



Guidance on zero problems

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INTRODUCTION

Guidance on zero problems is important to help competitors decide when to give a Zero answer. If a competitor has correctly understood the task, the map, and the terrain then they should be confident to decide whether any of the control flags is at the correct position or not.

Ideally, all Zeros must be clear and solved by map reading, but if a competitor believes the correct site should be a small distance away from the nearest control flag, this guidance will enable them to decide whether the discrepancy is just a slight difference between their interpretation of the map/terrain and the interpretation of the planner and/or map maker, or a genuine zero problem.

Tasks which do not adhere to the Guidance on zero problems shall be cancelled.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The objective of this guidance is to enable course setters to plan fair zero problems and allow competitors who have correctly interpreted the terrain (and yet are unable to decide if the flag is close enough to the correct spot or not) to make a fair decision of their answer, rather than needing to second guess the intention of the planner.

EXAMPLE 1

Imagine a control on a spur, with the centre of the circle touching the side of a boulder. If in the terrain the relevant flag is 2m away from the boulder, is it a Zero answer or is this because the boulder symbol at scale is bigger in the map than the actual boulder in the terrain? In the example below, with the additional information that the flag should be aligned between the two bushes which can be checked on the terrain, is the flag correct or should the answer be Zero?

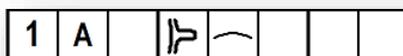


Fig 1. Map and photo for described spur task

EXAMPLE 2

Imagine a control set on the foot of a cliff corner, with the relevant flag on a very close unmapped minor cliff. Is the flag on a distracting cliff or just poorly placed in the correct cliff?

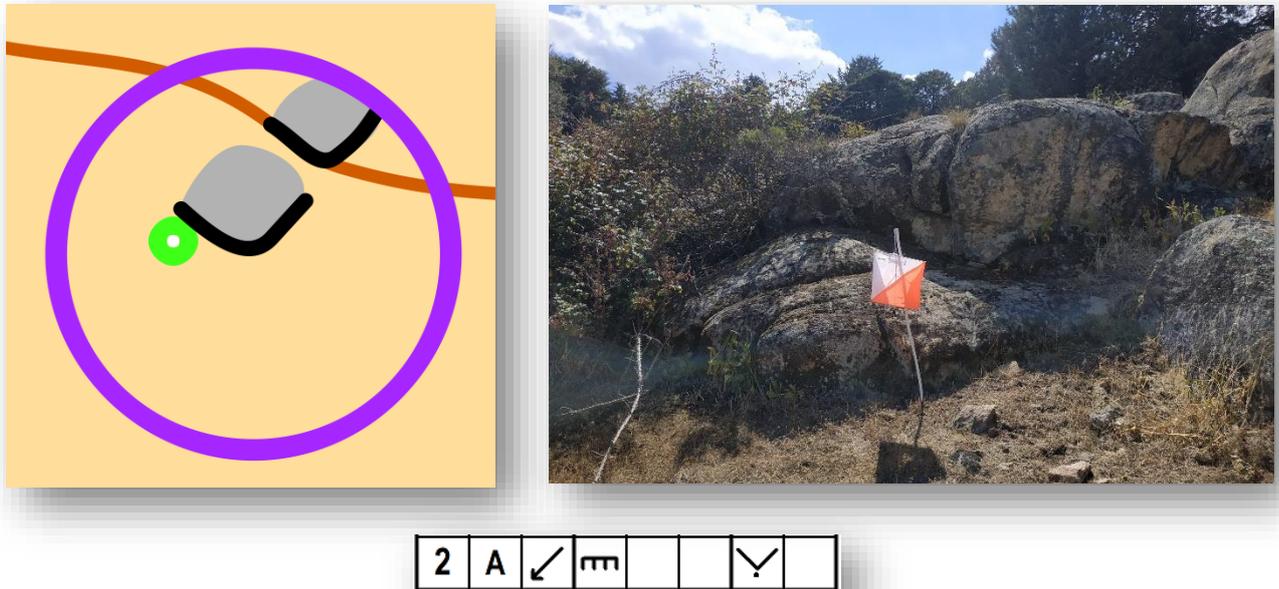


Fig 2. Is the flag on unmapped and incorrect cliff or just at the foot of what the course setter considered the right cliff?

These are examples of questions that a competitor should NOT have to worry about during the competition as these are not orienteering problems and often force the competitor to guess.

Thus, the aim of a clear Guidance on zero problems is to avoid such ambiguities and improve fairness of the competition.

In the following sections we'll give some guidance to define this policy in a competition.

COMPETITOR VIEWPOINT

Guidance on zero problems is to be provided by the organizer/planner of the competition and is meant to be used by the competitor in the competition.

It is mandatory that a clear Guidance on zero problems is published at least in the bulletin 2 prior to the event.

In a competition, a good Guidance on zero problems should be as simple as possible and leave no room for uncertainty for a competitor who has correctly interpreted the map/terrain.

This guidance should, at least, meet the following standard:

“If the answer of a task is Zero, there should be no flag closer to the correct spot than 4m”

This distance is equivalent to 1mm on the map at scale of 1:4000 and is the minimum gap that could be reasonably interpreted on the map. This minimum distance could be greater if the planner considers it appropriate, for example, terrain with indistinct large-scale features, long views etc.

Due to the application of this Guidance on zero problems, side zeros, that is, flag(s) placed on the correct feature but not placed according to the control description, including orientation, inside/outside, etc. are not allowed unless the point feature is larger than 4 m. In any case these are not interesting problems and therefore are not recommended.

