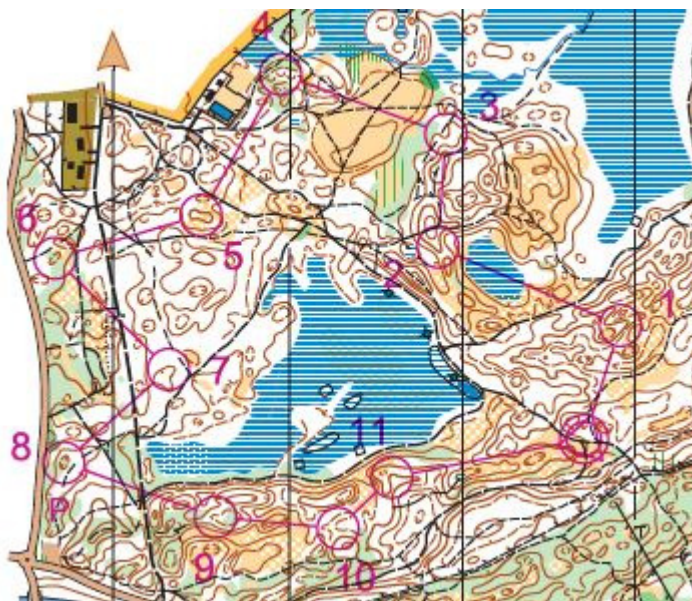


Maroc Glen Affric Camp – Talent Squad and Worlds Schools Teams 12-15th Nov 2016



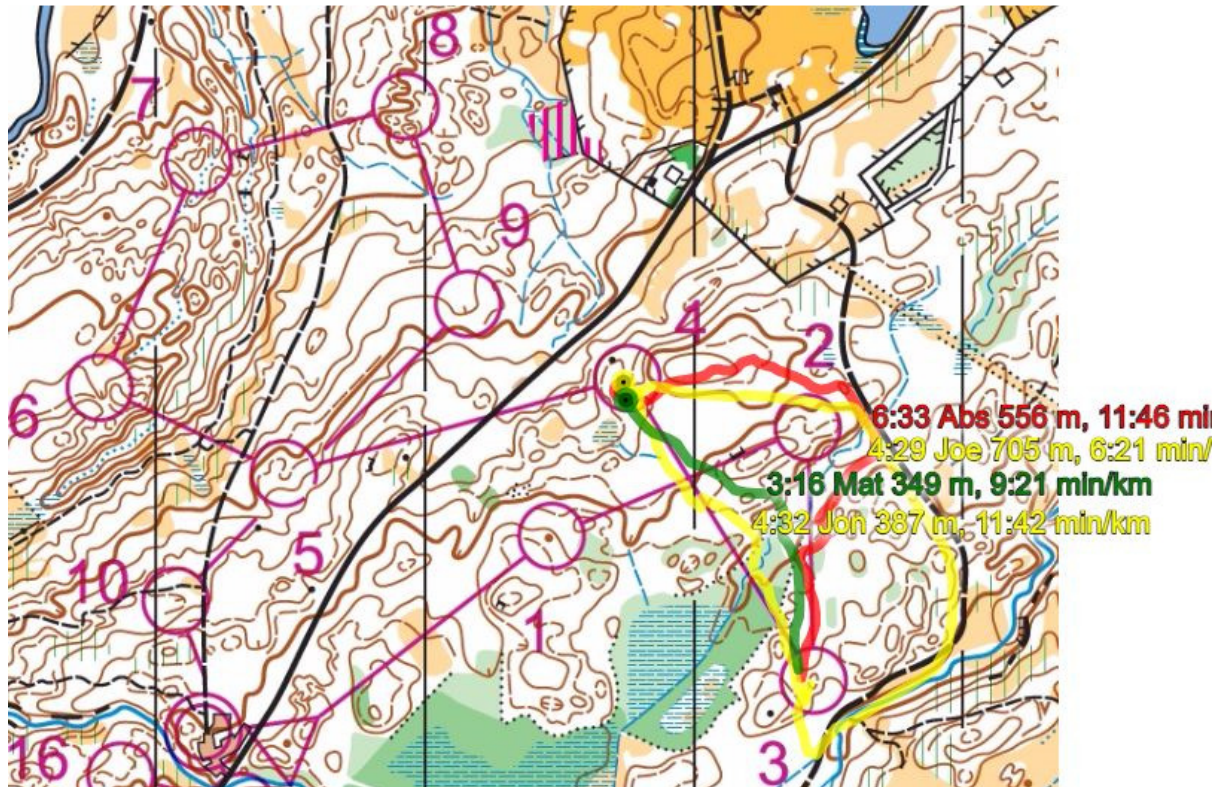
To make the most of school in-service days in November we decided to organise a mini training camp for Maroc juniors from Sat 12th to Tues 15th Nov. The original plan had been to fly out with Ryanair to Halden in Norway, but axing of the Edinburgh – Rygge service put paid to that. After a little bit of plotting Sarah managed to come up with a home alternative that would be almost as exciting; a long weekend in Glen Affric running in real wilderness and in the footsteps of the world's best orienteers from WOC 2015. The aims of the camp were; to inspire the youngsters to commit to orienteering, to foster team spirit and provide support in preparation for the Worlds Schools 2017, and at the same time to get some quality technical and physical training under their belts. Here is a mix-n-match account of the trip....

