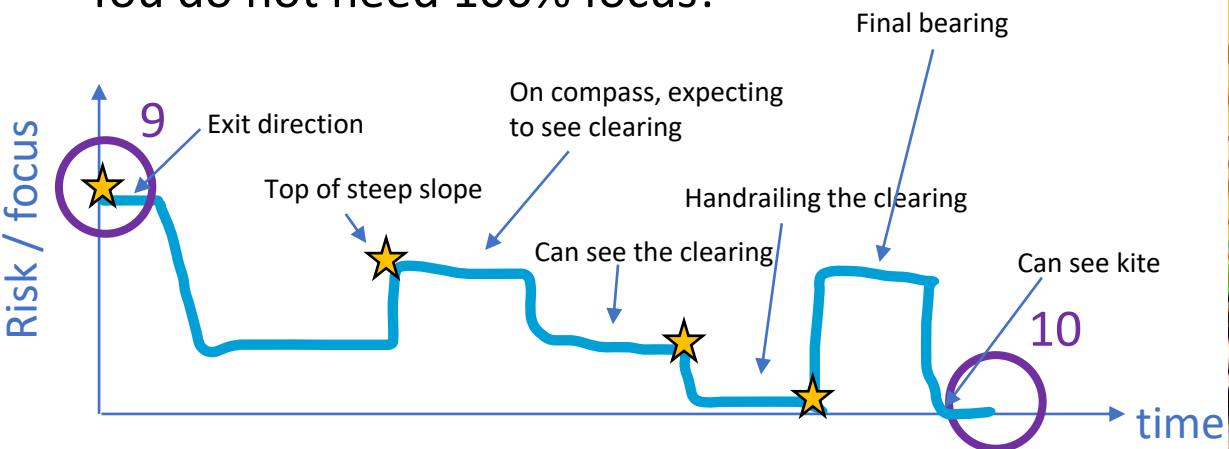


Read the map

Execute...when are you reading the map?

-  On compass
-  On feature
-  Beacon. 2-handed map-read
-  1-handed map glance

You do not need 100% focus!



Focus when you read

- Every 10s. One-handed glances. Compass in background
- Two-handed map-looks at the beacon

How to orienteer in 1 slide

1. Read the map

- Find the course
- Simplify to beacons
- Every 10s
- Compass in the background

Exit

3. Make a plan

- 0 to ∞ beacons
- What's a good beacon in this terrain?
- One at a time
- **Don't miss any out**

Attack Point

5. Control

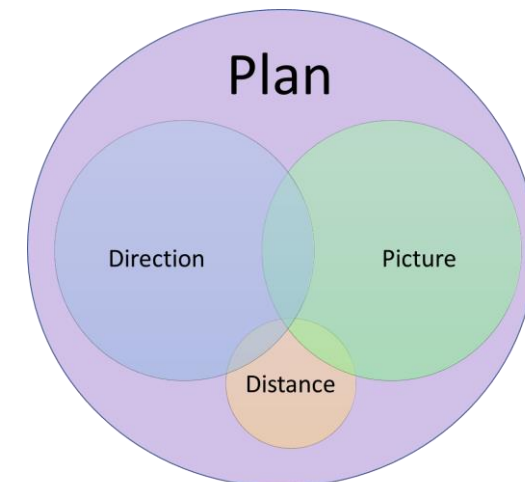
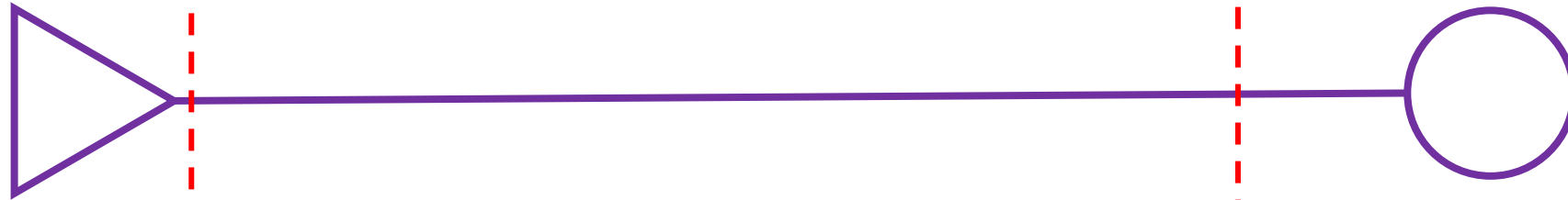
- Final picture – detail
- Final direction

