



**Thames Valley Orienteering Club
Didcot Urban Race 2026
SCOA Sprint Championships
Level C event
27th September 2026**

We are pleased to announce that this event will be the inaugural SCOA Sprint Championships, held in the intricate modern Ladygrove housing estate in Didcot, Oxfordshire. Each entrant will run two races, which will be much shorter and with more controls than typical urban events. Your total time will be the sum of your times for the two races.

- Race HQ in Ladygrove Park, Didcot, just off Tyne Avenue [///splits.ambushes.reclining](http://splits.ambushes.reclining)
- Car parking - Follow signs for Didcot Town FC, OX11 7GA [///boils.tops.reinstate](http://boils.tops.reinstate)
- Online entry available up to 10:30am on race day, subject to map availability.
- Waterproof SRA4 map, scale 1:4000
- SI electronic timing
- Courses close at 14:00
- Shorts and sleeveless tops permitted subject to suitable weather conditions
- Competitors should bring their own water, shops are nearby.
- Adult courses cross roads which will NOT be closed for the race – competitors must give way to other pedestrians and vehicles at all times*
- Course 6 will cross minor cul de sac and estate roads.
- Course 7 contains no road crossings.



Mapping:

Your races will be on two separate maps, Didcot Ladygrove NW and Didcot Ladygrove SE. Both will be printed on SRA4 paper. They are drawn to the latest ISSprOM standard at scale 1:4000 and were revised by Bob and Pattie Beresford in Summer 2026 based on earlier maps.

As a two part event, race A maps will be collected at the finish. Competitors will be available to collect a race A map from Enquiries after the close of race B starts, nominally 13:00.

Benches, tables and bus shelters are not mapped, but some paved areas under tables are mapped.

Special symbols:

Green x denotes fallen tree

Black circle denotes play equipment

Public Transport

We strongly encourage competitors to use public transport wherever possible. This is much easier than for most orienteering events since the start is less than 1km easy walk from Didcot Parkway Station and also lies on National Cycle Route 5.

Terrain Description

This is an urban race mostly on tarmaced surfaces with some areas of grass.

Cracks in ground: due to the dry summer and the nature of the local geology, there are numerous deep cracks in the ground (some over a foot deep). These are mostly very thin, and were all clearly visible at the time of writing. Nonetheless, appropriate care should be taken.

Lifted pavements and paths: Similarly, a number of pavements are in somewhat poor condition with lifted tiles presenting a potential trip hazard.

Bees nest: most courses will visit a control, 10m to the north of which is a small patch of ground with a sign 'bees in ground'. No bees have been observed, and the direct running route past this area does not pass over the affected small area. You should take care to avoid damaging it in any way.

Courses 1 to 5 have many road crossings on which cars may be encountered. However, the entire Ladygrove estate has a 20 m.p.h. speed limit and with the



exception of a small number of key routes, roads have almost no traffic. There are also many paths on which pedestrians, dogs, bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters may potentially be encountered, though we have observed the area to be very quiet. All courses will use fairly large areas of grass parkland, sometimes with steep slopes (which can be avoided by running around if desired).

Courses 1-5 will visit a small area of woodland. At time of writing this is largely clear of undergrowth. It is expected that most runners will want to stay on the paths, consider leg coverings if you would like to keep options open.

Course 6 does not cross any of the key routes but does cross minor cul-de-sac roads with almost no traffic.

Course 7 does not cross any roads on the optimal route. It stays mostly within the area of the two Ladygrove Hills. The courses pass near two fishing lakes, bear this in mind when considering whether to shadow young juniors. Key parts of the lakes have been marked out of bounds - Please respect these – keep your distance and keep any disturbance to an absolute minimum.

Both junior courses 6 and 7 do cross bike and pedestrian paths on which bikes, e-bikes and scooters may potentially be present.



Courses

The courses offered are 1-5 for adults and courses 6 and 7 for juniors. Each course has two races A and B, which will use essentially disjoint areas. The combined length of the courses will be similar to a standard urban, but with more controls. Details of the lengths of these courses are given in the table below.

If you wish to be competitive in the SCOA Championships then you should run your age-class (as listed below) or above. Otherwise, you are welcome to run any course of your choosing, and newcomer adults are welcome to run one of the junior courses.

When selecting a course for your juniors, please read the terrain notes above and consider them carefully.

Course lengths below are optimal distances, subject to final course planning and controlling. The area is essentially flat except for two 10-metre high man-made hills which are partially climbed by some courses, particularly the junior courses.

Course	Length A (km)	Length B (km)	Climb (m)	
1	4.5	4.6	20	Mens Open (M18-M35)
2	3.8	3.9	20	Men Veteran (M40+) Women Open (W18-W35)
3	3.2	3.5	25	Men Super Veteran (M55+) Women Veteran (W40+)
4	3.0	2.6	20	Men Ultra Veteran (M65+) Women Super Veteran (W55+)
5	2.0	2.5	20	Men Hyper Veteran (M75+) Women Ultra Veteran (W65+) Women Hyper Veteran (W75+)
6	1.8	1.3	40	M/W16- Juniors 12-16. Will cross minor culs de sac and estate roads.
7	1.3	1.1	30	M/W12- Juniors 12 and under. Contains no road crossings.



Start Times

The start will be a very short distance to the north of Assembly. There will be one start for all courses.

Race A start times will be from 10:30 to 11:30.

Race B start times from 12:00 to 13:00

Courses close at 14:00

If the short start windows are likely to prove challenging for anyone shadowing juniors, please contact the organiser and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Please note, this is not a heat / group / mass start race. There are no qualification rounds and there is no final.

The finish will be an equally short distance to the south-east of assembly. You **must** download after each of your runs. After your first run (A), we will collect your map so it cannot be seen by other competitors, who may have similar legs on their second run (B).

Starts

When you entered, you will have selected a 15-minute window in which to start your first race. You will start your second race 90 minutes later.

We will use a punching start, but please try to arrive during your window. Runners will depart at 1-minute intervals.

Facilities

Portaloos will be available at Assembly.

White Star Medical will be providing first aid cover.

There is a Co-operative Food market very close to the event as well as the Ladygrove pub.

Dogs

As this event is taking place in a public park dogs may be present, however TVOC's policy is that dogs are not permitted on courses.



Further Information

Etiquette and behaviour: Orienteers must be aware of, give way to and be courteous towards members of the public encountered on their courses, most of whom will live in the area we are using for the event. Failure to do this could jeopardise our use of the area. Under no circumstances should any runner cut corners over private garden areas, or enter any area marked as out of bounds (olive green) on the map.

The assembly/start/finish are opposite a children's playground; please bear this in mind when getting changed ready for your run and afterwards.

Officials

Organiser (Advance): Peter Rose, TVOC (prose.tvoc@gmail.com)

Organiser (On the day): Lawrence Jones, TVOC

Planner: Ben Green, TVOC

Controller: Katy Stubbs, BKO