

Coaching Corner

Pace counting

So now that we are all expert with handrails and attack points where do we go next? Well it is kind of useful to know how far along your handrail you are at any given moment because this gives you an early warning of your impending attack point so we need some method of distance estimation. The easiest way is to pace count. First you need to “calibrate” yourself. Find an O map of a local area (Valley Gardens would be good). The map extract is next to the junction of Harlow Moor Road and Harlow Moor Drive.

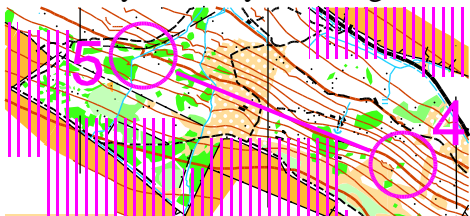


Measure off a 100m stretch of path (done in purple). Go out into the terrain and mark up your 100m start and stop points. Run at your normal pace from the start to the stop and count your paces (count how many times your right foot hits the ground). Repeat two more times. Get a mean average (total foot strikes /3). Now do the whole thing again but this time in the forest (you can just run parallel to the track but a few metres into the forest). You now know how many paces it takes to cover 100m when running. You may also want to repeat the whole thing do get a value for you walking paces so that you can use it in the slower bits of forest. Once out on your course all you have to do is calculate the distance you have travel along your handrail and use simple proportion to turn it into paces. So if

you routinely take 40 paces to cover 100m and you have a 70m leg to do then it will take $70/100 \times 40$ paces i.e 28 paces – Simple. Once you get used to it you will find that your brain can keep a pace count going in background so that you can get on with the rest of the thinking without noticing it. Go out NOW and calibrate yourself! Then practise on all your training runs till it is second nature. Pacing is only really accurate up to about 200m beyond that you need to start again!

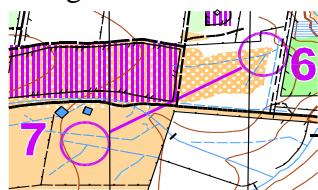
Catching Features

Now, Oh best-beloved, even though you have handrailed and attack pointed and paced you may sometimes overshoot the control(Shock , Horror!) but how will you know? You will use a catching feature! This an obvious feature (so obvious that even a mentally-retarded baboon would notice it) which is located beyond the control. If you hit it you have gone too far...



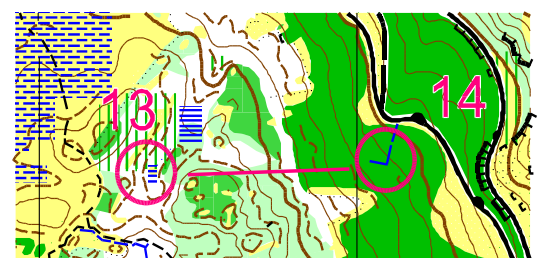
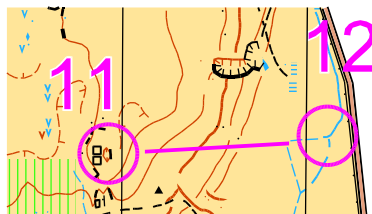
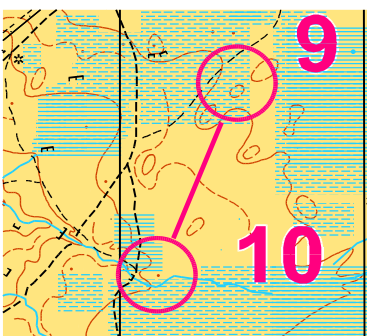
So here when you have hit the stream or the ruined wall you need to relocate and try again! Catching features can make pretty useful attack points if they are close to the control site. Run like the wind to hit the catching feature then relocate and go back to your control. In the example above hit the stream and follow it down to the boulder.

Aiming Off



Aha! I hear you cry “how will I know if I’m above the boulder or below it?” In this case if you always run slightly uphill you will know you are above the boulder for certain so you can turn right when you hit the stream. This is “aiming off”. If you are confident with your compass set a bearing to bring you out to one side of the control so you always know which way to turn when you hit the catching feature. This is a useful technique for controls on line features. From the Track/path junction take a

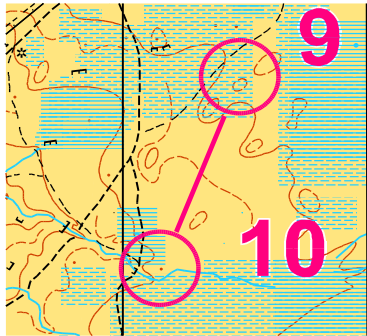
bearing to hit the cross ditch East of the control site so when you hit the cross ditch you know to turn right Now have a look at these (all at 1:10000). Think about how you would tackle each leg and how many paces would it take?



Pacing, Catching features and aiming off.

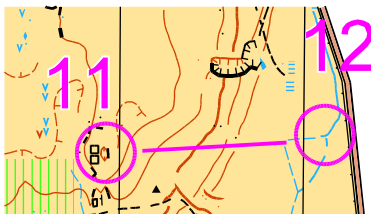
Here are my ideas about the three “problems”.

1.



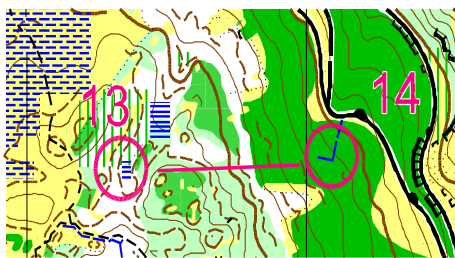
From 9 either run S to hit the stream then turn right (W) along the stream and look for the knoll. Pace count along the stream to act as a check. You are about 100m from the knoll so at 48 paces to 100m that's just 48 paces. (I know it is 48 paces to 100m because I've just planned a level C event on the area and that is what I was doing.) Equally valid is to use the paths to hit the stream and pace count from there. About 20 paces I think.

2.



From 11 run just N of E to hit the single ditch N of the control. Use the ditch as a handrail into the control. Going S of the control there are two ditches so you might get confuddled.

3.



Tricky and horrid. Aim N of E to hit the “green grot” than carry on till you hit either the ditch (good) or the track (less good but OK). Then use the ditch (or the track then the ditch) as a handrail to take you in. The track is a classic catching feature if you hit it you are on “Plan B” - find the ditch but at least you know which way to turn which is a big improvement on a direct bearing where if you miss the control you are lost!

HAVE YOU DONE YOUR PACE COUNT CALIBRATION YET?