

WightO – Needles and Knolls – Final Details

This note contains the final details for the Wight Orienteers 50th Anniversary event: Needles and Knolls, 5-6th September 2026.

Any late-breaking news will be posted on the event website: [Wight50](https://wight50.com).

Any changes since v1 of the Final Details are shown in red.

Entry

Entry is online via Racesignup: [Needles & Knolls](https://racesignup.com/Needles%20%26%20Knolls)

Online entries will close at 9am on Saturday 5th September for Day 1 and 9am on Sunday 6th September for Day 2 (i.e. you can enter online until the last minute, but not once the event has started, owing to unreliable mobile signal).

Entry On the Day (EOD) is available, but the number of maps is limited. EOD entry fees are the same as those for online 'late entry':

Saturday Double Sprint	
Senior, BO member Senior, IW Resident	£10
Senior, non-member	£12
Junior / Student	£6
Sunday Middle Distance	
Senior, BO member Senior, IW Resident	£14
Senior, non-member	£16
Junior / Student	£9
SI hire, per day	
Senior, SI classic	£1
Senior, SI air (SIAC)	£2
Junior / Student, SI classic	Free
Junior / Student, SI air (SIAC)	£1

Payment is by cash only at Enquiries / EOD.

Entry limit of 200 competitors each day.

Timing System

The SportIdent (SI) timing system is being used for both days.

Contactless punching for SIAC dibbers will be enabled for all controls and the FINISH.

All competitors must dib the START (including SIAC).

Thanks to SOC for providing the equipment necessary to make this event possible.

A&E Location

The Island's A&E is located at St Mary's Hospital, Newport:

Postcode	PO30 5TG
what3words	///ruling.solicitor.jams
Grid ref	SZ 494 904
Google Maps	St Mary's Hospital

Medical Conditions

Competitors with relevant medical conditions are invited to record them in a sealed envelope and give it to Enquiries. It would only ever be opened by a healthcare professional, should the need arise. For ease of identification, the outside of the envelope should be labelled with name and O-top colour / branding. The envelope should be collected after the event, otherwise it will be destroyed.

Ticks

Ticks may be present in both areas. Please check for ticks after the event.

Day 1: Saturday 5th September, St Catherine's Point

This Level D event takes place on land north of St Catherine's Point, with permission of the National Trust. The area encompasses St Catherine's Lighthouse and Knowles Farm. There will be an ice cream van near the assembly area. It accepts payment by cash or card. However, it is possible that card payments will be affected by the variable mobile coverage in the area.

Event Format

The event is a Double Sprint, which involves a course comprised of two separate laps (A & B) with a 90 minute interval between the start time of each lap.

The result will be determined by the total time taken for the two laps.

Course lengths have been set to achieve appropriate fastest times, considering the rugged terrain.

All competitors must DOWNLOAD after each lap of their course.

Timings

Enquiries, EOD and hired SI/SIAC dibber collection from: 10:00

Start window: 10:30 – 11:30 (1st Run) and 12:00 – 13:00 (2nd Run)

Courses close: 14:30

Courses

No	Course	Length (km)	Climb (m)	Comment
1	Open	2.2 + 2.6	125 + 120	TD4
2	Vets (M/W40+), Junior (M/W16-)	2.0 + 1.7	100 + 90	TD4
3	Supervets (M/W65+)	1.7 + 1.4	95 + 85	TD4
4	Junior (M/W12-)	1.1 + 1.2	60 + 70	TD2 with TD3 elements

Courses are expected to have winning times in the range 15-20 minutes.

Although the area is complex, there are many catching features, and so it really only offers orienteering with a technical difficulty up to the TD4 level.

Course 4 (Junior M/W12-) technical difficulty is mostly TD2 (Yellow standard) with occasional easy TD3 elements (e.g. very short cuts to a visible line feature with no path to follow). It is recommended that inexperienced juniors are shadowed on their first lap.

Course 4 competitors will be able to collect their map before dishing the start box.

