

Course description

The MSR course is a fairly standard University Campus orienteering. There are few alleyways and not much climb. There are no major technical sections: Quantum court (2-5) is the trickiest. Nor are there any big traps where people will lose 30sec. But there is a lot of scope for saving 2-3 seconds from cutting corners, decisive routechoice and accurate execution. The race ends in a maze, simple compared to what is provided for primary school children, but negotiating it under race pressure, in oxygen debt and in front of a crowd adds to the difficulty. The circular design and 4m wide openings mean that runner will need to take the correct direction, rather than memorise a series of left and right turns.

The winners will be those runners who cope best with many microdecisions and execute fast and cleanly. There are long legs, but the routechoice is not decisive. There is very little gaffling, so it is safe to follow – But of course, the athletes don't know either of those things.

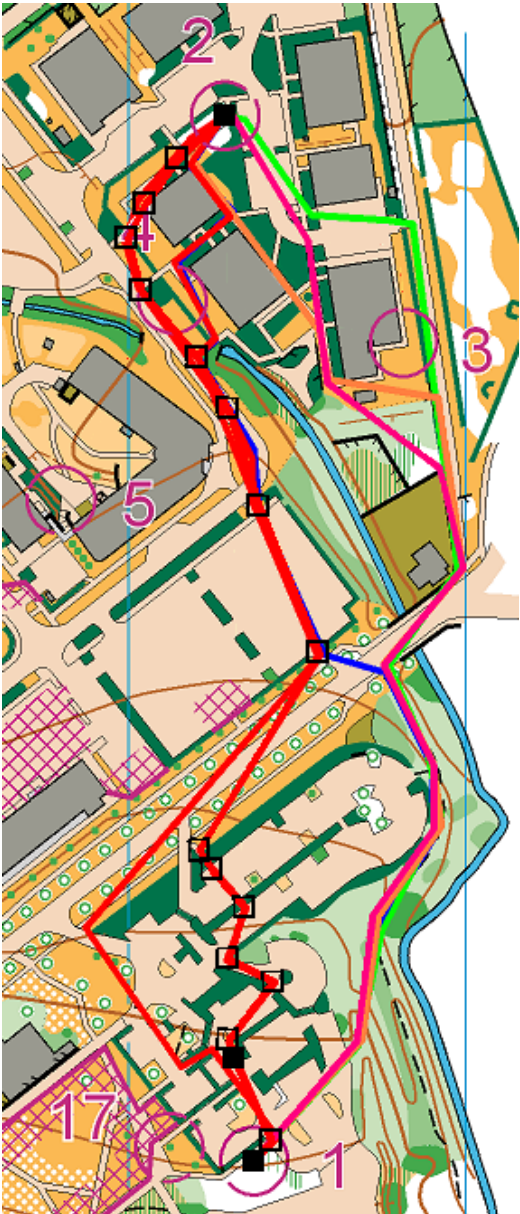
For the route maps, I used the red-with-squares to show the best options.

