

IDAHO MOUNTED ORIENTEERING

The Thinking Sport

Internationally, orienteering is a foot race, much like a car rally. It originated in Sweden in 1918 by a Youth and Scout Leader, Ernst Killander, to make running projects more appealing. In 1988, a group of people in Idaho, who had been participating in the National Association of Competitive Mounted Orienteering, got together and formed Idaho Mounted Orienteering (IMO)

The purpose of IMO is to promote family fun and good sportsmanship; to heighten self-confidence and independence by developing the skills of orienteering; to enhance mental and physical health through good outdoor exercise; and to enjoy and have purpose for a rather expensive hay burner. The Association promotes the sport of mounted orienteering, encourages all phases of horsemanship, and, by sponsoring orienteering rides, provides a way to have fun in the great outdoors with horses, mules, and ponies.

IMO is a timed equine sport. The object of the sport is to use a map, compass and clues to find five hidden markers while riding a trusty steed. To participate in IMO, trusty steeds must be at least three years old. It is a good idea to have them shod and in good condition. Participants may ride individually or as a team of two or more. The person or team who finds all five markers in the least amount of time places first. From six to one extra points are given to the first six individuals or teams finding all five markers in the least amount of time. Everyone gets two points for each marker they find.

Participation in IMO is fun and easy. After arriving at the ride site and registering, riders are given the landmarks and clues to find marker number one. Every registered rider finds this marker, even if they have to be shown exactly where it is. Number one is not timed but is awarded two points. At registration participants choose a start time. Riders are timed out at staggered intervals, usually 10 to 15 minutes apart. The time starts when an individual or first member of a team gets his or her map. Time stops when the participant or last member of a team completing the ride enters the Start-Finish area. After timing in, a ride manager will check a map to see how many markers were found.

The map used in IMO events is a topographical map. The five marker locations are noted on the map with numbers 1 to 5. These can be found in any order. The markers are 9-inch plates with the marker number and two or more letters written on them. Using the map, the participants find the area of the marker. On the back of the map, compass degree bearings from two recognizable landmarks are given. An orienteering compass with 2° increments is needed for taking bearings. The "X" made where the two bearing lines cross is where the marker can be found. After finding the marker, participants write the letters on the marker under the corresponding number on the back of the map. This is how the ride manager knows you have found the markers.

All riders must be members. A daily membership that includes the ride dues is available for \$20 per ride. Annual members pay \$15 in ride dues per ride. All riders 17 and under pay \$5. Annual membership dues are good from January 1 through December 31, yearly, and cost \$20 for individuals or \$30 for a family (includes children under 21, living at home). IMO annual members and their steeds earn points toward year-end and lifetime-accumulated-points awards, qualify to be ride managers, vote at meetings, and attend the annual awards banquet.

IMO events are held in varied beautiful and interesting areas. It can be fun for the fast and aggressive rider, and for the person wanting a leisurely pleasure ride. A potluck lunch frequently follows the ride and many families come early to camp for the weekend. We welcome anyone to join us in all the fun!