

**Amateur radio direction finding (ARDF)**, also known as **radio orienteering** and radio sport) is an amateur racing sport that combines radio direction finding with the map and compass skills of orienteering. It is a timed race in which individual competitors use a topographic map, a magnetic compass and radio direction finding apparatus to navigate through diverse wooded terrain while searching for radio transmitters. The rules of the sport and international competitions are organized by the International Amateur Radio Union. The sport has been most popular in Eastern Europe, Russia and China, where it was often used in the physical education programs in schools.

ARDF events use radio frequencies on either the two-meter or eighty-meter amateur radio bands. These two bands were chosen because of their universal availability to amateur radio licensees in all countries. In the UK events with somewhat different rules are also run on 160 meters. The radio equipment carried by competitors on a course must be capable of receiving the signal being transmitted by the five transmitters and useful for radio direction finding, including a radio receiver, attenuator, and directional antenna. Most equipment designs integrate all three components into one handheld device.

The first World Championship was held in 1980 in Cetniewo, Poland, where competitors from eleven European and Asian countries participated. World Championships have been generally held in even-numbered years since 1984, although there was no World Championship in 1996, and there was a World Championship in 1997. Asian nations began sending national teams to international events in 1980, and teams from nations in Oceania and North America began competing in the 1990s. Athletes from twenty-six nations attended the 2000 World Championship in Nanjing, China, the first to be held outside of Europe.

The first IARU Region I (Europe, Africa, the Middle East, ex-USSR, and Mongolia) Championship was held in 1993 in Chtelnica, Slovakia, the first IARU Region III (Asia and Oceania) Championship was held in 1993 in Beijing, China, and the first IARU Region II (North and South America) Championship was held in 1999 in Portland, Oregon, USA.

ARDF is a sport that spans much of the globe. Over 400 athletes from twenty-nine countries, representing four continents, entered the 2004 World Championship held in the Czech Republic. Organized ARDF competitions can be found in almost every European country and in all the nations of northern and eastern Asia. ARDF activity is also found in Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. Although they represent a broad range of amateur radio interests in their nations today, several member societies of the International

Amateur Radio Union were originally formed for the promotion and organization of the sport and continue to use the term *radio sport* in their society name. These include the Federation of Radio sport of the Republic of Armenia (FRRA), the Belarusian Federation of Radio amateurs and Radio sportsmen (BFRR), the Chinese Radio Sports Association (CRSA), and the Mongolian Radio Sport Federation (MRSF). To promote the sport, the IARU has delegated individuals as ARDF Coordinators for each IARU region to help educate and organize national radio societies and other ARDF groups, especially in nations without prior activity in the sport.