

Tahoe 3-Day “A” Meet

Burton Creek State Park, June 21-22, 2008

Course Setter’s Notes

By Dwight Freund

Welcome to Lake Tahoe Orienteering! In my opinion, this is one of the most beautiful venues for running in the woods to be found anywhere. Burton Creek State Park is characterized by high-altitude, relatively level, but topographically feature-starved terrain. Orienteers would be well advised to remember their skills with careful direction and distance monitoring; this meet is not an appropriate one to move up from Yellow to Orange, or from Orange to advanced courses.

The map is by now showing some signs of age. Some areas formerly open would by now be classified as rough open due to the increasing amount and size of vegetation. Some trails are now fainter than they used to be.

Some areas are rich in rock features and only the larger ones are mapped. Other areas are relatively free of boulders, and the mapper has paid attention to relatively smaller ones.

Brown × on the map can indicate either a fallen log or a standing stump of significant height. (The former is often also shown as an appropriately angled “T”). Where these features are used as control locations, I’ve indicated them by combining the symbol for lone tree with the symbol for “ruined”, and have distinguished between the two by including a height indication for standing stumps. Green × on the map signifies either a solitary tree in an open area, or a tree in the woods of a very distinct nature, due to size or species.

Saturday courses are “middle distance”, approximately 70% of classic length. Sunday courses are of classic length, with a streamered walk to the start of approximately 1 km from the parking area. Finishes both days are near the High School parking area.

Courses

Saturday Stats

<u>Course</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Climb</u>
White	1.9 km	15 m
Yellow	3.2 km	45 m
Orange	3.8 km	70 m
Brown	3.4 km	40 m
Green	4.3 km	80 m
Red	5.2 km	110 m
Blue	7.4 km	140 m

Sunday Stats

<u>Course</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Climb</u>
White	2.4 km	30 m
Yellow	3.1 km	55 m
Orange	4.5 km	70 m
Brown	4.1 km	35 m
Green	5.0 km	75 m
Red	7.1 km	165 m
Blue	9.2 km	220 m

Hazards

The Park is at approximately 6800-ft (2100-m) altitude, so the air is thinner, and there is an increased risk of dehydration.

Some areas have considerable slash; these change from year to year depending on the activities of the maintenance crews, so they are not reliably mapped. As far as I noticed, there is no poison oak, but some of the areas characterized as rough open have scratchy Manzanita and thorny bushes.

All courses cross the numerous trails that are popular with bicyclists, so please exercise caution when crossing or running along trails.

There are bears in the park. If you encounter a bear, do not approach it or run away. Just stop running and slowly walk away at a perpendicular angle to not pose a threat.

Special Hazard Warning

The northwestern corner of the park is inhabited by a family of Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), and it is now nesting season. The Goshawk is a large and beautiful grayish-white hawk, and is widely regarded as one of the most fearless and aggressive of wild animals. If you venture near the edge of its patrolled territory (which I have marked as out-of-bounds on the map), he/she will make him/herself known to you, calling out a shrill "kreee, kreee" and flying from one treetop near you to another. If you persist in approaching his/her nest, you will not see him/her again until he/she whizzes completely silently at low level up from behind you and puts a couple of deep gashes in your head!

I have set the courses so that there is absolutely no need to pass closer than 250 m from the area that I have determined to be the hawk's area of concern. However, the Park folks consider the hawk's area to be somewhat larger (and includes some controls on the advanced courses on Day 2). They are concerned both with your safety and the anxiety of the Goshawks. Therefore, if you should become aware of the hawk's interest in you (see description above), **you are required to immediately bail in a direction directly away from the marked area!** Failure to do so will result in disqualification. If you come back with a bloody head, you will need medical attention, and be disqualified to boot!

Information About Goshawk Hawks

A powerful raptor of northern forests, the Northern Goshawk is the largest North American accipiter. It maneuvers through dense woods, taking prey as small as squirrels and as large as grouse, crows, and snowshoe hare.

Cool Facts

- The Northern Goshawk is well known for its fierce defense of its nest. It commonly attacks people and other animals that approach the nest too closely.
- The Northern Goshawk can be very persistent in pursuing prey. One goshawk was seen pursuing a snowshoe hare for 45 to 60 minutes along a hedgerow until finally the hare ran into a clearing and was seized. A goshawk may also chase poultry into buildings.
- Attila the Hun wore an image of a Northern Goshawk on his helmet.

Northern Goshawk Juvenile Hatched in
2005 at Burton Creek State Park



(Photo is Copyrighted property of Martin Meyers)

Adult with Chicks



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