

C.M.O. ORGANIZATIONS

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Cover: Tammy Fitzner taking a compass reading at the landmark. A Plate hidden in a stump. Becki Ruh and Jordi Palsrok searching a field for the plate. A landmark.

www.micmo.org

Current ride schedules for CMO's and ride results across the country can be found on the NACMO web site at

www.nacmo.org

updated 3/10

HOW TO CMO



Originally Written for the
Michigan Competitive Mounted
Orienteering Association

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What is CMO?

CMO is called the "thinking horse sport" because it involves much more than riding. C - is for Competitive; as it is a timed event, you must find the MOST plates in the fastest time. M - is for mounted; as on horseback. O - is for orienteering; you use a compass and a map to navigate the trails to find hidden plates.

Riders interpret a map of the trails, locate well-described landmarks on the trail, use a map reading compass to take compass readings given to them for each station and then figure out according to the compass readings where a 9 inch paper plate has been placed for each station.

CMO Basics

NACMO - CMO is a national organization, the National Association of Competitive Mounted Orienteering (NACMO) is the parent organization which keeps lifetime and year end points, gives awards, and provides insurance, membership is \$20 for an individual, and \$30 for a family for a calendar year.

We have CMO's spread all over the USA, with NACMO keeping points toward year end and lifetime awards, as well as national and state awards.

MiCMO - MiCMO is the local chapter of NACMO. Membership includes newsletters, subscription to Equine Times for an additional \$8.50, year end MiCMO awards, member meetings, awards banquet, ongoing communication from the group actually hosting the rides during the season, and the camaraderie of a great group of riders. Membership is \$10 for a calendar year.

Points: – You receive one station point for each station found and time points for the fastest 6 teams or individuals, 6 points for the fastest with the most plates, 5 points for the second fastest etc.

Awards - Awards are given at Year End, for High Point Teams and Individuals, for both the long and short course. National awards are given for; National High Point Team and Individual, Lifetime Individual points, Lifetime Horse points (station points), High point Juniors, and Ride Manager points. As well as other state awards.

Team vs. Individual – A CMO may be ridden as an individual or by a team of up to 6 riders.

Teams and Individuals compete evenly at each ride, but year end awards are given separately for Teams and Individuals.

Fees – most rides are \$10 for Annual NACMO members or \$15 for Day members.



Trail Markings and Landmarks:

Riders at CMOs are given maps, that if followed carefully, will almost guarantee they will not get lost. Most ride sites have trails that are carefully marked with signposts or other markers nailed to trees. It is very important for the rider to read the map, check every trail marking and always keep track of where he is on the trail. Getting lost is no fun and it does not win CMOs.

Ride managers may also use these markers as landmarks because they are easy to identify and will help the rider to know that he is in the right place. These markers can be described creatively, however.

Examples:



The signs above may be described as, 1) #7 post, 2) tree with 2 blue diamonds, 3) Equestrian geographical locator

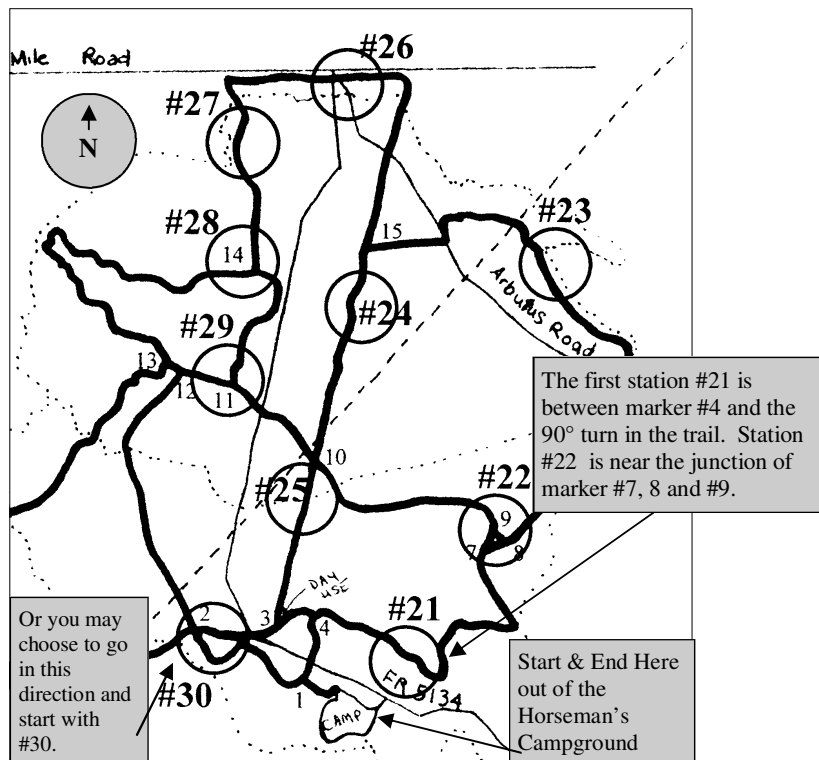
Ride Managers more often use more natural items that are not horse trail signs as landmarks. Often the more natural something is, the harder it is to identify.