Event Car Park

The event car park is now confirmed at Blackgang Chine theme park. It is accessed from Blackgang Road (A3055) between Niton and Chale::

Postcode	PO38 2HN
what3words	///screen.statue.fidget
Grid ref	SZ 489 768
Google Maps	Blackgang Chine

Parking is on tarmac .

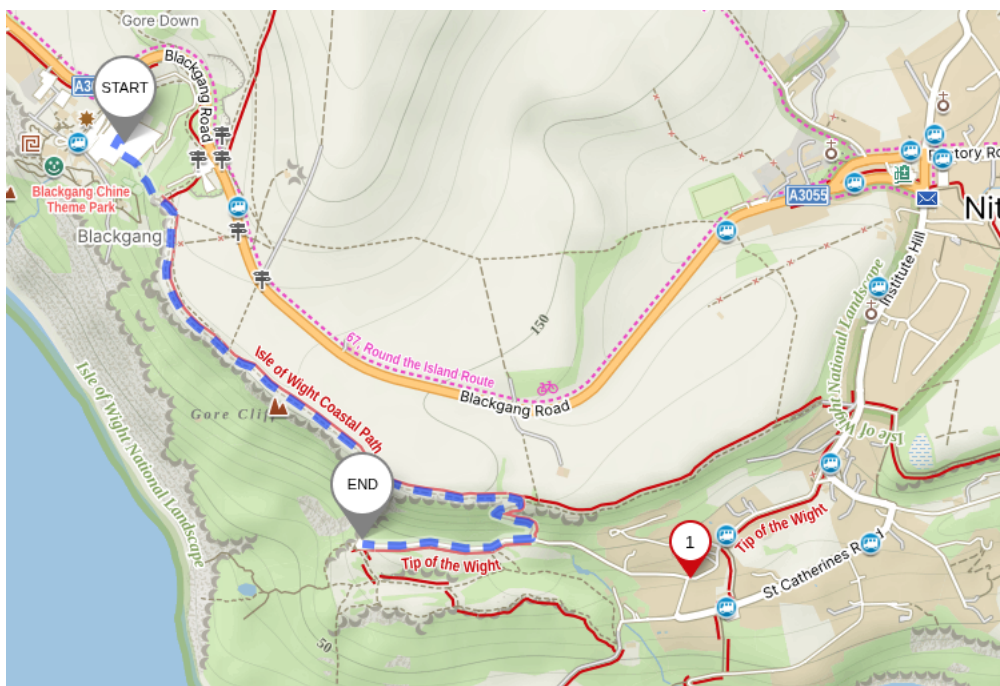
Thank you for your understanding of the forced rearrangement of car park location, which has resulted in a longer walk than originally planned. The distance to Assembly is now 2km with a height change of +40m / -60m.

The route starts with a climb of 40m to the top of Gore Cliff, followed by a scenic walk along the cliff top path (gently undulating) for 1.2km. The route then descends on a rugged path down the hillside, a drop of 60m. The remainder of the route is along a gently undulating minor public road.

If you have small children or are not very mobile, drop-off / pick-up is possible at the junction of Old Blackgang Road and Sandrock Road, which is a 750m walk from Assembly. Please do not drive to Assembly as Old Blackgang Road is single track.

The route is shown on the map below. The 'Start' pin indicates Blackgang Chine car park, 'End' is Assembly and '1' is the drop-off / pick-up point. The route will also be signed and taped.

Event Car Park – Assembly Route Map



Public Transport

Southern Vectis ([Island Buses](#)) operate a bus service to Niton (No 6, Newport – Ventnor) with departures about every two hours. The [Buddle Inn bus stop](#) is about 1 km from Assembly, along Old Blackgang Road.

Toilets

Portaloos are available in the Assembly area (x4).

First Aid

First aid, provided by Centurion Medical Services, will be located in the Assembly area.

Assembly

Assembly is in the Windy Gap Car Park and adjacent grassy area.

