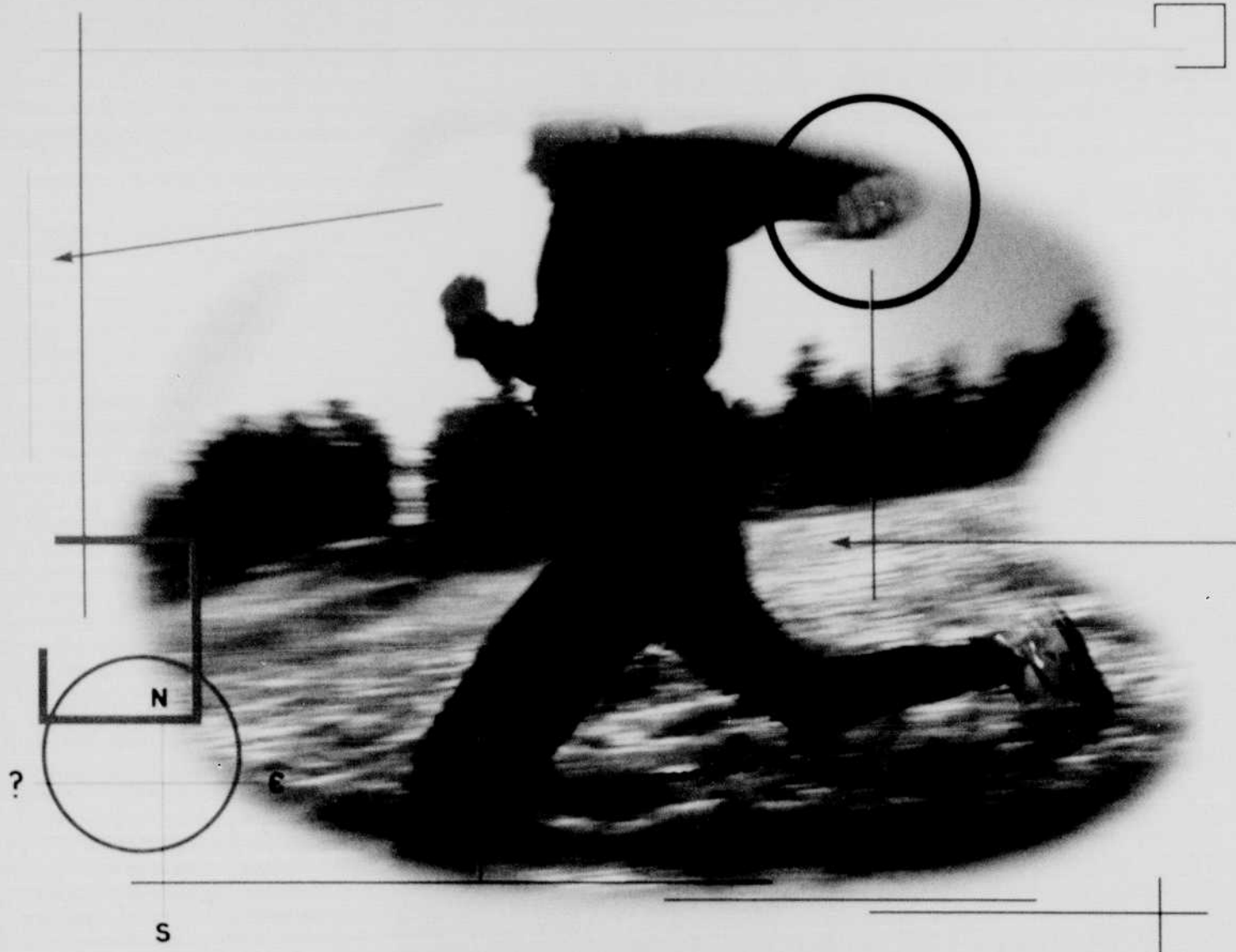




Collegiate Orienteers: A Special Breed

by Martin Dugard

"Orienteering," Eric Bone likes to say in description of his sport, "is as much about thinking as it is about running. It's for the kind of guy that might be a member of both the cross-country team and the chess club." However, says the University of Washington sophomore, who steps to the line in defense of his intercollegiate title this spring, the gritty hybrid of navigation and distance running

makes for much more than a cerebral excursion. "I'm not saying running is boring, but the strength and navigational skills required in orienteering make it a lot more exciting. We don't just get out there and think deep thoughts."

The perception Bone is trying to dispel — that orienteering is the bastard child of distance running — is gaining added momentum from the new sport of "adventure racing." Another hybrid, adventure racing (so-called because man

challenges nature in a manner not unlike explorers from centuries past) combines rock climbing, mountain biking, whitewater paddling, and long-distance orienteering in nonstop, week-long events. But whereas climbing, rafting, and even mountain biking are the gutsy glamour sports, orienteering is what separates winners from losers. "Orienteering is everything, because what we do isn't just about being fit, it's about being smart," points out Bruce Schlie-

mann of Team American Pride, the top American team at the infamous French adventure race, The Raid Gauloises. "You can race all day and all night, but if you can't read a map and execute, you might as well stay home."

First used in Scandinavia during the early 1900s as a military exercise, orienteering is the art of navigating cross-country, usually for between four to seven miles, through a series of checkpoints. Known as "controls," the check-