

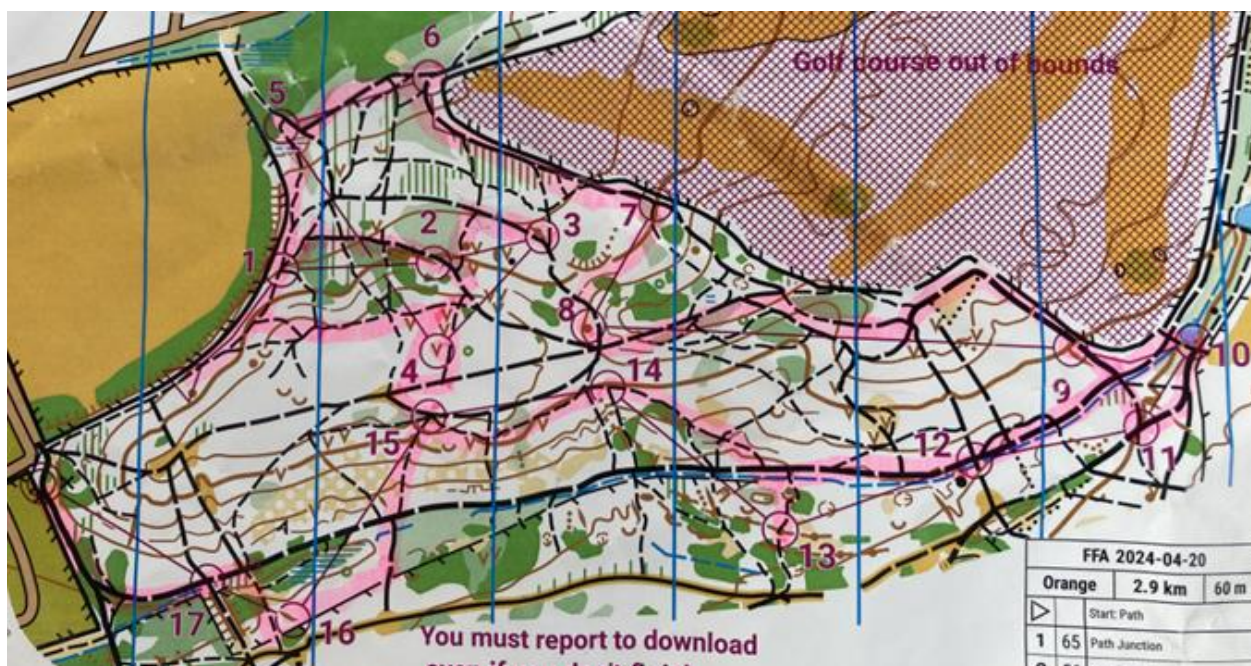
Weekend of 20/21 April by Ben Seaston

I started 2024 by doing a number of Light Green and Green courses to improve my technical skills but realised that this had come at the expense of my competitiveness on Orange courses, so I decided to do Orange courses on both Saturday and Sunday this weekend. I was trying to work on my focus and taking a few extra seconds where necessary to avoid losing minutes in mistakes.



Saturday 20th April 2024: SN local event at Frimley Fuel Allotments

A small, hilly area with a complex path network. 1:5,000 map so I knew that I'd fly across the map. I studied a Routegadget map of the area the night before and used the contours to visualize the shape of the land.



I was up against a whole assortment of juniors and adults today but none of my main Southern M12 friends/rivals. Tomorrow will be very different.

- Control 1: straight along path, full speed.
- Control 2: Took a few moments to check path junction as it appeared before I expected.
- Control 3: Took path to North then East.
- Control 4: Retraced my steps almost back to C2. Went to path junction just north of C4. Went along an unmapped path and ended up at C15. Went North using compass to get C4. Lost about 90 seconds.
- Control 5: Paths were confusing and I hit a T-junction with a fence opposite. Followed path South, saw C1 for confirmation and got to C5. Lost 40 seconds.
- Control 6: Easy path route.
- Control 7: Along paths, set fastest leg time by 30 seconds.
- Control 8: Cut across woodland using compass and contours, no problems.

- Control 9: Control 8 mapped as being near a junction of 5 major paths, but could only see 3 on the ground. Lost about 50 seconds checking that I was on the right path because map didn't seem to fit the ground.
- Controls 10, 11, 12 – all yellow course standard, easy pickings.
- Control 13: Along track to West and found correct turn-off up to C13. Planned to use fence south of track as catching feature but didn't need it.
- Control 14: Back North to track then first path Northwest to control.
- Control 15: Along path.
- Control 16: South along paths until saw fence then West to control.
- Control 17: Easy control
- Fastest on run-in even though a dog cost me 10 seconds.

