



Local Schools Celebrate World Orienteering Day

Events to be held in Cambridge, Newton and Arlington

May 19, 2017 (Cambridge, MA.) – Students at four Boston-area schools and one preschool will learn to race with maps on World Orienteering Day, May 24, 2017. In addition, an event open to the public will be presented at Menotomy Rocks in Arlington that evening.

Physical Education teacher Dan Fusco will teach orienteering to all his classes at the Cambridge Street Upper School, in collaboration with local non-profit Navigation Games. Dan said, "Orienteering is an awesome sport for kids - it gets them running and thinking at the same time." Students from Putnam Avenue Upper School in Cambridge will navigate on a brand new map by local mapper Ed Despard, of Cambridge Sports Union. Music teacher Eytan Wurman is organizing this first-ever orienteering event for the school. The ninth and tenth grade students at Newton Country Day School already experienced an intensive two-day introduction to the sport, and are eager to practice their skills on courses next Wednesday.

Keegan Harkavy, an 8th grader at Cambridge Street Upper School, is a member of the USA Junior Orienteering Development Team, and the top-ranked 14-year old in the country. He said, "I think it's important for kids to experience orienteering. Of course it's good to try any sport, to find out what you like. But orienteering in particular is great because it teaches life skills like navigation, and being able to picture a situation and make plans in your head based on the materials you have. It also is really fun and has taught me a lot, including working well with a team. So I think the more people who experience this sport, the better."

Orienteering is a sport for all ages, as will be shown by preschoolers at the MIT day care program. Patrick McNeal of the New England Orienteering Club has made a special map for the children's use, and designed additional exercises to introduce them to the concept of finding checkpoints. Fifth graders at the Morse School in Cambridge studied orienteering in the fall, and on May 24 they will teach younger children in grades K-4, coached by their teacher, Julia Bishop, using games such as visiting animal checkpoints and matching map symbols to pictures of terrain features.

"Through collaborations between orienteering clubs and schools, we hope to spur even greater interest in the sport and in our national junior orienteering program," said Barb Bryant, Orienteering USA's World Orienteering Day Coordinator, and President of the local non-profit Navigation Games. Navigation Games will participate in Cambridge's Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program again this year, giving local teens the opportunity to develop lesson plans and teach younger kids how to navigation with maps.

“Kids have so much fun learning and exploring the outdoors through activities like this,” said Kris Beecroft, OUSA’s President, “and it’s an activity that the whole family can enjoy, with more than 60 clubs across the US offering events on most weekends.” For information about local events open to the general public, visit www.NewEnglandOrienteering.org/events-schedule.

About Orienteering

Orienteering is a navigation sport suitable for all ages. Using a map and compass, competitors race through wilderness or urban parks. The fastest competitor to visit all the checkpoints in the correct order and return to the finish wins. The national governing body is Orienteering USA, representing over 60 local clubs and event promoters.

About World Orienteering Day

World Orienteering Day (WorldOrienteeringDay.com) is an annual school-oriented celebration of the sport. In 2017, events will take place at schools in at least 15 US states. The first World Orienteering Day took place on May 11th, 2016; more than 250,000 participants in 81 countries took part.

About orienteering in the Boston area

The New England Orienteering Club ([website](#), [Facebook](#)) and Cambridge Sports Union ([website](#), [Facebook](#)) are Orienteering USA member clubs that host navigation races open to the public, including beginners, throughout the year. Navigation Games ([website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)) is an education non-profit with a mission to teach map skills through fun games, and runs in-school, after-school and summer programs. All three clubs collaborate to host the ongoing [Greater Boston Youth Orienteering Series](#), open to all children and families; the next event will be at Danehy Park in Cambridge, on June 4th.

Photos

Action shots of children orienteering are available.

Teachers, orienteering club members, and teen orienteers are available for interviews.

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