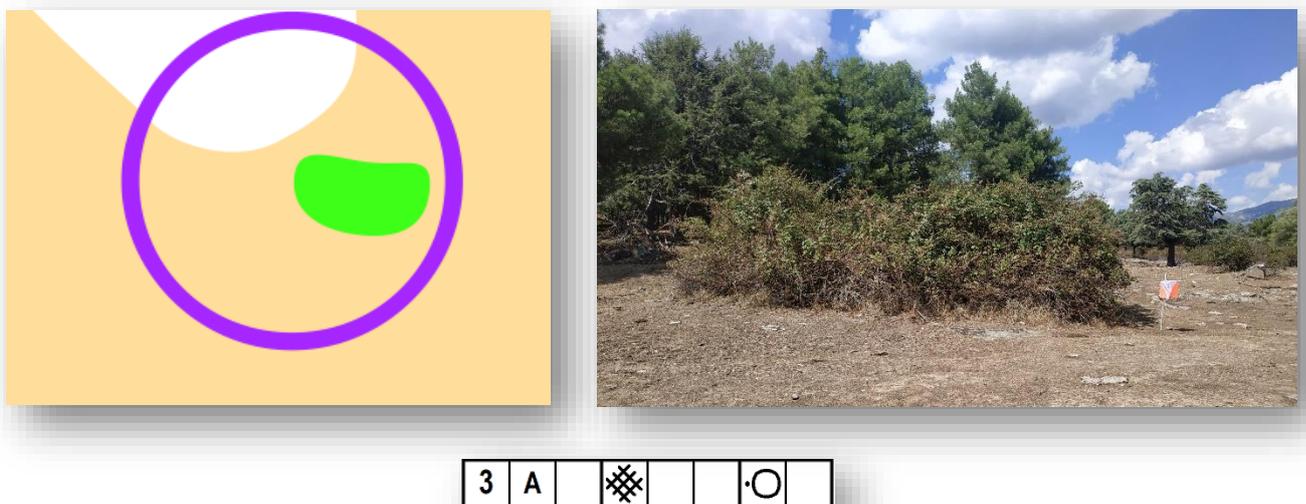


Fig 3. As the bush diameter is more than 4m and the flag is on the wrong side of the bush, this could be a valid Zero task, although – not a very interesting one

This guidance on zero problems also indirectly affects those controls with several flags on the correct element, for example a re-entrant, taking 1mm as the minimum gap that could be reasonably interpreted on the map, all flags should be separated at least by that distance.

ORGANIZER/PLANNER VIEWPOINT

The objective for Guidance on zero problems is to avoid uncertainty on the competitor side. It should never be used by the course setter to place the control flags with less precision.

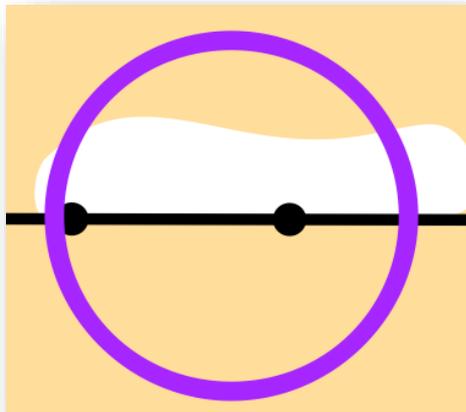
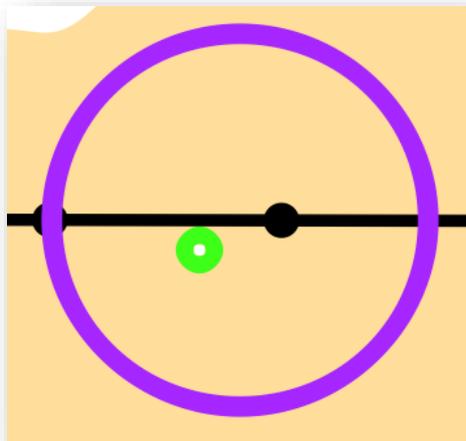
It is the responsibility of the planner/organiser to decide on the Guidance on zero problems, verify that all zero tasks adhere to the policy by measuring the actual distances in the terrain, publish the guidance, and be very precise when putting flags in the terrain (both for zero problems and when there is a flag at the correct spot).

The Planner's priority should be firstly to plan fair tasks, and secondly to plan interesting tasks.

When planning a Zero Control, all flags should be placed at a distance of at least 4 m from the correct spot according to the Guidance on zero problems rule stated above. This minimum distance should be considered as a baseline for controls set on mapped point features and, if any of the following circumstances occur, it should be increased.

EXAMPLES

1. Controls on linear features without nearby point features (50% increase at least) or even more on controls on area features (100% increase at least)



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Fig 4. On Top, control on a linear feature with a point feature (bush) nearby. Below control on a linear feature without any point feature. Tolerance for the later should be increased

2. Long distance controls (100% increase per 100m distance)
3. These increments are cumulative. For example, if a flag is on an area element without close point features (100% increase) at 100m distance from the view-point (100% increase) then the closest flag on a Zero problem should be at 4m baseline + 4m for area element +4m for distance =12m

Exception to the 4 m rule. The only admissible exception to the 4m rule is in the case of problems set on a point feature with the distracting flag on a different mapped point feature clearly identifiable in the terrain (if this exception is used, it should be stated in the bulletin).



Fig 5. In this case, the two mapped boulders are closer than 4m - so this can be a valid Zero task

NOTES

For the purpose of this document, minimal sized area or line features are considered in the same way as point features. Also, a distinct crossing between two line features can be considered a point feature.

The minimal distances should be considered at horizontal level. Thus, in steep terrain, the real distance should be greater.



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