

A MESSAGE FROM THE COURSESETTER:



The WRC competition area has now got the first snow for the winter.

In this article I will try to share some general information for all competitors. It may be clear for the locals but can be some kind of news for the first-timers. My intention is to give even opportunities and eliminate luck and “home advantage” as far as it is practical.

The IRF Advisor Jonathan Sutcliff did visit the area just before the Mother Nature decided to close the area. It seems Jonathan was happy with his experience.

LOCATION

The Competition area is located around Kiilopää Fell Centre and for those who have not visited Finnish Lapland I must state that it really is north from Polar Circle (Latitude 68,4 North) but thanks to Golf stream the conditions will not be extreme. However variations in weather can be fast.

One item on which the latitude will definitely effect is the way day changes to night and back. The sunset will be 21:36 and sunrise 04:55 but the twilight time will cut the real dark time close to 4 hours (civil twilight 22:54 03:33). On the other hand, as the sun will spend lot of time close to the horizon the real light conditions will be sensitive for clouds. Check the weather forecast – it will give you an estimate how dark and how long the night will be, not only telling the weather.

(<http://www.timeanddate.com/sun/finland/ivalo?month=8&year=2015>)

There is also a minor possibility for the first northern lights in the fall at the time of the competition. They are not likely but let’s keep the thumbs up. (http://aurora.fmi.fi/public_service/)

WEATHER

Even the WRC will be far in the North the weather conditions during the competition will be quite mild. Average temperature in long run at mid-August has been 15-20 deg in daytime and 5-10 C during the night. However in clear sunny weather the top temperature can be above 25 C and on the other hand freezing night temperatures can be possible.

As a part of the competition area is open tundra on the fells there will be little or no protection against the wind, which is good to notice when you select your equipment for the race.

I in person do trust most on the Foreca (<http://www.foreca.fi/Finland/Inari/Saariselka>) weather reports but there are plenty of other services also.

TERRAIN

Big part of the competition area is in Urho Kekkonen National park. You can find more information (<http://www.outdoors.fi/destinations/nationalparks/urhokekkonenationalpark/Pages/Default.aspx>).

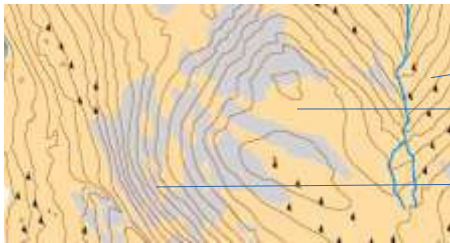


The core of the competition area is fells. They are open large hills with modest gradients. There is only little vegetation and no grass on the area so they are fast and easy to move, even you may collect some height crossing them.

This is typical for everything above round 400 m.

If no mist/clouds the visibility is excellent.

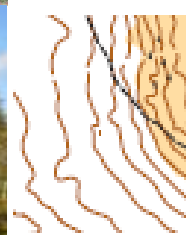
This is how the fell area will show up in the map.



Black spots = Stony area

Yellow = Open area, solid soil

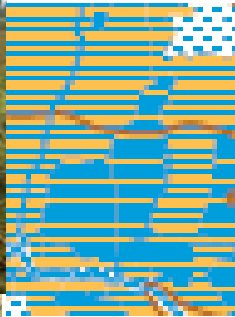
Gry+Yellow = Open area, stable rock



Mountain birch areas - rounding the fells, or covering some smaller hills - will generate some reduction in visibility but are easy to cross even you may need to watch your feet a bit



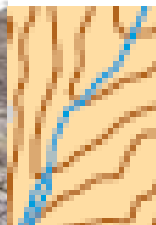
Big part of the area at lower elevation is covered by extremely nice pine wood forest. Pines are sparse and ground is free from grass, extremely fast and easy to run through with good visibility.



There are few wet areas on the terrain, you will get your feet wet there but areas are possible to cross without major difficulties. Visibility is excellent.

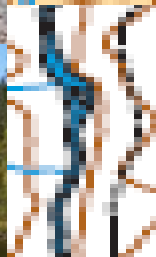
You should be aware on muddy soft spots. They may be "bottomless".

Note, the map symbol on left will be more clear in the final map.

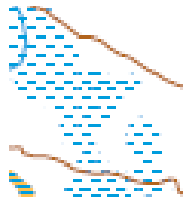


Creek and rivers are plenty in the area.

Up in fells the creeks are excellent supply of drinking water and so shallow that you can cross them without getting your shoes wet. Your need to carry water is minimal.



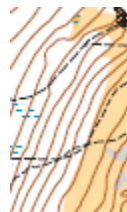
In valleys there are few rivers, you can cross them but there – depending on the rains before the race – can be half of a meter or a bit more water. You must take some caution and select the route through the river.



