Park-O
A how-to guide

What is Park-O?

The aim

Using a specially prepared map, find a series of checkpoints, "controls", in order, choosing your own route between controls, and doing all this as fast as you can (or as fast as you want to).

You can run or walk a Park-O course as an individual, or in a group, for example in a pair, or as a family group.

What is Park-O?

You carry a "dibber", which you use at each control site to prove you found it.

After you finish, you hand in your dibber at download, where we read the data from the dibber to get your result.

The Map

The colours may not match what you expect: open land is yellow, open woodland is white (see map legend below if you want to know more).

The scale is magnified compared to most maps you might be familiar with, typically 1:5000 or 1:10000.

There is a lot of detail: the map might show individual trees or benches as well as small hollows and lumps in the ground.

The north lines on the map are magnetic north – the direction a compass needle points.

Your course is shown on the map using the colour purple.

Orienteering map symbols

Symbol		Symbol
paved road		contour lines, tags downhill
gravel area		form lines
dirt road		hills, knoll
vehicle trail		depressions, large, small
large footpath		pit, broken ground
small footpath		steep earth bank
indistinct path		small, large erosion gully
narrow ride		earth wall
railroad		ruined earth wall
power lines		misc. landform
uncrossable fence		runnable forest (white)
crossable fence		vegetation: impassable ("fight")
ruined fence		vegetation: difficult ("walk")
stone wall		vegatation: slow running
ruined stone wall		runnable in one direction
buildings, ruins		undergrowth: difficult
firing range		undergrowth: slow running
boulders, boulder group		open land
boulder field, stony ground		rough open land
impassable cliff		open with scattered trees
small rock face		rough open with scattered trees
rocky pit, cave, cairn		orchard
grave, hunter's stand, tower		vineyard
man made objects		cultivated land
lake, pond		sandy ground
river, ford		bare rock, distinct tree, root stock
crossable streams		distinct vegetation boundary
minor water channel		footbridge
narrow marsh or trickle		tunnel
uncrossable marsh		fence crossing point
crossable marsh		settlement (out of bounds)
seasonal or indistinct marsh		settlement (out of bounds)
water trough, spring, water hole		permanently out of bounds
special water feature		

The course -
as shown on the map

Start is shown by a Triangle (the start is it the centre of the triangle)

Finish is two concentric circles

Controls are purple circles (the control site is at the centre of the circle)

Each control site corresponds to a physical feature on the map (and on the ground)

Controls are numbered with lines between – you must visit them in the right order

Control Descriptions

Each control has a number, so you can be sure you have found the correct one (you may encounter other controls which are not on your course).

The control descriptions list the controls in order, giving the number and a description of each control site (e.g. North-east fence corner).

In Park-O, the descriptions are printed on the map.

Short	1.6 km	
▷		Start: N end of path
1	31	Fence and path junction
2	32	Path junction
3	33	Road junction
4	34	Path junction
5	35	Path junction
6	37	Path and road junction
7	39	Path crossing
8	46	Path crossing
Navigate 120 m to finish		

Pictorial Control Descriptions

More usually, control descriptions use a set of symbols

Short		1.6 km	
▷		Start: N end of path
1	31	Fence and path junction
2	32	Path junction
3	33	Road junction
4	34	Path junction
5	35	Path junction
6	37	Path and road junction
7	39	Path crossing
8	46	Path crossing
Navigate 120 m to finish			

Text version

Short		1.6 km				T
▷			╱			
1	31		⌢	╱	Y	
2	32		╱	╱	Y	
3	33		╱	╱	Y	
4	34		╱	╱	Y	
5	35		╱	╱	Y	
6	37		╱	╱	Y	
7	39		╱	╱	X	
8	46		╱	╱	X	
⦶		120 m			⊗	

Symbolic version

To find out more, go to (e.g.) https://www.maprunner.co.uk/iof-control-descriptions

Before You Set off to the Event

Check if you need to pre-register! Check the event details on our website

What to wear?