Leg descriptions

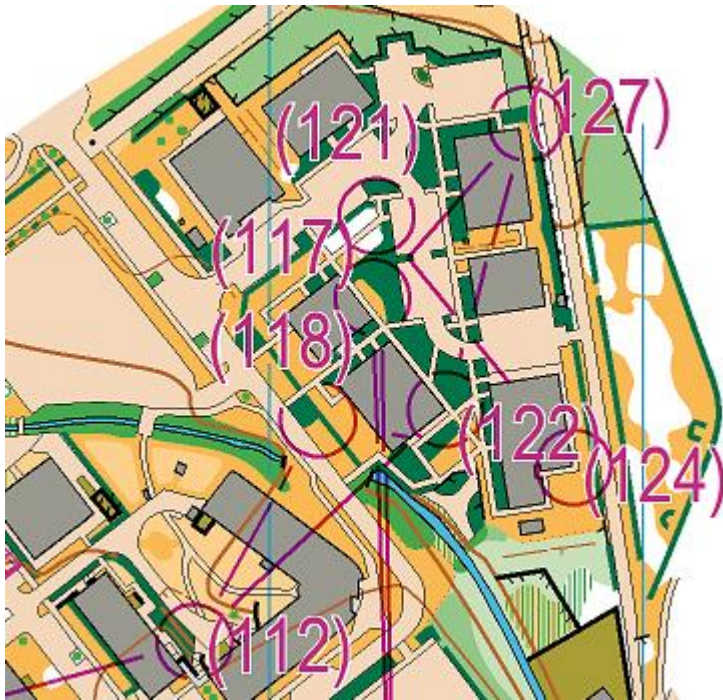
Numbers refer to women's course

Leg start –1 Not interesting, just give them a chance to look at the map

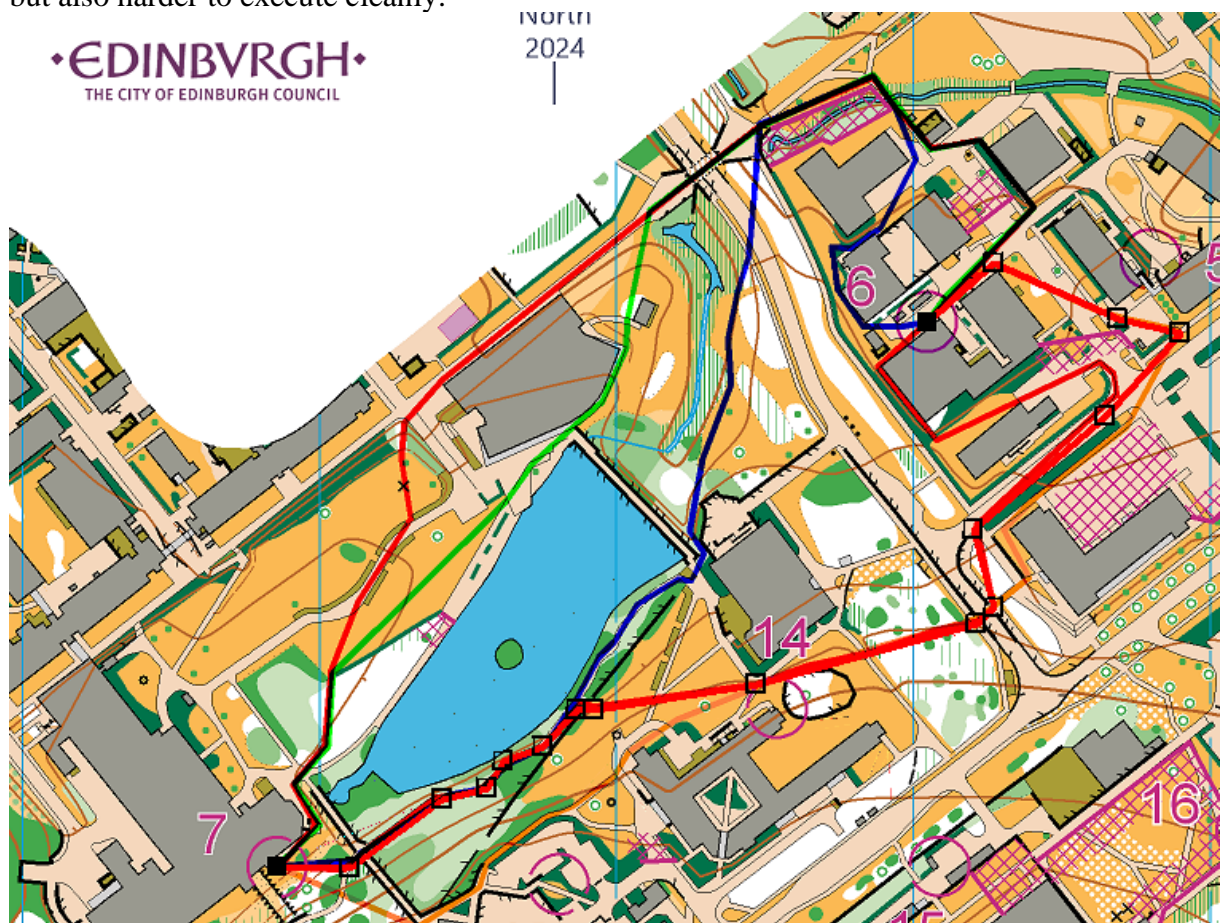
1-2 Many route choices here early on – there's a clearly best route through the carpark, but it involves a few turns and people may get it wrong, losing a few seconds. There is also an option of going east through the woods avoiding the carpark altogether. The pink route is actually shortest by a couple of metres, but has more terrain and test running suggest it is slower. Eastern options are easy to execute and only a few secs slower (if dry): certainly better than getting lost in the carpark. The middle part of this leg is quite dull. Control #2 is gaffled, but the major route choices are the same. - the red and orange versions of the final section are better for the other control. Please note that some hedges in the carpark are being extended on the day, so not a good leg for pre-filming.