2. Pick a route

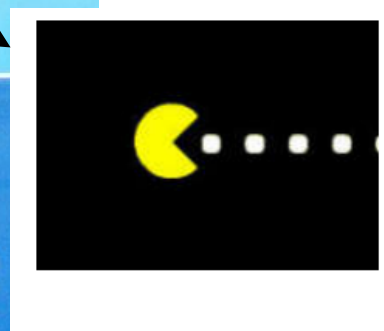
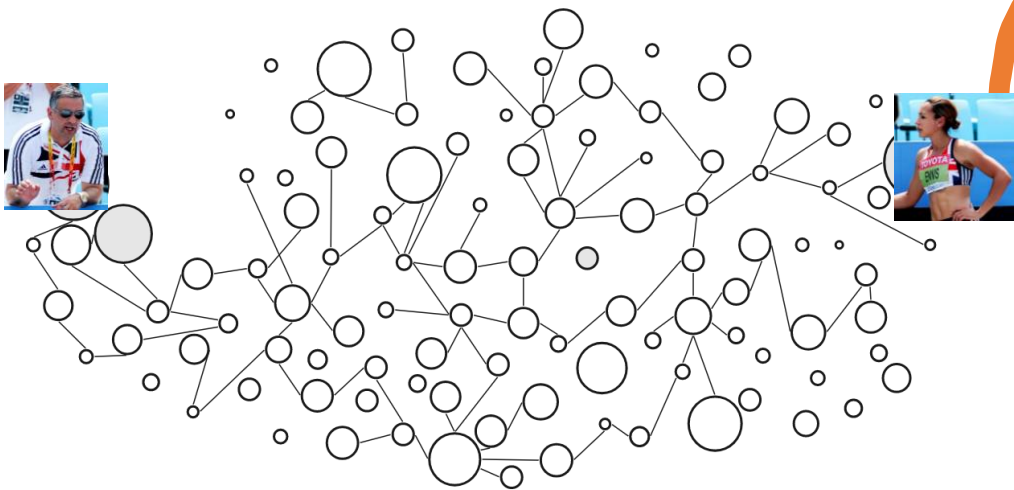
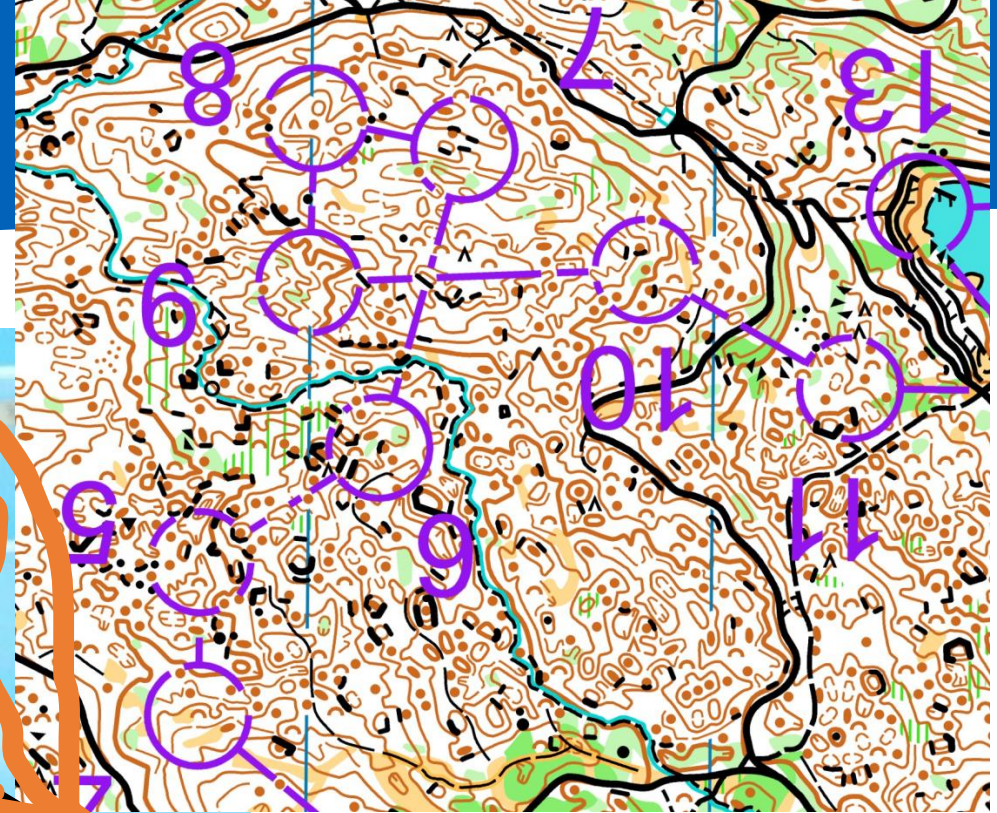