Above we see, 1) a log over the trail (CR), 2) rusty metal can between tree and a 1 foot stump, 3) tree with 3 trunks one cut off and rotted, 4) broken tree with rusty metal at base.

Part of the fun of CMO is finding the landmarks the ride manager has described. Normally the ride manager hunts to find ones that are interesting.

Sample CMO Course Map



Once the competitor gets this map, he looks at it quickly and either heads east from marker #4 to find station #21 first, or he decides to go in the other way around the course and head towards station #30.

If he decides to look for station #21 first, he can ride quickly until he approaches the midway point between marker #4 and the 90° turn in the trail. Thus as he nears this point he slows down and begins to watch both sides of the trail carefully for the landmarks described on the back of the map for station #21.

Once he has found that station he moves on to station #22. He has found the landmarks. Taking his compass readings. He locates all the stations and now must hurry back to camp in an effort to bring in the best time of the ride.

The back of the CMO Map

FALL FUN CMO MAP #1 SATURDAY SEPT 13, 2003 Short Course # 21 - 25			
21. _____	45° 345°	from tree on east side of trail with lots of warts from tree broken about 6' up and leaning in another tree	
22. _____	80° 80°	TO #8 post from #7 post	
23. _____	79° 37°	from tree with a dead pine tree laying in the fork from tree with 4 trunks with 2 blue diamonds, horse and skier	
24. _____	105° 130°	from tree with 2 sticks leaning against it in an X from tree broken off 6' up with 2 small sticks coming out of the top	
25. _____	337° 110°	TO the brown bike trail marker, with a hole shot through it from blue horse diamond, on tree cut off about 6' tall	
26. _____	195° 205°	from blue triangle from tree broken off about 9' tall, fall of woodpecker holes	
27. _____	312° 230°	from jack pine, on east side of trail (CR) from tree with 3 blue diamonds, and sticks leaning against it	
28. _____	160° 215°	from clump of many trees close together (CR) from old rotted stump in mound of dirt	
29. _____	186° 270°	from the fire pit with 2 rocks in it, on north side of the trail from the small tree broken off about 8', with shell lichen on it, on south side of the trail	
30. _____	325° 304°	from dead tree with grey plastic leaning against the bottom from huge old maple at intersection	

(CR) = Confidence Ribbon - a small ribbon on the back or bottom of the landmark

Long course vs. Short Course – The short course is roughly half of the long course and half of the points. Long course is approx. 7 or more miles with 10 stations, Short Course is usually 6 miles or less with 5 stations. We recommend new people start with the short course until they get the feel for it. You can switch back and forth between the two divisions.

There are two separate rides on Saturday and Sunday, you can ride either or both. Most CMO'ers ride both days and camp for the week-end. You can choose to ride either the long course or the short course .



The CMO usually starts at the Ride Managers campsite in the campground. We will teach you how to read the compass and everything you need to know, and help you with practice stations in camp.

When you are ready to ride you get your map and your time starts. On your map will be 10 circles (if you are doing the short course you will only do 5 of the stations), you need to figure out how to get to each circle. When you think you are in the circle you will look for the two landmarks for that station listed on the back of your map. When you find the landmarks, you will stand by the landmark and ride in the direction that your compass points. Where the compass readings from the two landmarks intersect you will find a 9 inch white plate. You write down the word or letters on the plate on the line on your map. Then you decide how to get to the next circle and repeat the process. When you find all of the plates you find the shortest route back to camp and turn in your map with the words written on it and your time stops.