"The trip started with us leaving Aboyne and heading to Grantown on Spey. We arrived there and parked just beside the bridge at Anagach, opposite the bike park place which I recognised. We were all excited after being on a hot stuffy minibus for an hour. We got ready and headed into the woods to the start. I was a bit nervous as I did not know what to expect. Along the way Sarah would shout out an exercise for us to do and we'd all jump to do it! When we arrived at the start we set off in pairs on a Talk-O exercise which was a bit funny to start with as we had to tell our partners what we were thinking as we ran through the forest. After about half an hour of running, talking and listening we had finished the first course. We were then set off on another course. It was a good start to the weekend and we got to know others quickly. It was then back to the minibus and we continued on our way to Glen Affric."



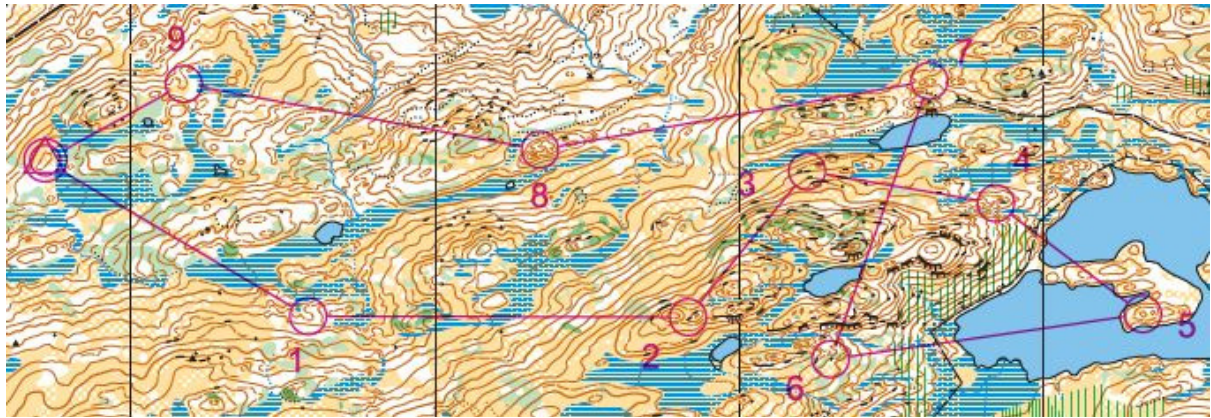
"Our accommodation was excellent! We had chalets in Glen Affric Holiday Park and were the only people there for all three nights. There was lots of space to play manhunt amongst the other empty chalets and we also had the games room to ourselves, including table tennis and pool. The table tennis was especially fun for Grant who beat everyone including Joe Wright – there's always next time Joe!"

"I haven't done many Night O's recently so I was a bit sceptical for the one at Plodda Falls on Saturday night. It was rainy and a bit cold, which didn't make me feel much better. It was a really good course but I found the terrain hard to navigate through because I kept getting disorientated and losing my bearings. Apart from number 1- where I made a 10 min mistake- it was really fun and a good way to finish off the first day. We came back to that area on the Monday for hill reps and it was cool to see the forest in day light, it made more sense then. Unfortunately I don't think I'm too keen for any more night O's anytime soon."



"The Saturday night was really helpful as we got to see and discuss are different routes and times for the night O at Plodda. Josh loaded up our GPS routes onto 2D Re-Run and we had fun analysing and laughing at our mistakes. It was also great to discuss goals and how to reach them. I found it was a great session for evaluating my mistakes and planning for future events."