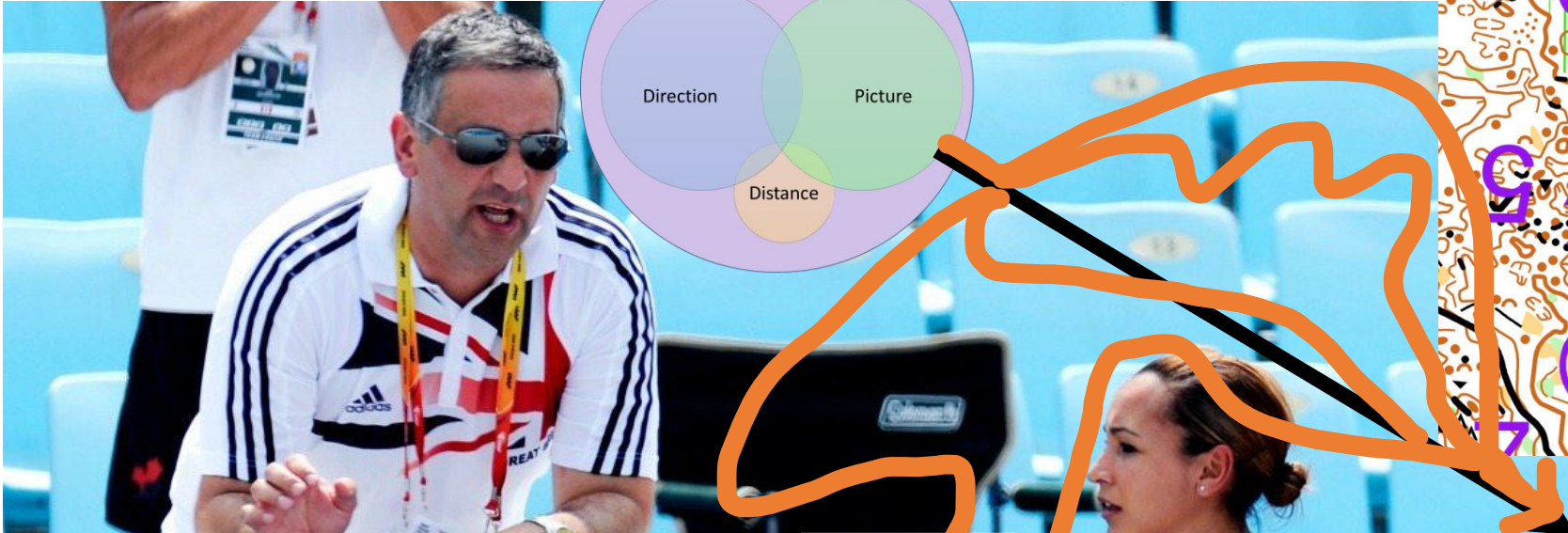
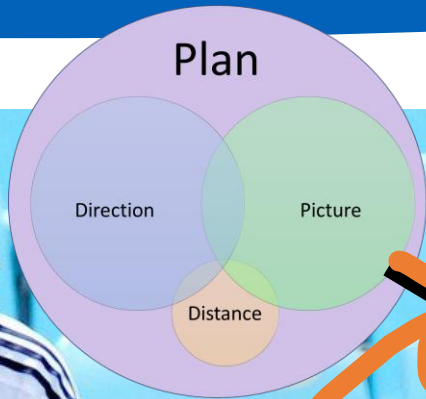
- What works for you
- Risk vs. reward