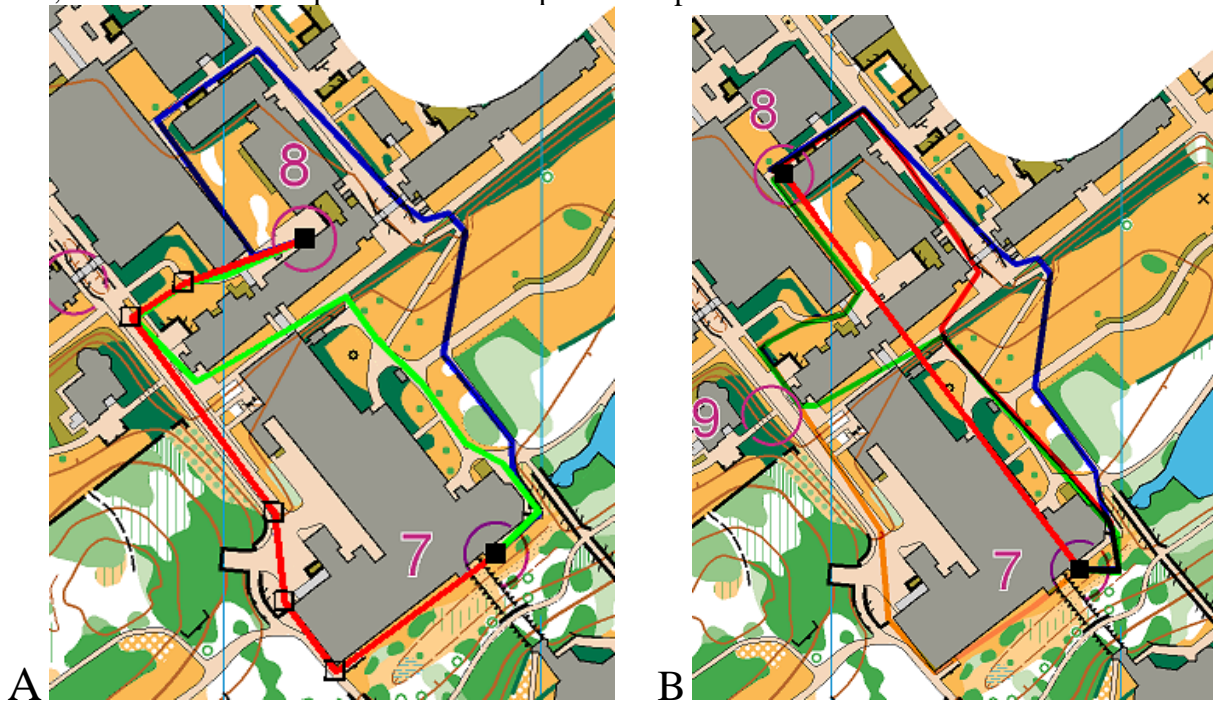
2-6 Gaffled section : this may be quite important as its quite tricky in Quantum Court, but there are tight alleys and hedges so it won't televise well (maybe drone?).

