

## Deeside 2023 Sam Osborne report

This year's jros Deeside tour welcomed 20 1<sup>st</sup> year m/w 16s from across Britain to participate in the week of training and fun. The tour was based at templars park scout camp near Aberdeen in the north of Scotland, with all the juniors camping adjacent to a hut where we ate, and relaxed in the evenings if we had any free time. Over the course of the week, I met and trained with a group of friends and rivals who greatly helped me increase my orienteering skills on top of all the training from the group of expert coaches, whose key interest was to guide us to be as speedy as possible running with the map and compass.

We started the week by pitching our tents and splitting into 4 training groups which we would train in for the rest of the week and attempt to gain points for the group competition (the group with the most points wins.) After we had split up into our groups, we had some afternoon fun and teambuilding to get to know people better, which also allowed the teams to collect some early points. After our dinner we did a micro-o race around the campsite area.

The first day's training was at easter Clune with key focusses of planning our legs before we started them. We did several exercises before lunch. After lunch the training was concluded with a pairs race with each person only having their legs on the map, so the idea was to be pre planning your leg whilst your partner was navigating to their control. After this we went for a swim in a freezing Scottish river. (We did this every day.) After our dinner we engaged in a small presentation about the different fields of orienteering. Technical, tactical, physical and psychological.

On the second day we went to Balmedie sand dunes to practice picture. For me this challenging as the map was a contour only map. After our morning courses we proceeded with a race followed by an afternoon of fun on the sandunes (dune Olympics) where we had races up and down the tallest dunes. We also got to swim in the sea, which was fun. Our evening session was goal setting.

The next day we travelled to glen dye (a lovely area) to focus on direction and compass work. After lunch we participated in a peg race where you collected a peg from each control but there was only a limited number of pegs at each control so you had to be there quick, or you would miss out. The aim was to finish with the greatest number of pegs. That evening we went to Elrick hill for some lovely night o, late on at night featuring lots of lovely head high bracken reducing the visibility even further. for me this was the greatest challenge of the whole week.

Rest day. We started with a sprint orienteering race around the campsite followed by some strength and conditioning. On top of this we designed our training plans for the upcoming year with assistance from the coaches. In the afternoon we went to an outdoor swimming pool in Stonehaven followed by an ice cream. After dinner we had a self-reflection session.

On our last day of training, we went to Birsmore which was a large hill to practice what we felt we needed to work on in preparation for the tour champs on the next day. After this we did some more goal setting back at camp and a few of us geeked the map for the next day.

Tour champs was at glen dye but a different unused area off it from our previous training there. The course was in the style of a middle course until around halfway where there was a huge leg followed by

some large legs in the long style. When we got back after swimming, we did a race analysis and debrief of the race and the past week of training. The week was concluded by a party in the evening with some late-night toast.

Overall, the week was a great experience to learn loads of new orienteering skills and meet some fantastic people from across Britain. It has vastly improved my overall orienteering performance and I give my thanks to everyone involved in making it happen, especially the coaches and all the generous people who kindly donated grant money which made the whole thing possible for me.