Assembly Facilities

EOD

Dibber collection

Enquiries

Download

Key drop

Portaloos (x4)

Clothing dump

Ice cream van

Start

The Start is adjacent to the Assembly area.

Each course is comprised of two separate laps (A & B) with a 90 minute interval between the start time of each lap.

As there are two separate laps (A & B), it is possible for two competitors to start at the same time on each course: one on lap A and the other on lap B (and vice-versa on their second run).

The start list will give the start time for each lap and identify which lap (A or B) is allocated to each competitor for their first run. The start list will be available on the event website:

[Wight50](#)

Start call-up and check/SIAC test will be 3 minutes before your start time.

Course 4 (Junior M/W12-) competitors will be able to collect their maps before dibbing the start box.

Loose control descriptions will be provided in the start lanes (-2 mins).

All competitors must dib the START (including SIAC).

Finish

The FINISH will be SIAC enabled.

All competitors must dib the SAFETY control after finishing each lap.

All competitors must report to DOWNLOAD after each lap of their run, whether or not they complete the course.

The assembly area is about 100m from the finish along a level grassy path.

Results

Results will be available on the event and club websites: [Wight50](#) & [WightO](#)

Event Instructions

Smoking is not permitted owing to fire risk.

Full leg and torso cover is mandatory.

Footwear should be suitable for rough ground.

It is recommended that an emergency whistle is carried.

Cagoules (i.e. hooded waterproof jacket) could be made compulsory, in the event of foul weather.

Do not cross intact fences or walls – use marked gates or crossing points. Uncrossable fences and walls that are likely to affect competitors' route choice are highlighted in purple.

Dogs are allowed in the competition and assembly areas, but must be on a lead at all times.

Return hired SI dibbers after download of second lap.

Terrain

The area is relatively small, but complex and rugged, and expected to provide a challenge. The higher ground in the north part of the map is undulating with many interesting features including woodland, rocky crags and erratic boulders. Some of the crags are high, and require caution. The central section is a south facing hillside that has extensive patches of impenetrable thicket, which are intersected by a web of minor paths. This hillside is steep initially before descending more gradually to the coastal region, which is flanked by high sea cliffs in the central and western parts. The eastern part is gently undulating, whereas the western part is more complex with interesting contour detail.

Mapping

All courses are at a map scale of 1:4000 with a contour interval of 2.5m, which will be printed on A4 waterproof paper.

The area was mapped winter 2024/25 with some updates for this event.

The symbol set used is ISOM 2000 scaled for 1:10,000 (i.e. x1.5) with addition of the symbols given in the table below:

Type	Description	Example
Linear Trace	A yellow line is used to represent a runnable linear trace over rough open land (Yellow 100%, Width 0.35mm)	
Vegetation Boundary	A green dashed line is used for distinct vegetation boundaries, similar to that available in ISOM 2017 (Green 100%, Width 0.14mm)	

The 'special man made feature' symbols have been used for posts and water troughs (o – post, x – water trough).

Uncrossable fences and walls that are likely to affect competitors' route choice are highlighted in purple.

Mapped paths are expected to be clear of problematic undergrowth.

Owing to recent weather conditions, the few wet features in the vicinity of the courses are currently dry. The marsh area in the east of the map remains wet.

Hazards

Hazard	Location / Comment
High sea cliffs	Southern edge of the coastal region. The section east of St Catherine's Lighthouse has a permanent fence separating the cliff from the competition area, which is mapped. The section west of the lighthouse has a temporary livestock fence (two strand electric) separating the cliff from the competition area, which is not mapped.
High crags	Higher ground to the north of the area. The south facing hillside is steep initially and topped with some high crags.
Rough ground	Central hillside. The paths that intersect the dense vegetation on the hillside have been created by cattle, and can be rough underfoot.
Cattle	Fields to the south east of the area. Open is the only course to venture into this area.

Mobile Signal

The mobile signal is expected to be good in the Event Car Park, but variable in the Assembly and Competition areas.

