

Lagganlia 2025 by Erik Biernacki-Jabłoński

My journey to Lagganlia was mostly without incidents. I arrived at Peterborough Station by car half an hour before my train to Edinburgh was due to arrive at around 09:30, before being quickly joined by Marcus and Ethan, who had also been selected. We sat together most of the journey, including after the change for a train to Aviemore, from where we were collected by some of the Lagganlia coaches, arriving at around five.

Once we were there, we settled in, unpacked and made our beds. Once everyone had arrived, we did some teambuilding activities to help us get to know each other better. We also had a briefing during which we learned that during our stay we would need to do chores, such as preparing for and washing up after breakfast and dinner and cleaning the minibuses. My first chore was dinner wash up that evening.

Later, we went to dinner, where we had bolognaise, which in my opinion was great. I thought that over the whole trip, all the food was good, especially after all the orienteering we were doing!

The next morning, we had breakfast, which consisted of a selection of cereals, toast or porridge, and you also had to make packed lunch to eat while orienteering. This contained a sandwich, crisps, a cereal and/or chocolate bar and fruit.

The orienteering exercises were conducted in various areas, such as sand dunes or moraine, and included a range of courses, the focus of which included simplification, bearings and attack points. There were also activities where you had to follow a line or a corridor, and you also had to draw a sketch map to focus on simplification. You could also focus on other things you wanted to work on, like map memory.

Furthermore, everyone was put into training groups of 4 people, with each group having 2 or 3 coaches. Your coaches were the ones who shadowed you and helped you with any difficulties or weaknesses you had, and also discussed the day with your group in the evenings.

After the learning activities in the morning and midday, we took part in other events in the afternoon. These included fun races like a star relay or a relay score, but also more serious courses such as a peg race or relay simulation, where everyone was simulated to be the last leg of a relay, with the first and last starter being only a few minutes apart.

The fourth day (of six) was a rest day, although we did more activities than on any other day! First, we went to Aviemore and then Glenmore Lodge for the sprint events. In Aviemore (the closest town) there was a sprint championship with staggered starts in which I did quite well, only making one minor error, and managed to get first place! Afterwards we went to Glenmore Lodge which was a bit more of parkland. It was a mass start semi-final and then final, which added more pressure, especially at the start. I didn't do too well in this as I made quite a big mistake at number four, and eventually managing to miss 11!

After the sprint races we went to a loch and went swimming, even though the water was freezing! Then we went back to Aviemore, where we had the chance to go shopping and also got ice cream. Finally, at around 8 pm, we went to Aviemore again, this time for night orienteering at the golf course. I had never done night orienteering before, so I was a bit nervous, but after a few controls I got the hang of it and was able to complete the three courses. We got back around 12 and so were given an extra half an hour in the morning.

On the last day we had the tour championships in Culbin. This was a staggered start, with the people who had done best during the week starting nearer to the end. Due to my successes in the sprint champs as well as the relay simulation, I began my course second to last. For the first few controls, I navigated on my own, but at around the middle, I joined a group of about half the boys, formed due to mistakes at controls four and five. I stayed in or around this group for most of the way to the finish, with some more people being caught, but the group eventually split up in the last section of thicker forest. Overall, only four or five people were not in the group, either starting too early or late to join it. Partly due to being in the group, but also because of my navigation at the start and end of the race, I was able to come first.

When he had gotten back and ready, we had a prizegiving ceremony. Apart from medals for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the sprint events and tour championship, there were also medals for things that people had been doing or been like during the camp.

Then, at 10:30, we had to go into the grounds of Lagganlia and hide until midnight and try not to get caught. In the end, only two people were.

In the morning, we had breakfast, packed, and left. If you were going to the Scottish 6 Days, you were taken on a minibus to Ballater, where you could collect bibs for the week.

Overall, I believe that Lagganlia improved my orienteering, not just by improving my skills, but also because of the many tips that were given along the way. Furthermore, I think that the camp contributed greatly to my success at the Scottish 6 Days the following week.

