

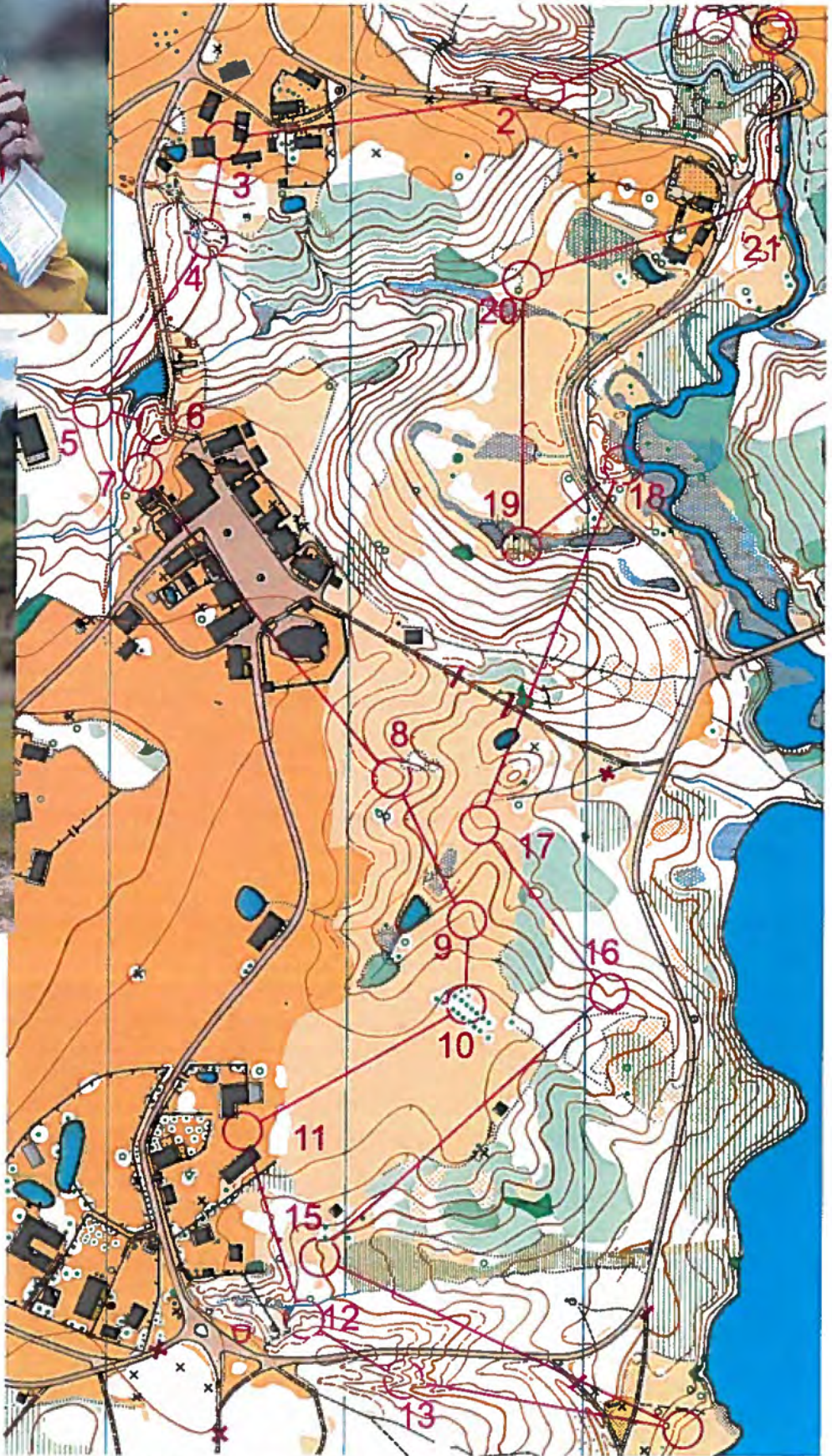
# Orienteering North America

Special Team Issue 2017





*Results of all Trail O races on next page.*



*Clare Durand, Christ Rasmussen and Curtis Schreiner solving the problems.*





# World Trail O Champs

**For the first time in many years, Team USA fielded full teams in both the Paralympic and Open categories.**

## ▷ **Russ Myer, OUSA Trail O Staff**

This past April, it was brought to my attention by Clare Durand that the current paralympic portion of the Trail O team was unavailable to compete in the upcoming Trail WOC in Lithuania. I gladly agreed to assemble a team....not knowing why exactly, except that I wanted to help our national organization. Not having a lot of time, I worked with my communities and networks, looking to veterans as they have a familiarity with orienteering through Land Navigation. I found three veterans willing to learn a lot, learn it well and learn it quickly! Army Major Curtis Schreiner, Marine Sergeant Matthew Pietro and Army Sergeant Christ Rasmussen dove right in to learn about Trail O so they could represent OUSA and their services with honor and distinction.

The VA Adaptive Sports Program gladly supported the initiative but would not cover international airfare. GoFundMe here we come. With the help of so many members of the Capital Region Nordic Alliance, we raised the necessary funds to cover round trip airfare for the team. Thank you everyone!!!

After missed flights in Warsaw, the team spent two days in Latvia prepping for Lithuania. All three veterans were cool under pressure, handling themselves very well in both Pre and Temp O events. All sorts of highs and lows were experienced (too many to reveal - probably longer than *War and Peace*) from selecting many right controls to avoiding getting struck by a car on the trail, to too many controls at a station or ones that were blown over....all taken in stride and handled like the fine veterans that they are.

A huge thank you to Coordinator Clare Durand for her mentoring, patience in traveling, eating, and waiting for us....truly a special gift to Orienteering and OUSA.

And thank you to our orienteering community for supporting the Paralympic team. All three veterans are sticking with it and hope to expand the program in the future.