Whatever you would wear for walking or running. Trainers/running shoes are fine for Park-O.   Come prepared for the weather!   (You may want to bring a change of clothes, but remember we can't normally provide changing facilities).
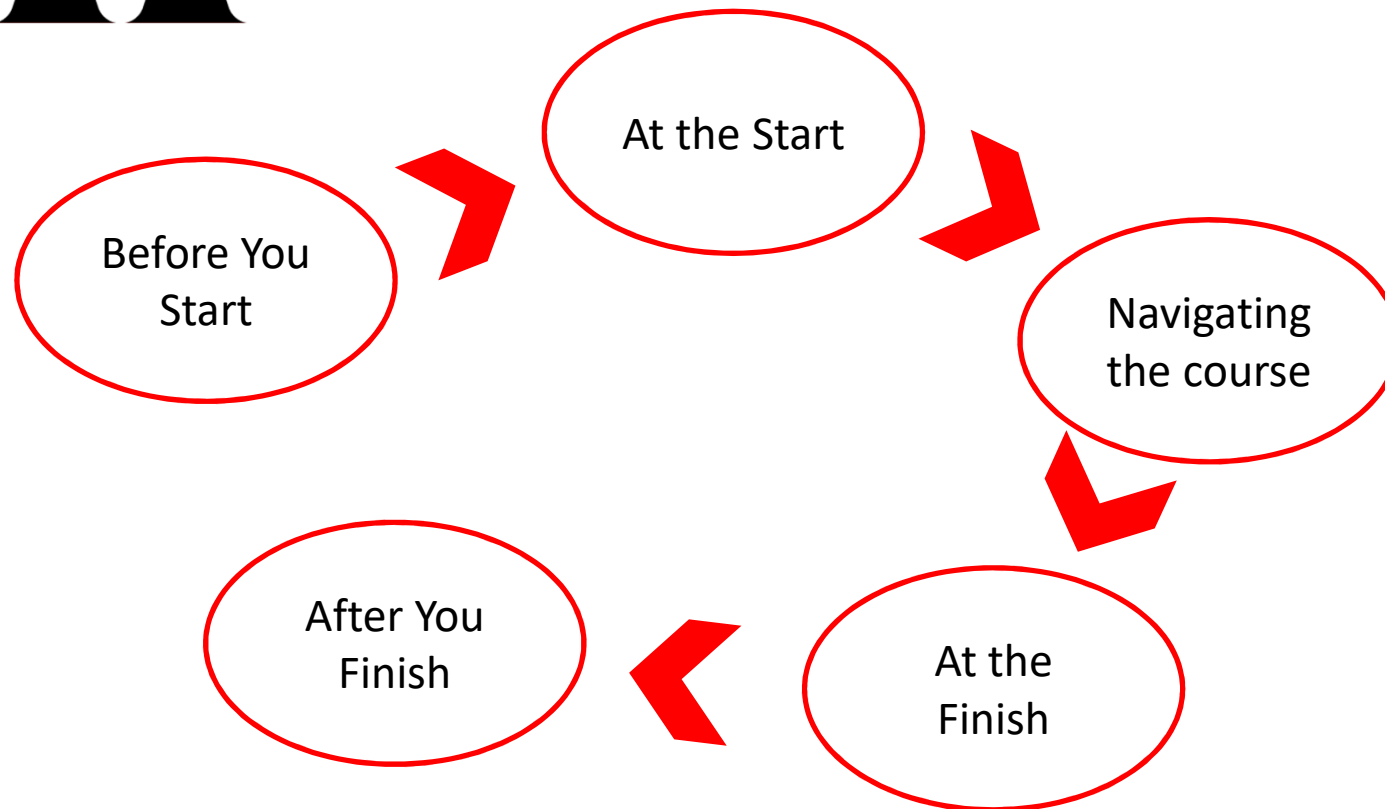
What to bring?

Food and drink, for before or after your run

Means of payment, if entry is not pre-paid: non-contact debit or credit card, or payment app on your phone.

