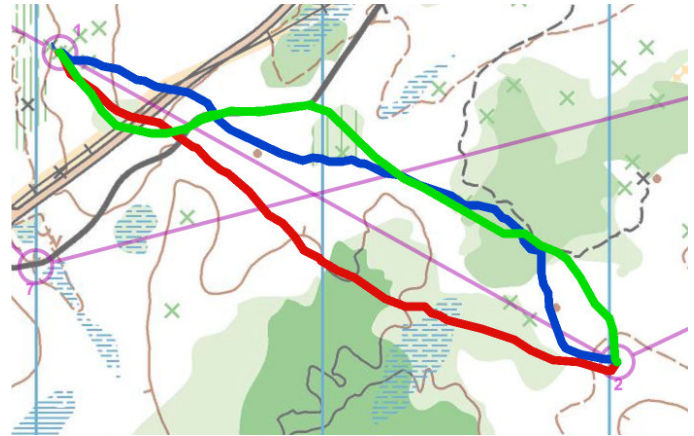


# Mason Neck State Park - December 8th, 2019

We kicked off the Brown course review with a completely unscientific survey of who uses pace counting during their navigation and about 1/3rd of those surveyed use pace counting regularly while orienteering. One participant recited a quote they had recently heard: *"People who don't pace count measure their mistakes in minutes and those who do measure them in seconds."*

Mason Neck State Park is a distinct map in QOC's inventory being indistinct in its contouring in the large main section of the park. There was substantial discussion on precision compass. Runners remarked on the excellent visibility allowing them to choose far-off points when sighting a bearing.

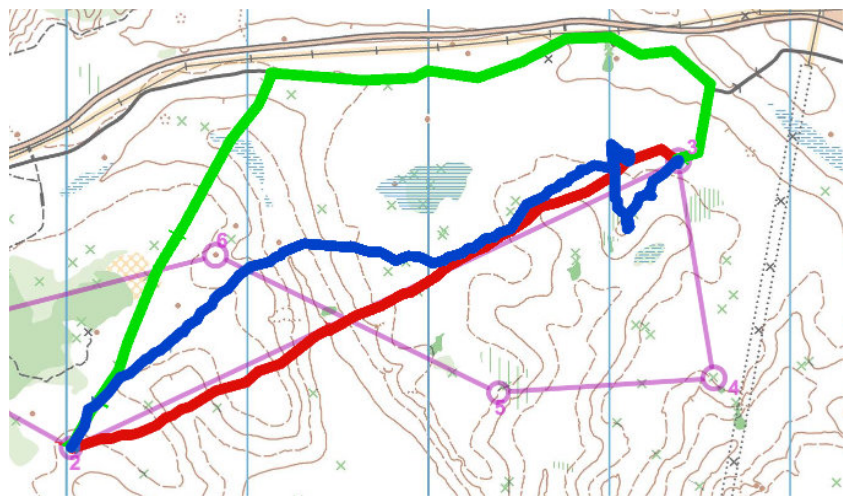
**Leg 1-2** was my introduction of the runner into the main section of the park, a 500m leg to a re-entrant on a form-line (half-contour or 1.25m). The first 100m being a sprint departing the previous control to the obvious linear feature: the paved High Point Multi-Use Trail. From there, the direct path to Control 2 being ~420m, many runners opted to add 50m and continue east on the paved path to the bend, cutting over to the path and following it for a distance. I provided cuts in the leg-line at the two rootstocks and knoll expecting runners choosing the direct path would be relying on them to verify they were on course. Several runners who initially missed the control re-attacked from the scattering of knolls and pit south east of the control or from Control 6 (a somewhat more visible refreshment control about 300m away).



Leg 1-2 (Brown Course)

**Leg 2-3** was the long feature leg of the Brown course (also shared by Green). A 900m leg across all the subtle featuring that Mason Neck has to offer. With few options to force runners to choose up-and-over vs run-around, the runners were presented with a navigationally hard direct leg or a much longer in-direct leg. The direct leg offered many well mapped rootstocks and a short (but surprisingly distinct if you happened to run by it) erosion gully about 450m into the leg.

Several runners nailed their compass work and navigated right to the prominent tree. At least one runner described using the small high-point, South West of the control. There were also a few runners that opted to add about 35-40% and head North to the paved trail and attack from North.



Leg 2-3 (Brown Course)

Overall, the Brown course review provided lively discussion, thanks to all who participated. For those who missed the discussion, make sure to check out [QOC's Route Gadget](#). As of this writing, 39 runners have uploaded their routes! Be sure to check them out to see how people approached Mason Neck's challenges, where contact was lost and runners were forced to re-orient themselves.

- Aaron Linville

