

'I started orienteering when I was 12 and had a background of track and cross country running. I got involved with the junior squad from LOC not knowing anything about orienteering at all but I was made to feel very welcome and the coaches and organisers were very supportive and always advising and training us. Although I had a running background it really isn't necessary as you can do orienteering at any speed and any pace as the focus is on map reading and learning all the technical skills you need (that are taught at training). Within LOC you get lots of opportunities to practise your skills year round and there is always someone to give you a hand if you need it. I have gained so many skills from orienteering: independence, resilience, problem solving and social skills as you meet so many new faces. It's important to note that you can do orienteering at any ages and any level as there is the opportunity to progress through the sport if you want to or just do it as a hobby. Initially I started out occasionally going to local events (and pretty much getting lost every time) not really wanting much more from the sport but over time I got more and more involved in the sport due to attending training, having things to aim towards and making new friends. This led to me joining the North West Junior Squad, then Talent North, then the GB Talent Squad. I have been able to compete for England and I'm soon to compete in Germany for GB so there are so many opportunities all of which involve trips away from home (within the UK or elsewhere). Orienteering has now become a really large part of both my social and sporting life and I couldn't imagine not doing it as it has given me so many amazing experiences and I am sure it will continue to do so. I hope to continue to orienteer after the junior level in the hopes to improve further through the help from all the support from LOC.

If you are thinking about starting orienteering, Lakeland Orienteering Club are the best place to be. There is so much experience within the club and everyone is so friendly and willing to help with the juniors. They have been incredibly supportive to me and celebrate my success with me.'