

Pete Dady
Pat Meehan
both

GOAL: INCREASE STARTS AT BOTH THE LOCAL MEET AND A-MEET LEVELS

Rationale

Starts are the single critical element for the growth and development of orienteering. Growth and development at all levels: club, Orienteering USA, Team USA...all levels. The more people we get to try the sport, the more will come back, the more will join their club, the more will join Orienteering USA, the more will volunteer, the more will attempt to join Team USA at all levels and disciplines.

Starts are the primary life blood for growth.

While growth is critical, though, it must be balanced by all participants having a quality experience every time they go out. If they don't, there is a good chance that many of them won't come back. In addition to losing starts, this loss could also negatively affect orienteering in that these disenfranchised individuals may speak negatively about the sport, dissuading others interested in it.

Moving forward, it is critical that we "Think Globally. Act Locally." We need to give the clubs the tools to customize and communicate to their local market while giving them the flexibility to maximize their return on investment at the local level. This will organically grow orienteering and will generate a greater financial long-term return for Orienteering USA.

1. **Strategy:** Actively pursue new groups of potential orienteers, embracing those who view orienteering as an activity as well as a sport.

While there are pockets of orienteering strength throughout the U.S., the overall membership and participation trends are flat to down. In addition, the general trend is that charter club and Orienteering USA membership is getting older every year.

For the past four years, the primary focus was to provide increased opportunities for Junior competition and training, and we have had success against key measures. The problem is that the organization is "top heavy". It is aging. While it is critical to continue to grow youth, we cannot exclusively focus on them because:

It will take years for a youth orienteer to grow into an adult orienteer, and even longer for them to recruit their families to become orienteers.

There is no guarantee that every youth member will become an orienteer as an adult.

That being said, we need to open our doors to anyone who likes to get outside, whether it is by themselves or with their family, and exercise their body and their mind.

- 1.1. Identify and develop marketing communication strategies and materials to target key groups. Current identified groups: Active Seniors (adults 50+), Families, Adventure Racers, Trail Runners, Post Collegiate Running Clubs, Metropolitan Sport and Social Clubs, College ROTC units, High School JROTC units, Boy Scouts (including

- Venturing), Girl Scouts (including older girls), and elementary and middle-school-aged children.
- 1.2. Sample. Sample. Sample. Return National Orienteering Day back to its “discover orienteering’s roots” offering local school kids a free orienteering day pass (if they bring an adult) to come and learn about orienteering. Issue additional incentives to return for a second time.
 - 1.3. Create and implement an effective Third Party Sanctioning program to get new people in the sport. Events must be executed to standards established by Orienteering USA to create a quality experience. Third Party Operator will turn the participants contact information over to Orienteering USA and the participants closest charter club for cross marketing and membership recruitment.
 - 1.4. Benchmark and colonize youth-focused programs developed to date by COC and other clubs.
 - 1.5. Expand the “O in Schools” program to deliver orienteering to students of all ages, from the very young to the older adult.
 - 1.6. Pursue national memos of understanding with viable third parties (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, National Parks and Recreation Council, Police Athletic League, etc.) to pursue opportunities to bring orienteering to their constituencies, and their constituencies to our events and clubs. An example is Orienteering USA and a charter club working in partnership with the National Parks and Recreation Council to hold summer evening orienteering classes in a local park.
 - 1.7. Focus on College ROTC team creation, with the incentive that their collegiate team can compete in the Intercollegiate National Championships.
 - 1.8. Develop and execute a regional JROTC program focusing on regional strengths and opportunities. For example: Air Force JROTC has a strong foothold in Kentucky, Army JROTC in Texas and Navy JROTC in Georgia. Have each JROTC branch compete for their individual service championship with the winning units representing their branch of the military competing for an award similar to college football’s “Commander in Chief” trophy at the Interscholastic Championships.
 - 1.9. Pursue opportunities to have orienteering return as a JROTC summer camp requirement.
 - 1.10. Where local club infrastructure is strong, establish high school and middle school leagues, including a home school team if applicable.
 - 1.11. Train the trainers. Expand and formalize the various coaching education and training programs that are available. Increase the number of Level 1 and Level 2 coaches in the U.S., creating a Level 3 curriculum.
 - 1.12. Train the meet directors and course setters. Develop online seminars, share best practices and hold annual training seminars at the national convention and/or AGM.
 - 1.13. In partnership with key Foot and Trail Orienteering committees, investigate an opportunity to create a high profile “orienteering event” to be held in the spring to attract attention to orienteering. This could take the form of an A-meet with more fully developed recreational orienteering opportunities.
 - 1.14. Continue to develop and test new program concepts and forms to appeal to a wider audience, like use of GPS for first time White orienteers.
 - 1.15. Begin development of a national orienteering calendar. Plan 18 months in advance to reserve key weekends for National Orienteering Day, A-meets, regional

meets and local meets. As the sport grows, allow for concurrent east of the Mississippi and west of the Mississippi schedules.

