ISSOM20XX

Michael’s comments

1. Scope of The Specification

We appear to have received a “Final Draft” of a revision without any early drafts or invitation to suggest areas of concern. We would wish to say that this specification is needed, not just for sprint orienteering, but for all events on urban terrain.

The current ISSOM suffers from attempting to cater for both urban and rural terrain. It is good that special rules which may apply in the high-speed sprint discipline have been removed from the mapping specification, and it would be logical to make this relevant to all urban situations.

While a map for the IOF sprint discipline as currently run (12-15min) might need to be at a scale of 1:4000, urban maps in general do not need to be thus constrained. There may be longer urban events, or even shorter.

While a map for the IOF sprint discipline may possibly need flat terrain for which 2/2.5m contours might be appropriate, other urban events do not need such a small interval. Even a 12-15min sprint may take place in steep terrain where many 2.5m contours in conjunction with yellows and greens make the path network very hard to read. (I’m thinking of a Botanical Gardens in NZ’s capital, Wellington). The contour interval should be chosen according to the terrain.

1. Running Level

We note that, as before, the running level issue is “glossed over”. We appreciate this is very difficult, and avoiding ambiguity is going to need effort by mappers, planners and controllers. It would be appropriate to ask all to take the competitors’ point of view. When approaching a “Hobbit House”, is the “main running level” in the front door and out the back, or is it over the grassed roof? The situation is even more perplexing when the “Hobbit House” is dug into a sloping hillside.

(Has everyone seen “Lord of the Rings”?)

1. Symbol Numbers

Though we argued against it, you made substantial changes to ISOM numbers. If you implement the symbol numbers used in this draft ISSOM there will be many discrepancies between ISSOM and ISOM.

Maintenance of symbol tables in files created over the years and by different mappers is quite a headache, and we are currently dealing with the conversion of ISOM maps. The last thing we need is a set of ISSOM symbol numbers which are “similar but different” from their ISOM counterparts.

Now that the damage has been done, we ask that ISSOM symbol numbers follow the ISOM numbers where possible. And that in the future you make only vital changes to the ISOM numbers.

1. Track Symbols

The 20% brown track infill is very difficult to see against a background of open and rough open. (Compare the CMYK values for 20% brown 0/11/20/3.5 vs 50% yellow 0/13.5/39.5/0). The international norms should suit all orienteers, and older orienteers especially lose their colour discrimination as well as focus.

The brown infill must be allowed to vary, and “seeing tracks at all” is more valuable than knowing whether traffic is heavy or light. This is even worse than the (discarded) urban/rural distinction. We suggest it be chosen by the mapper on a whole-of-map basis. A thicker border line may also be called for such as the previous 0.14mm value.

This is an example of an urban bias in the specification, please see item 1.

Thank you for enlarging small track symbol 507. Should you not agree that this is a purely urban specification, then we ask that you include the large path symbol 506 at 150% of its ISOM size. We accept that its use should be restricted to places where the dashes cannot be confused with impassable walls.

1. Symbol Dimensions Etc

You have given us quite a short period to make submissions, not enough to test right through to the printing stage. The following is a small selection of observations

* 1. Symbol 524 You have removed “shall not be crossed” from most other hard to pass features and we expect that these will now become rules matters. Perhaps it is an oversight that “shall not be crossed” remains here.
  2. Symbols 206 and 207 We think there should be provision for an in-between boulder size as there is in ISOM.
  3. Symbol 211 The Sandy ground dot is very close to the minimum stony ground dot size. In open land the two differ mainly in that one is a regular pattern and the other random. They may be confused. (This was the case before, too.)
  4. Symbols 402 and 404 We think there should be provision for green dots as there is in ISOM
  5. Symbol 525. The crossing point is quite large and often hard to fit onto the map. We like the statement in Section 3.3 that makes a minimum gap of 0.4mm (though we have not examined our maps against this criterion) but perhaps the crossing point does not need to be 2.5X larger.
  6. Symbol 538 Fodder racks are rather rare in urban terrain, we suggest it be also used for picnic tables and the like. It is rather big though, its footprint could be reduced to that of the “X”.