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ARMY ORIENTEERING SQUAD 2009/10

1. The 2009 Inter-Services Orienteering Match will take place at Bentley and Fritham in the New Forest on Sun, 01 Nov 09. The Army Team will, as always, comprise the best orienteers available to the Team Managers. To assist potential team members in their preparation, a squad list has been drawn up, from which it is most likely that the team will be selected. This does not rule out further additions to the squad, or others being selected if they show suitable form prior to the Match. The following personnel comprise the 2009/10 Army Orienteering Squad:

a. **Army Squads.**

MEN'S SQUAD

Col P Lane	Prob
Lt Col CAJ Bromley Gardner MBE QRH	Prob
Lt Col A Hoff RLC	Poss
Lt Col C Huthwaite RA	Na
Lt Col CW Metcalf REME	Prob
Lt Col CJH Sanderson RLC	Prob
Maj M Derbyshire REME	Poss
Maj PM Helme RE	Poss
Maj PR McClellan RLC	Poss
Maj A Spaul RA	Na
Capt E Andrews RLC	Poss
Capt MS Bentley R SIGNALS	Prob
Capt S Collinson APTC	Na
Capt T Jones R ANGLIAN	Poss
Capt J Oxley RLC	Na
Capt EW Walsh RE	Na
2Lt A Brett RE	Poss
2Lt N James Int Corps	Poss
OCdt J Harris	Poss

WOMEN'S SQUAD

Maj Jo Barr R SIGNALS
Maj Katy Caie R SIGNALS
Maj Lucy Giles RLC
Maj Sally McClellan RLC
Maj Claire Mills RE
Maj Rachel Parker RLC
Maj Mel Rayner R SIGNALS
2Lt Kirsty Davies-Walters R SIGNALS
2Lt Amy Pennington RE
Cpl Steph Bogart R SIGNALS
Cpl Stacey Lyon R SIGNALS
Cfn Becky Hoare REME

WO1 (ASM) PA Bell REME	Poss
WO1 D Clarke REME	Poss
WO1 J Martin RA	Prob
WO2 T Allsop RE	Na
WO2 D Averill	Poss
WO2 JR Edwards RE	Poss
WO2 K Main R ANGLIAN	Poss
WO2 GJ Osborne	Poss
WO2 C Porteus REME	Poss
Sgt M Beverley APTC	Poss
Cpl JT Ranson R SIGNALS	Prob

b. **Development Squad.** To be notified separately.

2. **Availability.** All those available and wishing to be selected for the Army Team are to e-mail their respective Team Manager with the following information:

- a. Name.
- b. Confirmation of availability.
- c. Contact details, to include a civilian e-mail address and mobile phone number where possible.
- d. Army Number.
- e. CO/Line Manager's details.
- f. Orienteering top size: S/M/L/XL.
- g. British Orienteering Membership Number, if a member.
- h. Current Age Category.
- i. Mitigating circumstances for poor performance or inability to attend assessment races.
- j. Details of performance at events in 2009 other than the designated assessment races.

3. **Selection Policy.** Notes on selection are at Annex A. The key message is that the Inter-Services Match is on high quality orienteering terrain, with both the technical and physical difficulty at a higher level than is found in the military leagues. Team members will, therefore, be selected on their ability to be able to cope with this step up. The best way of proving such ability is to compete regularly on the civilian orienteering circuit. There will be no single selection race, in light of everyone's commitments and the difficulty of finding a commonly convenient date and venue. Performance will be assessed in all relevant races, military and civilian between now and the selection date of the 21 Oct 09. Individuals should compete at as many of the following assessment races as possible, although performance at other events will be taken into account if briefed to the Team Managers:

- a. All Military League races in their respective local league. Where possible, efforts should be made to attend the Military League South races to allow direct comparison with other squad members.
- b. Civilian Regional Events, such as the following:
 - (1) Wessex Event, 11 Oct 09. Note that this is being held in the New Forest, so good performance here could seriously assist an individual's chances of selection.
 - (2) October Odyssey, date tbc. A weekend of orienteering in northern England, but note that the event may have to be cancelled due to the late non-availability of areas.
- c. AOA Intermediate Skills Course, 21-25 Sep 09. Whilst not a formal assessment event, attendance will greatly assist navigational skills and fitness, and the men's Team Manager will be on hand to offer advice, as well as to assess performance.

4. **Development Team.** An Army Development Team normally competes against the TA and Police at the Inter-Services Match. It is hoped that this will also take place this year, but is not yet confirmed. Further details will follow.

Original signed

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Annexes:

A. Notes on Selection for the Army Orienteering Team.

Distribution:

External:

Action:

All Squad Members

Information:

AOA Chairman
AOA Secretary

NOTES ON SELECTION FOR THE ARMY ORIENTEERING TEAM

1. It is notoriously difficult to select an orienteering team, as everyone is capable of a disastrous run when all other indicators, such as fitness and mental preparation indicate that everything should go well. Team managers, therefore, and we are no exceptions, tend to look for two key qualities:

- a. Consistency.
- b. Quick recovery from mistakes.

