



Summary of National Junior Safety Handbook, entitled
Recognizing, Reducing and Responding to Misconduct in Our Sport
And Creating a Healthy, Supportive Environment for Junior Orienteers

*A product of the Junior Safety Committee of Orienteering USA
with assistance from the US Olympic Committee and its program, SafeSport.*

Adults working with juniors need to prevent bullying, harassment and hazing, as well as emotional, physical and sexual misconduct. All of these are intolerable and harmful. The SafeSport video training is a first step in educating all of us in defining the problem and how to deal with it. The absence of clear behavioral boundaries is a significant risk factor for misconduct. If inappropriate conduct is not clearly defined, unacceptable situations may otherwise be tolerated and no action taken. An athlete protection policy creates a safe and positive environment for athletes. It also emphasizes and sets forth standards of behavior that clearly outline unacceptable behaviors, minimize opportunities for misconduct, and help to prevent unfounded allegations.

Staff members, volunteers, athletes and participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include:

- 1) **BULLYING** An intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership. These include behaviors such as: hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping; or throwing at, or hitting an athlete with, objects, including any type of orienteering gear. Bullying also includes such behaviors as teasing, ridiculing, intimidating, spreading rumors or making false statements using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate (“cyber bullying”).
- 2) **HARASSMENT** A repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, offend or degrade, create a hostile environment or reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability.
- 3) **HAZING** Coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group’s members.
- 4) **PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT** Contact or noncontact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to cause, physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants, any act or conduct described as physical abuse. Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, teambuilding, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance. High-fives and side hugs celebrating a good race are not considered physical misconduct. A specific policy addressing alcohol consumption is included.
- 5) **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT** Any touching or nontouching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual, forced, coerced, manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. Any sexual interaction between an athlete and where there is an imbalance of power is always inappropriate. Note: An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete. All sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited. Touching offenses include fondling and any sexual contact. There also should be no discussing of sex lives, exchange of sexual pictures, and similar behaviors.
- 6) **EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT** Any verbal or physical act that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to the athlete, which includes denial of attention or support. Emotional misconduct includes insults or repeated derogatory remarks, repeated yelling or banging, throwing items, and other “acting out” behaviors.



Every Responsible Adult and Junior Captain must act to protect our Juniors. Everyone must be aware of high-risk activities and areas, appropriate one-to-one interactions and prohibited one-to-one interactions and take measures if there are issues.

During training and competition, one-to-one interactions should be minimized to create a safe environment and to protect athletes and leaders. Individual meetings should generally occur in publicly visible, open areas such as spectator areas, pavilions, parking lots, hotel lobbies or restaurants. If a meeting occurs in a room, the door should remain unlocked and ajar. If a person is given individual training sessions, it should be with different coaches so that there isn't time for an individual to "groom" someone toward inappropriate behavior. Generally, the "rule of three" should be used: one adult with more than one junior or one junior with more than one adult.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT takes place in public with no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies. Physical contact is to be only for the benefit of the athlete, not the emotional or other need of an adult. Appropriate physical contact includes such things as positioning an athlete's body so that they more quickly acquire an athletic skill, get a better sense of where their body is in space, or improve their balance and coordination, positioning an orienteer's fingers and thumbs on a map with a compass, releasing muscle cramps, removing a tick or thorn from a location the athlete cannot reach or taping an ankle.

It is always appropriate to express the joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts such as high-fives, fist bumps, brief hugs and pats on the back. It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes publicly embracing a crying athlete, putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down or lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and "dusting them off" to encourage them to continue competition.

Inappropriate contact includes such things as asking or having an athlete sit in the lap, lingering or repeated embraces of athletes that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact, physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete, "cuddling" or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay, tickling or "horseplay" wrestling or any continued physical contact that makes an athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed verbally or not.

Changing Areas for orienteering athletes is an issue. Common sense should rule and no recording device should be used. One adult should not be changing in proximity to one youth, especially out of a public area, and males and females should dress and undress in separate areas.

When an individual is not abiding by the norms of behavior, their actions **MUST** be reported to a supervisor or member of the Junior Safety Committee. Violations will be addressed under our Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

Basically, juniors should feel safe. If they feel that something is strange or "not right" they should be encouraged to discuss this with other responsible adults or team leaders. If situations are discussed before they become real issues, then everyone will be safe. You, as a chaperone or leader involved in working with juniors, are on the front line of keeping our kids safe. It is important that you act if you feel that something is not right. Small things may be part of a larger problem. Don't just sweep things under the rug. Talk with someone about your concerns: the coach, a member of the Safety Committee or another responsible adult. This must be done confidentially but it must be done. We are very concerned about the safety of our junior orienteers and everyone must work toward their safety.

