**Deeside 2015 Tour Report**

Staff: Iain Embrey (TM )(Lead Coach)(safeguarding), Mary Nixon (Chef),

Coaches: Roger Thetford, Don McKerrow, Jonny Malley, Chris Smithard, Frances Brown, Charlotte Watson, Mark Purkis, Jenny Ricketts, Zoe Harding.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| [James](mailto:janehailey@doctors.org.uk) | Ackland | SCO |
| Freddie | Carcas | SCO |
| [Jake](mailto:craigchapman523@hotmail.com) | Chapman | SCO |
| [Jack](mailto:p4cry@yahoo.com) | Cryer | NW |
| [Zac](mailto:jenn.hudd@virgin.net) | Hudd | SW |
| [Callum](mailto:5hunters@talktalk.net) | Hunter | SCO |
| [Finn](mailto:antonyindigo@mypostoffice.co.uk) | Lydon | EM |
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| [Lucy](mailto:jeremy@tonge.org.uk) | Tonge | SW |
| Saskia | Warren | NE |
| Clare | stansfield | SCO |

The balance of athletes with about 2/3rds from the first year 16s and the remainder from the second years (most if not all of whom were also on the equivalent tour last year) worked fine, especially since we were based at the Trossachs last year.

The majority of the tour was injury free, though there was evident fatigue from following a week of the S6D – mitigated by deliberately having a day off running at the start and some slower moving days thereafter. By the end of the week we had picked up one minor and one more significant ankle sprain, and a recurring knee injury. There were also two athletes involved in a minor car scrape whilst being driven by Chris Smithard –no injury suspected at all.

The coaching team had a mixture of experience levels and skills, including three first-time coaches who nevertheless proved invaluable. We used a coaching group structure with pairs of coaches taking primary responsibility for generally 5 athletes between them, which also served well to support the development of coaches who worked closely in these partnerships. The coaching groups were designed specifically to mix genders and regions, and with a mind to avoiding athletes having the same primary coach as during a previous tour. The coaches in charge of each team were also primarily responsible for compiling their athletes’ tour reports. These groups were also then used as the basis for duty teams for the week.

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| 1). Don+Jenny | Jake | Jack | Bethany | Grace | Tara |
| 2). Roger+Chris | Freddie | Daniel | Finlay | Hannah | Lucy |
| 3). Jonny+Fran | James | Zac | Alistair | Saskia | Clare |
| 4). Mark+Charlotte+Zoe | Finn | Lindsay | Daisy | Callum |  |

The duties on the following page worked well, supplemented with additional periodic tasks to clean the bus/showers/toilets/communal areas. A general purpose group for this reason might work well in future, though possibly only needed from part way through.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Wash up breakfast and set up dinner | Wash up dinner |
| Saturday | 1 et al | 2 |
| Sunday | 3 | 4 |
| Monday | 2 | 1 |
| Tuesday | 4 | 3 |
| Wednesday | 1 | 2 |
| Thursday | 3 | 4 |
| Friday | 2 | 1 |
| Saturday | 4 | 3 |
| All Clean everything | |

Each day had a structure of:

8-8:30 Breakfast including making lunch

9:00 Briefing in dining room

10:00 in bed

10:30 quiet lights out

And evening sessions were fitted around this. Less emphasis was placed on debriefs for individuals back at home, as these were generally conducted in the forest.

The Venue is extremely cost effective and quite fun – showers had been improved to “adequate”, though further significant improvements are promised before next year. Rooms were used as follows:

9 girls in the George Smith Centre (sleeps 8 room) – can use spare sleeps 4 room if desired.

Mary in the room opposite the kitchen in the George Smith Centre

Fran, Jenny, Charlotte, Zoe in the George Smith Centre (sleeps 6 room)

10 boys in the White House: c.5 in the sleeps 6 room, and 5 in the random spare hall.

Don, Roger, Jonny, Chris, Mark in the White House (sleeps 8 room)

Iain in the White House (sleeps 2 room).

Tour tops: “contrast vests” were sourced from [megan@frontrunner.org.uk](mailto:megan@frontrunner.org.uk). She generally responded to around every second email, but eventual service was both excellent and speedy. Quite wearable customised named tops came to about £9, and I also purchased a number of rather nice medals with GBR coloured lanyards and the engraving “JROS tour champion” for 85p each. Both were well received by athletes.

Notes were made throughout the week by coaches using this A5 pro-forma which was developed last year:

Name:

Area/Exercise:

Coach:

Date:

Technical:

Tactical:

Physical and/or

Psychological

and/or other:

**Strengths**

**To work on**

SI equipment was borrowed from Harlequins; GRAMP and Moravian orienteers were most kind in arranging OCAD files and access for us without any charge. My training kites were supplemented by a set of HOC stakes and kites which were used at night (along with Roger’s excellent reflector devices) and for the races. Having my printer available during the tour was extremely useful. The 4 JROS radios were supplemented by a selection from SEJS/GPP/the family Marsden with grateful thanks.