The team or individual with the most correct stations in the fastest time wins. Placings are given and if you are a member you receive points for each plate found and time points that add up toward national awards. Awards and/or certificates are given at most rides. The awards are entirely up to each ride manager so the awards given at each ride vary.

Saturday evening we have a potluck at the Ride Manager's campsite and after everyone has stuffed themselves, placings are announced and awards given.

Getting Ready - Gear and Such

Equine: All Equines are welcome. All breeds of horses and even ponies do well and occasionally a mule beats us all. All equine competing must be three years of age. Include your animal's age on the entry form.

Rider: Riders may be of any age. Riders under 18 years of age, are considered junior riders, and must have written permission from a parent or guardian if riding with other members. Junior riders must ride with an adult.

Riders are to be polite to others on the trail and conduct themselves in a safe, courteous (albeit competitive) manner in and out of camp.



Only registered NACMO member (annual or day members) competitors may ride as part of the group.

Tack: As long as the tack is safe, sound and well fitting, it is ok. Use whatever tack is comfortable for you and your horse. This sport is not picky as to what you wear or what tack you use. You can personalize your outfit as you please and do what is best for you.

Most Rides start early in the morning. Depending on the weather and what time of the year the ride is held, the rider may need a warm jacket, sweatshirt, gloves or even a raincoat or poncho.

Many CMO'ers use a horn bag to hold the map when not in use, a pen and compass and maybe an extra of each. On a long ride or a hot day it is also nice to be able to carry other necessities such as a bottle of water, bug repellent, first aid kit, snack, Kleenex or biodegradable toilet paper.

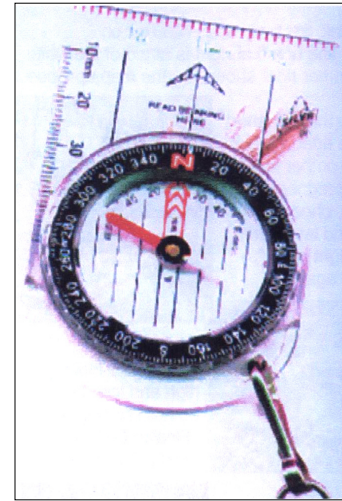


Many riders also carry a plastic sheet protector or gallon size zip lock bag to put their map into in the event of rain.

No artificial devices may be used, for example; GPS, Radios, Cell phones, whistles, etc.

Last but not least a good map reading compass. Silva brand is a good choice for example Silva Starter 123 or Silva Polaris. Compasses can be found at most sporting goods for about \$10. You can spend a lot more on a compass but they are usually more complicated to use. MiCMO has compasses to loan at most rides.

How to Read the Compass



A typical map reading compass is a plastic back plate with a ruler on two sides and an arrow pointing off one end of the plate. On top of that is a dial with degree readings and the letter N for north printed on it.

Inside the dial is a pointer that spins. Usually one end is red and one end white, but sometimes the ends are different colors. Often the white end is black. Note that there is also a red arrow painted onto the underside of the dial.

This is the type of compass used for CMO. It is called a map reading compass because in some sports it is laid on the map and used in that manner.

In CMO, you hold the compass in your hand, turn the dial to the reading given to you on your map. Turn the dial until the number given lines up with the arrow at the top of your compass (some compasses say Read Bearing Here). Holding the compass level, you then turn yourself or the compass until the red end of the pointer lines up with the red arrow painted onto the underside of the dial. Once these line up, the arrow on the faceplate points in the direction where you should look for the plate.

If the compass reading is a 'from' reading as in "250° from the #7 post", you turn the dial until the 250° line lines up with the large arrow on the base of the compass. Then you actually turn the compass or yourself around until the red arrows align. The base arrow will now point in the direction of the station.

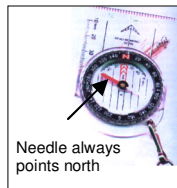
If the compass reading is a 'To' reading as in "250° TO the #8 post", you turn the dial until the 250° line lines up with the large arrow on the base of the compass. Then you actually turn the compass or yourself around until the white arrow is in the red arrow on the underside of the dial.

