

SMOC at the Scottish 6 Day – A question of perspective?

“Just simplify and think big picture” was the advice my son gave me when I expressed reservations over how hard it was going to be orienteering at the Scottish 6 Day (S6D). Truth be told, he and indeed the rest of my family are far better at orienteering than I am so he should know what he’s talking about.

With those words of wisdom ringing in my ears, Helen and I set off on a 2 day road trip from Swansea to Elgin (not the obvious starting place but that’s where we had to be on the Friday – another story). Meanwhile 17 other SMOCies made their way to the Moray Firth by a mixture of means including trains, planes and automobiles (one without brakes at one point but again that’s a story in itself).

Multi-day events and especially the S6D are, for me, where orienteering as a sport comes alive. Almost 3,000 competitors from many countries came to the multi day event and created a sense of atmosphere unmatched by any other orienteering event.

In no way wishing to denigrate orienteering in East Anglia, but the orienteering at this year’s S6D has lots of aspects that we don’t have much exposure to in East Anglia. Hills, contour detail, rock detail to name the first that spring to mind. So, it was always going to be tough! Personally, the odds were further stacked against me when on the Saturday morning I pulled a calf muscle doing parkrun at Stoke Trentham Gardens (seemed a brilliant idea at the time but on Saturday evening I could barely walk).

Day 1 at Lossie Forest (by Lossiemouth) was a shock to the system for many of us not least because of the Scottish weather! With most of the UK having torrential rain Lossiemouth had blazing sunshine which was to say the least unexpected. After a 3km walk in the open sunshine to the start, we were challenged with a forest with significant contour detail aka sand dunes.

Well done to Lawrence (M21L), Freya (W45L) and Milly (W18S) for achieving their highest or joint

highest scores of the week on Day 1 – as the course lengths and climb were generally harder on this day than the other days. For myself my ambition was just to get round the four days I had entered, and while in theory walking round should be a lot easier than running, I was too busy persuading myself that a bike track was a mapped path and not looking up to see distinctive mapped sand dunes...



Day 2 at Darnaway may have had forest but it had a lot of contours and intricate contour detail. Unlike days 1,4 and 5 it had an arena finish which always adds to the atmosphere with the chance to cheer other SMOCies in for the last 100 metres. With my children missing from this year's Scottish due to study and work commitments I missed our family run in competition which is always a fun aspect of the big competitions – as no matter what the rest of your course the sprint to the line is the same for everyone (well juniors excepted on some days). The Golden O Boot this year certainly go to Lawrence and Milly for their run-ins.

| | Run in time in seconds | | | | |
|----------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 |
| Gabriel | 29 | 26 | 26 | 39* | 49 |
| Lawrence | 24 | 19 | 18 | 31 | 37 |
| Dorien | 27 | 22 | 24 | 34 | 33 |
| Don | 70 | 52 | 54 | 58 | |
| Ian | 33 | 25 | 35 | 33 | 41 |
| Milly | 20 | 19 | 33 | 25 | 31 |
| John | | 68 | | | |
| Siobhan | 27 | 21 | 22 | 30 | 34 |
| Freya | 29 | 21 | 25 | 31 | 29 |
| Sandra | 40 | 27 | 28 | | 38 |
| Helen | 34 | 33 | 30 | 36 | 40 |
| Debbie | 44 | 31 | 34 | | 52 |
| Ros | 42 | 31 | 30 | 34 | 49 |
| Ann | 42 | 34 | 34 | 38 | 53 |
| Rachel | 45 | 32 | 28 | 42 | 61 |
| Rosie | 40 | 34 | 31 | 55 | 60 |
| Sue | 57 | 36 | | | 75 |
| Joanna | 34 | 29 | 24 | 41 | 54 |
| Sofia | | 22 | 23 | 32 | 36 |
| Martin | | | 27 | | |

Day 3 at Roseisle stuck in my memory for the fantastic beach just adjacent to the orienteering and indeed was a valid route choice on some courses if you could work out where to re-enter the forest. Indeed the beautiful tranquil sandy beaches were never far away and walking on them later without a care in the world was a stark contrast to the intense concentration needed for navigating the courses earlier.