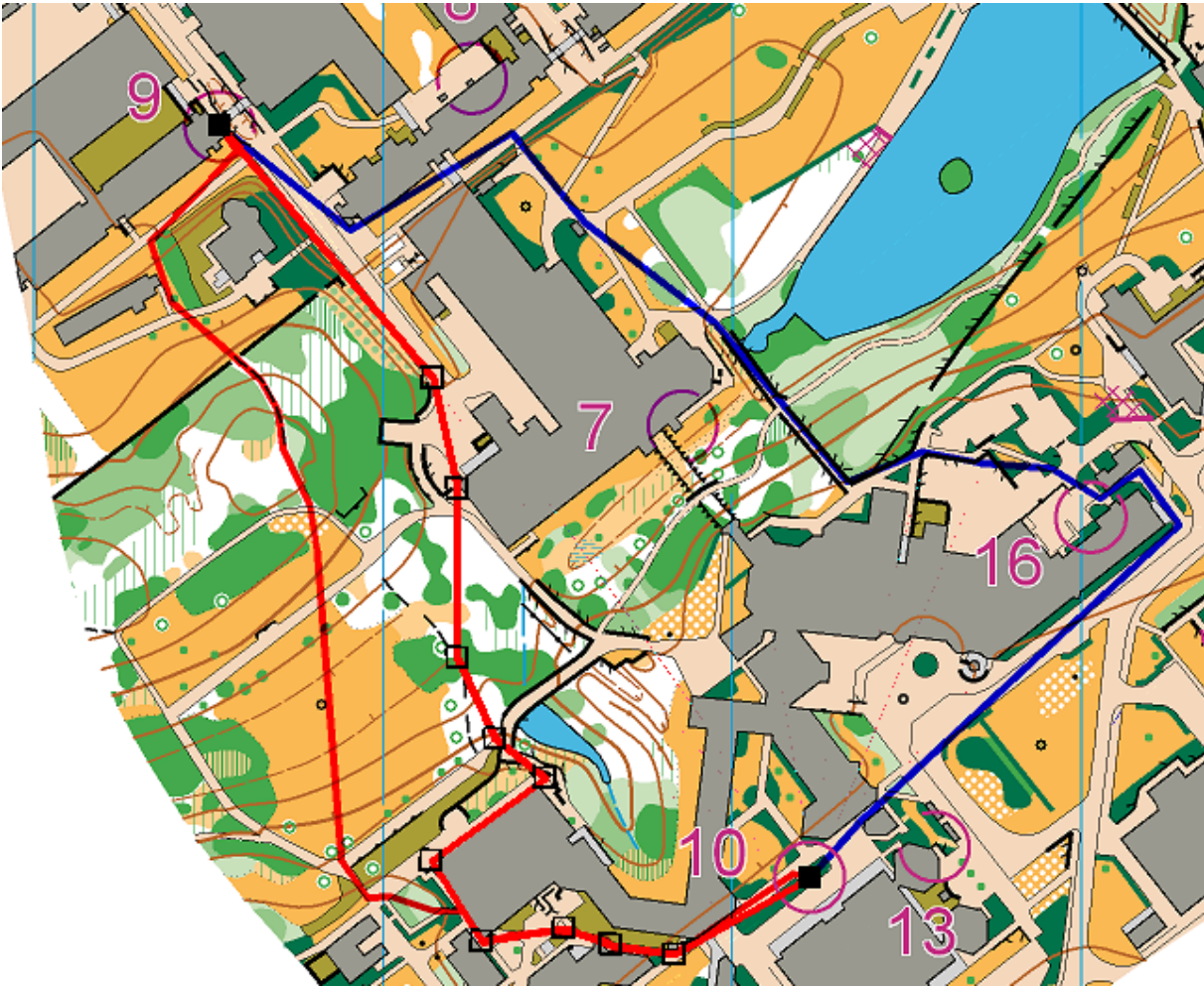


6-7 Big decision at 6, there are four options leaving the control to reach one of two exits from this estate. These lead to two routes, north and south, each of which has a number of sub-decisions to make. The second half of the leg goes through nice parkland before converging onto #7. There's not much to choose between the routes and no traps – south is a little shorter but also harder to execute cleanly.

