

European Youth Orienteering Championships 2022

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Introduction

The qualifying weekends that occurred over the Easter period had a great effect on my mental state going into the exam season which was what I was most worried about. I wasn't considering if I got a place on the GB team or not and only really was going for a Czech Tour selection. But the confidence I got from the break and races allowed me to be happy going into the exams and even though the training for running and orienteering had to stop, I still felt like I was able to put in some good times on the off occasions when I got the chance to go for a run.

Travel

For me this was my first time competing in another country and my first time flying. Safe to say I was feeling the pressure. Although I had been dreading the flight, it wasn't as scary as I thought it would have been. And I was comfortable enough to start a conversation with the kind gentlemen next to me.

Once we landed the heat was immediately present. The sweltering temperatures quickly started to affect us as we met our team members at Budapest airport. The journey to the motel was filled with cheers as we watched the World Championships and cheered on the British Athletes. We were overjoyed to see Megan take her victory on the sprint and probably startled the other motorist on the road.

Training Day

Friday's training day was a very helpful experience that allowed me to take in a lot of information about the event:

- First look at the forest terrain in Hungary, whilst in the forest was picking out the points of interest: the colour of the forest marked/how it was under foot, what distinctive features looked like/crags were more like landslide sites and weren't easy to find in the undergrowth.
- Going into a control different ways to see what both sides of the hill with the different run abilities was like. And helped with determining if the rough vegetation was runnable.
- Urban terrain was enjoyable. You were able to determine that the housing estates were going to be fast to get through and take a lot of route choices. and the walls that were marked as crossable were still very tall in most places and all walls could be crossed from above but had to be careful that it isn't uncrossable otherwise that would end in disqualification.

(Notes from Attack Point)



In the evening we were briefed on the events that were to happen. We went over how the quarantine would work, how to prepare pre-race, etc. This was helpful for all of us, as the quarantine was new to us and it was not looking good weather wise so we would have to try and find ways of staying cool and in the zone.



Long

Quarantine was a strange experience not in a bad way but it was unusual. I was able to get focused and not let the strange feelings get in my way. I then started my warm-up and went into the practice area to get up to speed again and be in the mood for the event.

After the bleeps and the green light, it became just like any other event and you forgot that you were anywhere special. The course weezed itself across the terrain and then looped back into the forest for the smaller loop.

I was pleased with the racer but what made me even more happy was the atmosphere within the arena. And the thrill of the arena got better every single time.

Welcome Party

The opening party and awards ceremony were very grand and quite entertaining. And probably the best part was hearing the Swiss team step in and sing the Swiss national anthem when the sound system played up. It

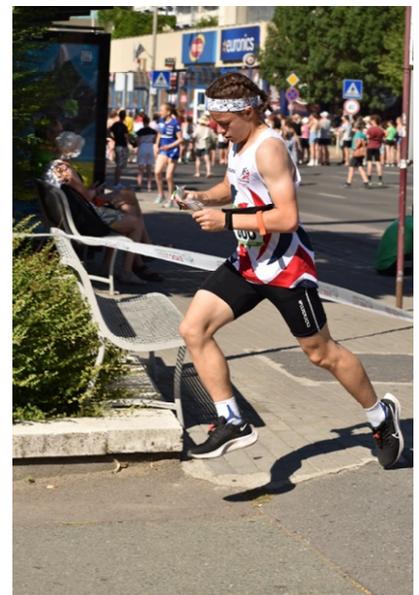
was very uplifting and showed how proud the teams were to be here representing their country.

Unfortunately we were too slow to the dinner line and had to wait a while to get the food, so what did we do? Well we had one of two options, we could join the mosh pit within the sports hall and probably get trampled by the crowd or have to find something to do outside. And after carefully considering our options we went and sat in the car park waiting for dinner as the music blasted on inside, which is kind of ironic as we were leaving the motel in Salgótarján because of a music festival happening behind it over the weekend.

Sprint

We were back at the event center for the quarantine that morning and it was almost completely different to Saturday. The court once full of life was instead filled with a serious mood. The rare noise from the athletes were heard and the occasional greetings were spoken.

The sprints terrain I knew was steep and technical, it was going to be incredibly fast as well. The call up was a slow jog across many roads to the estates that would be hosting the event. A couple spill ups at the beginning put me back but, it then was able to become clean towards the end and have a strong finish.



Relays

By this point the nerves weren't as strong. Yes they were there, but I was more relaxed. I was able to warm up fine and then I was able to enter the hand-over box with no problems. And I set off to my number one knowing I just had to hold it together for James. I made one mistake on the course and it wasn't as big as I thought. I picked up the pace on the final loop but to my misfortune I fell and skidded across my front. And although I was picking myself up, the German girl ahead of me was very kind and showed great sportsmanship. Shout out to Juliane Burgmair. I am very grateful for your help.

To the team's misfortune a miss-punch happened and so our results did not register. However, and I speak on everyone's behalf, we are not made and all of our performances were solid. It is only a learning curb. Next year will definitely be better with our experience now.

And to all my teammates and coaches,
Thank You and I will go for it again next year.