

Lagganlia 2016 – Rosie Spencer

Lagganlia was one of the best weeks of my life and an experience that I will never forget. When I arrived on Saturday afternoon, I was quite nervous; I only knew two people properly. However, on the first evening we did some games which helped us to learn each other's names, and everyone was very friendly, so I soon felt more comfortable.

The first day training was really good. I didn't really know what to expect at first, but I knew I wanted to make the most of the excellent coaching that was available to us and finish the week a better orienteer. We practised compass bearings in the morning, and did two short courses practising distraction and direction, in an interesting area that was a wooded checkerboard of run abilities, with lots of controls about. I thought this was an important exercise as I can quite easily get distracted. After, we went back to Lagganlia, ate and then had a briefing. The briefing included what we would be doing the next day and how to prepare for it; in this case we had to prepare a sketch map, which panicked a few of us. The next day's training was really good, and no one got too lost (even with our sketch maps!).

Tuesday was my favourite day, as we spent the whole day training at my favourite area, Roseisle. I loved the intricate contours of these wooded sand dunes, and we practised skills that we would need to use the day after in the tour sprint champs, although my favourite part was swimming in the sea when the training had finished!

The day of the tour sprint champs arrived, and I was excited to do my first ever forest sprint. I enjoyed it more than a normal sprint, and was surprised at my result, as sprints aren't usually my thing (although this was only the qualifier to see who would run in what final). The sprint final was at Badaguish, and I had an okay run, coming fourth in the A final. When everyone had finished, we all attempted to cross the monkey rings, which were above a pond (I didn't make it to the third ring). We all went and swam in a nearby loch, and then everyone went into Aviemore, where all the girls found a nice cafe and bought hot chocolates to warm up after swimming.

The next day was training, and then Friday was the Tour Champs classic race. It was an excellent, very technical area, which I found very tough. I finished up third, which I was pleased with, then that afternoon we did a fun relay.

I was so sad to leave Lagganlia. I made so many new friends and learned lots more about orienteering. I feel like I made the most of all the amazing coaching we got given, and had one of the best weeks of my life in the process.

Many thanks to all the volunteers and coaches on the camp, and to the people who supported me and helped me to get the most out of this amazing experience.