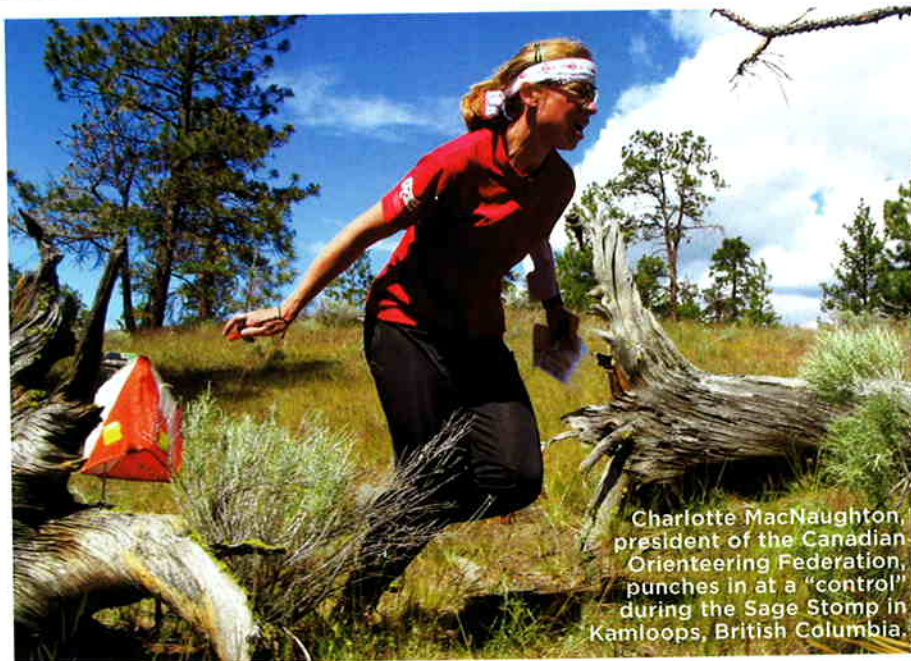


# ADVENTURE RACING

by KEITH LAY » photo by MAGNUS JOHANSSON



Charlotte MacNaughton, president of the Canadian Orienteering Federation, punches in at a "control" during the Sage Stomp in Kamloops, British Columbia.

## MAP SAVVY

Polish your AR navigation with orienteering

ORIENTEERING IS THE SPORT of locating controls (marked by small flags) on a course using a map and compass. By this basic definition, most adventure races could also be called orienteering meets, but the latter's unique charm and appeal set them apart.

Orienteering began in the early 19th century in Scandinavia as an army-training exercise, and has since grown into one of Northern Europe's most popular sports. It filtered into the United States and Canada, and by the 1970s had established itself as a club sport.

### GETTING STARTED

Orienteering events, called "O-meets," are hosted by local clubs that offer courses for beginner (3 to 5 kilometers) to advanced orienteers (6 to 12 kilometers). O-meets start with participants copying the course onto their map from a master. The winner is the one who navigates the fastest to all the controls in the pre-determined order.

There are many variations to this basic race format: goat-Os are longer and involve a mass start and at score-Os, each control has a point value (the more distant and difficult controls are worth more points) with the winner having accumulated the most points within the allotted time. A rogaine is a long-distance score-O with a time limit between six and 24 hours.

Whereas a typical 24-hour adventure race has around 35 checkpoints, an orienteering

event can have the same number of checkpoints in a 15-kilometer course. Though most O-meets are done on foot, there are also other sport-specific orienteering races called ski-Os, bike-Os and canoe-Os.

Adventure racers will also notice that an orienteering map is different in that the terrain is color-coded. For example, green commonly indicates thick undergrowth that you should avoid, while tan is open ground and easy to run through. And symbols indicate obstacles like rock outcroppings or unique trees. You might think that all this information would make navigating easy, but, actually, it allows the course setter to put controls in very tight places.

### NAVIGATION KNACK

Orienteering can rapidly improve your navigation skills since the purpose is not only to travel quickly between controls, but to accurately interpret maps and the landscape. You also become adept at following your position on the map at all times with your thumb (called thumbing). These skills, along with other techniques, like "aiming off" (traveling toward a landmark, such as a stream, where you know which way to turn to find the next control, rather than taking a direct route), could put your team ahead of the field in your next adventure race.

And it's much better to learn from navigation mistakes at a local O-meet that costs only a few dollars than an adven-

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## PRO TIP

### Q+A: SICK STOMACH

I have been adventure racing (sprint to 30-hour races) for about a year and a half, but am often plagued with nausea, particularly between 2 and 5 a.m. What can I do about it?

—Gerrard Delatte, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The nausea is most likely due to most of your blood being sent to hard-working muscles and relatively little diverted to the stomach to aid digestion. Digestive aids like Pepto-Bismol coat the stomach but only provide relief if too much acid is the culprit.

The best solution is prevention. Eat a high-carbohydrate meal at least two hours prior to your race so you have calories to burn early on. During the race, stay hydrated and replace electrolytes (including sodium, magnesium, potassium and chloride). I take one Sustain tablet ([www.zeemedical.com](http://www.zeemedical.com)) every hour (more in hot weather) to prevent the onset of mid-race nausea and eat small amounts of food frequently, nibbling almost constantly (consuming 50 calories per mile) to prevent low blood sugar.

If nausea strikes, slow your pace, and eat and drink even if you don't want to. High-calorie, simple sugars like candy work well for me. Or high-protein Ensure or Boost meal-replacement drinks are easy to digest, provide needed calories and fluids and keep your blood glucose stable so you avoid a sugar high and crash.

*Marshall Ulrich has finished over 100 ultramarathons, numerous expedition adventure races and has climbed the world's Seven Summits. [www.marshallulrich.com](http://www.marshallulrich.com)*

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ture race to which you traveled a long way and paid hundreds to enter.

Even if you don't normally navigate for your adventure-race team, orienteering is still a great learning experience, training and just plain fun. As orienteering catches on with adventure racers, clubs are offering more nighttime and long-course events. Just be careful if you add orienteering to your race calendar—you may enjoy it just as much as adventure racing.

For more information, visit the US Orienteering Federation at [www.us.orienteering.org](http://www.us.orienteering.org) or Canadian Orienteering Federation at [www.orienteering.ca](http://www.orienteering.ca).

*Keith Lay founded and served as race director for the Berryman Adventure Race from 2001 to 2004.*