



17th April 2024

Orienteering Ireland Mapping Officer Report

Summary

The following report summarises developments since the last AGM.

There are two important items to highlight this year:

1. After 9 years as Mapping Officer, I have decided not to put myself forward for re-election. I would strongly encourage anyone with even a vague interest in maps (which should be all of us!) to get involved. As Committee positions go, it is probably the least onerous in terms of time but it is vital for the smooth running of the organisation;
2. As mentioned at the 2023 AGM, I have completed a review of the mapping rules and have detailed a number of proposals below. My aim is to attempt to align the rules with current practices, particularly with the growth of MapRun and the development officer roles, while also recognising and preserving the intellectual property of the mappers and clubs. The new rules will be considered by the incoming Committee and implemented as they see fit. I would strongly encourage all interested parties to submit their thoughts on these proposals - both positive and negative - while also recognising what is in the best interests of the sport. Ideally, all comments should be accompanied by workable alternative suggestions.

Map Registrations

As usual I would like to thank all clubs and individual mappers for their continued hard work throughout the year. A total of 31 new or completed maps were registered, almost double that of the previous year. The majority of these are MapRun maps commissioned directly by Orienteering Ireland (OI), or smaller local club maps in urban areas. While these maps are increasingly becoming entry points into the sport, and are great to see, we also need to continue to produce high-quality forest and mountain maps. As always, I would like to encourage clubs

and individuals to enhance their focus on mapping as it is the backbone of our sport. As detailed below, OI has a number of supports available to mappers where required so please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Before starting a mapping project, I would again like to remind all mappers to check the online map register at: <http://www.orienteeing.ie/map-making-for-irish-orientees> and to register their intention to map. Registration costs nothing and prevents misunderstandings and duplication of effort. **Please register all areas, no matter how small. There is no charge.**

Mapping Grants and LIDAR

A large grant application was submitted in late 2023 to the Department of Sport Etc. Etc. (DTCAGSM). I would like to thank all clubs who supported this with proposed areas, and Eric, Mark, Pat and Sarah for their hard efforts in compiling the application. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for confirmation that our application has been successful and so the mapping of these areas must wait.

Nonetheless, I would like to encourage clubs to continue to request grants for mapping, LIDAR and equipment. All requests will be considered and OI will assist where possible and if funding allows. Priority will be given to national, regional and other championship-grade maps but please do ask if you need assistance, you never know!

OCAD Software Library

OI has a small number of shared OCAD licences, which are available for use by clubs and individuals on a short-term basis. These run on the cloud using Google Drive. If you would like to avail of a licence, please contact Eric. Licences are offered for use for two week periods only, which can be rolled over if there is no-one else on the waiting list.

Overhaul of Mapping Rules

In the past year, a detailed review of Rule 7 of the Technical Standards Document, which concerns rules around mapping and the Map Register, was carried out. The mapping rules were last reviewed in 2014, I think, and the sport has seen great developments since. The continued work by Andrew Cox, the appointment of the Regional Development Officers, the close engagement with and funding from the Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), and the success of

the Ready to Go and MapRun initiatives has greatly increased the supply of smaller maps. The advent of MapRun in particular has changed the nature of the sport completely and was not even thought of when the mapping rules were drawn up.

Having said that, it is also vital to continue to recognise the time, money and effort that clubs and individuals put into mapping areas, especially cultivating landowner relationships and access arrangements. Duplicating efforts, inadvertently or otherwise, serves no purpose whatsoever.

The club structure varies significantly throughout the country. Some clubs have a large membership with active members and put on events every week. Others, particularly the university clubs, struggle to put on a single event each year. As active members dwindle, there is a risk that maps owned by some clubs will just lie dormant, while other larger clubs have the capacity to run more events but have no mapping expertise to do so! It is in the best interests of the sport that every map is used as much as possible.

Hence, the proposals below aim to increase the supply of available maps while recognising clubs' intellectual property.

The proposals are as follows:

Proposal 1: Registration Fee and Area Size

All maps must be registered, irrespective of size, and will not attract a registration fee. This is merely a matter of formalising the current practice (of the last 6 or 7 years or so) which had not been reflected in the Rules of Orienteering. The Map Registration Form will be overhauled, if required.

Proposal 2: Mandatory Right to Borrow

I recommend introducing a mandatory right for one club to borrow another club's map for an event. Ownership would remain with the original club and they would have a right to receive any map updates subsequently made. To implement it, a club would send a formal notice to borrow a map to the owning club. They would have 30 days to respond. Permission can only be refused if they intend to use the area themselves in the next 12 months (or 24 months in the case of a

championship grade map) **and this is supported by a valid and approved fixtures registration**. In other words, if a club do not intend to use a map themselves, for whatever reason, then another club can use it for a single once-off event. This confers no rights whatsoever on the 'borrowing' club and the existing ownership rules continue to apply to the original club (i.e. 5 years after the last event). If necessary, owning clubs can apply for derogations from these rules for specific reasons (e.g. for areas with a 'special relationship' with a landowner) but this is purely a matter of last resort and is subject to approval by the Mapping Officer and/or Executive Committee.

Proposal 3: Registrations by Individuals

I also recommend that we allow registrations to be made by individuals as well as clubs. These individuals must have a known level of experience and the quality of the map must be of an appropriate standard. The aim is to increase the supply of available maps and encourage enthusiastic individuals. Obviously, individuals cannot hold events but clubs would be able to negotiate the use of such maps directly with the individual.

Conclusion

The incoming Committee is empowered to implement all, some or none of these proposals, as they see fit. However, the changes will impact every single orienteer in the country - hopefully for the better - and it is important that everyone has the opportunity to make their thoughts known. Please feel free to send on any feedback for consideration, preferably supported by suggestions and/or alternative recommendations, and be aware that every club is different!

Mapping Officer Role

I have now been in this role for nine years. Increasingly however, I have been finding it difficult to devote enough time to the role and I think it is a good time for someone with more time and energy to take over.

I would strongly encourage anyone and everyone to step forward! Timewise, it is probably the least onerous role on the Committee, not least because of the support given by Eric and the development officers. At a minimum, it requires a commitment of approximately two hours a month for meetings and roughly the same again for emails. But of course, the more involved you can get, the more you will get out of it. As mapping is the backbone of the sport, it is vital

that the role is filled from both a governance and coordination perspective. You do not need to be a mapper or even a good orienteer - the ability to remain impartial and accurate record keeping are the best qualities - if in doubt, just look at me!

If you would like to know more, please contact me and I will gladly explain more.

Acknowledgements

As always, I would like to thank my fellow committee members and especially Eric, Deirdre and Mark for their assistance throughout the year, and of course Pat and Eileen who we would be lost without. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the efforts of the orienteering community as a whole for their contribution to the sport.

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