Remember; line up the **red** end of the floating needle for "from" readings. Line up the **white** or black end for "to" readings.

These compasses are sensitive to metal or magnetic fields, so be careful not to let the metal in your saddle horn, power lines, or other metal on your person or saddle skew the reading.

You may have to get off the horse at times to get an accurate reading. One thing we all learn is, keep trying. If you can't find the plate maybe you confused a 'to' with a 'from' reading. Maybe something was skewing your reading. Try again. Have your partner take it, and take his over. You'll get it eventually and we all get better with practice.

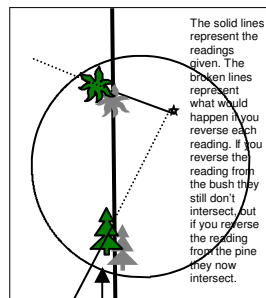
Read the whole clue, each word is important. If the clue says “a two trunk tree with sticks leaning against it”, there may be lots of two trunk trees but only one with sticks. If it says the clue is on the “north side of the trail”, there may be similar clues on the south side of the trail, but they are on the wrong side of the trail to be the clue.



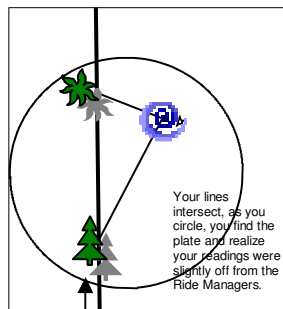
How do you know which side of the trail is the north side? The red floating needle in your compass always points north.

If you are sure you are in the correct place and still can't find it, double check each others readings, make sure you are not confusing TO and FROM. Switch landmarks with your partner, you may get a different reading than your partner, something may be throwing off one of your compasses, or one of you may have set your compass incorrectly, one of you may have confused TO and FROM and be going in the wrong direction. If you switch places you may realize the others mistake.

If you are in the correct place and your readings do not cross, try changing a “from” to a “to”, the RM may have made a mistake. Try changing one of the readings, so that they will intersect. This takes some thinking, if you change the wrong one they still will not intersect, but if you reverse the correct one the lines will meet. But first make sure that you have the correct landmarks, you may have look alike landmarks. Most ride managers double check their maps for errors but sometimes a mistake slips by, this is *really* where the thinking part of the sport comes in.



If it is in a field keep looking in bigger circles. If the plate is in the middle of a grassy field (yikes!) ride to where you think the plate should be, take the best readings that you can, then ride in circles, widening your circle as you ride. If you ride around in straight lines you will miss covering a lot of area in between. Usually you have to be right on top of the plate to see it when it is on the ground in grass.



(CR) – Confidence Ribbon - a small ribbon on the bottom or back of the landmark. The ribbon can be any color or size, but it is usually not in plain sight. When you think you have found the landmark described, you look for the ribbon, so that you know that you have the *correct* landmark. Confidence ribbons or not used a lot, but some Ride Managers will use one when they have a clue that is vague or there are similar landmarks in the area. A Confidence Ribbon is denoted on the map after the clue, with some form of “CR”.

Ready to CMO? Here We Go!

1. Arrive – Most parks offer camping, if you are coming in for the day, please use the day use area. Most rides start between 8:00 am and 1:00 pm, first come first serve. Check with the ride manager if you are not sure of the start time, some rides will have a pre ride meeting.

2. Register – You can register before or after tacking up, but it is easier to do it before tacking up. Most CMOs start at the Ride Managers campsite. You will need to pay the entry fee and fill out an entry form and a membership form if you are not already an annual member, if you are not already a member you must join for the day. It is also beneficial to become a MiCMO member in support of the local club sponsoring the ride.



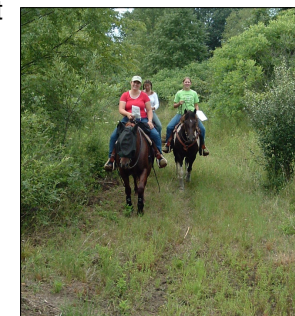
3. Camp Stations – If you have any questions or need a compass lesson we will teach you. Each ride will have practice stations set up in camp for practice.