If you have a compass, bring it, but we have compasses to loan for those who want to use one.   Most Park-O runners manage fine without needing a compass.
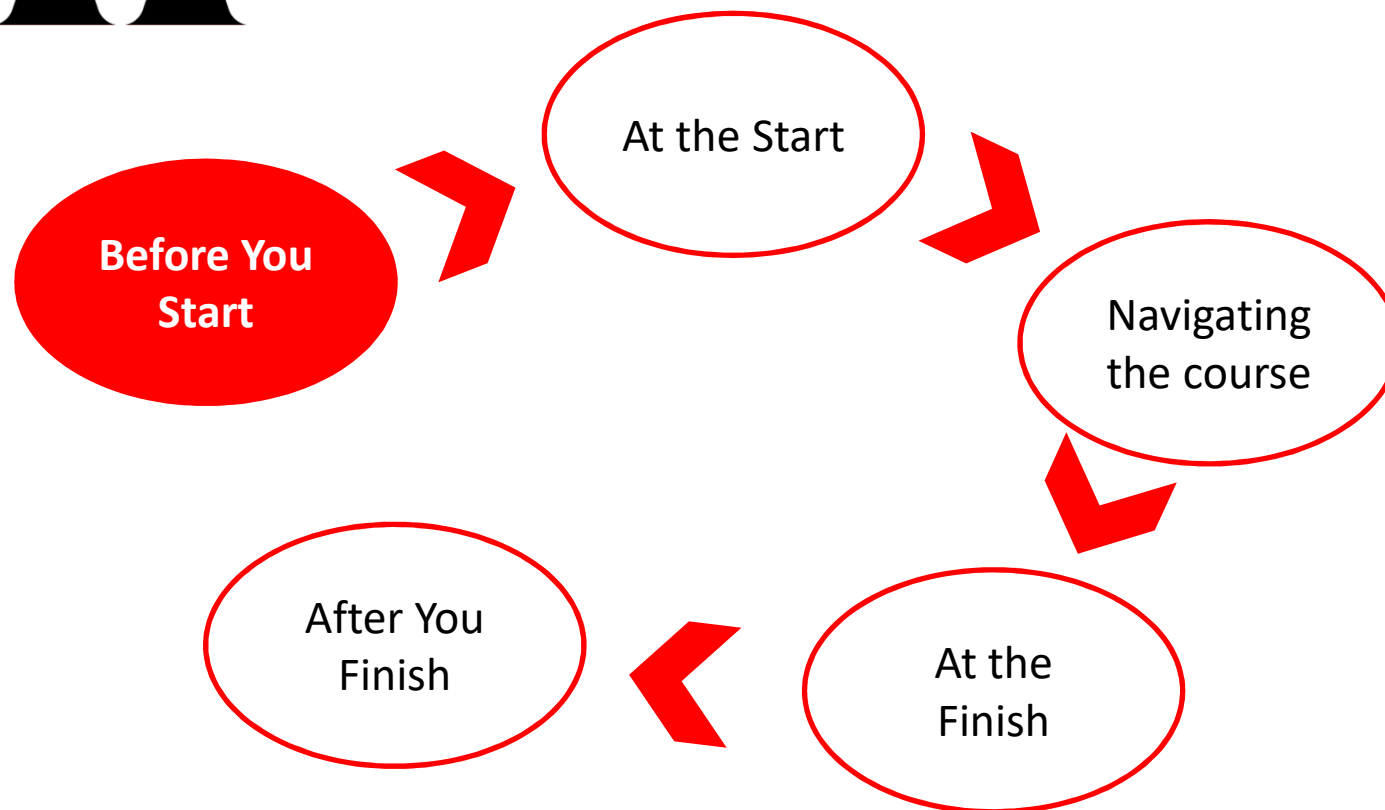
At the Event