Event Officials

Planner: Pete Bartlett (WightO)

Course Checker: Ben Windsor (DRONGO)

Organiser: Pete Bartlett (WightO)

Safeguarding Officer: Carol Taverner (WightO)

Day 2: Sunday 6th September, Needles Headland

This Level C **SCOA League event** takes place on the Needles Headland, with permission of the National Trust. The area encompasses Tennyson Down, West High Down, the historic Needles New Battery and the Rocket Test Site ruins.

The event is using the Needles Landmark Attraction overflow car park with permission of Warren Farm. And, they have also allowed access across their fields to the competition area. They have declined payment, but would appreciate a donation to the Mountbatten Hospice. If you would like to help, there will be a collection bucket in the car park.

Warren Farm is a family farm, raising Sussex cattle, Herdwick sheep and milking a herd of Jersey cows. If you appreciate quality farm produce, they operate a self-service farm shop. Access is from Alum Bay New Road, near the junction with Alum Bay Old Road.

There is an opportunity for a trip on the Alum Bay / Needles cruise boat on Sunday with a two for one offer, available to competitors on production of their race map.

Event Format

The event is a Middle Distance, and offers a full range of colour coded courses.

Timings

Enquiries, EOD and hired SI/SIAC dibber collection from: 10:00

Start window: 10:30 – 12:30

Courses close: 14:30

Courses

Course	Length (km)	Climb (m)	Comment
Black	6.9	235	TD4. Double sided map. No legend
Brown	5.9	190	TD4. Double sided map. No legend
Blue	5.2	190	TD4. Double sided map. No legend
Green	4.5	130	TD4. Double sided map. No legend
Short Green	3.3	90	TD4. Double sided map. No legend
Light Green	3.3	90	TD4. Double sided map. No legend
Orange	2.3	55	Suitable for improvers and confident adult novices. Legend on back of map
Yellow	2.3	45	All on paths and earth walls. Legend on back of map
White	2.1	40	Easiest, all on paths. Legend on back of map

The Needles Headland is not a complex area; it really only offers orienteering with a technical difficulty up to the TD4 level. Consequently, the Light Green and Short Green have been combined into the same course.

Yellow has a taped route from control 1 to control 2. Follow the tapes when you reach control 1.

Light Green and above will be printed on double sided maps. You will need to turn your map over part way through the course.

Black, Brown and Blue will be printed at 1:10000. Green, Short Green, Light Green, Orange, Yellow, and White will be printed at 1:7500.

Event Car Park

The event is using the Needles Landmark Attraction overflow car park, which is accessed from Alum Bay New Road (B3322):

Postcode	PO39 0JA
what3words	///wrist.stowing.space
Grid ref	SZ 309 854
Google Maps	Day 2 Parking

As you approach, passing the bus turning area on your right, the car park entrance is on the left, a short distance beyond the Alum Bay Glass Shop at the rear of the coach park.

Parking is on a grassy field.

Public Transport

Southern Vectis ([Island Buses](#)) operate a bus service to Alum Bay (No 12, Newport – Alum Bay; Needles Breezer, Yarmouth – Needles Battery). The Needles Breezer has departures every 30 minutes. The [Alum Bay bus stop](#) is about 120m from assembly.

Toilets

Public toilets are available north of the Alum Bay Glass Shop, opposite the bus turning area, which is about 120 m from the car park entrance.

Juniors under 16 must be accompanied by an adult to/from the toilets.

First Aid

First aid, provided by Centurion Medical Services, will be located in the Assembly area.

Assembly

Assembly is adjacent to the Event Car Park.

Assembly Facilities

EOD

Dibber collection

Enquiries

Download

Key drop

Refreshments are available from the Needles Landmark Attraction, which is about 200m from the car park entrance. Juniors under 16 must be accompanied.

Start

The Start is 750m from Assembly. Initially, the route is uphill over grassy fields for 200m to the edge of the competition area. It then proceeds east along the north edge of the competition area on a mostly level footpath for 550m. The route will be signed and taped.

