

WCOC Development

WCOC Club Development Update

Our focus for the first year is to increase the number of under 40s in the club – not just members but those taking part in our activities.

The main strands of doing this

- 1) Creating quality events
- 2) Links with local running clubs
- 3) Increased marketing eg social media and email

Quality Events

We hit the ground running with the Spring Series. We are lucky in that WCOC already put on weekly events, so the focus was to adapt the events to attract as many as people as possible, and improve the marketing (more on that later).



Rocket League

We opened the series with the Rocket League - a series of sprint events around local towns eg Cockermouth and Keswick. We know that events in local towns can be more accessible and feel less daunting to newcomers, so felt this was a great place to start.



We had 4 events starting in March as soon as the Night Series had finished.

We had a record 130 entries at our Keswick sprint event, including a good number from the local running club Keswick AC. It was great to see local fell runners compete against the orienteers.

We have had 4 more Rocket League events between the Spring and Summer series, including a successful event at Maryport Coastal Park attended by a group from Netherhall AC wanting to improve their navigation skills. We are currently close to completing the final 4 Rocket League events between the Summer and Night series – including the finale on a brand new area Braithwaite.

We have used the local Keswick YHA as our base for download twice, and we've also used the Swan Inn in Cockermouth – this created a more sociable atmosphere and is something we want to repeat.

Spring Series

Following the first 4 Rocket League events we moved to our traditional Spring series - 10 events on fell or in forest. We have some great local areas which includes techy terrain in Borrowdale to local fells. Numbers have been

very good for typically being over 80.



As club development officers we have taken a step back from organising these events (except the Northern Champs weekend see next) but increased the marketing of these events (see later on) plus we used the Golden

Ticket option to encourage competitors to enter all the events. A discount is achieved if you enter all 10 events (basically 8 for the price of 10). Not only does this save competitors money, but it encourages them to come to all the events as they have already paid!

Keswick Mountain Festival and the Northern Championships weekend

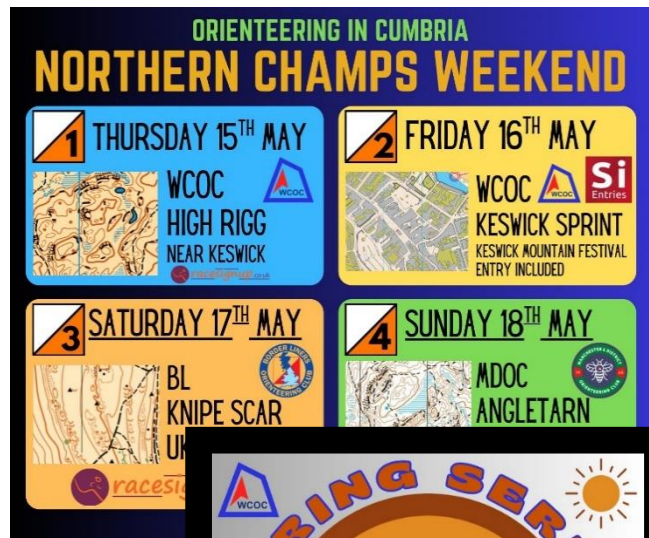
WCOC already has links with the annual Keswick Mountain Festival (KMF) as we annually put on a maze on Crow Park which always has a steady stream of enthusiastic juniors running around.

This year we thought it was a great opportunity to put on another quality sprint event, but use the facilities of the KMF to add some razzmatazz to the event with us having a mass start, commentary, and using the KMF start and finish arch and funnel. The KMF organisers were very encouraging and they allowed us to give all of our competitors a free wrist band (normally worth £30) to stay at the festival in the evening.



