

## **BOF Summer Talent Camp 2016**

Attendance at the BOF Talent summer camp is for the younger members of the current talent squad and athletes who BOF feel like have the potential to join the squad. This year it was being held in Swansea, South Wales, alongside the CROESO 2016 multi day event. As a current Talent Squad member I attended, along with Niamh Hunter and Daniel Spencer also from WCOC.

The camp was based around assessing everyone's all round Orienteering capabilities and also giving us help with training and racing.

The first assessments were about physical fitness with a 3km time trial on the track at Swansea University. The morning exercise was to inform pacing at training sessions away from the camp and allowed the coaches to see how we compared to each other in speed terms. Then in the afternoon we went back to the track and did a taster track session working at the paces calculated from the morning's activities.

The rest of the camp focused on technical orienteering training: direction and distance; map to ground visualisation and; planning. First, direction and distance training took place on Kenfig sand dunes, using the same controls as the CROESO courses. One exercise was a star course, but we only had the over-printed course and no map, forcing us to use our compass skills and distance judgement. Then, later that day we worked on visualisation (picture) by running a course, but without the aid of compasses so we had to make a good picture of the leg and the control circle in order to navigate without mistake. Finally, we considered planning. Using Kenfig sand dunes again, we ran two short course exercises. In the first, we had been given the map hours before we ran it, allowing us time to make proper plans and execute them on the course. The second, was a normal course where we were given the map at the start. The idea behind this was so that we could compare our plans which we make in a proper course, and the plans which we could make with unlimited time.

Our final day was race day. We participated at the CROESO race each on our own age class courses. This was to give us the opportunity to put together everything we'd learnt and practised at the camp into what would hopefully be a flowing and fast technique.

I took many things from this camp, but principally the fact that good orienteering doesn't happen when you run fast, it happens when you navigate well.

I have enjoyed a summer of orienteering, participating at a number of training camps for which I received funding from a variety of different sources. I know that lots of individuals contributed to the camps and that without the financial assistance this would not have been possible. Thank you, I hope my future performances will demonstrate the value of the training camp to me.

*Alastair Thomas*