## ▷ **Curtis Schreiner**

When Russ Meyer contacted me and asked if I would be interested in doing the Trail-O World Championships in Birštonas, Lithuania with a disabled veterans team, I was initially skeptical of my ability to adequately perform. I have had experience over the years with Military Land Navigation and have competed in two Run-Os In Lake Tahoe about 15 years ago. I have difficulty walking due to Multiple Sclerosis and while I would love to perform in Run O again I would be beyond slow and be unable to meet any minimum standards for any competition. Once I became educated, though, I realized Trail-O was developed for people in my situation and I would be able to do the event.

Trail Orienteering turned out to be much more difficult than I had imagined and I never thought it would be easy. The level of precision and terrain identification was much higher than I had thought it would be. Luckily for us, we had very good teachers on the US team and by the end of the trip, I started to feel more comfortable and confident.

Our first training competition was in Latvia and was an excellent introduction to the sport. I was introduced to the intricacies of terrain features. In my military experience, at a scale of 1:15,000, features were much easier to identify and obvious. The control descriptions were also new and once I learned what they meant, very helpful. Latvia gave us an idea of what it would be like the following week at WOC.

The events in Lithuania were interesting and challenging. The town of Birštonas was very picturesque surrounded mainly by rolling farmland. We were all thankful that the maps didn't run when wet after the first Pre-O event where it rained hard for the whole competition. Some of the trails were hard to navigate due to soft conditions, but all the disabled competitors are used to facing much more difficult challenges.

I was honored to be on a team with my fellow disabled veterans Matt Pietro and Christ Rasmussen. Both men helped to make the events interesting, entertaining and fun. The international competitors were great to meet and get to know over the week. I have nothing but admiration for the challenges faced and the level of ability of each competitor. Clare Durand was a talented team leader and Russ Meyer was a great coach for the disabled side of the team.



Many thanks to the instruction given by Clare, Sharon, Matti, and the two Richards who helped teach us some of the required skills.

I would be very happy to compete in trail O in the future. I realize I have a lot to learn yet and recognize I need much more practice and competition to excel at the sport.

*Back: Richard Y. Ebright, Christ Rasmussen, Sharon Crawford, Richard H. Ebright (Team Official), Curtis Schreiner, Russ Myer (Team Official). Front: Matthew Pietro, Clare Durand*

Photos by Donatas Lazauskas Photography

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