

Maroc Talent Squad Inspiration Camp, An Affa Fine Weekend, by the Squad

Crathie Training

Saturday morning and as a' the squad were ready tae clamber intae the trusty O-wagon (bender bus) young Mr Wright tried to pull a classic sicky by 'forgettin' his bag. His mam wiz haein' nane o' it tho', an' they scurried aff hame tae find it. A' the rest rocked some filthy tunes and got stoked for the weekend to come, heading up into the prime terrain o' Upper Deeside. After pullin' up tae the spot we trekked about the church yard (thankfully it was nae the Sabbath and HRH was awa' back tae warmer climes) for a wee warm up led by the Big Jon himsel'. Eventually a sheepish Joe made an appearance. Then it wiz time tae get the compasses oot as we headed intae a cracking wee gem o' an area for line, corridor and control pick exercises. The glaciers hae left some fine curvy shapes that translate into a host o' brown squiggles on the map and oor laigs soon kent about the meanin' o' them. Hot chocolate at the finish saved us fae getting' perished wi' the cauld, then it wiz back in the bus tae head north tae the holiday hoose.



The Hoose



O'er the weekend we were kippin' in a cottage on the side ae a hill nae far frae Tomintoul. The training locations were a fair way awa but nowhere near as lang as the deadly track tae the house. Dan's voice echoed throughout the O-wagon as he requested o' 'Joe' cold hands' Wright' tae open the gate, so the bus could go in to the deer pen that surrounded the cottage. The sauna was affa fine and in it Big Jon liked to tell tales of orienteering wisdom to all. The communal bath (hot tub) was enjoyed, and Joe eventually managed to warm his stone cold hands, afore dippin' intae the plunge pool tae ice the legs. Aye it was a

fine place tae stay and there were plenty of fly cups and fine pieces to go round. The evil ducks quacked all night lang and kept everyone up. The scenes were scenic and lots of exotic wildlife curted about, e'en when it snawed o'er night.

Hill Run

Saturday afternoon was marked out for a long run up to the cairn. We started from the house, and ran to the bottom of the bike trails. Since bikers have done an awful job of poisoning the pine trees, the trails were not open and we were free to cut about without fear of getting flattened. Up we went with Chaps setting the pace, not stopping for a breather all the way to the top. A very steep ride led us to the snow, where snowballs were pelted at the stragglers. The last glimmers of the setting sun were glowing over the Cairngorms as we piled on top of the cairn. A quick summit snap and we were off back down the hill faster than farts down a drain pipe.

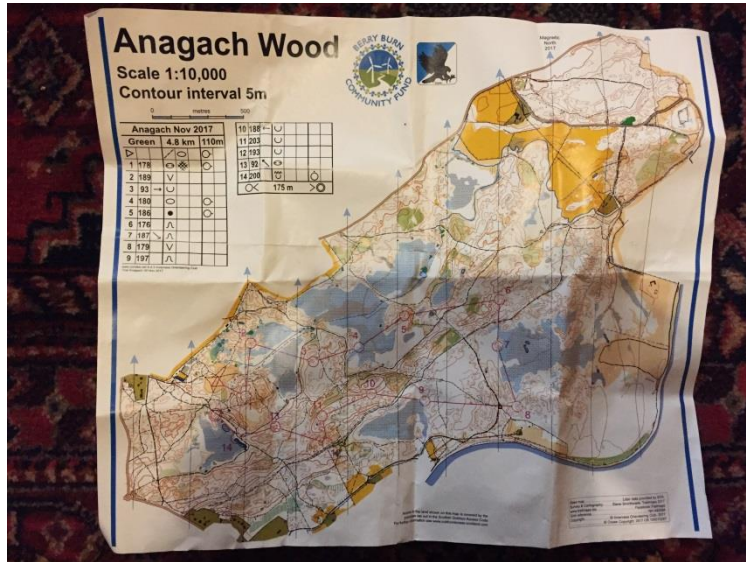


Evening Session



There was no rest for the wicked yet and we were not allowed into the fine spa area until we had a shottie at stretching 'out our weary laigs. Big Jon showed us all the way to do it while Luke and wee John showed us just why we should. After a soak and some fine tea it was time to chat about our plans for training over the winter season. We are challenged to come up with 3 short-term training targets before we'd be allowed to get away home on Tuesday.

