



As in previous years, October 16 to September 17 has been full of events and coaching sessions. Often it has been difficult to fit in coaching sessions because weekends seem to be so full of events, local, regional and national.

Practical Coaching Activities

We have tried to deliver coaching sessions in a number of different ways and aimed at different interest and technical levels this year.

October 16	Kelton Fell Top	Compass work	TD3/4/5
	Brigham School	Orient8	TD1/2
November	Hawse End	Compass work	TD 3/4/5
December	Whinlatter	Christmas fun activities for juniors	TD1-5
February	Borrowdale	Relocation, Long legs	TD3/4/5
	Whinlatter	Pre-Sunday event coaching	TD1-3
March	Hogs Earth	Long legs plus	TD1-5
April	Marron Leas	Orientation, Decision making, Relay training	TD1-3
May	Harris Park	World Orienteering Day, Cockermouth Guides	TD1/2
June	Scale Hill	Cockermouth School, Pre BSOC coaching	TD1-4
September	Mawbray	Orientation, compass work	TD1-5
	Fairfield School/ Harris Park	Festival of O Bite sized advice	TD1/2
	C'mth Memorial Gardens	Bite – sized session – Orientation and Sprint conversatio	TD1-5
October 17	Hawse End	Compass, relocation, decision making, corner cutting and compass	TD1-5

The sessions outlined above reflect only WCOC coaching. Of course, many of the coaches on the WCOC team not only deliver club coaching sessions but are involved in schools and regional coaching (NWJS) and JROS tours also. Both of these are demanding programmes of activity too but are enormously rewarding for individuals and the club.

Skills

This year, David Spencer, Steve Breeze and Debbie Watson have been assessed for their UKCCL2 coaching award with Deborah Goodwin to be assessed shortly.

BOF National Coaching Conference was held January and was attended by Lynne and Matt. There were interesting classroom sessions on Talent Development and training phases as well as practical sessions on TempO and TrailO which suggested coaching exercises around decision making. Lynne undertook the pilot Advanced Coaching session “Coaching in remote and high places” which will be required of all L2 coaches in the near future.

Coaching Development

At last years' AGM, a discussion group considered coaching and made a number of suggestions for development. Notes from the AGM discussion, along with the responses provided to Committee, follow this Coaching Report. Perhaps most important, is that the discussion about developing coaching continues. The following notes and response include some further questions for consideration by the 2017 AGM.

For the coaching team, one of the key issues seemed to be one of communication or perhaps comprehension. Some of the suggestions are already part of our standard coaching sessions or throughout the programme. In particular, we have tried to ensure that the message is clear this year: sessions are always open to adults as well as juniors. Coaching distinctions are based on technical ability not age.

Working with different coaches is always a good idea for both those learning and coaching. Charlotte Watson, fresh from a year in Australia delivering orienteering coaching, came to deliver a session for us at Mawbray recently.

Most recently we have begun Bite-Sized Coaching at Thursday evening events in the autumn. These sessions aim to allow beginners, as well as very experienced orienteers, the opportunity to concentrate on one simple technique per session and then implement it immediately.

2017 Summary

Not only does WCOC send 18 juniors to the North West Junior Squad, we send 18 TD5 technically competent orienteers. This is what coaching should look like at club level. Coaching is a club conversation and a club burden. We have a strong, enthusiastic, flexible and developing team of coaches. No one coach could deliver our programme, it is successful because we have a team of coaches and supporters, each with different skills, talents and approaches delivering to a range of athletes with different interests, motivation, fitness and skill levels.

Finally, whilst we can be exceptionally proud of the current and unique position that WCOC occupies in Talent Development, it was a club level activity that was the standout moment of 2017 for me. On Thursday 21st September, many, many, many juniors and their parents to attended our Thursday evening event at Harris Park following the Fairfield Festival of O lead by Roger. Lots of mispunches, lots of headless chickens (or maybe that should be beavers) but so many smiles.

Lynne Thomas, Lead Coach WCOC

AGM Notes from Adult coaching group.

- Most of the group were not aware that we were already providing adult coaching, together with the junior coaching - more publicity needed on the type of support we already provide?

Coaching in WCOC for the last few years has always been for both juniors and adults. It is based on ability not age. Adults have attended for coaching most sessions but not all. Mostly beginner adults rather than TD5. Clearly, there is a communication issue.

Solution: Improve communication about current coaching activities

- It was felt that coaching was a good way for adult novices to become involved in orienteering and that we should provide them with a pack of supporting materials, including sample maps, information sheets on how to use a compass etc.

Not sure about supporting materials for adults. I believe there is readily accessible coaching material available anyway and coaching is much better delivered directly rather than by written material. I would prefer not to divert scarce coaching resources to preparing generic materials.

- Suggested that we bring in outside coaches for adults at TD5 level like we have done in the past – names suggested – Derek Allison and Lecky.

Happy to bring in outside coaches as we have previously done. Not happy that this would be for adults only. It benefits juniors just as much to work with different coaches as adults.

WCOC used to deliver coaching based on age not ability. Clearly we have juniors who are very able to work at "adult" levels in orienteering. If you make this distinction you end up with juniors confined to TD1-3/4 and not getting TD5 training until either NWJS picks them up OR we have to organise separate TD5 for juniors. We don't have enough coaches to deliver duplications of training (remembering that coaching requires organisation, planning, controlling and coaching for any single outdoor activity).

Questions

What is it that adults would like to be delivered that is not delivered through a mixed age session so that we can meet what is clearly an identified need?

Does a separate group within a coaching session meet this need?

In terms of external coaching, this is a costly exercise, will the club contribute towards this, do you expect grant applications to be made?

- Felt useful to provide coaching for theory as well as outdoor sessions eg to include discussion around maps – route planning, using attack points etc. Sessions by Neil Kerrison described as being very useful.

Need more information about coaching theory sessions, specifically when/how this should be delivered? (We have done this previously as part of physical activity sessions)

- Also using ideas of whiteout areas on maps.

Whiteout areas on maps is used regularly as a coaching technique at outdoor sessions, usually as part of compass training.

Was this about outdoor sessions or indoor?

- Felt our coaching should include dedicated adult only groups at all levels from novice to TD5.
Questions and ideas as above
- Idea of a weekend away for coaching to use good TD5 areas like South Lakes.

Great, when?

- Idea that we could include coaching sessions in the Spring series.

Again, need more info on what exactly.

Solution: Last year we offered coaching in advance and following Thursday sessions. There was not much take up of this. Could improve on this perhaps by setting out two or three controls adjacent to start (like a warm up map) with a coach assisting or even just info on map.

Needs advance co-ordination of planner and coaching team.

- Idea that on a Thursday evening coaching could be included say once every month or every 6 weeks using contour only maps or map memory.

Have suggested this previously, very easy to implement, some of juniors already doing this of their own accord.

Requires coordination of planner and coaches in plenty of time so that preparation can be undertaken.

Or requires simply printing of maps as contour only, or individuals to relinquish the idea of “racing” on Thursday evenings and just focus on a particular technique that is appropriate to the area.

This one probably needs more information about the discussion at AGM and consideration of practical implications but imminently achievable!