

## **Coaching Corner #1**

*This article by Mike Hind first appeared in The Clarion #137 in September 2014 as the first in a series of coaching articles. The answers to the problems are included at the end.*

For some reason Vince thinks that I know something about orienteering (he clearly hasn't looked at many recent results!) and on that basis he has asked me to put together some coaching tips for the grown-ups – so here we go.

I'm going to try to help those of you who spend more time than is strictly necessary “hunting” for controls and we are going back to basics to start with.

### ***Setting and thumbing the map***

OK, we all know that the map needs to be set. Either do it using the ground i.e. line up the path/wall/stream in front of you with the one on the map, or do it with your compass i.e. needle of compass aligned with North lines on the map. The jury is still out on which type of compass is best, with both base-plate and thumb compasses having their adherents but for simple map setting either one will do.

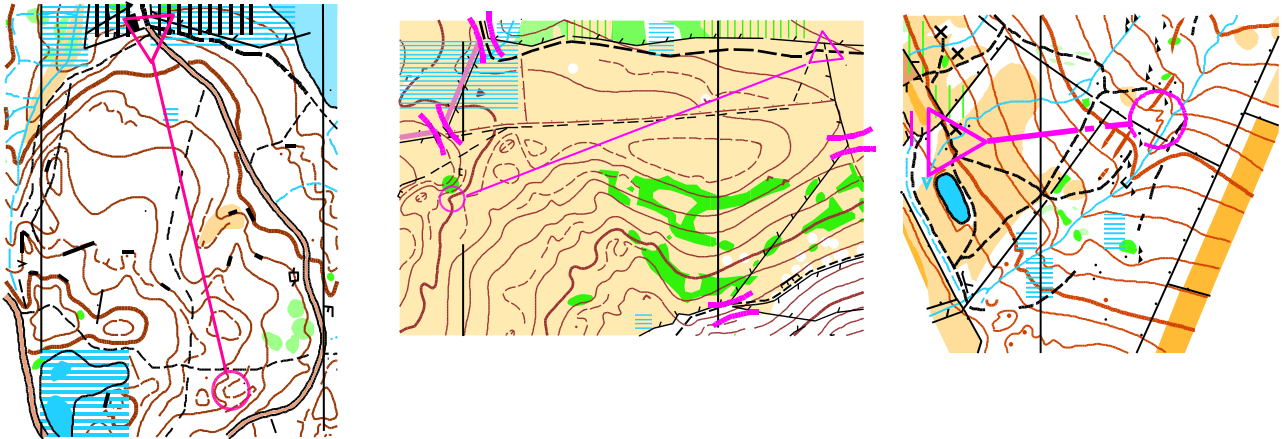
How you hold your map is actually important – it needs to be folded such that you can see the leg you are running and a decent width on either side. Too big, and it flaps about, and you can't easily thumb it, too small and you may fold over important terrain details (like that track you should be running along rather than flogging through this green forest). However you fold it, it needs to remain set and you need to get into the habit of “thumbing”. This is not hitching a lift with a passing, very fast, orienteer but placing your thumb at your last known position. That way you do not have to keep on saying “Now where was I when last I looked at this map?” and losing 10 seconds every time you do it. You will now not be too far from your thumb!

### ***Handrails and Attack Points***

The easiest way to navigate accurately is to use a “handrail”, which is a line feature like a path or a stream or a fence which you can hang on to (sometimes literally if it is an uphill fence). However not all controls are conveniently placed on nice easy line features, so you need to know where to abandon your comfy handrail and go into your control. This point should be a very obvious feature like a bend or a junction or a crossing – this is your Attack Point (AP).

You can run like the wind along your handrail(s) till you hit your AP, but then you **must** slow down and navigate carefully into the control. More mistakes are made here than anywhere else. If you often think “I was good as far as the circle” then you are probably not slowing down enough.

So look at these three re-entrants. For each one pick your handrail and your AP.



Now have another look – are there options? Which one is best?

“And exactly when am I supposed to do all this?” I hear you cry. Well the best time is while you are running along your handrail on the previous leg because you are not having to do much navigation so you have time to think . Similarly whilst running on your chosen handrail on this leg you should be planning your handrail and AP for the next leg. I believe this is called “flow”.