"Glen Affric north the next morning was an enjoyable time. Having walked just over 4km from the car park at the head of Glen Affric, we arrived at base and set out to do a line course. Next we had an option of 3 courses, with the aim of practising individual techniques that we had identified to work on the day before. So overall I found the training useful and inspiring, made better with the great views."



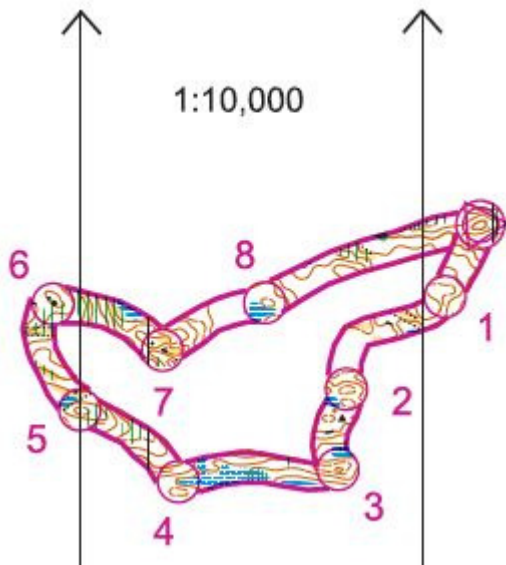
“The afternoon session was a step up in difficulty from the morning’s courses; an increase in distance and climb which had us scurrying from marshes to the hill tops and back several times. The furthest section of the run took us across a small, and rather frustratingly, heathery section of land which protruded out into a lochan. Although this particular control was not quite as tricky as the others (due to it being visible from a good few hundred metres away) it was a brilliant opportunity to see the Scottish landscape from an uncommon angle. The rest of the course was satisfyingly challenging and, in my opinion the most enjoyable course of the weekend.”

“The World Schools discussion on Sunday night was very inspiring and made me even more excited for the event in April. Thanks to listening to the older juniors speaking about the last visit to Turkey, I am now a lot less nervous and really looking forward to the trip. I found looking at the map from Sicily very helpful and will try to look for areas with similar terrain to train on.”

“Monday morning was a physical training hill rep session. It was a really beautiful place to do it. We did 10 reps of 1 minutes which was hard work but great fun! After the session we had a warm-down jog to Plodda Falls for some sight-seeing and team photo shoot.”



“On Monday afternoon it was time for the corridor session at Plodda North. After being dropped as close as possible by the mini bus, we headed off on the long walk up the hill to the start. There were 3 courses to choose from, but after the hill reps that morning and the trek to the start I think most of us only did two of them! Each course was around 2km and the terrain was super runnable in some parts. The complex contour detail meant we had to take it steady to make sure we didn't go off the corridor, otherwise it was almost impossible to re-locate.”



“On Monday evening, we ate a well-cooked meal of risotto in Cannich Village Hall with plenty of cake and custard for pudding which everyone ate happily in celebration of Megan’s 17th birthday. After dinner, an evening challenge was provided for the squad: mapping the surrounding area of the accommodation in Glen Affric. This involved looking at buildings and other features that are included in a typical sprint map. The bravest of the squad ventured out into the darkness of the village to map as many features as possible. However, many chose to stay near the accommodation area and identify features in much more detail. Mapping maestro Jon judged the results of our attempts. Prizes were awarded for the map which provided the most detail near the accommodation and the map which included the most features across the village.”

“On the morning of the last day, before we left for the days training, we were told that there was an extra fun exercise. What we saw was a large grid of controls in about 5 square metres. The exercise involved running very short, quick courses around this tiny area. The idea was that to do it fastest you needed to be in contact with the map constantly, to keep the map orientated - if you didn't, it was nearly impossible to relocate, and to keep planning ahead throughout the course. This made the training more enjoyable and made it easier to reinforce these skills. We were told at the start of the exercise that the previous record was 32 s, I managed to complete one of the courses in 28 s, setting a new world record.”

“Last up was one of Sarah’s favourite fiendish sessions on one of her favourite areas; an Achtemarack pie. No north lines, map edges, or numbers to orientate your map; leave that compass behind and read those contours. And then to round everything off (all’s well that ends well) a short feel-good control-pick back through glorious birch wood to the bus.”



A full on 4 days for everyone, but hopefully the experiences will live-on and help provide motivation for a good while to come.

