

If Cadets is the best-kept secret in Canada, then orienteering is the best-kept secret in Cadets. Or should we say it *was* the best-kept secret?

Orienteering: A best-kept secret?

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Capt Mike
Wionzek observes a
unit orienteering
team at the finish
control line.

It is no longer a secret in Central Region, specifically in Central Ontario Area (COA), which has conducted an annual orienteering competition since 2002. This event has grown steadily from 42 cadets participating in the first year to more than 150 last year. This success has inspired our region to conduct orienteering competitions in all four areas, beginning this fall. It has also inspired the region to share what it has learned.

A large part of our success is our strong partnership with Orienteering Ontario. Orienteering Ontario volunteers provide technical expertise by setting up courses, providing maps, assisting with registration and maintaining statistics for competition.

When COA conducts competitions, local corps/squadrons promote them and provide logistical support, such as pre-registering competitors, looking after lunch and arranging for safety vehicles and support staff. The region has provided medals and plaques for the past two years, and the detachment increased its level of support after the first year when it

recognized the value of orienteering.

Building on the success of previous years, Central Region will be using COA's model for its other three areas—appointing area co-ordinators who will hire staff to organize and conduct competitions. By doing so, the region will ensure that all four area competitions will be conducted under the same conditions so that the top teams and individuals qualify to compete at the first annual regional orienteering championship in April 2007.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- There is a sizeable difference between orienteering and military navigation. Although both activities are usually timed events and make use of maps and compasses, orienteering is typically 95 percent map-reading and five percent compass-use, while traditional map and compass is closer to a 50-50 split between the two skills. In orienteering, CIC officers and cadets often overuse their acquired map and compass skills, wasting valuable time by standing

still rather than moving towards their control marker.

- Orienteering is a great activity for all three elements. Navigation is a skill taught in all three elements, and although the Orienteering Instructors course offered by regional cadet instructors schools is intended for army and air officers only, most schools have permitted sea officers to attend the course, provided the desire exists to build or maintain an orienteering program within their corps or training centre.

Our orienteering competitions feature both team and individual events, with every cadet having an opportunity to participate in each. They are designed to accommodate both novice and experienced cadets. Although we encourage each corps/squadron to send at least one team, those who cannot may still send individual cadets who have a chance to advance to the regional championship.

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