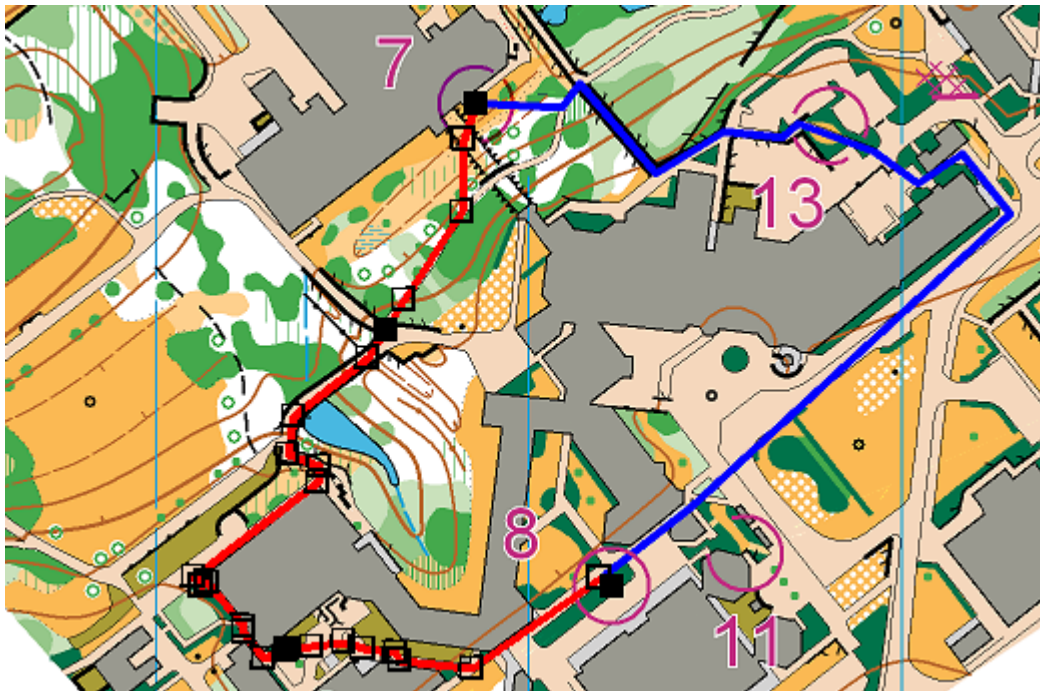


(Men extra loop north – mainly route choice, fast running, some woodland. Option A should leave #7 heading west, Option B should head east. The gaffles cross between 8 and 9, at which point those running A will appear to have gained time, but they have a longer route to 9. There's lots of route choices on the long leg back SE, but nothing definitively better, the key is clean execution. The small path through the woods on the westernmost route choice is fast, but dark and atmospheric: nice for a prerace clip



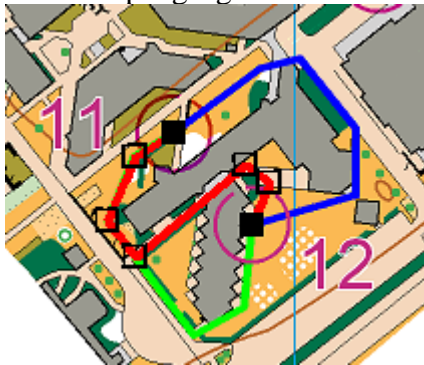


(Women have a routechoice around the main building. West is significantly better, but has some options for running further west than needed)

