

George Mitchell Nature Preserve Orienteering Course— Instructions

Welcome to the Mitchell Preserve Orienteering Course! This course consists of 15 wooden posts, emplaced and verified Fall 2018 by cadets with The Woodlands High School Air Force Junior ROTC Orienteering Team. Post locations and condition were verified Fall 2020.



Posts are approximately three feet tall and are white, with the international orienteering-marker pattern painted on the top four inches of each side (see photo). On top of each post is a brown metal placard with white lettering. Each post has a unique three-letter identification code. Course participants should not know the coordinates of the posts, or the codes on each post, before using the course. Returning to the starting point with the codes verifies the participant did in fact find the post(s) in question without the aid of GPS.

The orienteering map for this course was produced by the Houston Orienteering Club (<http://hoc.us.orienteering.org>). The trailhead is marked on the map as a solid purple triangle (the “starting point” symbol); posts (orienteering “control points”) are designated by open purple circles. Black vertical lines spaced 300m apart on the map indicate the direction of Magnetic North and are intended to be used with a compass to properly orient the map during use.

Some posts are visible from one of the established trails; others may require more skilled use of compass bearing and pace count. Seasonal variations in plants may also obscure some posts from easy view (they are generally easier to see in the winter months).

Control points on the map are numbered but are not connected by suggested routes; this is intentional so that groups using the course can develop their own routes with which to compete using all or some of the points as a “Sprint-O” (everyone runs the same route, competing for the fastest time) or to run an event as a “Score-O” (everyone competes within the same window of time, with points awarded based on how many points they can visit within that time).

For information on learning orienteering skills, visit Orienteering USA’s “New to Orienteering” page at <http://orienteeringusa.org/new-o>. YouTube also has many helpful videos.

Point of contact for questions concerning the Mitchell Preserve Orienteering Course is Lieutenant Colonel Chris McMartin, US Air Force (retired), cmcmartin@conroeisd.net. Thank you and enjoy!