

Dear Cumbria Schools Orienteering Association,

I would like to thank you for your support in funding my recent participation in BOF's summer camp in Swansea. This is a report on what I did.

This July I was fortunate enough to be invited on British Orienteering's 'Talent Development Camp' in South Wales. I joined 17 other junior athletes from around the country, including top performers from this year's EYOC. We were working with talent squad and volunteer coaches over the five days to practice and analyse all the aspects of our orienteering and learn ways to further develop. We were based at Swansea university so had access to excellent facilities including track, lecture rooms, restaurant and an almost identical copy of the 2014 JK sprint terrain - it's amazing how memories of an area come flooding back to you – along with the experience of staying in uni halls of residence, which are an improvement on a village hall floor, if only slightly.

The focus of the first full day was all things physical so after a good lengthy briefing- a feature of the week – we hit the track for a 3000m time trial. We used the results to calculate what our paces should be for, say, a steady or threshold run and applied these to the afternoon's sampling warm ups, drills, running sessions and warm downs. We ended up doing a 40 minute warm up for fifteen running!

Day 2 was time to go back to basics for all the technical aspects of orienteering. The 'plan' was broken down into its various elements, primarily: direction (as it always helps to go the right way), picture and distance as a back-up (we were told in no uncertain terms that pacing is pointless, instead knowing The Force is essential to judge distance). We used the excellent terrain of Kenfig Dunes near picturesque Port Talbot, sharing it and its controls with Day 1 of Croeso 2016, running exercises including: controls on a featureless map to practice compass, a northless map to practice 'picture' - I reckon I can vividly imagine any type of sand dune possible now, and finally no map at all (whilst running between controls that is) to practice planning ahead.

The next step, naturally, is to combine all the aspects into 'complete orienteering' which we headed back to Kenfig the next day to do. Then, having seen enough sandy bumps to last a lifetime and with two lucky athletes off to hospital after a wasp encounter, we made use of a near deserted campus to test our plan making and route choice under pressure – in a sprint. Analysis afterwards using 2d Rerun (found on World of O if you fancy comparing real and theoretical sprint routes) showed just how much further it's possible to run on a poor route choice.

In the evening we were treated to a very interesting talk by GB's Megan Carter Davies on her recent JWOC success, particularly how a seemingly slow leg took her to fourth place in the Middle, and what kept her going through below-average results and a serious injury early in the year. (The love of the sport of course!)

With plenty of new ideas to put into practice, we could at last go racing and Margam Forest North, from the map extract, seemed like a great area to get stuck into. Well get stuck in it many certainly did, and the mapper's comment 'better than you think' was true simply because the dark green covering ninety percent of the map was just less than horrendous. My run was relatively clean if not fast so I was satisfied with third place. Now we had results we looked at ways to analyse them to identify mistakes and therefore ways to improve. Direction was something I 'generated lots of learning' in.

On the final day the camp was rounded up with a look at what we'd learned - personally lots of new training ideas like the periodised year, how to approach planning, and new tools to pore over my race maps with. It was great to work with the range of experienced coaches, get to know other orienteers from around the country and of course run in sunny South Wales.

CSOA's grant was very helpful in enabling me to attend the camp and learn so much, so I'd like to thank them for that and I look forward to seeing my training pay off in future races.

Kind regards, Harry Scott (LOC)