Before you Start

Before You Start

Go to Registration

Collect your hire dibber (SI card) and pay
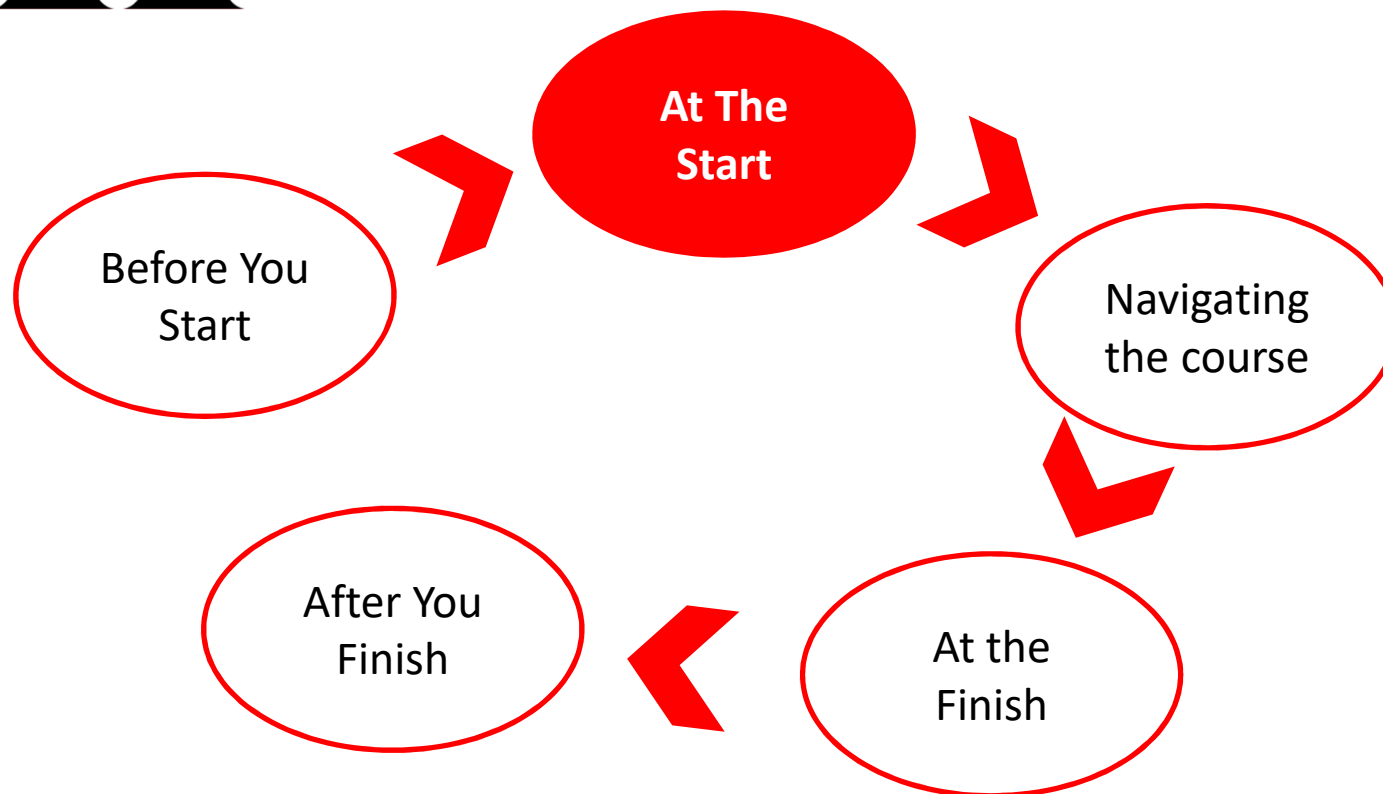
Choose your course

Collect your map (sometimes you collect the map when you start)

Get ready

Go to the start when you are ready

At the Start

At the Start

Clear Your Dibber, by holding the dibber in the Clear box until it beeps and flashes (this may take a little while)

