

Moravian Members Participate at British Talent Squad Camp in Oban.

Michael Bishenden Reports:



British Orienteering Talent Squad (16-18) 2022-23

Last Week, Michael Bishenden, Kate McLuckie, Isobel Howard, and Jane Halliday (who was helping with the coaching), all participated in a Race Preparation Camp with the British Orienteering Talent Squad. The four-day camp, which was based around the Oban area and with everyone being accommodated at Oban Youth Hostel, was the ideal venue. Despite it being quite overcrowded at times!



Airds Bay near Taynuilt

The aim of the camp was preparation for the upcoming selection races such as the BOC (British Champs) and the JK Festival. This involved different types of supposedly “non-competitive” races that almost everyone took seriously, with some instances too serious. With everyone sticking to strict start times, SI boxes being available at every control, and some of the races being seeded. The races were intended to feel as if they were proper events so you could train at maximum ability.



A sprint finish...

The week consisted of the following plan:

Thursday 16th February- a.m. Coille Nathais Middle Distance race, p.m. Oban Sprint race

Friday 17th February- Glen Nant Long Distance Race

Saturday 18th February- a.m. Ardnaskie 3rd Leg Relay Simulation, p.m. Aird's Park Night O race

Sunday 19th February- Coille Nathais 1st Leg Relay Simulation

Day 1 was a middle-distance race at Coille Nathais, which was predominately birch forest with a few sections of open moorland to the moorland. Like every other area, it was of course very wet with marshes and streams all over the place. Day 2 was a long-distance race Glen Nant and it didn't disappoint with Course 1 being 8.8km with only 13 controls! However today consisted of open moorland and due to the remoteness and bad weather forecast- cagoules were made compulsory! The final 2 days were relay practice. Day 3 was 3rd leg practice at Ardnaskie, at which random people would get set off at random intervals. This area was by far the wettest and least runnable area. The final day was back at Coille Nathais for some first leg relay practice, with 3 mass-start loops of approx. 2km.



This was the start at Glen Nant before torrential rain appeared!

The camp was an opportunity to try out new ideas which you would never have tried before or to continue to do things which you have done before every race. This was for you to try out new things now and prepare them instead of starting them at the “big” races, so you can get maximum potential out of those “big” races. We also spent a lot of time after the races doing analysis and having various discussions about the day’s courses and got lots of great feedback on how to improve and what techniques to try in the future.

Pre-race and post-race routines are very important for not just to get the maximum out of your race but also to help recover and prevent any injuries. We were told how a decent warm up before your race and a cool down after are very important- if we did not, we would just get nagged by the coaches! Having good race nutrition and hydration are also key factors in orienteering performance. It also doesn’t just help your recovery post-race but also makes sure you have enough food for you to perform at your best. If you are out for more than an hour, we would suggest having some jelly babies or other sweets while on your run!

Isobel, who is now nearing the end of her youth career, ran well in the relays

While we were not racing, it was very important to do have some down time. Whatever you did in this was up to your choice, however there were countless games of chess, dozens of trips to Tesco, silly games of would you rather or just relaxing next to a speaker. A group of people were even brave enough to have a little dip into the sea! Even though the weather deteriorated near the end of week, the mood across the group was still as high as it was at the start of the camp. It was good to see both old and new people coming together and forming friendships that will hopefully stay for a lifetime.



Michael at the first control on his 8.8km long course at Glen Nant. This is the first time I have ever used a map scale of 1:15000

At this camp, I have learned a lot of skills and improved my confidence and experience going ahead into the JK and future competitions. A big thanks to Will Heap for all the photos and to all the coaches for making it a weekend I will never forget!

