

# SUMMIT DAILY NEWS

## Don't get lost! Orienteering comp comes to Frisco

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On Sunday morning, many of the region's best adventure racers could be found at the Frisco Nordic Center on the Frisco peninsula.

Breckenridge's Monique Merrill and Pete Swenson and Silverthorne's Danelle Ballangee were there, as was Vail's Mike Kloser, one of Ballangee's Nike ACG adventure racing teammates.

Running through the woods along with several dozen other people, the accomplished endurance athletes were taking part in an orienteering competition being held by the Rocky Mountain Orienteering Club (RMOC).

Steadily, they each made their way across the peninsula using a map and compass to find checkpoints known as controls, where they used specially designed hole punchers to mark a card.

"It's sort of like adventure racing without all the pain and suffering," said Kloser, who, along with teammate Mike Tobin of Idaho, recently won a 24-hour world championship in the discipline. "If more people tried it, they'd get addicted."

Summit Daily/Reid Williams Thornton resident Andy Nauman and Frisco resident Shauna Henderson get their bearings using map and compass before running to their first checkpoint Sunday in an orienteering meet at the Frisco Peninsula.



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As a form of competition, orienteering has a small but devoted following in America.

Sunday's competition is part of a 17-event schedule of events held on select weekends throughout the year by RMOC. The tour visits towns throughout Colorado including Nederland, Colorado Springs, and a handful of Denver-area venues. The schedule also includes a 10-day tournament in Laramie, Wyo., in August.

"Some of the best terrain is down near Woodland Park and Florrisant Fossil Beds National Monument," said Brendan White, an RMOC member who set the courses used Sunday.

The competition featured seven different courses, five for hikers and two for mountain bikers, ranging in difficulty from beginner to advanced.

For the beginners and the mountain bikers, the courses stayed exclusively on established trails, but for the intermediate and advanced courses, many of the controls were hidden many yards off of the trails.

Each course consisted of between 10 and 15 controls, forming loops that spread out across the peninsula.

Participants used specially designed topographic maps marked with the location of the controls and extremely detailed information about the terrain. They included markings for everything from prominent boulders to the exact location of all 18 of the peninsula's disc golf course baskets.

"It's really just a sport of map reading and decision making," said Frisco's Sharon Crawford, a three-time masters world champion in the discipline.

While the competitions began at 10:30 a.m., they didn't begin like a typical running or



Summit Daily/Reid Williams The routefinders' goal is to reach "control" points, where they punch their route card, then move on to the next.

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bicycling race.

"Each person gets their own individual start time and their own individual finish time," Mil Plant said. "There is no mass start."

Many people did more than one course, such as Breckenridge's Kate Chapman, who started with the bicycle long course and then took on one of the intermediate running courses.

According to Plant, strategy is a big part of orienteering. "The fastest person wins, but if you go too fast, you'll get lost," she said. "So it's a balance between speed and technique."

Added Crawford, "Sometimes you can get very confused and you can make a big-time mistake because of all the cars and buildings." □

In some competitions, a competitor's success can hinge on his or her proficiency at reading the complex array of symbols on the map.

"In Denmark, there are these giant anthills that are on the map," Crawford said.

Competitors can also use particular techniques, such as aiming directly for a prominent feature on the map like a large boulder or a building, then finding the control.

And while Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are becoming common with hikers and mountain climbers around the world, White is convinced they give no advantage.

"I don't know of anyone who has used one, and I really don't think it would help you in any way," he said. "A map and compass is all you really need."

To find out more about the RMOC, visit their Web site at [www.rmoc.org](http://www.rmoc.org).

For complete results of Sunday's competition, check page A19.

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