SPORTS

Orienteering's Key to Winning: Not Getting Lost

By **SAM BORDEN** JULY 8, 2015

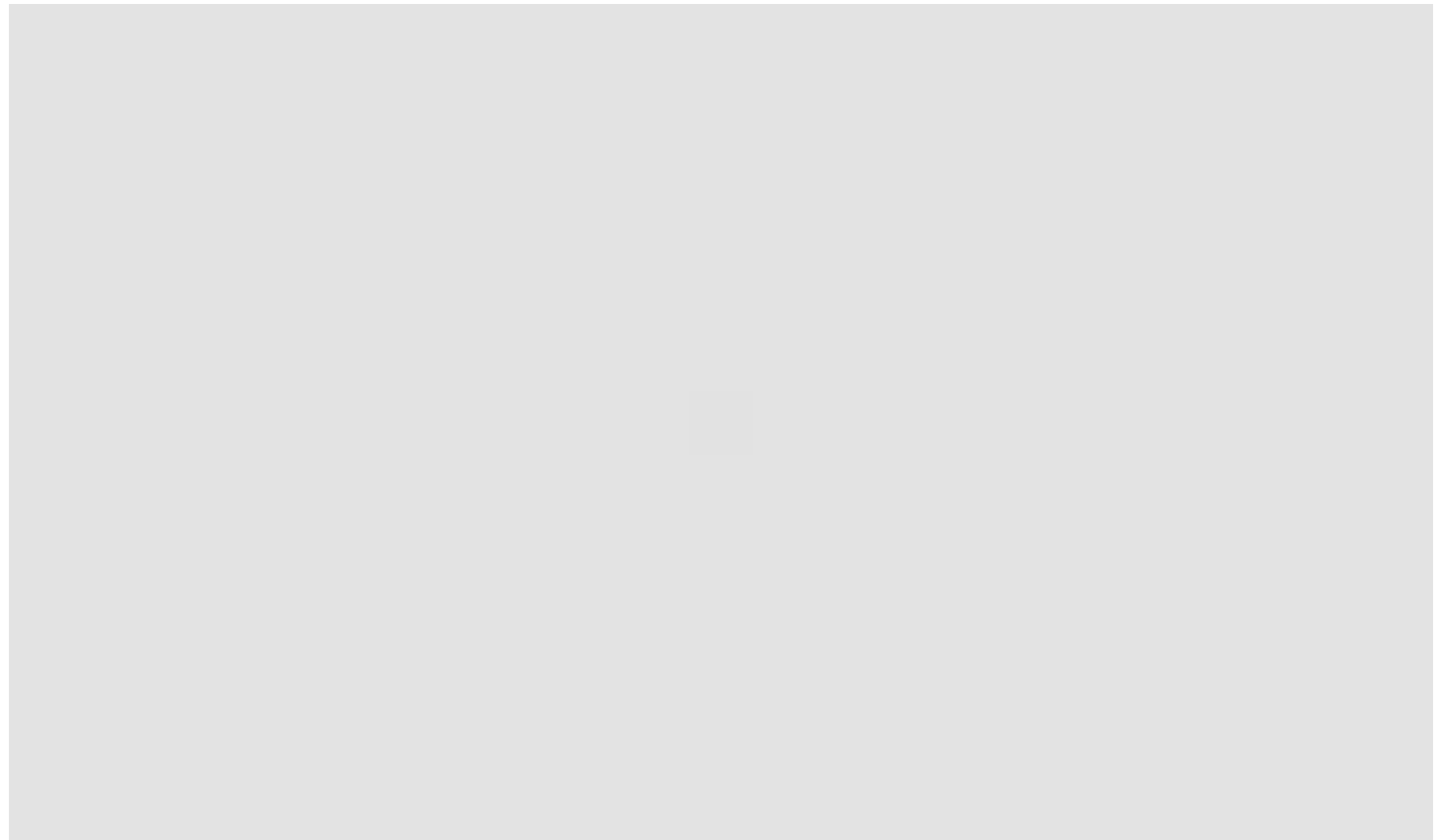


Thierry Gueorgiou, left, and Annika Billstam, his girlfriend, trained at Harriman State Park near Stony Point, N.Y. Andrew Spear for The New York Times

UPPSALA, Sweden — About 100 yards inside one entrance of the Lunsen forest is a rock ledge formed millenniums ago when all of Scandinavia was covered by ice. A thicket of bushes lines the near edge of a gully that drops down 15 feet. On the far edge, a group of trees rises, like fingers splayed wide, providing the false impression that they are not so far away when in fact, a steep fall awaits anyone who steps off the precipice. To the side of the ledge is a medium-size stone.

“So look,” Thierry Gueorgiou said one afternoon, pausing just before the ledge and pointing to a folded map. “See that rock? It is this tiny, little black dot here. And so we must go down the other side.”

With that, Gueorgiou — a lanky Frenchman with a perpetual bounce — was off again, his sneakers crunching over branches. His voice rose in excitement as he explained that the key to his dominance in the sport known as orienteering was an innate ability to quickly convert a two-dimensional piece of paper with a variety of symbols on it into a three-dimensional route through the woods.