In the competition area is small area which is called "jänkä" in Finnish, a semi wet area with trees and lot of bushes/scrub. Also the soil may be stony or with water holes. Luckily this not-so-pleasant soil occupies only a couple percent of the competition area.



In the competition area are many small lakes which can vary from clear and deep ones to complete dry ones. However there is a clear area to be recognized in the soil even if there is no water present. The level of water is highly dependent on the weather conditions before the race.



The trails marked in the map are clear and visible in the terrain. The most used are like small roads. On top of those there are plenty small animal trails ("poropolku"), which can start and end wherever and are not marked in the map.



For those who likes geology, in the competition area there are some clear remarks from last glacier to be seen in form of breakthrough valleys. For the competition - those areas are extremely stony and steep – luckily they are clearly marked in the map.



In the competition area are many shelters of different type. They will be marked into the competition map and they will be open for competitors to rest or as a place to look for safety in case of emergency.

Note: They are also equipped with dry toilets which are recommended to be used.



In the area there is one specialty: Fences for the reindeers. Major ones are marked in the map but there are some new, some temporary and some outdated, which may not be shown in the map. When you get to one DO NOT CLIMB, the fence will not take that weight but instead go under it! That is the easiest and fastest way and the only way approved with the locals.



Sometimes, when a fence is crossing trail or road there are gates which can be used.

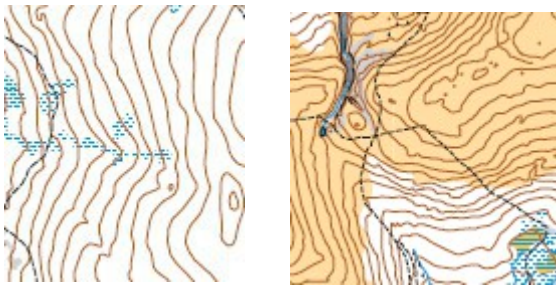
The top elevation of the competition area is round 550 m above sea level and the lowest location is little below 200 m.

MAP AND CPs

The map is based on Finnish "Peruskartta" -Basic topographical map – which is very good in quality. (<http://www.maanmittauslaitos.fi/en/maps/map-products/printed-maps-and-prints/basic-map>)

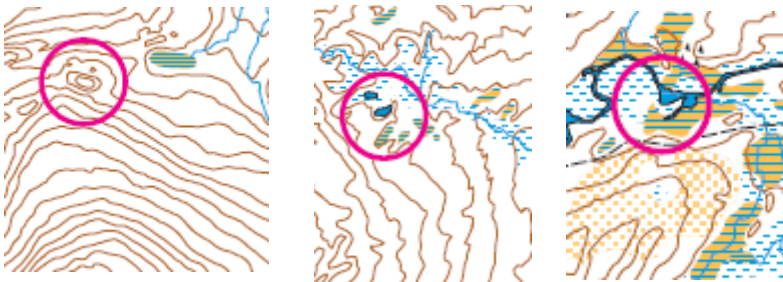
Some checking based on latest information (fall 2014) will be adopted into the map.

The competition map will be printed in the scale of 1: 40 000 and with 5 m contours. The 2, 5 m help contours as well some other minor objects will be cleaned out. This selection will make the map it easy to read.



The training map (<http://wrc2015.rogaining.fi/training.html>) is produced from same material and printed in the same print as the final map.

CPs will be located on objects which can be clearly navigated and which are visible in distance which in the map is 1 mm (=40 m). Flags will be hanged at round 70 -100 cm above the ground level.



Typical CPs to be used in the competition – a copy from the training map.

ANIMALS AND NATURE



A big part of the competition area is a natural reserve so competitors must not only honor the rules of the park but also honor the sensitive northern nature itself. Any littering or devastating of the nature shall not happen.

Beside the natural reserve the area is source of live hood to locals in form of reindeer cattle and some individual gold miners. We shall not disturb them nor their property.



The park border is marked as in photo but is not as clear in every location. The border is marked with green line in the map.

Regarding the animals, the most likely animals to be seen are shown below.



The high season for mosquitos will be over during the race but for sure there will be some left.



Kukkeli is a funny and curious small bird.



Reindeers will be feeding themselves for the coming winter and will move in small groups of 5-10. If possible, pass them from the side wind blows so they will get your smell.



There are living some carnivores in the area but likely the only one you may see is the fox. Bear and wolf are existing but rare and shy.



The area is now covered by snow and the way to move there is take your skis on,

Highly recommended!

Juhani Isaksson