

By Michal Besta, FK Göingarna, Sweden

## **Some Notes on Orienteering in Greenland**

Mary and I attended the orienteering events in Nuuk, Greenland, last month. I thought I'd write up a few notes about orienteering in Greenland.

**Best terrain in North America?** Greenland certainly has some of the best orienteering terrain in North America. Check out the maps around Ilulissat. ([http://iog.9net.dk/kort\\_uk.asp](http://iog.9net.dk/kort_uk.asp)) The maps around Nuuk aren't quite as spectacular - check out some of the maps at Nuuk. (<http://www.nasp.gl/kort-2>) I think Nuuk has plenty of really good terrain and may rival Ilulissat, but the club in Nuuk is new and they haven't mapped a lot of the terrain.

### **How good are the best orienteers in Greenland?**

Michal Besta wrote:

Local runners were extremely strong in the mountains and did really good job. But they missed too much and that was the only reason why I could stay in touch for most of the race.

You can see [Besta's map with his routes.](#) ([http://www.bestik.cz/mapy/show\\_map.php?user=bestik&map=724](http://www.bestik.cz/mapy/show_map.php?user=bestik&map=724)) He finished second. He was 14 minutes back of the winner - who runs for Ilulissat. He was 22 seconds ahead of another local runner who finished 3rd. For some context, Besta is currently ranked 179 in the IOF World Rankings. Currently, the best US runner is Eric Bone at 310. Currently, the best Canadian runner is Wil Critchley at 186.

Without having more results and more to go by, it is difficult to really know how the orienteers from Greenland compare, but it looks like they're quite good.

For some context, Ilulissat has a population of about 5,000 people. As best I can tell, orienteering has been around Ilulissat for a bit over ten years.

My understanding is that Ilulissat regularly draws 40-50 orienteers to their club training events. That's a pretty good portion of the population - imagine if your club drew 1 percent of the population!

### **What about orienteering in Nuuk?**

If I understand correctly, orienteering is quite new in Nuuk. The club has only been around a couple of years and has just a few maps. The terrain that we ran in was quite good. But it was also in and around the town, so you were never far from man-made features. I think there is some very good terrain near Nuuk. As the sport develops in Nuuk, I wouldn't be surprised to see them map some of the terrain that is not immediately adjacent to the town.

Nuuk is a much larger town than Ilulissat. The population is around 16,000.

## Would I recommend an O' trip to Greenland?

Yes. But, it is difficult (and a bit expensive) to get to. If we'd have had more vacation time, we'd have gone to Ilulissat. We didn't have so much time, so we settled on visiting Nuuk, only.

I enjoyed our visit to Nuuk. The town has a nice museum and the setting is nice (especially if you ignore the group of apartment blocks right in the middle of the town). The video gives you a sense of the old part of town.

## What was the highlight of orienteering in Greenland?

Well, the orienteering was fun.

The setting is amazing and the flight out - on a clear, sunny day - gave us some amazing views of the country.

But, I think the highlight was the good feeling from the local orienteers. They welcomed us as visitors, made good use of the terrain and maps, and gave off a good vibe. I left Nuuk feeling motivated and impressed with the efforts being put to bring the sport to Nuuk.

## Greenland AMO: score-o (2011-06-22)

First run in Greenland. Very unusual experience. There is no tree in Ilulissat, thus white = open land. Most of the area is covered by bare rock and marshes are very soft. Everywhere of course big hills. Only huge cliffs are on map, the rest is drawn only with contours (close contours = cliff). Red areas are the "summer parking" for sledge dogs. Not recommended to enter - they look pretty hungry(<http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/6.jpg>) (and certainly they are)... Greenland loves score-o. Mass start of everybody and a pretty big hill to control 31. Try to find its placement on [this](http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/1.jpg) (<http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/1.jpg>) picture. Even if I didn't take optimal course I managed to collect all controls within the time limit (50 minutes). There are simply ultimate views from any place on the map. Sometimes you look more at the sea than on the map... Check this [view](http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/3.jpg) (<http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/3.jpg>) and picture of the [area](http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/2.jpg). (<http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/2.jpg>) The area is really one of the top for the membership in "101 Orienteering Maps you should run on before you die".

Route choice by Michal Besta [http://iog.gl/AMO%202011/Intro\\_Michal\\_Besta.jpg](http://iog.gl/AMO%202011/Intro_Michal_Besta.jpg)

Route choice by Lucie Weissova [http://iog.gl/AMO%202011/Intro\\_Lucie\\_Weissova.jpg](http://iog.gl/AMO%202011/Intro_Lucie_Weissova.jpg)

## Greenland AMO: Unofficial Greenland Championship (23.06.2011)

Very hilly race in high cliffs. Everybody already prepared for this kind of terrain but legs started to hurt after all climbs... Missed no 13 by stopping at another control before. Another [view](http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/4.jpg) (<http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/4.jpg>) from the competition area. And one picture of [me](http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/5.jpg) (<http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/5.jpg>) in the marsh right before control 15. Got a very nice plate with some local traditional motif for the win.

Route choice by Michal Besta [http://iog.gl/AMO%202011/GM\\_Michal\\_Besta.jpg](http://iog.gl/AMO%202011/GM_Michal_Besta.jpg)

Route choice by Lucie Weissova [http://iog.gl/AMO%202011/GM\\_Lucie\\_Weissova.jpg](http://iog.gl/AMO%202011/GM_Lucie_Weissova.jpg)

### **Greenland AMO: Arctic Midnight Orienteering (24.06.2011)**

The holly grail of orienteering in Greenland. Mass start at 11 p.m. and one of the toughest ultra long distances I've ever run. The sun was still pretty high (<http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/8.jpg>) during the midnight (taken next midnight). But after a nice weather at the start the fog came and made the race even harder. First track came after 2,5 hours of running! One more picture (<http://bestik.wz.cz/grl/7.jpg>) of the area taken from control no 20, direction over the marsh to 19 (bottom of the ridge) and 18,17 (pretty up on the ridge). Local runners were extremely strong in the mountains and did really good job. But they missed too much and that was the only reason why I could stay in touch for most of the race. If you've been still searching for some real challenge in orienteering - go for AMO!

Route choice by Michal Besta [http://iog.qi/AMO%202011/AMO\\_Michal\\_Besta.jpg](http://iog.qi/AMO%202011/AMO_Michal_Besta.jpg)