4. Execute

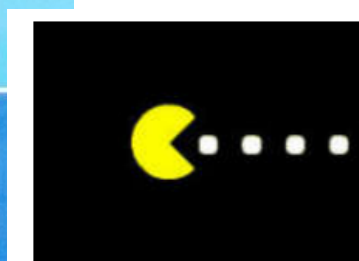
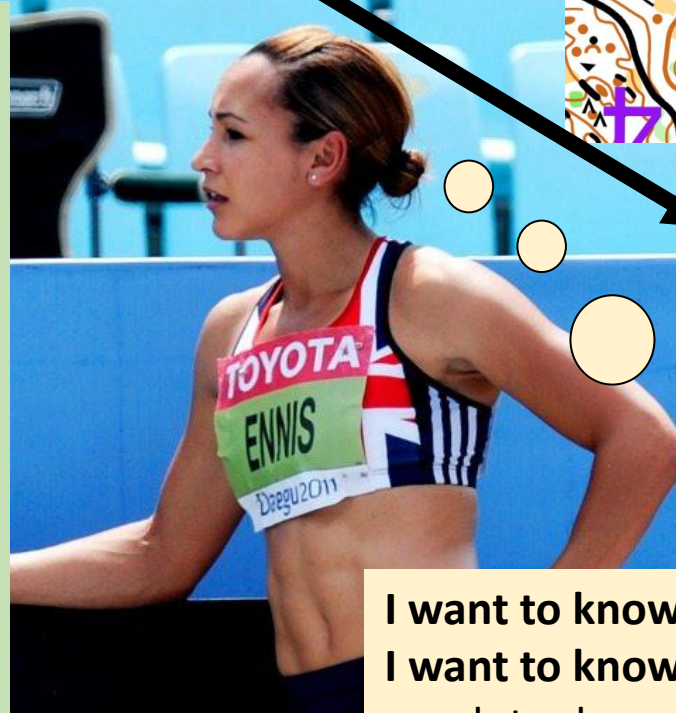
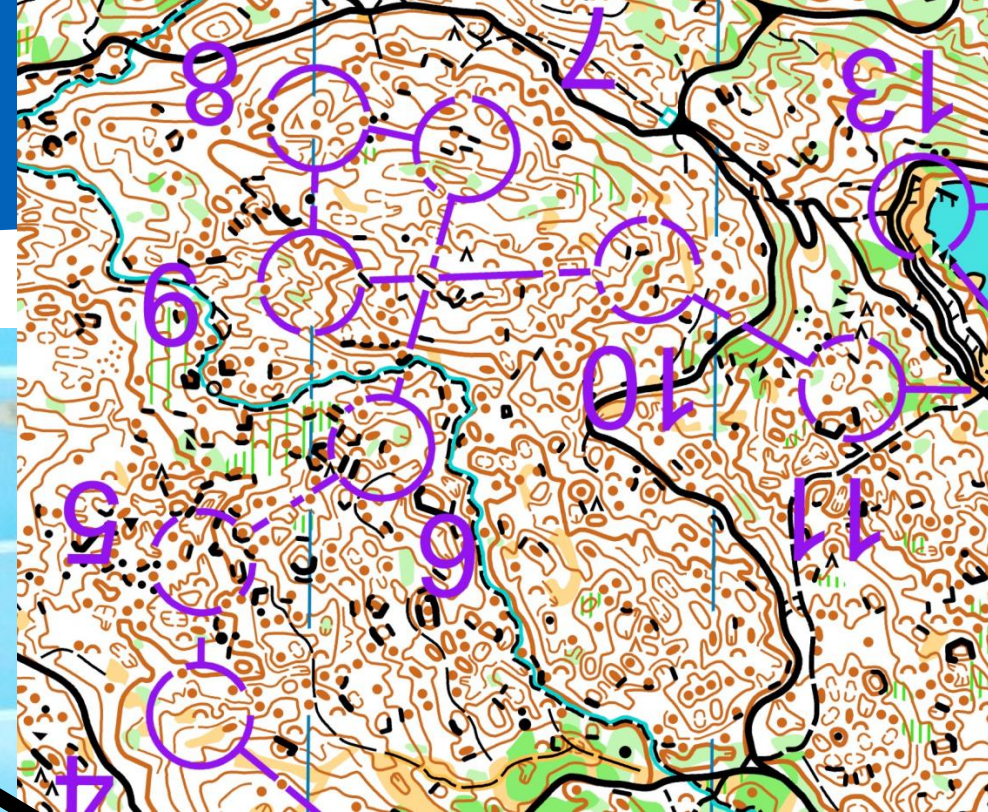
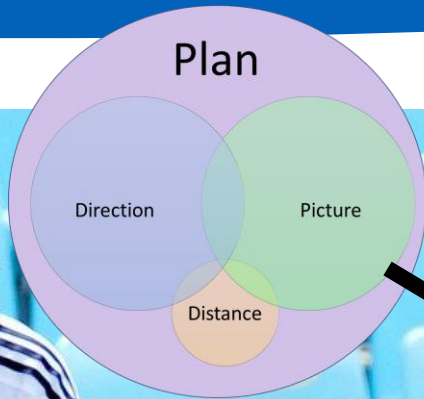
- Leapfrog between beacons. Using picture & direction (compass & features)
- Be proactive at a beacon
 - Add detail if required
- **2 modes: compass (direction) or features (picture)**
- Confidence: when you are confident, you run hard
- Speed control: do the right thing at the right time



How to coach this?