A very useful reflective debrief at the end of the week allowed the athletes to decide upon (and share with us) particular points to take away and work on, future goals, and some feedback on the week. These were then incorporated into tour reports.

The areas used were fantastic on the whole, with just the presence of some quite heavy bracken in the orange parts of Cambus O’May and as mapped in Scolty’s orange. The tour champs fun relay was abandoned due to inclement weather and a rather long classic race. The effort to support local orienteering by attending a local evening event was one training too much. The outline programme is overleaf.

The budget and accounts are shown on the following page. BML printers were duly credited on our tour tops for their continued and valued support, and Turner hiredrive once again supplied vehicles in a highly cost effective manner. We managed with only hiring one minibus due to both Roger and Don providing people carriers.

A new system was piloted with upfront charges of £230 for each athlete, which was to be followed by a second charge to cover the actual costs. In fact we were already in surplus, saving each athlete £120 from last year.

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Feedback from Roger and Don:

\* Despite the generally long times, Iain's Classic course was much admired by those athletes whom I heard express an opinion. However (my opinion), when so much depends on the route-choice for the long leg, making that decision before having seen any of the open hill made it a bit of a lottery.

\* Glen Dye was excellent and the Templars Park area was fine for the use we made of it. Cambus O'May also fine (despite a Big Jon Nopesport comment referring to "...rough forest like Cambus O'May"). Having lent out both my big light and my back-up Petzl, I never got out into Crathes so can't comment on that. Balmedie was great but would have been better with a 1:7500 map rather than a 1:10,000 that appeared to have been shrunk from 1:7500 - particularly for a fast-paced exercise. Countesswells, once finally located, was rather ordinary and was an event too far after evening training on both Monday and Tuesday. Birsemore Hill was again hard work for mass-start / chasing exercises and by the afternoon there was a lot of walking. Gaining height on the walk to the start was an excellent decision, although as it turned out the western track would surely have offered easier going. At Scolty I saw only the last control plus the middle-distance section: tough, but not unreasonable particularly as the early section demanded a relatively slow pace.

\* With the 6-person trains at Balmedie, hare and hounds (and looking after Jack) at Birsemore, and the Classic race on Friday, I felt a bit isolated from the athletes in my group. Chris of course had gone by then and I'm grateful for the comments from Fran, Jonny, Iain and Mark. Without them I'd have struggled to write the tour reports.

\* Access to wi-fi at Templars Park would probably have prevented most of the faffing trying to find Countesswells, and if Iain had been able to email Karen Maxwell we could also have had an extra coach for the end of the week. We should try harder to obtain access.

\* The facilities were acceptable but no more than that. Encouraging TP to plumb in the washing machine, as well as refurbish the showers (and air the White House), would make a considerable difference.

\* One athlete, who hadn't done much night-O, found launching straight into a mass-start race rather daunting and would have preferred some less pressured night training first, even though the night race had been carefully designed to avoid people being out alone. She actually suggested swapping Crathes and Templars Park but that would have meant using the more difficult area first -- probably not a good idea. Instead, I'd recommend a night map walk at TP for the newbies.

\* Abandoning the 'fun relay' on Friday was a good decision -- too many excessively tired people. One athlete commented on Friday that the mix of the week had been good though, with the right number of races.

\* Wednesday turned into a very long day, with much driving. Attending the evening event was a nice idea but I felt that we were imposing on the locals (especially as more or less everyone else had finished when our group was only just starting) rather than reaching out to them. Welcoming the MAROC athletes on some of the other days was good though.

\* As usual, a 'can-do' attitude prevailed and I would be happy to work again with any of the coaching (and cooking!) team.

\* possibly an overall balance with too much pairs/groups/trains cf. solo O?

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Feedback from Mary as regards cheffing:

The kitchen was great although minus 2 important implements- a decent knife and a pair of scissors. Great supply of pans. Good fridge and a freezer.

The groups tasks did not really work from my point of view. Expecting them to clear the tables and to wash, dry and put away was a tall ask. In the morning there was lunch stuff to clear and wash as well. Perhaps one group for laying up and clearing, one for wash/drying.

The kids were not brilliant at turning up to do their jobs, especially the boys. Most meals I had to send for at least one of the boys. Not very fair on those who did appear on time.