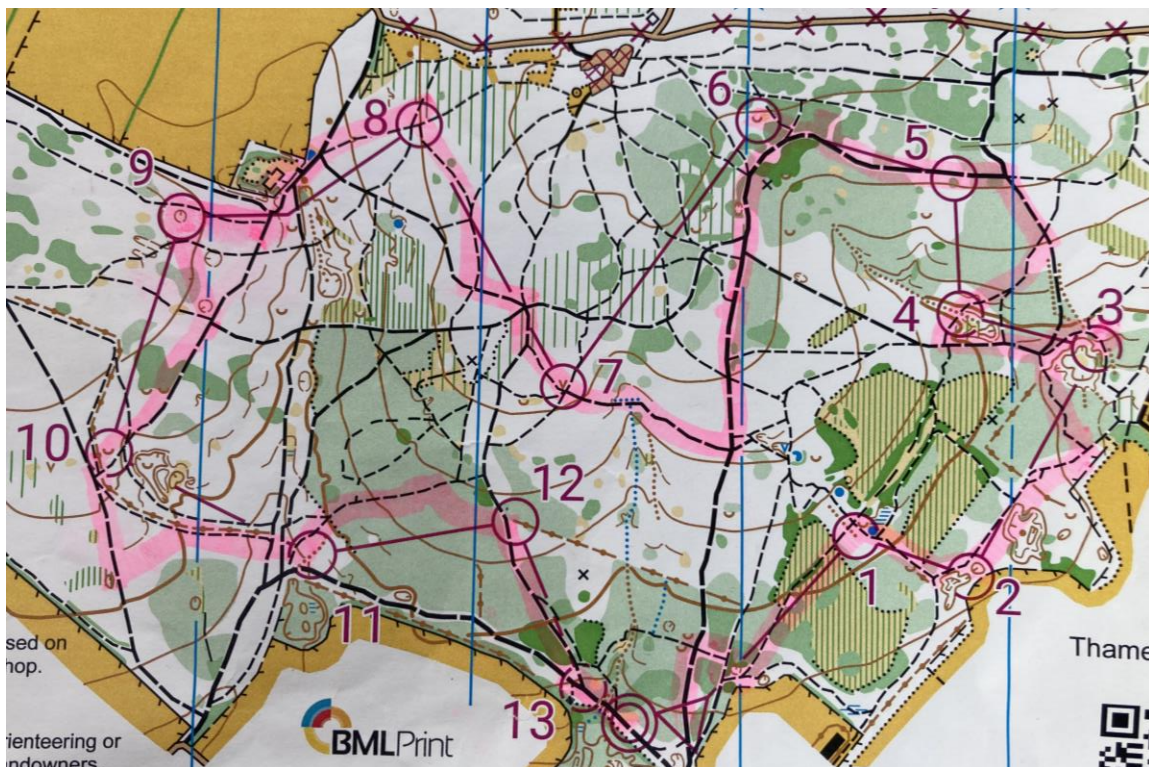
Took 31:46 overall, 2nd behind an M40 but nearly 9 minutes ahead of the other 15 runners. Lost about 3 minutes in total. Reasonably happy with that given the confusing path network, including unmapped paths.

Sunday 21st April 2024: TVOC Regional event at Hodgemoor Woods and SCOA Yvette Baker qualifier

A very different set of competitors to yesterday. I was up against all of my main Southern M12 friends/rivals.

A lovely area in the Chilterns, again with a complex path network. Bluebells in full bloom at this time of year.

I did an orange course here at a local event exactly 6 months ago so I studied my previous map the night before, recalled where path junctions had previously led to errors and visualized the shape of the land using the contours.



3.3k 55m climb and 13 controls.

- Control 1: Changed my plan for the better. North up track, East on path then across to small path that leads directly to C1. Lost (invested) 40 seconds checking and being cautious.
- Control 2: Took path, no time lost.
- Control 3: Went along path. There were lots of unmapped paths. I went on a mapped path but not the one I intended, realised quickly, lost 40 seconds.
- Control 4: West along paths, then along NE path.
- Control 5: Easy control along paths.
- Control 6: West along track, turned North up a couple of unmapped paths but realized very quickly. Only lost a handful of seconds.
- Control 7: South along major track. A lot of paths coming off so spent time to ensure that I got the right one. Control 7 is the area where I lost time 6 months ago – but no problems today.
- Controls 8 and 9: Took the right paths, no time lost.
- Control 10: Cut through woods onto track using rough compass, orientated map to ensure on right track.
- Control 11: Couldn't see the small paths, followed main track South, realized path was too straight and cut across to correct path. My biggest mistake, lost c.1 minute.
- Control 12: Along path until unmapped junction. Stopped and took the wrong path, which cut the corner straight to the control – got a bit lucky there.
- Control 13: easy, fastest time by 5 seconds.

Took 32:57 for 3.3k, cf. 59:48 for 3.4k 6 months ago. Came 2nd out of 25, behind an M14 but ahead of 14 M/W 12/14s, including a 2 times M12 Southern Champion who I had never previously beaten.

Summary

2 good runs where I executed my plan to take the seconds to save the minutes.

I'm happy with my improved focus and enjoyed the courses.

Results for Frimley can be found [here](#)

Results for Hodgemoor can be found [here](#)