Enter the start grid - a Check box will be used to check the dibber is working. This should beep and flash immediately
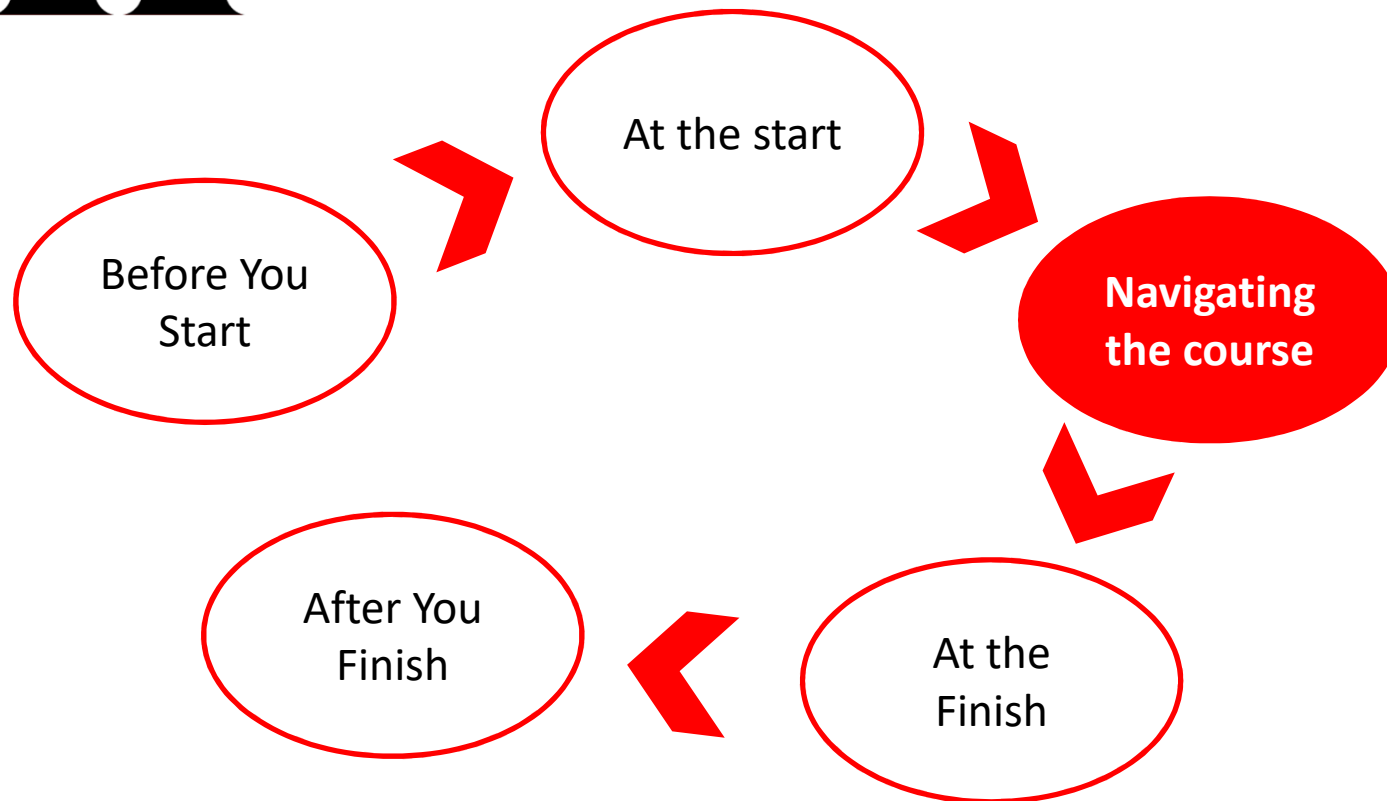
Wait for your start time

"Punch" the start box (wait for the beep/flash) – your race time starts now.

Pick up your map, and off you go!

Navigating your course

Navigating your course

FOLD, SET AND THUMB your map

FOLD the map with the Start and early controls showing, and so that you can hold it easily in one hand.

SET the map so that as you stand at the start, the path ahead on the map is the path ahead on the ground.

THUMB your map by putting your thumb on the start triangle (if you are right handed, use your left thumb for this and vice versa - this leaves your best hand free for using the dibber to "punch" the control).

Navigating your course

When you reach your control

Make sure it's the right one (check the number on the top of the control box), then put the tip of the dibber into the hole in the control box. Hold it there until you hear a beep and see the lights flash.

This might happen in a fraction of a second or may take a few seconds. Once you hear the beep or see the light, remove the dibber.

Navigating your course

Setting off for the next control

Keep your map **FOLDED** to show the next few controls.

As you leave each control, make sure that your map is still **SET**

Move your **THUMB** to show where you are on the course.