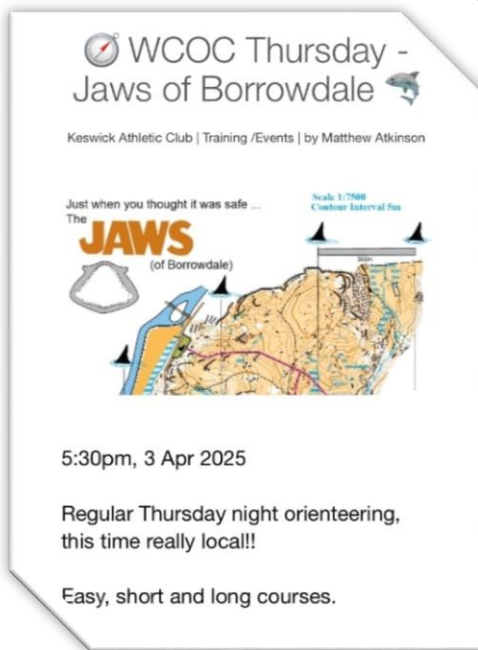
It was a great event, definitely one to be repeated in the future. We had a wide range of abilities at the event including newcomers and WOC Sprint Bronze medallist Alice Leake. As we knew a lot of orienteers were up for that weekend for the Northern Championships weekend in the Lakes we took over the Thursday WOC night event too – moved it to High Rigg.

We had over 130 entries for this event – in part due to the location which is one of our best areas but also the increased marketing which aimed to increase the links with the Northern Championships weekend.



Links with local running clubs

Our family are all currently members of Keswick Athletic Club and there is a good crossover of members between WOC and a few of the local running clubs. Our aim this year is to get more Keswick AC members to our events. We market our events on their Facebook page and Whats app groups.

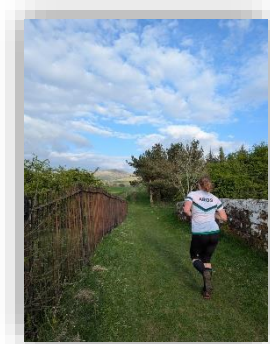


We have also managed to get our events added to their Team App – this ensures the App that all members use to sign up to training etc also has our events, plus they all receive a weekly reminder email.



We have written articles on orienteering in their club newsletter too.

A lot of fell runners want to improve their navigation for fell races, so coming to our events which are regularly based on local fells is a great opportunity for them to improve their skills.



Red Course

To encourage more runners to come to our events we have resurrected the Red course – traditionally a longer easier ‘orange’ standard course, which doesn’t feature regularly in orienteering events. We are even also calling it a fell/trail runners course on the event details – we knew that our traditional Easy course which can be 1-2km in length put some of the fell runners off, as it seemed too short.

Planners seem happy to add this extra easy course to their course planning so we plan on keeping this option in the future.

Marketing

We are having an increased social media presence on both Facebook and Instagram. A main feature of this is use of the app Canva – this has really helped us improve the look of our posts. We know that Instagram is used by younger members, so we are posting more there including 'stories' and videos.



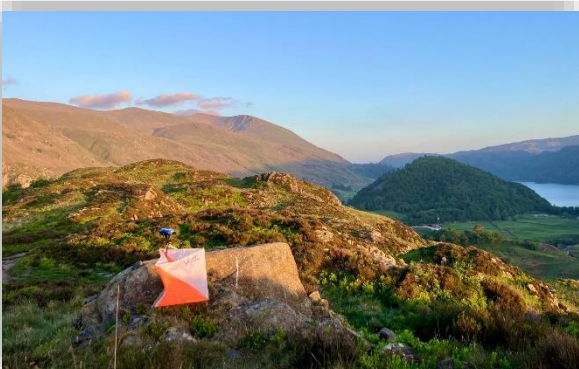
We have also created a WCOC WhatsApp group – this includes a Community group where we can announce events and other requests, a members group where anyone can post plus other subgroups which can be created for specific events including the recent Compass Sport Cup final.

As well as the cross marketing with Keswick AC on their social media and WhatsApp we are also sending out emails!

After each event we generate the results that evening (if possible) and send out a bulk email via Racesignup – very simple but this maintains interest with the results and Routegadget and provides a link to enter the following week's event.

Is it working and what's next?

We know more people are coming to our events, and our membership is the highest it has been since the current Membership officer has been in post.



Our next focus is enhancing the links with local running clubs to develop a successful WCOC Schools Events Programme.

