

Trossachs 2014 Report by Tim Harrison

This year I was fortunate enough to be selected for the M/W 15 and 16 training course in the Trossachs. The course was based at Trossachs tryst a bunk house near Callander. This was the first year that the course for 15s took place in the Trossachs having previously been based at Deeside.

On the first evening many of us expected something similar to other camps we had been on; a short briefing and introduction followed by a free evening for the athletes. What we actually had was a short briefing followed by timed sprints, some of which were blindfolded and a basic course in the neighbouring wood.

Every day breakfast and packed lunch making opened at just before 8 and closed at 8:30. We then had until 9 when we would either leave for an exercise or have a theory session. Either way by 11am we were out on the hillside and operating in our training groups to do exercises. Each training group consisted of 4 athletes, 1 senior coach and 1 junior coach or elite runner. We would then spend the day at various sites before heading back to the Tryst, often stopping to go wild swimming on the way. In the end we would arrive back round about 4:30pm and were expected to analyse our progress over the day, before debriefing with our coaches about how the day went. At about 6:30 dinner would be served which was followed by a theory session.

Monday's training took place at Sauchie Crags and focused on attack points and flow. Unlike Lagganlia the athletes could choose what they wanted to focus on in each area meaning that each athlete could tailor the training to his or her weak points.

Tuesday took place at Trossachs and the day was designated contour visualisation day, I found the area the toughest of the course and one of the most physically challenging areas I have ever run on. However I found out that bilbury is in fact wild blueberry meaning that you can stop to snack on the berries in particularly tough going or between exercises.

Wednesday was one of the longest days of the week, involving three separate areas and a night O. The day started with training on Dumyat where I decided to focus on bearings and contour visualisation as I felt that the previous days training had left much to be desired. We then moved to Stirling University for a mixed sprint relay in which my team came second having been battling for first all the way up to halfway round the final runners course. Following this we headed into Stirling for an hour of free time most of which was spent in Sainsburys. We then headed back to Trossachs before heading to Barr wood for a night O and a game of Sardines.

Thursday's training took place at Fairy Knowe and was fairly ordinary training until after lunch we discovered that the next exercise the slope O would be timed and used to rank us for the classic race the following day. Afterwards we realised that we had one more exercise, a head to head designed to put us under pressure. The head to head, to avoid any following, was gaffled, however, this didn't turn out as planned as no control codes were put out meaning that in some areas you weren't quite sure if you had the right control, I happily won mine which meant combined with the Slope O that I would start 3rd last the next day.

Friday was the much awaited Classic race and like Tuesday took place at Trossachs with a more than 1 in ten average gradient. After an alright first control I seriously messed up control 2 and was

overtaken without seeing or hearing anybody. However due to a good route choice to number 3 I caught them up and consequently we ran the next few controls as a pair before struggling with number 5 and being caught up by the last starter who also joined our little group. The three of us ran most of the course together before having a mad dash from the penultimate control for the final control and the finish beyond that. The other two in the group finished 1st and 2nd while I came in 5th which I was significantly more pleased with than my previous result at Lagganlia.

Lastly I would like to thank EAOA and SUFFOC for paying some of the costs of the trip and I would thoroughly recommend the trip to any athletes considering attempting to gain a place.