

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)

Campus Compass Course

A local orienteering club brings students

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Some of the students wandering around Sunday afternoon weren't looking for their Monday classes - they were following an orienteering course.

This course, set up as part of National Orienteering Day, was facilitated by the Oregon Cascades Orienteering Klubb.

"It's a sport or activity where you find your way around," said Klubb member Dave Derlacki.

"This is a real good thing to do before school starts because you see all the parts of campus that you don't usually see," said Klubb co-founder Paula Whipple.

Orienteering maps are unlike topographical and road maps, but have similarities to each. Maps used for an orienteering course are oriented to magnetic north (unlike topographical maps, which are oriented to true north) and have specific colors and keys for different features.

Dense vegetation is dark green, open spaces are yellow. It is up to those completing the course to find the fastest path through or around the obstacles that lie ahead.

The students navigating the course did not need to use a compass, but organizers had turned a table into a giant compass by orienting a large laminated arrow to magnetic north.

Competitors raced to different locations and punched sheets of paper to identify where they had been. Not only were they required to punch all 13 boxes, but they had to get them in the right order too.

The location markers, seen around campus Sunday, are orange and white triangular flags with CDs attached to the top and a paper punch attached to the bottom.

Each paper punch had a different pattern of metal spikes to mark the paper.

Computer science sophomore Nathan White, who chose to run the course like most competitors do, finished in 29 minutes and 35 seconds. Derlacki predicted that other students would finish in about an hour.

"As a student they are learning their way around campus," Derlacki said.

White, who competed last year, had done orienteering in the past with his Boy Scout Troop. He is also considering joining the local Klubb.

"It's a good way to keep in shape," White said.

The maps for the course directed students from the Valley Library Quad, to as far as the Forest Sciences Lab and back to Snell Hall and the library clock tower.

13 groups started the race and most said that they learned a lot about places on campus that they don't usually go.

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