

► **FOREWARD-**
APRIL & MAY NEWS ... 1



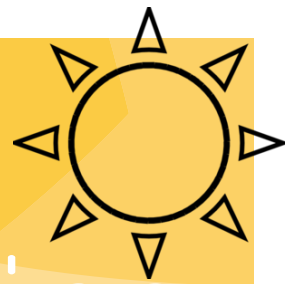
ISSUE 4



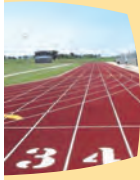
JUNE



2012



► **ATHLETE PROFILE-**
STEVEN LINTON..... 2



► **COACHING CORNER-**
PHYSICAL TRAINING FOR
PERFORMANCE
ATHLETES 3

NI Orienteering: COACHING *focus*

PROVIDING OUR COACHES AND ATHLETES WITH NEWS,
TIPS, REVIEWS AND MUCH MORE...

APRIL & MAY NEWS




Not only have we been spoilt with the number of orienteering races to choose from during the past two months we have also been able to orienteer in the sunshine which is very unusual in Northern Ireland! (the Magilligan Colour Event even had to have a water station added at the last minute).

At the end of April LVO held the second event of the Colour Series in Slievenagore which saw another 'Elwood double' with Alan winning the Blue course and son Andrew winning the Yellow. The father and son duo continued their good form in FERMO's Navar event making it a hat-trick of win for both of them.

The Blue course is providing the greatest excitement so far this year with our top


M16s (Paul Pruzina, Peter Meehan and Frazer Howe) all performing very well.

On the international stage Ciara Largey and Rosalind Hussey have represented Ireland in the European Championships and the World Championship. Jack Millar has been selected to run for Ireland in the European Youth Championships and Áine McCann will run in the Junior World Championships in Slovakia.

All three clubs have now started their summer evening events which are providing us all with the opportunity to orienteer throughout the summer months and will also, hopefully, help introduce our sport to newcomers. 

Coaching and Talent Development Officer's Report

In June NI Orienteering are sending a team of 17 young orienteers to the Junior Inter Regional Championships in Sandringham (Norfolk). With a maximum of 24 per team Northern Ireland have struggled to find enough juniors to fill our team, in particular on the girls side (only 3 girls). As a small region Northern Ireland has always found it difficult to bring new juniors into mainstream orienteering, however I feel that as an association we can all work together to come up with ways to encourage more children to see orienteering as the sport for them.

Although we do not have many young orienteers at the moment the juniors that we do have shown a great deal of dedication and commitment over the past several months. There has been a core group that come to all of the training and competition opportunities that have been available and I have seen a remarkable amount of improvement. In particular I am very excited about the future of 3 of our M16 boys (Peter Meehan, Frazer Howe and Paul Pruzina) for the first time that I can remember it is very difficult to predict who is going to come out on top in the result lists. They have shown that a lot can be achieved in a relatively short period of time and that the best way of improving is by taking advantage of all the coaching and training opportunities that are now available through NI Orienteering. 





Steven Linton INTERVIEW

As we are about to embark on the international competition season Coaching Focus has decided to interview an athlete this month instead of a coach; and who better than Northern Ireland's most experienced international orienteer, Steven Linton.

Growing up I remember you returning from World Championships and showing me your map. How many WOCs have you competed in?

I have been to 6 WOCs, 3 World Students and several World Cups. My first experience of WOC was in 1989 in Sweden and the last time I ran was in 2004 in also in Sweden.

What is your best memory from all the WOCs you have attended? What is your best result?

My best memories are from the training camps which we went to in preparation for the big events, particularly in Norway and along the French/Swiss border; living, eating and training in the forests and of course swimming in the lakes.

Prior to 1995 each country was allowed at least one runner in the final i.e. you didn't need to qualify as you do now. In Sweden I managed to be the best of the Irish bunch in the qualification races and so as a very inexperienced "kid" was sent to the "slaughter", all 18Km of it – I was lucky to finish at all (54th out of 57 runners).

