

Together with James Nisbet and Catherine Hemingway I was fortunate enough to be selected to attend the M and W 14 JROS training camp at Lagganlia. Lagganlia is an activity centre in the Cairngorms near Aviemore.

We travelled up via the East Coast mainline with athletes from other regions joining along the way. After a change at Edinburgh, we were met by two minibuses at Aviemore station, which stayed with us throughout the week. The accommodation was relatively basic but comfortable, consisting of either two or four man dorms each with an en-suite toilet and shower.

The first evening included a briefing about what we would expect to do the next day, this set the pattern for the rest of the week. We were also placed into our training groups which had four athletes, one senior coach and one elite M or W 21. In these groups we did all exercises, had an hour long session about what we learnt and did our chores for which there was a rota.

Every day breakfast (and pack lunch making) opened at around 7:15 and closed at 8. There would then be a briefing at 8:30 before leaving for the day at 9. We would arrive back around 4:30 then would have an hour in our training groups talking about the day. At 6:30 supper would be served and an hour later there would be a briefing about the next day.

Sunday morning was mainly about pacing and bearings but included a three person team clock relay. In the afternoon we did two 1k timed runs, one on paths, the other through terrain, after this we did two short detailed courses to improve our concentration, in an area called the chessboard.

Before we left on Monday morning we were given a map with a course on and told to make a sketch map of the course, the quality of these varied greatly, with a few having to write how far between controls and which way to go. Monday like Sunday had two areas; the first area was to focus on visualization and started with a walk through the area in our training groups describing what we expected to see. In the second area, we started by running the courses drawn on our sketch maps, the success levels varied, with some claiming to prefer running on such a simple map. After this we did an ordinary relay, but although there were control kites there were no numbers which meant that several people probably didn't always go to the right controls. Due to popular demand, instead of doing a Maze-O we went down to the river Feshie to swim which gradually developed into seeing who could stand in the middle of the rapids for the longest.



Unlike previous years we were unable to use Culbin on the Tuesday due to its use in the Scottish six day. Instead we went to one of the areas used as a training area for the six day event. The morning included three exercises, simplification, long legs and low visibility orienteering during which I had an encounter with a marsh of at least chest depth. The afternoon had an odds and evens relay, during which due to miscommunication my team managed to run two of the legs twice. That evening we had a briefing for the sprint races the next day and were told to ask any questions that we thought we might need answering.

We had been told that Wednesday was a rest day but when we found out our itinerary it didn't appear to have much rest involved. The morning started with a sprint qualifier and the first of three quarantine areas and silent starts. Due to a complicated pretzel loop, I ended up missing a control causing my disqualification and placing me in the B final. This was made even worse by the fact that if I hadn't missed the control I would have probably won by over a minute. This made me only more to win the B final and have the fastest time in the Sprint Final, which took place at Badaguish on a 1 to 1500 map! In the end I had the second fastest time which I was much more pleased with than my run earlier in the day. That afternoon we attempted the rings at Badaguish, these are eight large metal rings of a foot diameter suspended over water, and I was one of only three who was able to complete it consistently. Afterwards we went to go for a swim in Loch Morlich before going

shopping in Aviemore and a barbeque back at Lagganlia.



Thursday like Tuesday we were told was to be in different location to previous years again due to the areas involvement in the Scottish six day event. Before we left we had a session on how to improve our running technique particularly downhill. The main training exercise on Thursday was talk-O which is where you go round in pairs describing your route what you are going to see and when you see it. This

was to improve the way we think about what we are planning to do as we go around the course. After a rainy lunch, which was fortunately the only one, we were then told that we would be going back into the now soaking wet bracken for a peg race. A peg race is where there are pegs at certain controls on the course and if you get a peg you have to do an extra leg, at the end the person with the most pegs wins. Our course had 19 controls on if you got every single peg, at control nine things were going brilliantly, two of us had broken away from the pack, I had every single peg and they didn't, but things didn't stay that way, we headed for the wrong control in our haste and then had to climb over a hill covered in bracken to correct. The rest of the course was spent desperately trying to catch up with the rest of the pack. Fortunately we still managed to finish mid-flow. The day finished.

Friday morning was the classic race, upon which large amounts of pressure had been placed, I ended up starting last, and struggled with control six which the previous night my coach had said follow the massive ridge, but when one the course their turned out to be several massive ridges which severely worsened my time, this and a few other mistakes including finding a path and a clearing that won't marked, pushed me far down the running order. That afternoon we had a normal relay except that we had to carry a balloon with us and if lost or popped then a thirty second penalty would occur after which a new balloon would be issued. My team managed to come second which I was a lot more pleased with than the morning's result

Lastly I would like to thank EAOA and SUFFOC for paying some of the costs of the trip and putting me forward for selection.