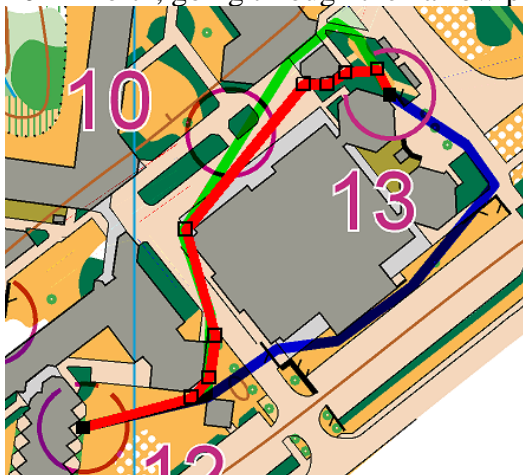


8-9 TV leg, Everyone will go the same way west along the wide path. It is a big dogleg so you will be able to see the gaps to the chasing runners.

9-11, ungaffled, many route choices, twisting through buildings, earmarked for running cameraman. Optimal routes by a few seconds are 9-10 sharp zigzag red route is shortest



10-11 north, going through the narrow path rather than the big canopy.



11-15 (men 13-17) Second gaffled section: runners are all heading broadly the same way through a section with low hedges. The gaffles cross frequently, so you should be able to follow the whole race.

15-16 Simple leg across the road, right/west is the better of the two routechoices

16-17 Outdoor arena passage, hopefully lots of spectators. Executing the route to the control is not trivial, and I expect that the distraction from the crowd will induce errors and maybe panic. Make sure you cover the section immediately after leaving the spectator area, before #17 - it should make good TV. Hedges in the carpark make it tricky to execute with several turns. Athletes enter the shown section from the arena passage on the west side



17-18 Simple leg, a moment for athletes to plan the maze, and for TV to focus on the chasing groups in the arena passage before the leaders arrive inside Oriam.

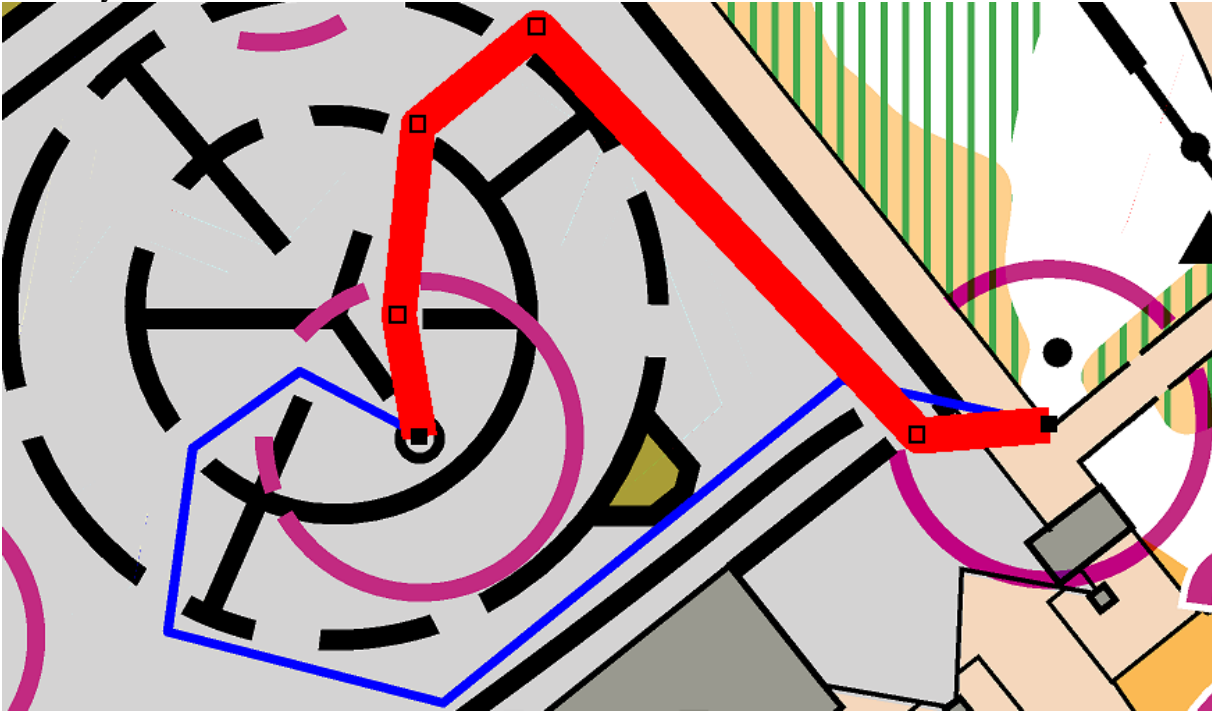
Inside Oriam.