2. Given the varied nature of orienteering terrain and the infinite combination of factors that can trip up even the best orienteer, these qualities are rarely gained without considerable experience. The Inter-Services Match always takes place in conjunction with a civilian event, usually at Regional (age group) level, although occasionally at a Local level event, in which case a longer (Black) course will be put on for the men's race. As a sound grounding, the military leagues are hard to fault. However, they rarely use terrain or courses of the same quality as the civilian events used for the Inter-Services Match. When they do, a combination of local knowledge, few courses out and a need to make them achievable for the average competitor can favour the fast but less capable orienteer. We have noticed that the expected order on a military event has often been reversed when the same runners attend civilian events, and the more capable orienteers are able to use their skills to better effect.

3. How, then, do we tell whether you are likely to perform well on challenging, unknown terrain? There are a few combat indicators, in order of preference:

a. **Championship Standard.** British Orienteering awards the Championship Badge to those who perform consistently well at the highest level of national competition each year. To be awarded the badge you must get a qualifying time (roughly, within the winner's time + 25%) on the Elite, Long or A courses in your age class in at least three of the National Events. One qualifying event must be either the British Championships or one individual day of the Jan Kjellström (JK) Easter event. This year, only two people eligible for the Army Team appear on the latest Championship award list, which is a noticeably worse situation than in previous years. Performance at this level indicates a high level of ability in coping with the most extreme orienteering terrain whilst, importantly, producing peak performance when it really matters: against the toughest competitors in the biggest competitions.

b. **Gold Standard.** British Orienteering awards a scale of badges (Bronze, Silver and Gold) for consistent performances in the Regional and National events. To qualify at Gold level you must get within 125% of the base time for the course in at least three events over a two year period. The base time is the average of the first three runners' times. Gold is currently the minimum standard considered for selection for the Army Team. Note that simply achieving the award once is not enough, as it is relatively undemanding for a

competent and fit orienteer: we expect to see consistent performances within the Gold time range.

c. **Split Times.** Split times are very useful in identifying how bad individuals' mistakes are and how well they recover from them. Fast splits, with a few long times in between, worry us. They indicate that you may be quick but that you probably aren't tailoring your speed to the difficulty of the control and that, having made a mistake, you are not recovering well from it. As an example, Dave Rollins won the night event at Bulford on the 17 Oct 07 without recording a single fastest split, indicating a high degree of consistency and the ability to adjust his speed to the navigational demands. On the rare occasions he made a mistake, he recovered quickly. By contrast, someone who managed to win one leg (and clearly has the basic speed) actually finished in 32nd position, after other controls saw times roughly 600%, 600% and 100% slower than the fastest; with 24 minutes lost in total.

d. **National Ranking.** In an attempt to compare orienteers' performances across the whole country, British Orienteering produces a national ranking list. It is based on performances at Regional and above events during a rolling year. It is not used extensively for selection purposes because of systemic difficulties in comparing events, which can lead to some orienteers gaining proportionally more points from relatively easy, poorly attended events than from good quality ones. It does, however, tell us who is regularly attending civilian Regional events, so that we can examine their actual results in more detail.

4. Ultimately, if you don't challenge yourself by taking part in more demanding competitions, we find it difficult to judge your potential. Our top tips for increasing your chances of selection in 2008 are:

a. Get out to civilian events. The more, the better, and make sure that they are both challenging and relevant. A District event in the easy terrain of Thetford will be assessed as less demanding than the British Championships in the wooded sand-dunes of Forres. Note that the 2008 JK is being run on fairly poor terrain. Therefore, if you have to keep your family and bank manager happy by limiting the number of events you go to, we suggest leaving that out and choosing a more technically demanding event instead.

b. Run the Long courses. There's no need to run M/W21E, especially if you're M/W45, unless you really feel that that is where you belong. However, the Inter-Services Match will be run on M/W21L courses and it is no good doing well on courses half that distance/winning time. We don't encourage the older runners to run down an age group regularly, but the odd run on M/W21L will help us judge fitness and the ability to cope when tired.

c. Once the area for the Inter-Services Match is known, make sure that you get to as many events as possible in similar terrain. As it may only be announced fairly late on, cover your bets earlier in the season by getting around to different areas.

d. Get on Army and Corps tours to multi-day events. These are often abroad in very different conditions to the UK.

e. Show that you can perform when it really matters. Select a few key events and aim to peak for them. Nothing impresses us like a good performance at the British Championships.

f. Don't wait until the last minute to stake your claim. Establish a strong position early in the season and let the others have to try to displace you. We are more impressed by those who can produce consistently good performances throughout the year than by those who can do it for a month before selection.

g. Most importantly, talk to us about your goals and results. That way, we are better able to judge your actual performances and advise you. Try, however, to avoid just making excuses for poor results either before or after the event. We accept that everyone has a bad run every now and again, and sometimes it is outside of their own control. Ultimately, though, we are only interested in performance, irrespective of any mitigating factors. The truly great still have problems, but they perform well despite them.