

Deeside 2014 Tour Report

Staff: Iain Embrey (TM) [safeguarding], Roger Thetford (Lead Coach), Alison and Jim Elder (Chefs), and coaches: Dave Rogers, Don McKerrow, Jessica Orr, Jonny Malley, Chris Mackenzie, Frances Brown.
Athletes were as listed:

James Ackland	INT
Matt Hartland	WCH
Tim Harrison	SUFFOC
Callum Hunter	ECKO
Laurence Johnson	SROC
Tom Lines	ECKO
Finn Lydon	LEI
Ewan McMillan	MAROC
Eddie Narbett	BOK
Finlay Todd	INVOC
Rowan White	INVOC

Kathryn Barr	MOR
Megan Bett	SN
Lucy Hanes	AIRE
Roanne Lilley	ECKO
Abigail Mason	MAROC
Megan Ricketts	MAROC
Lindsay Robertson	CLYDE
Clare Stansfield	FVO

The coaching team had a mixture of experience levels and skills, including two first-time coaches who nevertheless proved invaluable – Chris with his IT/SI expertise and Fran with her high level of running knowledge. 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 to share out various athlete medical needs between the coaches. 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.

1. Don & Fran	Clare	Abigail	James	Laurence	Finlay
2. Dave & Chris	Megan R	Lucy	Tim	Tom	Eddie
3. Jet & Jonny	Lindsay	Megan B	Callum	Finn	Ewan
4. Roger & Iain	Kathryn	Roanne	Matt	Rowan	

	Set Up Breakfast	Wash up Breakfast and Set up dinner	Wash Up Dinner	Clean Busses, Toilets Hall
Sunday			1	
Monday	2	3	4	1
Tuesday	3	4	1	2
Wednesday	4	1	2	3
Thursday	1	2	3	4
Friday	2	3	4	1
Saturday	All clean everything			

These duties worked well, once tweaks had been made to reflect the fact that breakfast needed very little set up, but more help was needed to deal with the aftermath of dinner; also athlete clothes washing needed to be included. Each day had a structure of: Breakfast 08:00-08:30 (incorporating making lunch) Briefing 09:00 (ready to leave) Coaching groups debrief 18:15 – generally as a group with some individual discussions... this seemed to work well and many of the coaches very much liked it, though my personal preference is probably for individual discussion. Dinner 19:00. Evening session 20:30 (ish) Bed 22:00 with lights out and quiet at 22:30. Notes were made throughout the week by coaches using this A5 pro-forma which was developed on tour:

Name.	1	Coach.
Area/Exercise.	1	Date.
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Strengths	1	To Work On
	1	
Technical;	1	
	1	
Tactical;	1	
	1	
Physical and/or	1	
Psychological	1	
And/or other	1	

Feedback from coaches on this sheet was positive (we applied it flexibly just as a loose structure/stimulus), although ‘Coach’ would have been a useful addition alongside ‘Name’. The venue of Trossachs Tryst was used for the first time by JROS. It features sufficiently spacious and reasonably well appointed dorms (8+8+6+4+4+1+1) all with en suite electric showers. We used one of the 8 berth for 5 male coaches + coaches hang out, which worked reasonably well. It has good mobile reception, and (slow) wireless in the communal and dining areas. The single large communal area was designated for use in theory sessions, and as an athletes’ hang out, and included such amenities as a flipchart whiteboard and a large tv with hdmi for audio/visual

presentations/running video reviews/etc. We were also grateful to Jon Marsden for lending us his projector.

SI equipment was borrowed from Harlequins and Clyde; FVO and Clyde were excellent with areas and permissions and ocad files (FVO waiving their usual fee for this); my training kites were supplemented by some from the South Central Junior Squad. Home-made reflectors were a great help for the night-O. Having my printer available during the tour was extremely useful, as was the Go-Pro for capturing some running styles during the sprint relay. On occasions where late athletes were being awaited (particularly the night O and classic race) I was very glad of having a full complement of 8 radios (many thanks to WMJS for supplying 4 of them).

