How to do Micro O'
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The Micro O' courses are intended to provide an opportunity to practice "flow", the technique of moving smoothly through controls. Saving 5 to 10 seconds per control can be significant over the length of the course. There are many other factors that contribute to lost time, but this is an easy one to master.

To prepare to run these courses, get a copy of the relevant description sheet and put it in your description sheet holder. Use your compass. I also encourage you to wear your e-punch finger stick. In other words, treat this like a competitive course - how you play in practice is how you play in the game.

The goal is to develop and practice a standard procedure – a sequence of actions – that is **the same** for each control. I try to do the following, ***without stopping***, beginning as I approach the control marker:
- check the control code on my description sheet
- confirm my ***relative*** direction of departure
- set my map for the next leg
- punch the control, checking the code as I do so
- look at my map, turn to face my departure direction, look up

I begin the above sequence as soon as I see the marker (or the feature I'm confident it's behind). Other sequences are valid and I encourage you to find one that works for you. Ideally this sequence becomes a strong habit requiring little thought.

<u>Direction of departure</u> Choose your route to the next control (and read its description!) before you get to the current control. Know how you are going to start the leg to the next control – what ***compass*** direction will you go as you leave this control? Then, as you approach this control, translate that compass direction into a ***relative*** direction – *e.g.*, "ahead and to the right". Readjust how you hold the map so that your initial direction of travel on the map is straight forward on the paper (at this point your map might not be oriented, a rare exception to the rule "always keep you map oriented"). As you leave this control ***check*** your compass heading – it takes just a second or two to do so and can save minutes of distress.

<u>Check the code *as* you punch</u> Rarely is there a penalty for punching a control you didn't need to. Most of the time it will be the correct control so don't spend extra time checking before punching. If it turns out to be the wrong control, *then* **STOP** and figure out where you are (which is a whole 'nuther topic).

For the Micro O' we use pin flags with paper control codes attached. I encourage you to go through the motions of punching an imaginary punch box with your e-punch finger stick, you can even say "flash" as you do (kind of like playing an air guitar, only more athletic).

During an actual event, I encourage you to get in the habit of looking for the light flash instead of relying on the beep. In noisy environments it might not be possible to hear the beep. Also, there have been instances of competitors hearing the beep from an adjacent box (as it was being punched by someone else) and assuming it was theirs – but their punch didn't register (no beep) and they ended up being disqualified.

A way to make Micro O' a bit more challenging: With a friend, prepare both maps, back to back (or whatever). Start at the same time, one of you runs Micro 1 then Micro 2 while the other runs Micro 2 then Micro 1 – see who finishes first!

I am interested in hearing how this works for you. Thank you for giving it a try.

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