Anagach Race



Aye, it was a Baltic morning in Grantown, where the Maroc Talent Squad were gagging for a good race at Anagach. After shootin awa fae the registration at the bairns school we a' trekked to the start, in a cauld clearin in the forest. There wiz a wee wait, an by the time we were oot we were fair shiverin. Luckily the courses and terrain fair made up for it. A few controls in, and most found themselves affa chilly, knee deep in the first o' mony bogs. As we flew through the forest faster than a flying capercaillie, controls were spiked and

route choice decisions made. Most were relieved tae leave the marshes behind as they reached the brutal run in, but a few loons ignored the map and found themselves swimming tae the final control. The smairt controller was affa chuffed tae ken that his handiwork had paid off. A' in a' a crackin wee event roond a bonnie wee wood and the lads and lassies fair did their club proud.

Tomvaich Training

After the Anagach event, the squad travelled a wee 10mins to a sma' patch o' terrain just north o' Grantown. Here they were joined by some other lads an' lassies fae foren clubs up north. Sarah and Jess fae Basoc had an interestin' time tryin' tae hang a few markers as it seemed the mapper had nae got oot his car tae field check this spot. A few words o' wisdom fae Jess an we were sent oot on a wee line course into the area, towerrin o'er and above the boglands. The line took us tae Sarah and Jon who gave us an affa confusin circular map wi' nae north lines - nae compass, nae fair! Joe's hands seemed tae ha'e frozin and needed constant warmin up. Most stuttered roond ane o' the circles whilst a few did both courses. The few who were chavvin awa' went tae the bus whilst the big lads collected a' the wee markers. Once in the o'wagon we a' warmed up and were aff back tae the hoose, far we reflectit on a hard' day's work.



Race Analysis



There wuz time to chill afore everyone was filled wi a pipin hot meal cooked by the affa carin Esther. The scene was set for Big Jon tae retrieve his projector again. Course laid out and splits compared, mistakes were analysed and disappointments shared. Joe's cold hands had been warmed up and the talk came tae an end as the puddin came oot the Aga. The analysis made everyone think about whit they can do tae improve their navigation. Next time we a' hope Amber can tell us whar she's been.

Docharn Training

Afore we set aff each morn' Sarah had us oot on the drive runnin this way and that through a ladder and o'er the hurdles, to practice oor drills and warm up oor laigs. Then we were aff to Speyside wi' Big Jon ravin' about the quality o' the terrain, sayin it was second tae none. Nippin thru the forest tae the start, a devious route choice exercise had been laid out by Sarah. Two hardie wee bams ventured through the Christmas tree plantation whilst the more keen-minded went hoonin roond tha path.



More complex choices had to be made over the 8.4km course as the snaw fell. The legs on the course were longer than Lukes, aimed at improving planning and simplification so as we a' know whit tae do when we come across similar scenarios in a race. Big Jon was right. It was indeed a fine forest and a grand experience wi some valuable learning gained. Flapper Felix collected the tapes as his shoe was finally declared deed. Back in the O-wagon wi hot chocolate motivation to venture intae the affa chilly Cairngorms wis low as the weather was mingin. Back tae the ranch it was.

Monday Afternoon Challenges

Sarah had set us a' up in pairs tae come up wi' an orienteering challenge roond and about the hoose. We were a' bein loafers about this except for Ewan and Felix who were affa enthusiastic and went aff to make a map an then drew it up wi some fine art work on the computer. A' the rest then had to do some map memory hoonin roond and about the policies on some wee courses. Sarah & Big Jon gave a' the rest a kick up the bahookie for nae carin and eventually challenges were set. Everyone got affa chilly and damp standin oot in the rain going for gold in the treasure hunt. No one knew the obscure map symbols in the quiz led by Amber & Joe taken fae a dodgy website, and arguments were aroused o'er dodgy courses. Everyone learnt something fresh and it was a fine idea for a bit o' fun.



Hill Reps

Tuesday morn and efter Sarah's wicked drills, we headed oot tae the hills for a nippit 10min warm up. Big Jon counted down fae 10 and the intervals were aff. Those who were feelin it sprintit up the hill whilst the mare sensible caved canny. After 10 o' thon tortures only a few survived tae hit up another 2. Lungs burst and legs o' jelly we wobbled doon the hill takin in the bike trails and stumblin hame. It wiz near time to be aff but we wernie going to be let awa until we'd written up oor wee story and ice creams in Tomintoul had been properly earned.



Special thanks to the Orienteering Foundation for helping to meet the costs of this weekend.