Start call-up and check/SIAC test will be 3 minutes before your start time.

White and Yellow competitors will be able to collect their maps before dibbing the start box.

Loose control descriptions will be provided in the start lanes (-2 mins).

All competitors must dib the START (including SIAC).

Finish

The FINISH will be SIAC enabled.

All competitors must dib the SAFETY control after finishing.

All competitors must report to DOWNLOAD after their run, whether or not they complete the course.

The assembly area is about 650m from the finish. The first 450m is on a path alongside the minor road from Alum Bay to the Needles. This road is access controlled, and so there is very little traffic. The remainder of the route is on the minor road and across the coach park. The route will be signed.

Results

Results will be available on the event and club websites: [Wight50](#) & [WightO](#)

Event Instructions

Smoking is not permitted owing to fire risk.

Full leg and torso cover is mandatory.

It is recommended that an emergency whistle is carried.

Cagoules (i.e. hooded waterproof jacket) could be made compulsory, in the event of foul weather.

Do not cross intact fences or walls – use marked gates or crossing points. Uncrossable fences and walls that are likely to affect competitors' route choice are highlighted in purple.

Dogs are allowed in the competition and assembly areas, but must be on a lead at all times.

Return hired SI dibbers after download.

Terrain

The majority of the high ground of Tennyson Down in the east and West High Down in the west is open land, which is highly runnable. It is peppered with an abundance of landform detail; remnants from its days as a golf course. The central section, midway between the high points of Tennyson Down and West High Down, is rougher open land interspersed with thickets. The north side of the downs is tougher going. It is steep in places and the vegetation cover is more extensive. There is a block of woodland on the hillside north east of Tennyson Monument. Although a substantial part of this area has a cover of dense vegetation, it includes a useful runnable area, which provides variety for the longer courses.

Mapping

Black, Brown and Blue are printed at a scale of 1:10000. Green, Short Green, Light Green, Orange, Yellow, and White are at 1:7500. All courses are printed on A4 waterproof paper with maps for Light Green and above being double sided.

The contour interval is 5m.

The area was mapped spring / summer 2026.

The map has been prepared in accordance with ISOM 2017-2.

The 'special man made feature' symbols have been used for posts and seats (o – post, x – seat).

Uncrossable fences and walls that are likely to affect competitors' route choice are highlighted in purple.

A legend will be printed on the back of the map for White, Yellow and Orange. Maps for other courses will not have a legend. If needed, non-waterproof legends will be available at Enquiries.

There are a few pockets of scattered small thickets (often gorse), which, although evident on the ground, have not been included on the map. These thickets are too small to be represented individually, and they don't warrant an undergrowth screen as they do not significantly impact runnability.

Mapped paths are expected to be clear of problematic undergrowth.

Hazards

Hazard	Location / Comment
High sea cliffs	High cliffs surround the Needles headland. The north and west sections are unfenced. The south central section has a permanent fence separating the cliff from the competition area, which is mapped. The south east section has a temporary livestock fence (two strand electric) separating the cliff from the competition area, which is not mapped.
Broken ground	Rabbit holes can be anywhere. Significant clusters of rabbit holes are mapped as broken ground.
Unfenced drop	Courses Green-Black encounter an underground bunker towards the end. On the ground, it looks like a concrete plinth, but there is a 2m unfenced drop into the entrance to the bunker (see photo below). It has been mapped as a stairway.
Cattle	Cattle may be encountered anywhere in the competition area, except for the far west (Needles New Battery and Rocket Test Site Ruins). The experience has been that these cattle are docile, but should be treated with caution.

Hazard Photo



Mobile Signal

The mobile signal is expected to be variable in all areas (Event Car Park, Assembly and Competition area).

Event Officials

Planner: Ben Windsor (DRONGO)

Controller: Tom Dobra (TVOC/DRONGO)

Organiser: Pete Bartlett (WightO)

Safeguarding Officer: Carol Taverner (WightO)