

# Orienteering

**Origin** – The original use of orienteering was to get messages through unfamiliar areas for military purposes. Competitive orienteering was founded in Scandinavia and was first done on skis. After WWI, on March 25, 1919, orienteering became a recognized sport, and in the 1960's improvements in map technology boosted its popularity. Since then orienteering has widely grown into a serious and competitive sport and also one of enjoyment. The *Eco Challenge*, on *The Discovery Channel*, incorporates this skill into its 300+ mile race, which is considered the toughest race in the world. Without this skill participants are in serious risk of injury or death.

## Terminology

- **Orienteering** – The art of navigation through an unknown area using a map and compass as a guide.
- **Compass** – Used to determine geographic direction using the magnetic field of the earth.
- **Map** – A representation, usually on a plane surface, of a region.
- **Cardinal Points** – N, S, E, W
- **Degrees**<sup>°</sup> – A unit of measurement starting from North going clockwise with 360 units.
- **Bearing** – Measuring the direction in degrees from where you are to where you want to go.
- **Course** – Direction from point A to point B.
- **Aiming Off** – Following the compass guide.
- **Contours** – Shape of the land in vertical height.
- **Scale** – Rate of reduction.

- **The Three Norths:**
  - **Magnetic North** – The direction in which the needle points on the compass, the magnetic pole.
  - **True North** – The actual direction of the North Pole and can be ignored for all practical purposes by the orienteer.
  - **Grid North** – The direction in which all the vertical grid lines point on an Ordnance Survey map.