Unfortunately, fire regulations limit the indoor arena to maybe 500 lucky spectators on the bleachers + teams and officials.

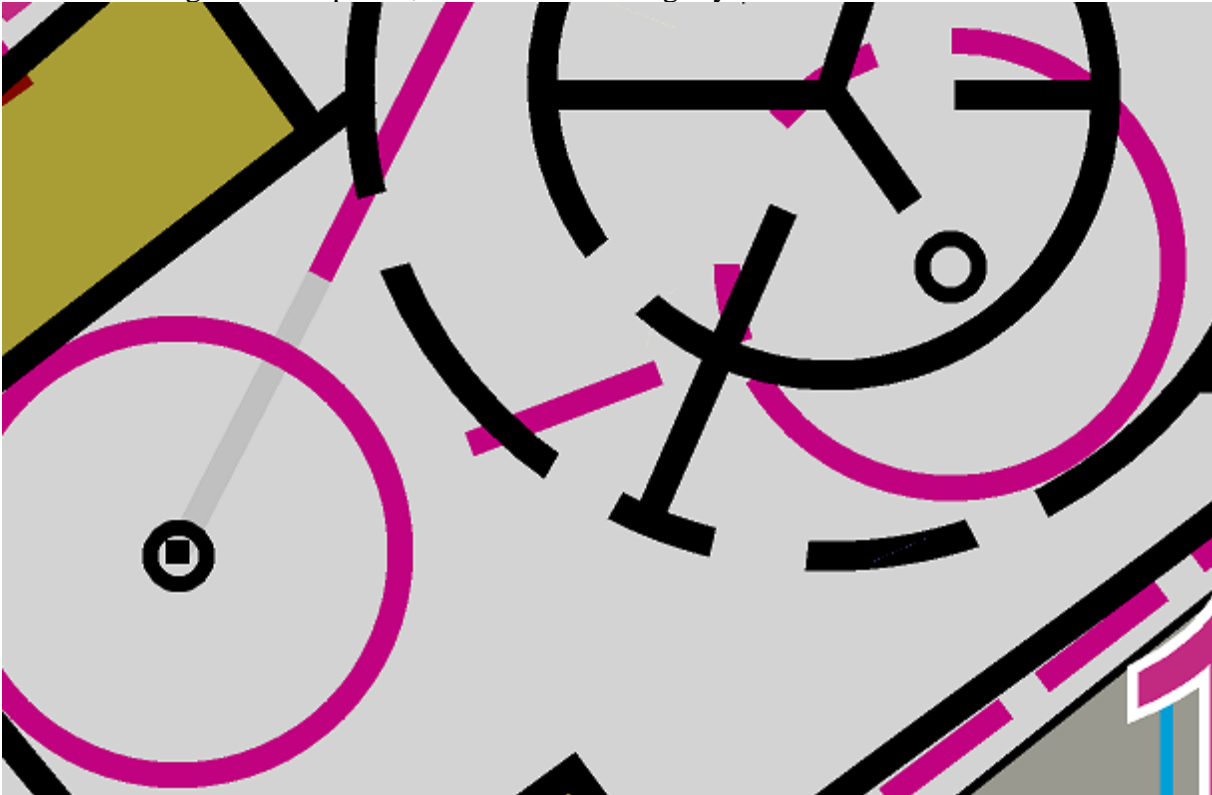
Again, there is some scope for race-defining routechoice errors of 5-10 seconds, and the possibility of complete meltdown if athletes lose track of where they are. So you certainly want to cover this.