How to coach this?



BEFORE
Build their confidence = Give facts (their AP)

AFTER

- PDP. Simple language. Common jargon
- Open questions
 - “what was your plan?”
- No one cares about the coach’s stories ☹
 - It’s not about you
- When? After getting changed & few days later
- How? Talk. They write in AP

I want to know you care
I want to know you can improve me (you need lots of coach tools, exercise ideas, contacts to make that happen)

Future

- Challenges:

Lack of money

- Increasing costs. Inflation & IOF entry fees
- We are ranked 7th nation in IOF league for M & W
- CZE in 6th have x3 our budget, as do HUN. DEN x5
- Big four: NOR, SWE, FIN, SUI x£££
- Money stops athletes making the choice to have a 'dual career'

Needs improved engagement with the membership

Most similar nations have 1 to 5 coaches + secretary

Make the most of what you have

IOF World Federation League Table

Men

	Fed	Sprint	Long/middle	POINTS
1.	SWE	64691	66283	197257
2.	SUI	65014	65312	195638
3.	NOR	64221	65434	195089
4.	FIN	63248	64739	192726
5.	FRA	63006	63965	190936
6.	CZE	62638	63118	188874
7.	GBR	63046	61605	186256
8.	DEN	61968	61961	185890
9.	AUT	61152	61251	183654
10.	ITA	60951	60749	182449
11.	GER	61078	60555	182188
12.	LAT	58740	61463	181666
13.	ESP	58641	60810	180261
14.	EST	57884	61130	180144
15.	HUN	59729	59899	179527
16.	AUS	58733	59740	178213
17.	POL	57200	58280	173760
18.	NZL	54879	58330	171539
19.	BEL	54958	57852	170662
20.	UKR	43355	59392	162139

Women

	Fed	Sprint	Long/middle	POINTS
1.	SWE	64970	65483	195936
2.	SUI	64288	64861	194010
3.	NOR	63324	64205	191734
4.	FIN	62984	64075	191134
5.	DEN	63214	62410	188034
6.	CZE	61616	61640	184896
7.	GBR	62264	60174	182612
8.	FRA	59524	60277	180078
9.	AUT	60945	58812	178569
10.	LAT	57048	59633	176314
11.	HUN	58533	58411	175355
12.	GER	54158	57667	169492
13.	ESP	53553	57773	169099
14.	EST	53505	57631	168767
15.	AUS	55334	56680	168694
16.	ITA	54792	56769	168330
17.	NZL	53504	55324	164152
18.	UKR	46508	58178	162864
19.	POL	53450	53642	160734
20.	LTU	38193	53824	145841

What I'd like to see

Make the most of what we have 😊
Parkrun & running clubs



- **Clubs & regions spend their money on development**
 - Club development officers & coaches
 - Cohesion between them?
- **Juniors: make the talent funnel wider**
 - Good for development, good for performance
- **Elites involved in planning**
 - Higher quality UK events. E.g. Lakeland Warrior
 - Guest controller? Bring together the manpower (M/W65) with the knowledge (M/W21E)
- **Quality training for 21-39**
 - SEDS and DRONGO
 - Create a GB-EDS
 - Capture uni clubs (ShUOC, EUOC, CUOC)
 - **Social structure for those outside the GBR squads**
- **Fund your elites**
 - Say 'yes' when they ask the club/region for support
 - Fundraising: a money-making training tour?
- **WRE: can your club make your Level B event a WRE?** It isn't that much more effort, and it a) attracts elites and b) helps support UK elite athletes 😊 More WRE = more world-ranking points for our athletes = better opportunities for the GBR squad (e.g. WR points set how many start slots we get at a championship, and set the start list rankings).

- **Parkrun** → local CC with EOD
- Invite **young people to committees**
- **Share your OCAD files**
 - For training
 - With caveats on land access
- **Social assembly areas. EOD. Car sharing schemes**

There is more **choice** and everyone is **connected** more than ever before. Everyone seems busier.

Orienteering is a brilliant sport, and a tonic to a modern world of screens, connectivity & choice overload, but people will drift away if not engaged