Days 4 and 5 were at Culbin which were again packed with a lot of contour detail but with mixed undergrowth from the 'very runnable' to the 'very difficult'.

In terms of overall results, the highlight has to be Milly getting a podium position but credit to the youngsters Sofia and Gabriel for some excellent results. Also a shout out to our relative

new members Lawrence and Siobhan who performed well on some of the longer courses that SMOCies ran.

Position by day

| | Overall Position | Name | Age Class | Day 1: Lossie | Day 2: Darnaway | Day 3: Roseisle | Day 4: Culbin | Day 5: Culbin | Score |
|------|------------------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| M10B | 10th | Gabriel Mee | M10 | *13 | 9 | 11 | 5 | 8 | 33 |
| M21L | 8th | Lawrence Jones | M21 | 4 | 13 | 11 | 4 | 10 | 29 |
| M60L | 71st | Dorien James | M60 | 61 | 68 | 67 | 77 | 52 | 248 |
| M60S | 47th | Don Nisbet | M60 | 42 | 42 | 44 | 39 | *51 | 167 |
| M65L | 59th | Ian Byrne | M65 | 57 | 52 | 74 | 48 | 55 | 212 |
| M65L | 86th | Martin Cook | M65 | *101 | 50 | 67 | *101 | *101 | 319 |
| M70S | 33rd | John Shaw | M70 | *35 | 27 | *35 | *35 | *35 | 132 |
| W14B | 4th | Sofia Mee | W14 | *7 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 12 |
| W18S | 2nd | Milly Askham | W18 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| W21S | 15th | Siobhan Patrick | W21 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 11 | 52 |
| W45L | 23rd | Freya Askham | W45 | 15 | 23 | 23 | 27 | 28 | 88 |
| W55L | 70th | Sandra Mather | W55 | 68 | 63 | 62 | *84 | 65 | 258 |
| W60L | 62nd | Helen Nisbet | W60 | 55 | 72 | 59 | 46 | 59 | 219 |
| W60S | 8th | Debbie Charlton | W60 | 8 | 13 | 7 | *35 | 17 | 45 |
| | 25th | Ros James | W60 | 24 | 20 | 27 | 20 | 20 | 84 |
| W65L | 30th | Ann Harris | W65 | 51 | 23 | 20 | 18 | *67 | 112 |
| W65S | 21st | Rachel Thomas | W65 | 21 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 21 | 74 |
| W70L | 35th | Rosie Shaw | W70 | 31 | 30 | 38 | 33 | 32 | 126 |
| W70S | 20th | Susan Rae | W70 | 13 | 18 | *24 | *24 | 17 | 72 |

So five days (yes 5, I know the Scottish 6 Days isn't what it used to be...) of some fantastic orienteering. Some excellent results from the likes of Lawrence (4th in M21L), Milly (2nd in W18S) and Sofia (W14B) and some individual goals reached for many. However despite some good performances and some "glad just to get round" performances the over-riding memories of the S6D for those that went were generally about seeing family or friends enjoying themselves and of the beautiful scenery.





These were what those that went said were their lasting memories...

“Great air&b with a sea view in a village I wouldn’t have been able to place on a map 6 months ago”

“Seeing my daughter orienteering after a gap of 30 years and my grandchildren confidently setting off from the starts”

“Coming across my son in the forest and him looking like I’m a complete idiot when I ask if he’s okay” (many parents can relate to that one)

“Hearing my daughter singing in the mornings because she was going running..”

“I will remember looking at the first half of the course on day 1 and seeing all the contours! ...Plus the joy and amazement at coming up at the right point after running on the beach straight to my number 7”

All the concentration on the map and finding the next feature was certainly fun but for me it was the “big picture” that will stick in the memory...and I don’t mean the big picture of contours I mean the big picture of relaxing on the Moray Firth, the dappled sunlight in Culbin Forest and the endless sandy beaches at Lossiemouth and Roseisle..



By Don Nisbet