Orienteering is a cross-country race that requires a map, a compass and a pair of running shoes. By Mac William Bishop, Michael Kirby Smith and Eugene Yi on July 8, 2015. Photo by Andrew Spear for The New York Times.
[Watch in Times Video » \Hrd. ##bnlj" a g#%J rV81 `](#)

He passed a gap in the trees. "Crisscross," he said, tapping the little symbol on his map. Then came an open field of tall grass. "Shaded light green," he said. "And also orange, because it's a clearing."

It went on. The dirt trail was a black dotted line. A small pond was colored blue.

Gueorgiou, 36, has won 12 world championships in orienteering, a sport with several disciplines but, in its purest form, one that is largely based on athletes running over courses of varying terrain with only a map and a compass to guide them toward a series of checkpoints.

During the world championships in the Scottish Highlands in August, Gueorgiou will be seeking to win a 13th title that, he said, would "be a dream for me." It could also cap a career that began when he was a little boy and his father sketched a map of the local schoolyard before sending Gueorgiou and his friends crawling over every crevice of their playground.

"It is just this automatic part of his mind," said Gueorgiou's girlfriend, Annika Billstam, who is a top orienteer as well. "He always wants to be in charge of the route. When we are driving somewhere, even if he is the one driving and I have the map, he will keep asking: 'Can I see the map now? Let me see it.' "

Gueorgiou is the closest thing to a celebrity in orienteering, one of just a few athletes who can make a living as a professional through sponsorships and other agreements. He estimates that he earns about 50,000 euros, or roughly \$55,000, per year, which "just about covers all the training and other expenses," he said.



Gueorgiou at Harriman State Park in New York. He conceded that “the end of my career is definitely nearing.” Andrew Spear for The New York Times

The sport, which has its roots in Sweden, has many forms — canoe orienteering, mountain-bike orienteering — as well as many disciplines within each form. In foot orienteering, for example, events are most often held in forests or other natural terrain, but they can also be run through metropolitan areas, which is known as urban orienteering, or Street-O.

Gueorgiou has won seven of his world titles in the discipline known as middle, which usually covers a natural course of about six kilometers, or 3.7 miles, and sends competitors past 20 to 25 checkpoints over about half an hour. He is also the two-time defending world champion in the long, or classic, competition, which involves navigating a course closer to 15 kilometers, or 9.3 miles.

By rule, he is not allowed to train in the area that will be used for the world championship courses in Scotland next month, but he is planning to hold a training camp nearby soon to help himself acclimate to the Scottish terrain.

“That long grass, the heather — it is always quite wet and quite difficult,” he said.

Since orienteering courses are generally whatever the competitors make of them, the easiest way for fans of the sport to track racers is through GPS signals. Fans who attend races like the world championships can typically do so from the finish area — the one place that the athletes, who can use only a compass that attaches to their thumb and their map, are sure to appear at the end of a run.

Just because there are not overflowing grandstands around the courses, however, does not mean that there is not drama. On various occasions while orienteering, Gueorgiou has confronted a bear (“It was alarming”); been carried away from a competition by helicopter after accidentally swallowing a bee (he is allergic); and stopped in the middle of a race to rip off his shirt and use it as a tourniquet after one of his opponents fell down and impaled his thigh with a stick (“I just reacted”).



In the purest form of orienteering, athletes run over courses of varying terrain with only a map and a compass to guide them toward a series of checkpoints.

Andrew Spear for The New York Times

One of the more significant moments in his career — and his life — came in 2011, when he met Billstam. Gueorgiou had been asked to speak to members of the Swedish women's orienteering team at their training camp in France, and Billstam recalled how Gueorgiou spent one afternoon shadowing her while she went on a practice run.

"I was so nervous because we all knew who he was and how talented he was," Billstam said. "But I was also thinking, 'He is very nice. It would be really nice to get to know him better.' And this, mixed up with my orienteering technique, was not a very good combination."

After giving her some tips on her form, Gueorgiou asked Billstam for a date. Not long after, he relocated here from France, moving in with Billstam, who earns her living as a landscape engineer.

Billstam, who has won two world championships (one in middle, one in long), has already said it is almost certain that this year's event will be her last elite race. Gueorgiou, who missed training for two months after breaking his toe in early January, is less sure about his future, though he conceded that "the end of my career is definitely nearing." He plans to make a decision in September about whether to continue racing.

Whatever Gueorgiou decides, Billstam said there was no question that orienteering would remain a part of the couple's lives. Gueorgiou is likely to work as a coach after he retires, and they both plan to continue making trips into the woods wherever they go. Last fall, during a visit to the United States for a friend's wedding, they downloaded the orienteering maps for Central Park and Harriman State Park near Stony Point, N.Y., so as to engage in a bit of training.

Beyond that, though, is the instinctive pursuit of a perfect route that is all but hard-wired into both of them. That quest, they said, is both perpetual and understood.

"There is an Ikea maybe three or four kilometers away from our apartment," Billstam said. "That's it — three or four kilometers. But if we have to go, we always have an argument. Which is the best way?"

She laughed. "Then we talk about every turn."

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