As a cook I found it very hard work. I like to cook everything from scratch so there is a lot of cutting, slicing and chopping to do. By the end of the week I had RSI in my right hand. It would have helped to have an assistant who could help with these tasks and/ or do the shopping. It was taking half an hour to do the trip but going round was taking anything up to 90 minutes. Unloading and putting away took at least another half an hour. Two days I could not get the car through the barrier. Seven trips up to the hut with heavy shopping bags is very tiring! By the time I had eaten I was already having to start preparation for the evening meal!

I had some help from some of the junior coaches, ie Jonny, Mark and Charlotte doing the BBQ, which was really great.

Timing was not always great. The evening of the BBQ the meal was nearly two hours after we'd been expecting it. Equally later in the week when there was an afternoon indoor coaching session which meant they were 20 minutes late eating. This meant the rice was ruined. Incidentally the kids voted with their feet that night and did not eat all the food.   
  
Despite this I enjoyed the week. But in future I suggest a second person to help. David would have been happy to have come. 30 is a lot to cater for. I really admire Liz Orr if she did it on her own. I would be happy to come again on a Scottish year.

I was surprised there were not any older female coaches. I fell it is important for the girls to have an older woman who they could go to if necessary.

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|  | Sun 9th | Mon 10th | Tues 11th | Weds 12th | Thurs 13th | Fri 14th |
| Theme | “Plan” route and methodology choice | “Direction” (+Plan) | “picture” Contour shapes/techniques toolbox | Direction + Picture: fine navigation | Combine/refine; psychological – pressure/distractions | Tour Champs (middle-classic morph; relay) |
| Area(s) | Use of maps from 6 days; site microsprint, site big control circle sprint; | Glen Dye; | Cambus O’may | Balmedie (permission from the car park south) | Birsemore | Scolty (pay and display); inchmarnoch |
| Suggested Summary | Team building games;  **Body Tired; head will work hard today instead…**  personal strengths and weaknesses; aims for the week; active recovery; stretching and core; running style analysis/workshop;  warmup/warmdown theory and practice? Tech/Tact/Phys/Psych | Variety of leg lengths, but control sites easy, use of collecting features/easy contour shape legs, use of attack points/traffic lights concepts (*“navigate more” rather than “slow down”)* | Low speed. Very short legs, continuous contact, ground shape, contour-feature handrails. **read everything from map** | Increasing speed, simplifying  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Easier day; Afternoon off?  Aberdeen and stonehaven Lido? Dunnottar castle?? Site activities? | Orienteering intervals/loops/trains/in sight/pressure  Key: **invest time in planning and navigating calmly under pressure** | Tour champs to have an initial middle style section; followed by classic style legs – winners by splits for middle section and overall.  Short, fun, multiple run-throughs relay at inch |
| Evening | Physical training: principles, key sessions, periodisation, tapering long session incorporating discussion, notes, personal planning for next season, discussion on this…  Charlotte | Contour shapes; act out a haggis; Given Contour shapes make in sandy blow-out; map contours of given shapes  Mark | Contour simplification – lidar vs. 5m vs index – finding features game; some night O tips – iain 30+ mins | The importance of mental preparation, quality practice, analysis and the desire to keep improving.  "Think, practise, practise, think, practise, practise, think, perform." - Roger | Day debrief and TCUP – Don  30 mins? | meh |
| Notes/night | Travel from Inverness area;  Possibly go swimming? Site activities? | Night O introduction on site (one man/peg relay?) | Night at Crathes (send maps to Fiona Milne [fmilne@nts.org.uk](mailto:fmilne@nts.org.uk) in advance) | Countesswells summer series event? (each individual states how will use as training) | Write tour reports, hang tomorrow | Party :)  Tour reports ctd? |
| Day Lead | Iain | Don | Roger | Jonny | Jenny | Julie |
| Orienteering Activities ideas | Reflection on 6 days maps/performances,  shape/theory of the week, classroom leg planning sessions/games | Pairs alternate legs planning; unlimited time map memory; “Norwegian” with map excerpts for the next leg at each control; talk O | Straight lines of shape (paths removed); hanging (three similar courses with clusters of confusable features); following line; control flow or relocation (pairs exercise with only odd / only even controls shown); speed control (short legs, slightly longer legs, sections of line) | Head to head; gaffled things; palmer challenges; trains; group terrain intervals along a line | Orienteering intervals/loops/trains/in sight/pressure; lots of fun mini competitions; short exercises; obligatory stand for 10s at each control reading map? | Scotly: Avoid rough open areas within the wooded bits; large green patches are completely unusable. Middle section in the East leading to W for classic? |

Thoughts for the future:

Consider duty groups as outlined in Mary’s feedback; welcome the idea of having 2 chefs. It would also be good to have more than 1 person doing all of the tour managing and leading the coaching.

Otherwise some tweeking based on the contents of this doc, but nothing major that needs to be changed/actioned – except to ensure that we take a tour group photo for the website!