Metrics

- 2010 Identify, prioritize key opportunities. Implement cost efficient programs.
2011 Implement balance of programs, utilizing ROI as a means of prioritization.
2012 – 2014 Ongoing program implementation, reviewing annually for ROI.

2. **Strategy:** Utilize technology to promote, grow and measure orienteering.

- 2.1. Make it easy for a new orienteer to find an event and eventually join a club. The new Orienteering USA website will have an event and club locator. An interested party will enter their zip code and will link to an event calendar that will also include club and Orienteering USA membership lists and volunteer opportunities.
- 2.2. Establish a single online registration tool that all charter club and third party event directors can use. Applicable for all meets (not just A-meets) this will take an administrative burden off meet directors, while providing immediate measurement and timely payment of meet fees from the event to Orienteering USA.
- 2.3. Focus marketing efforts on key targets mentioned above, focusing efforts on grass roots marketing, public relations, social media, sampling and cross-promoting orienteering at large “destination” 5K and 10K races/ running festivals in their local market.

Metrics

2010

Activate club and event locator as part of www.orienteeingusa.org launch.

Finalize local marketing plan introducing at National Convention/AGM for fall event launch.

2011 33% online registration

Establish on line registration tool as part of www.usorienteering.org launch.

2012 66% online registration

2013 100% online registration

3. **Strategy:** Do not forsake event quality for quantity.

- 3.1. Work with the Orienteering USA sanctioning committee, and individual discipline committees as appropriate, to establish formalized, measureable performance standards (vs. “rules”) for local and A-meets.
- 3.2. As part of these standards, have one person “mystery shop” each local meet and five people each A-meet. A copy of the evaluation form will be on-line so all can see the standards a local meet or an A-meet are expected to uphold.
- 3.3. The mystery shopper(s) will fill out the evaluation sheet and will return it to the Vice President/ Competition at Orienteering USA. The VP/ Competition will then share it with the meet director and charter club president. The purpose of this evaluation is to help put on better meets in the future.

Metrics

2010 Establish measurable performance standards and evaluation form.

2011 Test pilot program with four A-meets and fifty local meets (1/2 spring, 1/2 fall)
2012 Roll out revised program at national level, 25% of A- and local meets evaluated
2013- 2014 100% of A-meets evaluated, 50% of local meets evaluated

Mountain Bike Orienteering

- 3.4. Establish Mountain Bike Orienteering as part of the Orienteering USA community.
- 3.5. Mountain Bike Orienteering represents a new and potentially interesting target for Orienteering USA. With the increasing number of adventure racers in the United States, it creates a growth opportunity for Orienteering USA and its charter clubs. This represents a potential link into the Adventure Racing community and a chance to increase starts through a new participation stream.
- 3.6. Determine local "centers of excellence" to form a committee to develop an effective plan to launch Mountain Bike Orienteering in the U.S. In 2010, this committee would be charged with determining goals for sport development, club adoption and national championships. In 2011, this committee would be charged with determining the viability of World Championship Teams (as noted later in the Team USA portion of this plan).

Metrics

2010 Establish go-forward plan addressing all goals.
2011 Potential inaugural U.S. Mountain Bike National Championship + other goals.
2012 - 2014 Goals as set by the committee and approved by BOD.

Rogaining

- 3.7. Orienteering USA acknowledges Rogaining as a unique and valued discipline of orienteering.
- 3.8. As the International Rogaining Federation considers a national membership model as opposed to individual membership model, position Orienteering USA to serve the IRF member and National Governing Body of Rogaining in the United States. Through the Rogaining committee, continue to communicate with the IRF to make this feasible.
- 3.9. Sanctioning: Develop rogaine sanctioning processes, implemented by the Rogaining Committee.
- 3.10. Championships: Hold annual US and North American Championship rogaines. Those championship rogaines which are held in the US will be sanctioned by Orienteering USA.
- 3.11. Outreach to adventure racing and other communities. Bring in adventure racers and other interested parties to rogaining.
- 3.12. Publicity within the orienteering community: keep orienteers informed about rogaining news and opportunities
- 3.13. Record keeping: Establish a repository of information about sanctioned rogaines held in the US, including results.