Two options for the first leg inside, the right hand route is some 25m shorter than left. Both options require athletes to count up to three or risk turning into the maze too soon, which will

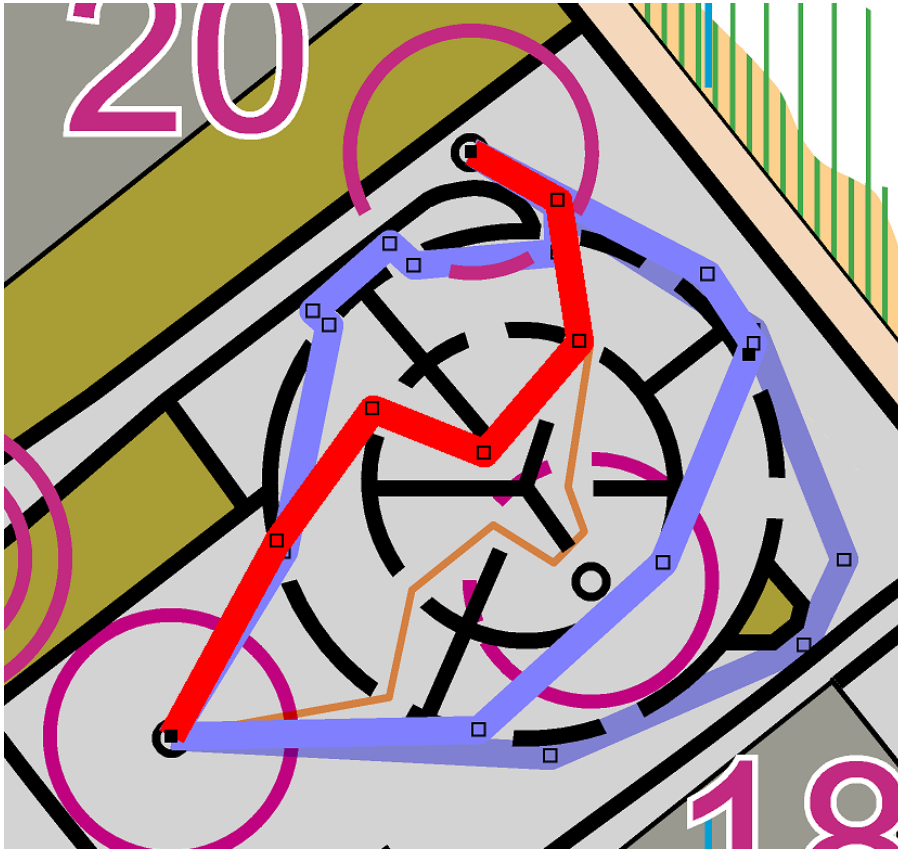
be costly.



Penultimate leg has two options, south is ever so slightly shorter



Last leg has five options – red is shortest by 1m from the northernmost. The route further east route are 10 or more metres worse than those two, and will be a couple of seconds slower.



Summarising the best **set-piece TV sections** (all common to M and W)...

Start of leg 1-2 in the carpark (also, approach to 17 from same location)

Decision making at 6 before the long leg.

Section 8-11. You asked for this common section, I'm not so convinced as there are many routes and you won't be able to cover all of them.

Gaffled section 11-15: although gaffled sections can be confusing, you have good sight lines through here and the gaffles criss-cross, so you may get more footage of runners than in 8-11.

Arena Passage and #17 (Men 19). **Drone footage** should work well for Quantum court, long leg 6-7 around the lake and men's extra loop.