Navigating your Course

For your run to count, you must visit all the controls on your course, in the right order. If you punch any other controls, or punch any out of sequence, these will be ignored. So, for example if you realise when you get to control 5 that you have missed out 4, then you can go back to 4 then back to 5 again and carry on.
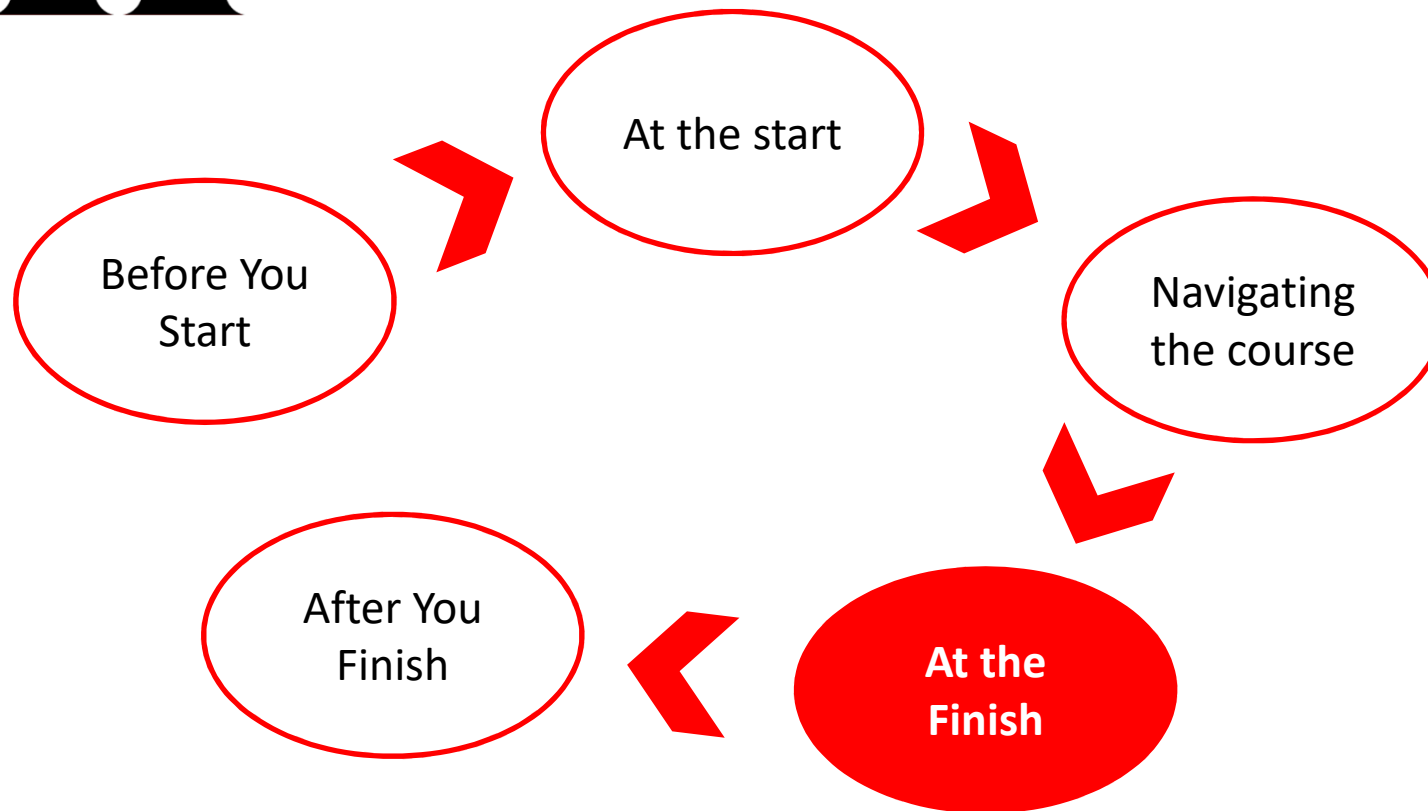
Don't worry if you punch a control which isn't on your course – these will be ignored.

Once you have visited all the controls on your course, head to the finish

If you decide not to complete the whole course, it is really important that you report back to the download desk so we know you are home safe.