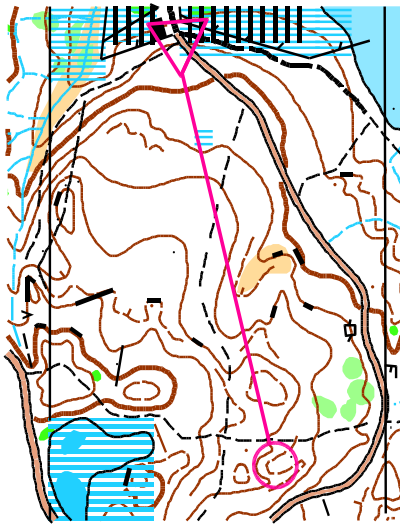
Once the Clarion is out I'll give you a week or so to look at this and then put my thoughts up on the Website. Bear in mind that all this is being written by a man who could get lost in a cupboard.

*Mike Hind*

*Scroll down for the potential answers to the three problems*

## As promised – the answers!

### Problem 1.



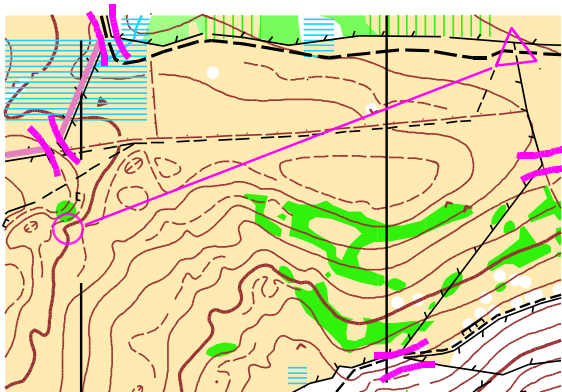
This one is pretty straightforward. Two options:

- Road SEish then small path south to crossing, turn left and use the knoll as your AP.
- Go along the road till you see the thickets on the right then take the small path up to the re-entrant

Which is best? The jury is out. To some extent it depends on how fast you can run as quicker runners will gain time on the road ( and there is less climb this way) but using the path is shorter

and so faster (but there is more climb). Both routes have the problem of spotting where the small path leaves the road so pace count along the road on the path route and use the thickets for guidance on the road route.

### Problem 2.



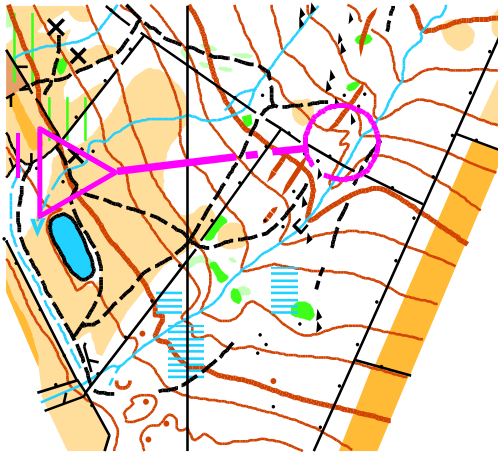
Again there at least two possibilities

- Track to the NS earth bank and follow this to the junction with the EW earth bank. From there take the uphill path just S of E and use either the crag or the thicket as an AP.
- Take the small path up to and along the EW earth bank as far as the

path junction. From there take the uphill path just S of E and use either the crag or the thicket as an AP.

The second option is probably the faster as it is shorter and has the same climb. In both cases if you were feeling confident you could use the path junction as your AP and simply contour in ( i.e. don't gain or lose any height from your AP) from there.

### Problem 3.



Several options here

- Take the path W of N to the wall and follow the wall NE then SE to the path running NEwards. Cross the wall and follow it to the stream which you then follow to the control.
- Take the path heading SE and follow it through the wall swinging round to NE until it ends. Go E to the stream and follow it to the control.
- Take the path heading SE and follow it to the junction just before the wall then take the path heading NE to cross the wall then use the wall and stream to reach the control.
- Take the path heading SE and follow it to the junction just before the wall then take the path heading NE to cross the wall then use the right fork of the path and look for the clearing as an AP.

Any one of these will get you there but the first is longer and you are not certain about the runnability so it is probably slowest. Two and three are both fairly direct but do rely on being able to cross the ruined wall almost anywhere (which may not be true) in which case you could lose time finding a gap. So the last option is the most reliable in that it uses paths for most of the route and although slightly longer it is probably the fastest.

if you have any views on this article you can reach Mike at

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