



Scottish Night Orienteering Championships 2026

Final Information



We're delighted to see the sun here in Deeside today and the weather look dry for tomorrow but it will be very cold with -2°C expected at 6pm. We also have snow at higher levels, so please be prepared with appropriate clothing/footwear.

Deeside has experienced four times the average rainfall this year, causing numerous potholes on all routes, allow plenty time for your journey and expect to get your feet wet out on course!

Currently the Braemar, Glenshee and Cockbridge Snow Gates are open, however the Cairn O'Mount Gates remain closed – please check before you start your journey:
www.snowgatecameras.co.uk.

Key Information

- Strictly no Competitor parking at Burn O'Vat.
- Competitors must travel on buses from the Event Centre at Victoria Hall, Ballater.
- Access to Victoria Hall no earlier than 4.30pm. First bus at 5.30pm, takes 12/15 mins.
- Kit check will be carried out in Victoria Hall - required before boarding bus.
- Kit check requires: Dibber, Whistle, Head Torch, Spare Head Torch, Full Leg and Torso Cover, Cagoule or Warm Layer, phone.
- There will be a manned Clothing Dump adjacent to the Bus Drop Off for bags/coats etc.
- Red Start 800m from Bus Drop Off – allow 20 mins. Start window 6.30 – 7.45pm
- Blue Start 50m across road – allow 5 mins. Start window 7.00pm – 7.30pm
- Please adhere to your allocated start time.
- Courses close at 9.30pm.
- Controls are SI Air Enabled but Start and Finish controls must be punched.
- Courses 1 to 5 have an untimed, marshalled road crossing – please give way to vehicles.
- Haydn's Wood Fired Pizza Van will be on site afterwards at the Victoria Hall. We will also have hot drinks available. There will be plenty of tables/chairs available in the hall.
- Please stay and support the Prizegiving which will be as soon as possible after 9.30pm.
- We will have Live results available on the night. The web link for results is:
<https://www.marocscotland.org.uk/latest-results>.
- **YOU MUST REMEMBER TO DOWNLOAD AT THE VICTORIA HALL EVENT CENTRE.**

Event Centre

Event Centre is the Victoria Hall, Station Square, Ballater. AB35 5QB. Here you will find space for a bag drop, toilets, dibber collection and somewhere warm to wait to be transported to the Burn O'Vat Visitor Centre.

Buses will be ready to return competitors to Ballater after their run. Shelter and warm drinks will be available as you wait. Remember not to leave any rubbish or belongings on the buses.

Parking

Strictly no competitor parking at the Burn O'Vat car park or in the vicinity. Ballater has good on street parking and nearby Church Square Car Park, AB35 5NE.

Burn O'Vat Visitor Centre

At the Burn O'Vat Visitor Centre there are public toilets, shelter tents, First Aid station and a manned clothing dump – please make sure to pick up your belongings after your run. Warm-up maps will be handed out during the bus journey.

Courses close at 9.30pm. Organisers/Planners phone numbers will be printed on the map – please don't hesitate to contact us if you, or another competitor gets into difficulty.



Courses

Classes conform to 2026 SOA Night Champs Rules & Guidelines

Course	Km	Climb	Controls	Classes	Scale	Start
C1	9.6 km	270m	24	MO	1:10,000	Red
C2	6.6 km	170m	18	MV(40+) W20 WO	1:10,000	Red
C3	5.0 km	130m	17	M18 MSV(55+) WV(40+)	1:7,500	Red
C4	3.7 km	75m	14	M16 MUV(65+) W18 WSV(55+)	1:7,500	Red
C5	2.7 km	50m	10	MHV(75+) W16 WUV(65+) WHV(75+)	1:7,500	Red
C6	2.2 km	60m	8	Novice	1:7,500	Blue

Courses 01 to 05 are Technical Difficulty 5 (TD5). Course 06 is TD3, equivalent to an Orange Course. Under 16s will require to be shadowed. All courses have the same finish.

All competitors must be capable of navigating at night to the technical standards of their course.

If your SI unit fails to register in contactless mode, you should revert to 'dibbing'.

Registration/Enquiries

All entrants must have pre-registered beforehand and there will be no entry on the night. Hire SI cards can be collected from the Event Centre. Competitors must undergo a kit check in the event centre prior to boarding the shuttle bus.

Safety

The area is very wet following several weeks of persistent rain. Expected low temperatures will mean ice and possibly snow on higher ground. On all courses you will meet the usual slip and trip hazards. Shoes with good grip are recommended.

The safety bearing is East before the B9119 road crossing for Courses 1 – 5 and West after the road crossing and for Course 6 (Novice).

