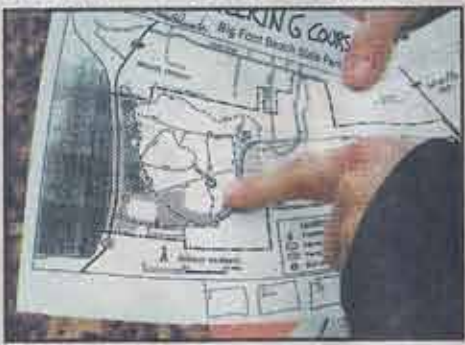


## THE ART OF ORIENTEERING:



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# Heading in the right direction

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PHOTOS BY KEVIN POIRIER/KENOSHA NEWS



David Schuster navigates Big Foot Beach State Park in Lake Geneva with his dog, Jackson.

**E**ven if you've never tried orienteering before, you can take part in the sport during a family event March 25 at Big Foot Beach State Park in Lake Geneva.

"Orienteering can be very technical, very easy and everything in between," said David Schuster, one of the event organizers. "(This course) will be easy, a family event."

For those unfamiliar with the sport, orienteering is an activity where participants use a map and usually a compass to find certain points in an outdoor setting. Many events are competitive with the fastest team winning.

The March 25 event is planned not only to introduce people to orienteering but also to encourage use of Big Foot Beach State Park, said Schuster, a charter member of the recently formed Friends of Big Foot Beach State Park.

Currently being set up as a non-profit organization, the Friends group seeks to promote awareness and use of the Big Foot Park.

And encouraging more families to come out to enjoy the park in multiple ways is a major goal of the orienteering event, said Schuster.

The course will be designed for beginners who can do their orienteering between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. March 25 at Big Foot Beach State Park.

At the beginning, participants receive a map that marks certain spots called control sites that they must locate before returning to the finish. The trick is to read the map to navigate through the woods and over the hills to find a good and fast route to the control sites.

"It's a time trial so everyone starts at a different time so they aren't following," he said.

He estimates it will take most people between 60 and 90 minutes to complete the 2.5- to 3-mile course.

Each spot, or control site, is marked with a control marker, an orange and white triangular-shaped flag, with a punch hanging next to the flag. Participants follow the map and clues on the map to find control sites and then use the punch

### Park schedules orienteering event

A family orienteering event is scheduled Saturday, March 25, at Big Foot Beach State Park, located on south Lakeshore Drive in Lake Geneva.

The event will run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will include refreshments and prizes.

Entry fee is \$5 with all proceeds benefiting Big Foot Beach State Park.

The event is sponsored by Friends of Big Foot Beach State Park and Clearwater Outdoor sporting goods store in Lake Geneva.

For details, contact David or Sarah Schuster of Clearwater Outdoor, (262) 348-2420.

For information on orienteering and clubs, visit the Web site: [www.us.orienteering.org](http://www.us.orienteering.org)

Would you  
know how to  
stay the course  
in a test of  
orienteering?

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KENOSHA NEWS PHOTO BY KEVIN POIRIER

David Schuster stands near an orienteering course marker at Big Foot Beach State Park in Lake Geneva.

## ORIENTEERING: Activity lets people explore the outdoors

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to mark their race cards. The punches all make different patterns of holes in the card.

"You use every clue you can," he said. "You have to try to evaluate the lay of the land as it relates to where you are. The markers are universal; they're always orange/white triangles."

Besides clues, an orienteering map generally shows topography, dark green areas that indicate wooded areas, trails and roads. The map for March 25 will not include topography since the 220-acre Big Foot Beach State Park isn't that hilly, according to Schuster.

And participants probably will not need a compass, he added. "The coordinator can explain the map if necessary at the beginning," he said, "and there are safety barriers, for example if you go too far, you will hit the road. It will be for family fun."

Schuster, himself, is relatively new to orienteering. He and his 7-year-old son tried a beginner course in November at Kettle Moraine State Forest Northern Unit. For him, it was an orienteering mission with multiple purposes.

"I'm an outdoor enthusiast and I



David Schuster traverses the orienteering course in Lake Geneva.

thought orienteering was something we could do in the Lake Geneva area," he said. "For us, it was a father-son day. He was excited because it was going to be a race. I wanted to do it so I could tell others about it."

In addition, he was looking for outdoor activities the Friends group could organize and that he and his wife Sarah could promote through their store, Clearwater Outdoor sporting goods in Lake Geneva.

"We've adopted Big Foot Beach State Park," he said. "We're totally into the community; we want to give back. The mission of the store is to get people out-

side and active and to create environmental awareness."

His introduction to orienteering came at an event organized by the Badger Orienteering Club, a club that he subsequently joined.

"That day about 150 people were running around," he said. "There was a short, medium and long course for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels."

He was also inspired to purchase an orienteering kit that includes markers and punches so he could set up orienteering courses at Big Foot.

Unlike his first orienteering experience, the March 25 course will be beginner level only. "The terrain may hinder some folks," he said, "but it's a sport for everyone as long as you can walk."

Also in the works for March 25 is a kids' course set up in the playground area where the younger set can try orienteering on their own.

There will be refreshments and prizes by random distribution rather than to winners.

"It isn't really about being a winner," Schuster said. "It's about being a participant. ... I'd be thrilled if we get 20 entries or families. Dogs are welcome, too, if they're on a leash."