

Kincraig 2012 : Tom Hemingway : WAOC

On the 4th August this year, eleven boys and thirteen girls in the W/M16 age category travelled North to the Cairngorms in Scotland to take part in the Kincraig Summer Training Camp. A week of improving technical ability, fitness and fun was in store for the athletes, most of whom had already been to the Lagganlia tour one or two years previously. Once we arrived, we played a few games to break the ice and get to know each other and the coaches by using alliterative name games.

On the first day of training, we were woken up at 7.00 for breakfast at 7.15 and a briefing at 8.00 about the day's activities to come. A half hour bus journey later, and we'd arrived at the day's activity area—Alvie (I was last there on Day One of the Scottish Six Days in 2007), with wooded marshes and steep knolls and re-entrants. Even after having been warned about the concentration of midges, I don't think anyone had come prepared for the number of bites we all received whilst waiting at the start and finish.

Exercises for that day consisted designing our own courses to get a controller's perspective - this should help us in the future in understanding control location and positioning. Once we'd finished all the exercises of the day we took the bus back to Lagganlia Outdoor Activity Centre where we were staying and we all did a time-trial on the track through the woods just over the road in Inshriach. The girls were started at minute intervals for a 2km run and the boys a 3km run. I am very pleased to say that I won the boys time trial by 26 seconds and beating the only coach that ran by six seconds. Hot and sweaty, we jogged back to the centre for showers and tea, before finding out that we'd be taking part in a night orienteering event that night and probably wouldn't get to bed until gone midnight. However this didn't put anyone off and we were sent off in the reverse order of the time trial results, which meant that I was the last to start. I made multiple mistakes and finished 6th overall after overshooting a couple of controls. The night O' event was really fun and a new experience for a few of the athletes who had never run an event during the night before. It added difficulties of poor visibility, unknown running surface and an unusual scale of 1: 2,500 for a fun challenge.

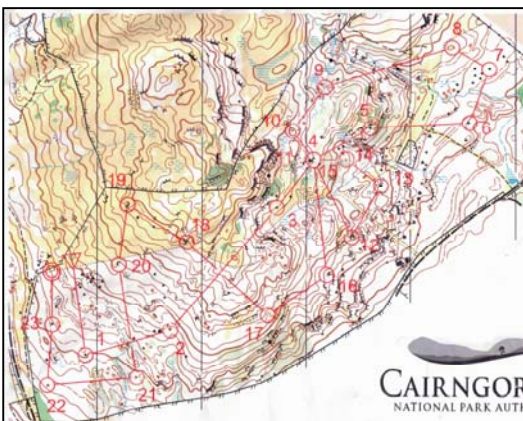


Not a gorilla but a coach in an anti-midge suit

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The next morning we were allowed to stay in bed an hour later to make up for our late night and we

awoke with the sun streaming through our blinds. We arrived at the location for the next day's training—a hill called Balavil on which we were to be focusing on slope exercises and staying on our line whilst going diagonally up or down the hill. I personally found this very challenging as I tend to drop down the hill too much by accident – a common mistake this exercise hoped to correct. Later there was a middle distance race (see map extract one) over a hilly mix of forest and moorland with the intricate contour detail. Boulders and crags were a common feature on this map. Once we arrived back at our lodges we walked through the woods to go swimming down at the river just below Loch Morlich.



Map extract one – Middle Distance Race

Tuesday was my favourite training day, as we took off on a 1½ hour bus journey to Roseisle, a contour strewn area very much like Culbin, that lots of WAOC members will have been to, with many sandy hills and depressions that were interesting to navigate off. I thought this was the best area because of the complex contours and the fun races we did after lunch. In the morning, we were focusing on simplification and attack points, and an Odds and Evens relay and a 'Forest' race took up the afternoon. In the Odds and Evens relay there are two maps for the three members of the team, one map with the odd numbered controls and the other with the even numbers. Two runners go out to collect a control and pass their map to the remaining member of their team for them to collect a control. This process is continued until all the controls have been reached. I found the 'Forest' race quite difficult but enjoyed it. I think that if the map had been from East Anglia the *light green screen -slow run* would have been marked as *dark green- impenetrable!*

On Wednesday were able to walk to our training area, Inshriach North, which was the same area that we had done the time trial a couple of days before (and Spey 2007 Day 3). Distraction exercises were the focus of the day. Controls were placed all over the place, some even on the same feature but on a different side. Coaches ran across our paths, tried talking to us and even punched incorrect controls just to confuse us. That evening, we were able to experience the delights of Trail O', a type of orienteering where you're not allowed to run or leave the track, and is supposed to be something that disabled people are able to do. It's basically a normal orienteering map with controls on, and you must navigate around the paths until you reach a



Map extract two – One of the Distraction Courses

viewpoint for the control site, which will have anything between three and six kites. By reading your control description, you must then identify which flag is the correct flag and then you write this onto a scorecard to be handed in at the end. The controls were within a foot of each other which meant a careful understanding of the map and control descriptions was needed. I found this very enjoyable and I liked how even people who are injured or disabled can still participate in a competition.

Thursday was the 'Sprint qualifier and Final' day at Faskally. In the qualifying sprint the top six boys and girls made it into the 'A' final and the rest into the 'B' final. I managed to qualify 5th and finish 4th.

The Classic race at Loch Vaa (Moray 2003 Day 3) was very challenging, both technically and physically. It was incredibly hot and most of the course was open moorland which made it all the more difficult. The relays were at Avielochan, which was very easy running, especially compared to the morning's race when everyone had found the terrain hard going and were a really nice thing to have on the last day as it enabled us to run and have fun without it being a competition or having worry about being tired for the next day. My team won after managing to carry three balloons around the course and without any of them being popped (for every balloon of ours that was popped we would have incurred a 30 second time penalty).



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Overall the whole week was really fun, and I am hoping to try and get selected for another tour again next year. I found all the different exercises and training really helpful, and as Tony a coach told me “Lagganlia is more about making sure you know the skills, whereas Kincraig is all about learning new things and getting them up to competition standard”. I would definitely like to go again and would recommend it to the

people who went to Lagganlia this year, and perhaps a few that went to the Cairngorms camp. I really enjoyed getting to know all the new people and being back with some of the people that I met last year. The coaches were all really good fun and amazing at encouraging everyone. I would like to thank Tony Carlyle and Nev Myers for organising the week and I’m pretty sure everyone will agree that it was brilliant. Thanks also to WAOC and EAOA who nominated me and are going to provide some financial support.

Tom M16