4. Receive Map – Your time starts when you are handed your map and ends when you return your completed map at the end of your ride. Make sure you have everything you need before you get your map, pen, water, raincoat etc., so that you don't have go back and get them while the clock is ticking.



5. Decide Shortest Route – Stations have been marked with circles on the map. The rider or team should determine the best way to ride the entire course (this is part of the strategy) paying special attention to where the circles are located. Decide the shortest route to the first station you choose to do. You can do the stations in any order, you don't have to do them in numerical order. Short courses may have easier stations first, some ride managers set it up so the first station is easier so that new riders will be successful on the first station, but not all ride managers do this.

6. Ride to First Circle – Ride to the area where the first circle is located. Usually, there is a bit of distance between each station. This is where the team or rider can use a little speed if trail conditions and footing allow.



Once the rider is approaching the area where he thinks the landmarks will be found, however, he slows down and carefully watches the trail for the landmarks. Many a team has whizzed by a landmark only to have to backtrack to find it, wasting precious time.

7. Find 1st Clues – When you find the landmarks listed on the back of your map, you can find both clues and work as a team or work off one clue at a time. Most teams will split up and each person will take one landmark.

8. Taking Readings – Standing at the landmark, set your compass reading (see page 9) and ride in the direction indicated, look for a focal point, ride straight out looking behind you as you go, it may be on the tree that you just passed. Your partner can direct you from the second clue, when you get close to the line from the second clue.

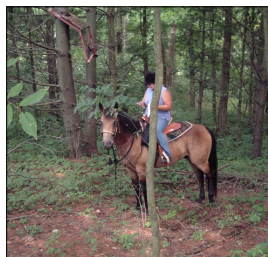


9. Find the marker – Where the compass readings from the two landmarks cross, you should find the marker. The marker (or station) is a 9" white paper plate. It can be hidden any place that it will fit; under a log, on a tree, up a tree, on a stump, in a stump, in a hole, anywhere. You should be able to see it from horseback, but it will not be in plain site. It can be close to the trail or a long distance depending on the compass readings. Check the date and station # to make sure it is the correct plate; write the letters on the plate on your map.



Riders of a team may not split up to find more than one station at a time (you may however split up to go to the two landmark for one station). A rider does not have to help any other competitor, but is not supposed to hinder them either.

Of course, if someone arrives at the station you are at right after you have found and are standing next to the plate, it is good to be as sneaky as possible so they don't walk right to it, get the letters off it without even having to take compass readings, and then high tail it down the trail, beating you. The longer a rider competes, the better he gets at strategy and sneakiness. Many experienced riders can actually read the map while trotting or even cantering down the trail. Some memorize the letters on the plate they've found and then write them on the map after they've ridden a ways down the trail. This insures that no one knows where or



even if they found the plate. "Hey, we learn how not to help people we are trying to beat!"

10. Take Shortest Route to the Next

Station – Decide which station you want to tackle next, and take the shortest route there.

11. Found All Stations?– Take the shortest route back, hand in your completed map and your time will stop.

The person or team with the most stations found with the best time is the first place winner. Places are awarded to sixth based upon the combination of number of stations found and time.



And that is how CMO is done!

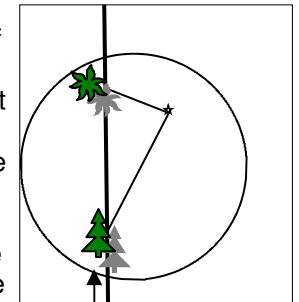
Rules and Tips

Read the NACMO Bylaws for the complete rules.

When all else fails:

If you can't find both clues make sure you are in the correct place. If you can't find both clues you may be in the wrong place and have a landmark that looks similar to the clue. You may not have gone far enough down the trail or you may have passed it. Are you even on the correct trail?

The direction of one clue may tell you which direction on the trail to look for the other clue. If the compass reading for the clue that you have found points down the trail in front of you then it is a good bet that the second clue is farther down the trail, in order for it to intersect with the first clue. This is not always true, a compass reading can run parallel to the trail for a long distance to intersect with a reading going in the opposite direction, but it usually is a good place to start.



Clues are not necessarily listed in the order that you will come to them.

As you are riding down the trail the first clue that you come to may be the second clue listed on the map, it depends on the direction that you are riding and they are mixed up so that you will not know which clue you will come to first.