

## Park World Tour Lake Garda

We like orienteering holidays, and we like Italy, so we signed up for a week's events around Verona and Lake Garda at the start of October.

The event was advertised as European Orienteering Championships, and although it seemed unlikely that either of us would qualify for the EOC, we duly entered our age classes. There are a few unusual features about entering Italian events. One is that (at least in this case) the prices were not trivial: €30 per event, plus €25 for the bus to each day; although at least the surcharge of €160 for not staying in the official accommodation didn't materialise. Then there's the condition that no refunds will be paid if the event doesn't happen - as indeed one of the six we'd booked didn't. Then you have to provide a doctor's letter saying you're safe to run. And finally, absolutely no information is published about terrain and course lengths. The general nature of the courses (mostly Urban Sprint) was published 48 hours before the first race, and we learned our course distances when we picked up our maps.

The first of these Urban Sprints was at Torri del Benaco, a lovely medieval lakeside town. We quickly learned that the first challenge of these events was to run through dense crowds of unsuspecting holidaymakers without colliding with either them, or fellow orienteers coming round tight corners. I got round in 14:37, which is good if you think of it as 7 minute kms, and bad if you think of it as two Euros per minute. Worse, I found I had mispunched, for which I blame the lack of loose control descriptions. I took some comfort that 9 out of 40 on my course had done the same, including five at the same control. However, by now we had worked out that our races were an adjunct to the EOC, rather than the actual EOC, and we were able to watch the actual EOC opening ceremony over a pizza before getting the bus back. By far the best part of this was watching the 11th Bersaglieri regimental band playing the national anthem while leading the parade at a brisk jog. We concluded that this had been an excellent day despite sharing a last place and a dsq between us.

Day 2: Lazise, another lovely medieval lakeside town. This time we decided to forgo the official coach and travelled on the lake ferry. Here another difference with Italian events became clear. Our risk assessments worry about possibilities such as "competitor running along track decides to fall into adjacent canal". The fact that the quickest route from 5 to 6 lay between this lamppost and the harbour was not a concern to anyone. If not duffers, will not drown. And indeed no-one did (that we know of, although I don't know how rigorously they checked that all participants got back.)





*City walls behind the run-in*

Day 3 was Borgo Venezia, a relatively new suburb of Verona. The area was used for the prologue of the EOC Sprint immediately before we ran, allowing us to watch the elites finishing before we set off. We were very envious of the organisers' ability to persuade the carabinieri to close off all the roads into the estate (although the occasional resident was still to be found driving around), but I don't think the area is as challenging as Pennyland or King's Hedges. If the map looks a bit ragged, it's because day 1 had taught me to tear off the control descriptions before I started.



In the afternoon, we watched the finals of the EOC Sprint in Verona city centre. For this event, even the elite were obliged to battle unsuspecting crowds of dense tourists. Dante seemed unsure what to make of it.



On Day 4 we finally got a non-urban event, high on the sides of Monte Baldo. The terrain was reached by an unusual cable car. You are given about 10 metres to run along and leap on the back, a bit like a bobsleigh team. At this point, the cage seems to be moving terrifyingly quickly. As soon as you've got on, you realise that you've got a long way to go and it isn't really going that fast at all. 20 shivery minutes later, we reached the terrain, a very open and quite steep fellside. Although courses were short, average climb was 40m/km, comfortably enough to qualify as a category B fell race, with the added twist of starting downhill and finishing with 200m straight up the hillside.



Finally, day 5. This was Soave, famous for its wine and hilltop fortress. First, we watched the EOC Relays. It's almost impossible to make orienteering into a spectator sport, but this worked superbly. The coverage was shown on large screens which combined static camera, drone shots, leaderboards and animated tracker information so that we could see exactly what was going on ([watchable here](#)). But we were also standing right next to the start kite, within touching distance as Megan Carter-Davies came round the corner, stopped, checked her maps, stopped again, spotted the road closure, and doubled back. It's reassuring to see that even the best have these moments of hesitation, but we were talking 4 or 5 seconds rather than the time it takes most of us. Have a look at the map to see how fast you can work out the best line to control A1, without the pressure of the cameras and 30 enthusiastic weekend orienteers gawping at you! Sweden won; GBR were a respectable 6th.