Metrics

2010
Establish and publish annual deadlines for championship bid submissions
Establish connections with adventure racing organizations

Change Orienteering USA rules to allow non-Orienteering USA organizations to put on sanctioned rogaines.

Join IRF and decide who will represent Orienteering USA on the IRF board.

2011 - 2014

Create database of results and historical information for Orienteering USA-sanctioned rogaines.

Regular communication with clubs, to develop opportunities for new rogaines.

US championships held each year, with Orienteering USA sanctioning.

North American championships held each year, those held in the US to be Orienteering USA sanctioned.

Co-publicize rogaines and adventure races with adventure racing organizations.

Develop sanctioning process into smoothly functioning operation.

Trail Orienteering

3.14. The primary goal for Trail Orienteering is to substantially raise participation by clubs. The number of participating clubs should be at least 50% of the number of clubs with representation in all areas of the U.S.

3.15. The number of clubs offering Trail Orienteering is very small with no representation in every area of the U.S. This is due to a lack of qualified personnel for Trail Orienteering Events.

3.16. Achieving this goal will be determined by the ability to provide the tools and methodology for increasing the personnel required in all categories to offer Trail Orienteering Events.

Metrics

2010 - 2014

Increasing the number of qualified event directors, course planners/ setters, mappers by offering clinics at Orienteering USA conventions and other selected venues. Strengthening their skills by current qualified personnel mentoring them.

Developing a Trail Orienteering Coaches Manual for the Trail Orienteering Coach position to be created and filled.

Increasing the number of potential Trail Orienteering Members by offering more demonstrations courses at local and national events.

In conjunction with Canada develop North American Trail Orienteering Championships, consistent with IOF goals.

Increase participation in Trail Orienteering nationally and internationally in the Paralympic and Open Classes

There are a limited number of persons participating in the Paralympic Class because quite often they are already associated with another Paralympic Sport and are very reluctant to make a change. Many eligible Foot Orienteers do not understand/ appreciate the more demanding map reading skills required in Trail Orienteering.

Attaining the goal will require Foot Orienteers to recognize the mental vs. physical challenges. Paralympic people not already associated with a Paralympic sport will need to be identified locally and encouraged to take up Trail Orienteering. Relationships will have to be established with veteran organizations and other disabled groups.

Metrics

2010 - 2014

2010

Promote and offer the new format of Trail Orienteering based on faster times called TempO
In every issue of Orienteering North America write an article about all the happenings in Trail Orienteering in the coming months.

WTOC Team members will prepare bios for newspapers in their hometown areas before going to the WTOC and afterwards write articles about their WTOC experiences.

Based on the number of participants in the current year of the WTOC in each class, as least two team members will be in the top 20% of their class.

2011

Establish a core of Orienteering USA members from various clubs to promote Trail Orienteering with various disabled groups.

Hold a Trail Orienteering/ Foot Orienteering event in Washington DC, close to USA Today's headquarters in nearby Virginia. Invite the sports staff to attend the events in order that they will have a background to write articles about both disciplines for the Weekend Edition.

Use the Trail Orienteering section of the new Orienteering USA website to cover all aspects of trail orienteering and the team.

2013

Make Trail Orienteering more attractive and practiced by all age groups mobility to insure credibility. Conduct all Trail Orienteering events in the U.S. as closely as possible to the standards set for the WTOCs.

4. **Strategy:** For orienteering to have a long-term viable future, don't be afraid to rewrite the rules.

4.1. For us to stay ahead of the curve to grow the sport beyond its current limits we must have a group of orienteers and novice/potential orienteers focus solely on the future.

4.2. Formation of a wide ranging think tank/group that focuses solely on future opportunities and growth avenues for the sport and activity of orienteering. From new activities, to embracing and maximizing technological advances, to simplifying the language this group will focus on blue-sky ideas as well as ask, and hopefully answer the question, "What if?"

Metrics

2011 Think Tank formation of orienteers and non-orienteers.

2012 - 2014 Regular meetings and progress reports to the Orienteering USA board.

<i>Metrics: Overall goal – Increase starts</i>		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Local meets</i>	<i>A meets</i>
2010	45,900	8,000
2011	49,300	8,800
2012	52,700	9,600
2013	56,100	10,400
2014	59,500	11,200