At the Finish

At the Finish

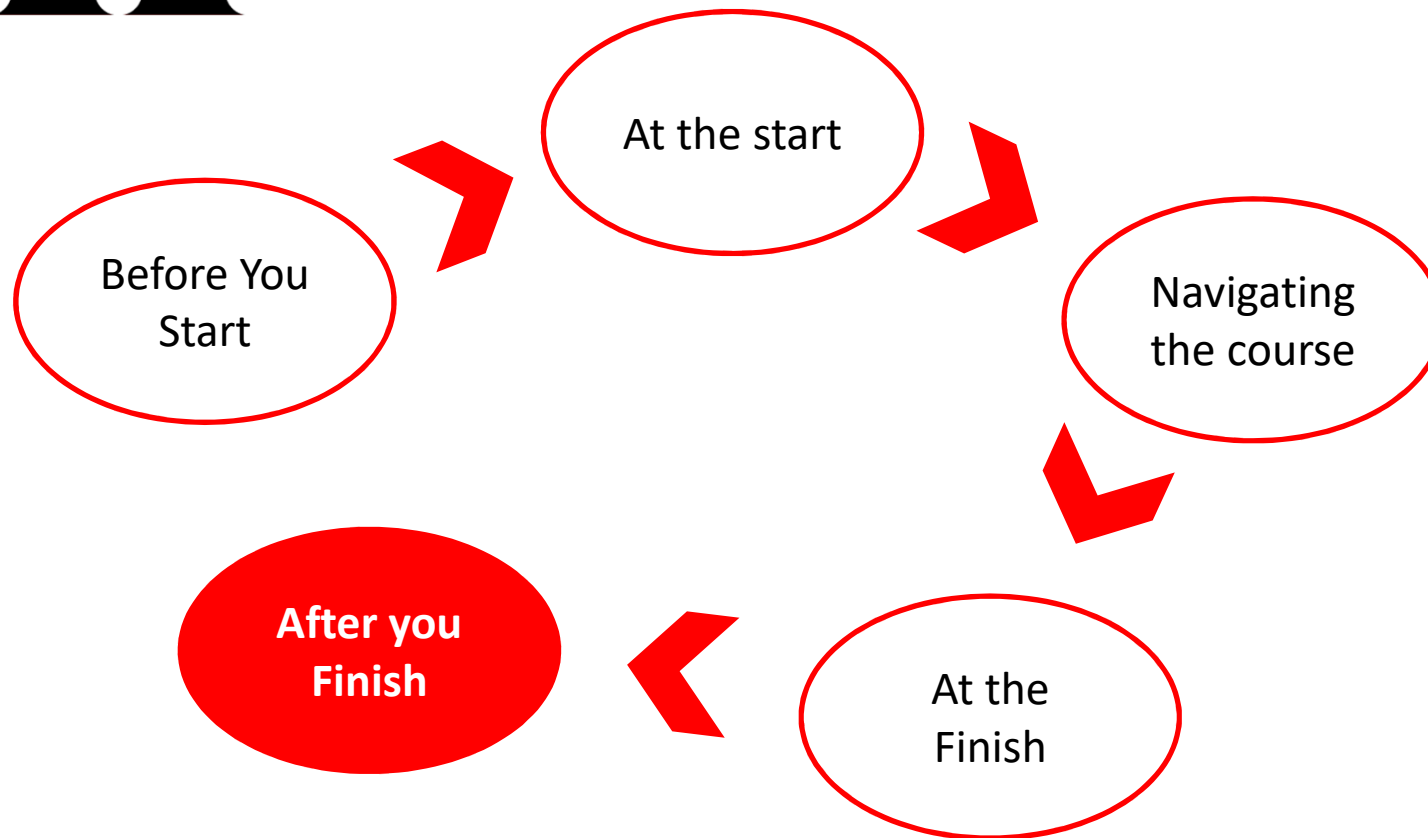After finding your last numbered control, you have one more task: find the Finish

Look for the "Finish" banner

"Punch" the Finish control – your race time stops now

Now go to the Download desk

After you Finish

Before You Start → At the start → Navigating the course → At the Finish → After you Finish

After you Finish

Once you have completed your course (or if you are retiring) you should go to the download desk straight away

Hold your dibber in the download unit, for a few seconds until it beeps

Collect your results slip

Put your hire dibber in the collection box

Want another run? Go to the enquiries desk to see if there are any start slots free.