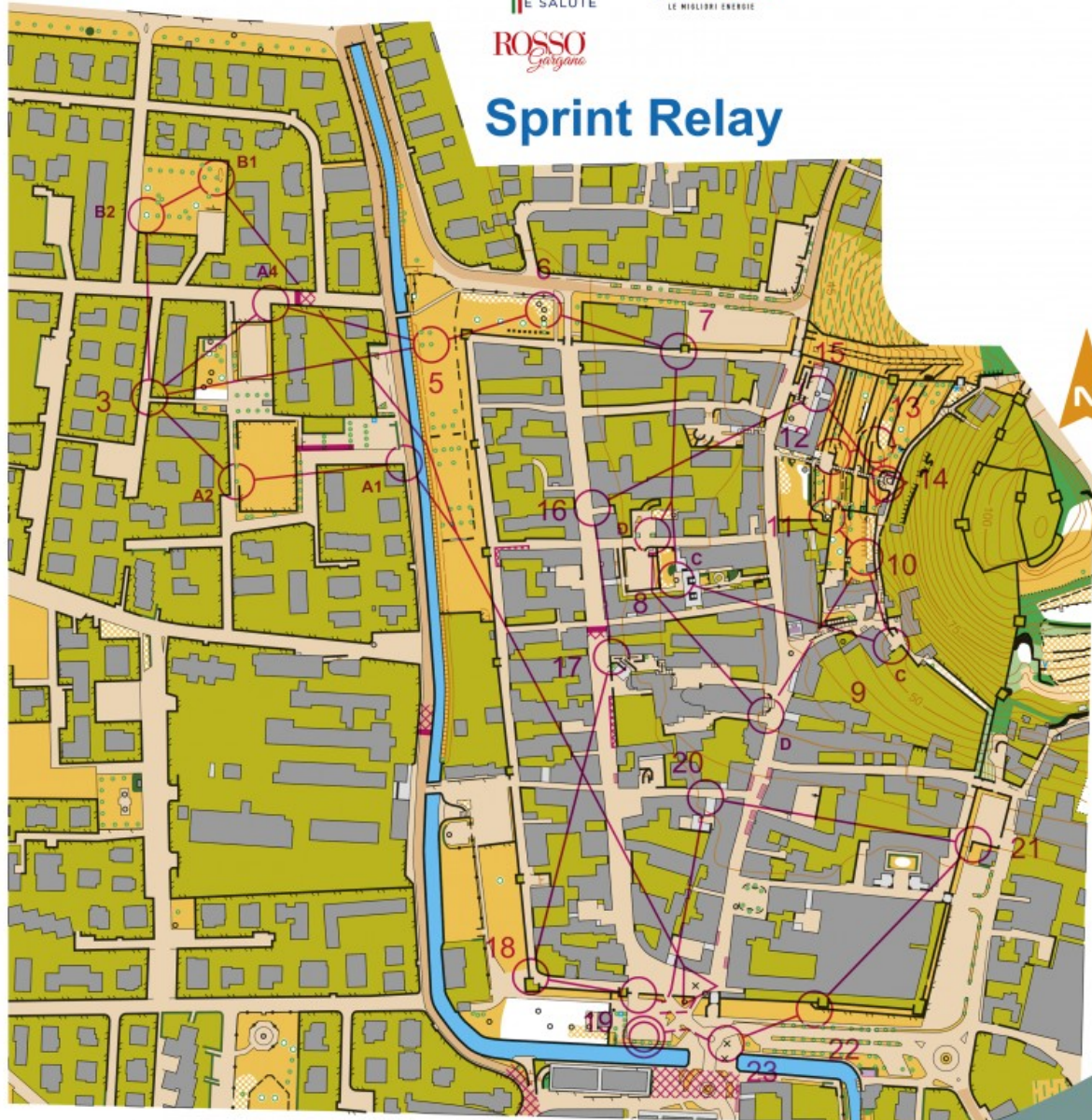
# SOAVE

Scale 1:4000

Contour interval 2m



## Sprint Relay



Then, we got to run on the same terrain - sadly without the complications introduced by the artificial road closures, or the steep complex hillside between 10 and 14. The event used some nifty download software which - rather than wait for WinSplits - calculated your possible errors in real time, and also gave a SIAC battery readout. It was gratifying to see



that, with the benefit of a week's practice, I was only accused of one mistake. Better still, they then gave us a couple of glasses of the local wine and - best of all - a big slice of cake. Despite all the reservations about the organisation that I expressed back on page one, I congratulated the series coordinator wholeheartedly on the good time we'd had - as far as I can tell, entirely organised, planned and staffed by the same six people every day. We'll be back for their next event in July: [www.5daysitaly.it](http://www.5daysitaly.it).

*Dorien and Ros James*

SPLIT TIMES				
EOC TOUR - Soave				
Date: 06 ottobre 2023				
Chip	Str no Name			
8458611	109	DORIAN James		
Club				Class
SMOC				M60
Start	Finish	Time		
00:20.02	00.37.42,4	00.17.40,4		
Point	Split	Progressive	Estimate Error(s)	
01 (52)	01:32	00:01:32	11	
02 (42)	00:53	00:02:25		
03 (51)	01:27	00:03:52		
04 (32)	00:59	00:04:51		
05 (31)	01:42	00:06:33		
06 (33)	02:04	00:08:37		
07 (38)	01:11	00:09:48		
08 (39)	00:25	00:10:13		
09 (45)	02:53	00:13:06		
10 (54)	01:14	00:14:20		
11 (56)	00:42	00:15:02		
12 (58)	01:00	00:16:02		
13 (59)	01:01	00:17:03		
14 (100)	00:19	00:17:22		
	00:18,4	00:17.40,4		

Situation: OK - You are on results! (2/4)

SIAC

2.98KV 08/10/2023

Stampa: 06/10/2023 17:48:09

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<http://www.bostek.it>

All results on [www.CamelotSport.it](http://www.CamelotSport.it)