The cost of the accommodation would have been £3500 for the usual 7 night booking, which is almost 3 times that of the Deeside accommodation. This was reduced to £2500 by having 6 nights and through me doing some bargaining. The tour would have been improved were it a day longer (6 days training as opposed to the 5 which we had). The owners of the hostel live on-site and were incredibly helpful and accommodating in every way. They probably will no longer own/operate the hostel by this time next year.

Although the available qualifying athletes after all but one of the selection races numbered only a dozen, 20 athletes were selected at my specific request (tricky due to a squad tour clash and increased BOF tour numbers in this age group), of whom 19 accepted the invitation. I believe that they all benefitted significantly from the tour, and none were of a level which limited the ability of the group as a whole to make the most of all opportunities. By chance we had fewer injuries/ailments than I have ever known, with one athlete missing about 1hr of training following a minor ankle sprain. The policy of collecting phones was less successful this year than last, possibly due to the increasing use of phones as music players etc in addition to their core purpose. At times when several athletes had their phones there was some tendency for sitting absorbed in them, with little interaction between the athletes, and the occasional trivial silliness involving girls not liking photos of themselves and chasing each other round. At such times phones were once more collected in. I was particularly happy that there were none around on the final evening which was reasonably sedate but still might otherwise have led to the odd unfortunate pic. Phones and logistics were also complicated by accommodating one delayed arrival, two early departures, and two spending an evening at the Commonwealth Games. This was, nevertheless, almost seamlessly managed.

Tour tops: “contrast tech Tees” were sourced from megan@fronrunner.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 £11.50pp, and I also purchased a number of rather nice medals with GBR coloured lanyards and the engraving “JROS tour champion” for £1 each.

A shared dropbox folder was very useful throughout the tour and beforehand, providing for example a means of transmitting map files (from Clyde to us and from us to BML) that was more reliable than email.

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.

The areas used varied from the very tough physical challenge of the Trossachs complete with areas of ridiculous bracken, through a selection of rather second-rate bits of woodland to the open and runnable Dumyat Hill (thus well received despite being somewhat mediocre) plus a fun mixed sprint relay around Stirling University. A

good range of experiences was thus provided, with some skilled planning (from Don, Dave, Roger, Chris and Jessica) recovering worthwhile training from patches of usable terrain. The programme was as below:

Sun 27 Jul - evening

Assemble

leg-stretch with a few flags in Coihallan Wood [Callander, FK17 8HW, activity number 15133], adjacent to the accommodation, provided it's not completely unusable.

Fran & Jet – warming up; Drills/Running – pairs jog around the woods. Blindfold sprints on the lawn.

Introductions; icebreakers - Fun and games (egg games in coaching groups worked well)

Mon 28 Jul

Theory session – Roger – Full Speed No Mistake (Thierry's philosophy), building on data from blindfold sprints.

Sauchie Crags + Polmaise [Stirling, FK7 9PX, 15134]

Theory session – Iain - Technical; Tactical; Physical; Psychological

Tue 29 Jul

Trossachs [Brig O Turk, FK17 8HZ, 15135]

Theory Session — Don — Thinking Clearly Under Pressure

Wed 30 Jul

Dumyat [Stirling, FK9 5PX, 15136] plus

mixed sprint relay at Stirling Univ. [Stirling, FK9 4LP, 15137] **Permission granted**

PM: some free time in Stirling (voted for over possible golf activity), and running styles analysis

night-O training, Barr Wood [Stirling, FK7 9QW, 15138] **Permission granted**

Thu 31 Jul

Fairy Knowe [Aberfoyle, FK8 3XF, 15139] **Permission granted but eastern part OOB**

Theory & Practical session (tbc) – Jet – Core/Stretching

Fri 1 Aug

Trossachs (classic race)

Sat 2 Aug Disperse