

### **Course setters statement**

The competition area was last used for a race during the 2018 Finnish Sprint Relay Championships and the 2022 Tuplasprintti. In addition, a few individual trainings have been held, most recently in spring 2023. Compared to 2018, the area has undergone significant changes. The updated competition map is clear even in the most detailed areas. The smallest gaps have been enlarged and forbidden areas and features have been widened so that they stand out clearly on the map.

The course setting team has gained experience from the races organized over the past four years. These competitions have provided many lessons and valuable feedback. The feedback has been carefully considered, and this time the races will be held on more challenging courses. Competitors can get some idea of the course setters' style by studying courses from previous years and by participating in Saturday's model event. There are many courses in the competition and the area is limited, so compromises have had to be made particularly regarding the qualification race. Nevertheless, the aim has been to create the best possible courses for each class, including variations in leg length, route choices, map reading, and physical challenge. Competitors should be prepared for challenging courses, but the intention has not been to create labyrinth-style orienteering.

Running directions have been planned to be as consistent as possible, but in a competition of this size, encounters with oncoming competitors cannot be completely avoided. Please be cautious in narrow passages and around building corners. Both the qualification and final courses include fast sections where high-speed running is possible. In the more difficult areas, high-speed running is unlikely to be the fastest option. During the qualifications, all competitors start within an approximately 1.5-hour time window. This may lead to some congestion. Control loads have been analyzed using a custom simulation model, and the worst bottlenecks have been mitigated by adjusting courses and the starting order, as well as by using double punching units. In addition to other competitors, please also consider local residents and other people using the area. In good weather, Sunday afternoon is likely to attract many people outdoors.

Housing companies have been positive toward the competition, and all crucial permits have been obtained—if nothing else, agreed in a sauna. Cooperation with the City of Kerava has worked well. One construction project and one newly restricted area slightly changed the plans a couple of weeks before the competition, but the courses did not suffer significantly. During the final inspection round before printing the maps, a few new construction fences were discovered, so there are still a few details to sort out during race week. The map maker made a few final adjustments to the map on the return ferry from 10Mila, hidden from view in the cabin bathroom. It is hard to say whether a competition map of this level have previously been finalized in such a location.

Red-and-white tape is used extensively to mark forbidden lawns and to reinforce low fences and hedges. Please look at the sample images showing the tape markings and road crossings available on the competition website. Before the competition, review the forbidden features in sprint orienteering as well as the descriptions of multi-level areas. Studying old maps is unlikely to be a disadvantage—they are high-quality compared to previous years' Finnish Championship sprints. Please also read the competition instructions carefully and remember to follow the marked route when arriving at the competition center and between the races.

The division of tasks within the course setter group has been clear, but key decisions have been discussed together and feedback has been exchanged openly within the team. The final courses in particular have been refined carefully, and route choices measured thoroughly, also using some traditional pen and paper method. The course controller and the technical advisor have provided good suggestions for changes and expert advice in unclear situations. Thank you, Atte and Mika!

We ourselves have always enjoyed pre-race speculation when competing, especially in Finnish Championship sprints, so we are naturally interested in how competitors have prepared for this challenge. We will gladly review course predictions and previews, which can be sent to [rtm.kerava@gmail.com](mailto:rtm.kerava@gmail.com). Course feedback is also welcome after the competition, or feel free to share your thoughts on site if we happen to meet.

Road shoes are an excellent choice for the competition. The running surface is mostly hard. In rainy conditions, grass areas can of course be slippery, but there are not many steep slopes. Overall, the elevation differences are moderate. Forest sections account for only 0–2% of the course, depending on class and stage. These sections are also mostly fast runnable forest.

Welcome to Kerava!

Tommi Hakuli (Main course setter), Antton Koivisto (Qualifications) and Matti Kallio (Finals)



One week before the competition, Kerava's numerous cherry trees were in beautiful bloom. Let's see whether the blossoms last until race day.