If you wish to declare a medical condition or other vulnerability you may leave a note at Enquiries in the Victoria Hall in a sealed envelope and retrieve it afterwards. The envelope will not be opened unless you trigger our Missing Runner Procedure or Casualty Procedure.

Depressions will be filled with water, so controls have been placed at the end of these features rather than the middle.

Map

The map is ISOM17, 5m contours, updated in Autumn 2025 for vegetation from the earlier 2013/2014 map by Jon Musgrave of Deeside Orienteering and Leisure Maps (DOLM).

Scales are 1:10,000 for courses 01 & 02 and 1:7,500 for courses 03 to 06, all with 5m contours.

Control descriptions will be printed on the front of the map and loose descriptions will be provided at the start. Blank maps in start lane. Maps are printed on waterproof paper.

There will be event official contact numbers printed on the map, should assistance be required.

Previous versions of the Muir of Dinnet map can be viewed on Routegadget [2025-01-08 Muir o Dinnet DNC](https://www.routegadget.com/routes/2025-01-08-Muir-of-Dinnet-DNC)

Blank copies of the competition map will be displayed at the Event Centre along with a map of the warmup area/route to the start.

Terrain

East of the road the contours are all depositional moraine with rounded hills, depressions, spurs



and re-entrants. Height difference is 10-15m across this section of the map. There are few rock features and several paths and tracks with old fields in one part. Several large flat marshes criss-cross the area and these are out-of-bounds (and will be marked as such on the maps). Smaller marshes are not OOB so may be crossed. *Some depressions will have standing water and could appear as lochans.* Vegetation varies from birch and pine with mixed undergrowth to heathery areas with slower going. Bracken occurs in small and large areas, larger areas are marked with green stripes

but with the recent heavy snow fall these areas offer easier going than areas of heather.

West and north of the road the ground rises steadily 150m+. There are plenty of boulders, crags, some large and a few patches of boulders or stony ground. *On the map rock features are generally 1m+ though smaller prominent rock features are mapped in places.* Contours vary from smooth slopes to detailed erosion spurs and re-entrants. Few paths, though two power lines cross the area. Few streams or marshes. Vegetation varies from fast pine forest to birch woodland and semi-open hillsides. Undergrowth varies from almost nothing to deep heather and some areas of bracken – again much faster running than in the heather.

There are several large areas of windblow. These are marked on the map with green “T” symbol. The density on the map gives an indication of penetrability. *The windblow symbol should be used to gauge runnability and not for detailed navigation.* Courses have been planned to avoid needing to venture into the worst areas, however you are likely to encounter individual fallen trees across several parts of the area.

B9119 - This road will need to be crossed during all courses. Please take care crossing, you undertake crossing the road at your own risk. **Running along the road is prohibited and anyone spotted doing this will be disqualified.** Courses have been planned as much as possible to avoid an advantage being gained by running along this road.

Timing

Sportident Touch Free Enabled timing will be used. Start and Finish units must be punched. Reflectors on stakes with an SI Unit will be used (see right) to mark control locations. Standard red/white kites will only be present (in addition to a reflector) at the start triangle and finish.



Starts

Start times will be available on Slentries. There are two starts, the Red and the Blue Start. The Red Start will be signed following reflective canes from the Burn O'Vat Visitor Centre for 900 m along a forest track and should take approx. 15-20 minutes. The Blue start is 50 m from the Visitor Centre and will cross the road.

For the Red Start, the start window is from 6.30 – 7.45 pm.

There will be a 4 minute call up procedure:

- On arrival: Clear, check, Slac test
- 4 mins: Name Call, enter -4 box.
- 3 mins: Pick up control description
- 2 mins: Blank Maps to view
- 1 min: Handheld check, pick up map

Punching start for all.

There will not be a call up for the Blue Start. The start window is from 7.00 to 7.30 pm.

Finish

All courses have the same finish. Once you have punched at finish control, cross road to Assembly/Bus Pick Up Point. The crossing will be marshalled but please take care.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ALL COMPETITORS DOWNLOAD AT THE EVENT CENTRE, WHETHER THEY COMPLETED THEIR COURSE OR NOT.

First Aid

Active First Aid Scotland will be located at the Burn O'Vat Visitor Centre. A First Aid Kit will be held at the Victoria Hall Event Centre and one at the Red Start, otherwise contact the Enquiries in Event Centre or call either mobile number printed on the map.

Officials

Planner: Jordan Matthews/Jon Musgrave

Controller: Paul Duley

Organisers: Caz Dudley/Pat Graham

Entries/Results: Keith Roberts

Many thanks to Edward Humphrey and Dinnet Estate along with Simon Ritchie and Scottish Natural Heritage allowing us to use this fantastic area and for being so helpful in the run up to the event.

We are also very grateful to our numerous Maroc volunteers and families who have given their time to help make the event a success.