

22nd USA Radio Orienteering Championships Summary

The 22nd USA Radio Orienteering Championships took place April 19-23 at Cooper Lake State Park (CLSP) near Dallas, Texas. The event saw participation from 34 individuals representing nine US states and Ontario, Canada. April 19 was dedicated to radio direction-finding training and practice. The competitions from April 20-23 will help determine the members of Team USA who will compete in the ARDF World Championships scheduled for the fall of 2023 in Liberec, Czech Republic.

All events were held within CLSP on maps provided by the North Texas Orienteering Association (NTOA) of Dallas, Texas. New Mexico Orienteers (NMO) of Albuquerque, New Mexico, organized and sponsored the event across state lines to bring the championships to a challenging new venue. Professional communications and logistics support was provided by members of the White Rock Lake Amateur Radio Club (WA5WRL), for which the event organizers are extremely grateful. "The terrain at this championships was the most challenging of any championships in memory," noted the event director, Gerald Boyd, WB8WFK. "The relative flatness of the courses was more than compensated for by the challenges posed by the thorny vegetation," he added.

The races began with a sprint event on April 20, where two sets of five transmitters operating on two different 80-meter frequencies transmitted sequentially in 12-second bursts every minute. Ordinarily held in an open runnable park setting, this sprint was held along hiking and bridle trails. Transmitters (called "foxes") were placed near trails to help competitors complete their courses without exceeding the 60-minute time limit.

The competition continued the next day with Foxoring, a timed race where individual competitors used a topographic map and a magnetic compass to navigate through diverse, wooded terrain while searching for the foxes. A violent electrical storm wreaked havoc with one of the foxes. Its non-volatile memory was scrambled by the currents induced by a nearby bolt. It failed to transmit, causing some competitors to search (sometimes successfully!) for the silent transmitter. "The competitors were amazing!" exclaimed Charles Scharlau, NZØI, the course setter.

Classic events were held over the weekend. Each day, two separate courses (one on 2m and one on 80m) were set out. Competitors competed on one band each day. The Saturday classic event included a family competition among the Sanderson clan. Matt (KC9SEM) and Patty (N9PLS) of Chicago, Illinois, split into mother-daughter and father-son teams to compete for family bragging rights. "We would love to see more families participating in these events," Boyd added.

Despite the anticipation pre-event of hot Texas weather, the last day of the competitions saw cold rain, which added to the challenge. But the competitors persevered, with many of them turning in excellent performances.

The 2023 USA Radio Orienteering championships provided a full and complete

championships experience. They should serve well as a springboard to a successful USA showing at the World Championships this fall. The lessons learned will be applied to the USA Championships in Michigan in 2024, which have already been announced: tinyurl.com/2p9fmw27

RESULTS

Sprint Results: <https://backwoodsok.org/ardf-usa-championship-2023-sprint-results>

Foxoring Results: <https://backwoodsok.org/ardf-usa-championship-2023-fox-o-results>

Classics Results Day 1: <https://backwoodsok.org/ardf-usa-championship-2023-classic-80m-and-2m-results>

Classics Results Day 2: <https://backwoodsok.org/ardf-usa-championship-2023-classic-day-2-results>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who helped support the 22nd USA Radio Orienteering Championships:

New Mexico Orienteers (NMO) for their sponsorship of the event.

North Texas Orienteering Association (NTOA) for the use of their maps.

Backwoods Orienteering Klub (BOK) for the use of their timing equipment and stands for sprint and foxoring. And for the use of their website for posting results.

Thanks to Gerald Boyd, WB8WFK, for serving as Event Director and providing foxoring transmitters.

Thanks to Nadia Scharlau, KO4ADV, for designing the longer classic courses and helping at the starting line; and to Charles Scharlau, NZØ1, for designing the other courses and setting them out.

Thanks to Ken Harker, WM5R, Vadim Afonkin, KB1RLI, and Imre Polik, KX4SO, and Robert Frey, WA6EZV, for their help at the starting line during the competition days.

Thanks to Matt Craig, Adalia Schafrath-Craig, Gheorghe Fala, Natalia Leoni, and Imre Polik, KX4SO, for picking up the sprint and foxoring controls after those events.

Special thanks to Imre Polik, KX4SO, for operating the download station and posting results to the BOK website, ensuring timely reporting of each day's results.

Thank you to the White Rock Lake Amateur Radio Club (<https://whiterockhams.wordpress.com/>) members David Ricker, KG5VSR, John Webb, W5JMW, John Cheyney, KF5PFP, Randy Durham, W5WXY, Alberto Boisse, KI5WZZ, Shane Outlaw, KI5GBU, Topp Robertson, KI5LET, Anthony Mendina, NT5TM, for their help with communications during the event. And special thanks to Dave Catlett, K5YR, for organizing the club's efforts and for hauling the finish line equipment through the rain and mud! Their skills and dedication helped the event run smoothly and safely.

PHOTOS ONLINE

Courtesy Imre Polik, KX4SO: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/F1G73MAgtJCcmdmLk7>

Courtesy Adalia Schafrath-Craig: <https://www.icloud.com/sharedalbum/#B1653qWtHqakK4i>

Courtesy Robert Frey, WA6EZV: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/VupxekVNJi7veCcW9>

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