The WOC final in the States was probably my most memorable race. Running as the underdog, only because Bill Edwards was sick on the day, I came 51st out of 86 runners beating quite a few people (Australians/Canadians) I didn't expect to. There was torrential rain all day long. The maps by Pat Dunlavy were amongst the best I have ever run on, if not the best.

If you could change one thing about your time as an international orienteer, what would it be?

My biggest disappointment looking back, is that I didn't deal with 'the big stage' very well and feel that I could have achieved better results by approaching the events more sensibly. I would love to be back on the start line again with the aim of enjoying the courses more.

What did you use to prepare for WOC? Did you do/ change anything in the months leading up to WOC? I think my main concern running up to the WOC's was getting on to the team! Really in hind-sight I should have been thinking beyond this.

I found that coming up to a big event, I needed to get my mind going through the processes of navigation. In the year coming up to my first WOC in Sweden, I was lucky enough to be living in the Lake District, and would plan a little course for myself on a local area, and just go out and run it mid-week. I also find now that, just doing a normal run with a map (with a course on it), is good.

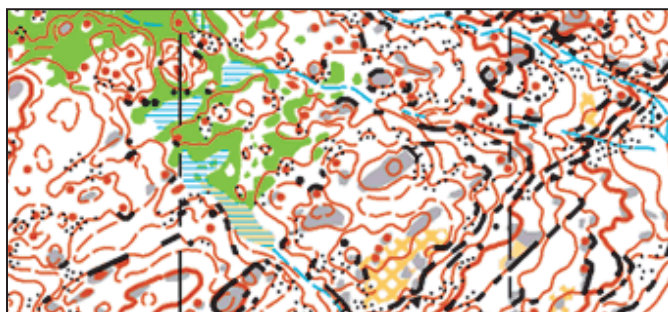
Did you run any non-orienteering races in preparation?

Before I left school I hardly knew that such a thing as fell running existed. That said, my first hill race was one that my Mum took me to near Glenariff. It was a long race with some navigation, so I managed to out-smart some of the regulars and

won a pair of socks for coming second. I didn't really start doing fell races (and some cross-country) regularly until I came back to Northern Ireland after university. Prior to that I would have gone out running onto whatever hills I found myself near just to explore. At university I did train regularly with the athletics club which was my first real insight into how to physically prepare.

After electronic punching began being used in the big races, it didn't take us in the Irish squad long to work out that we were generally fairly adequate navigators by comparison with the rest of the world, but that with the mistakes filtered out, the best guy's were simply covering the ground faster. So faster is good.

Out of all the countries you have orienteered in, which has your favourite terrain? Scotland isn't bad. However in saying that, everyone says that Scotland's best bits are just like Scandinavia. The style of mapping in Scotland is more familiar, so the bits of Scotland that are like Scandinavia are great. I find that I like terrain that is technical but that is clean enough underfoot to allow looking at the map regularly. I struggle with terrain, such as in many parts of Norway, where it is difficult to get looking at the map because the ground is so rough. Again, the maps of Harriman State Park in the USA were brilliant. The terrain there was undulating but rocky, deciduous and reasonably clean underfoot.



What advice would you give any young orienteer that hopes to compete at an international level?

I reckon that you have got to get yourself to the start line really looking forward to the course ahead. Your approach has got to be such that anything you experience on the way to the start line does not deflect your goal. In the qualification races at the WOC in Aberdeen I can remember going to the start line but unbelievably had not realised that 2 people started at once. I was quite calm and looking forward to the race until the guy beside me raced off at twice my speed. I forgot "my approach" completely and made a mess of the first few controls, only to find when I finished that the same guy finished well after me.

In Northern Ireland we often make the excuse that we don't have enough good terrain to train on. What would you say to this? How did you manage to get to the level you did while living in NI? How can we make the best out of the terrain we have? Yes, you are right, we have limited terrain. However we do have some excellent terrain, it is just that it is in small pockets – for example: Binevenagh, Magilligan, Roe Valley Country park, Cross Murrin, Gortalughany, Cave Hill, Castlewellan, The Rowans. Some parts of these areas are world class. I would like to see funding being made available for the mapping of some specific areas just for the purposes of training – they don't need to be big! I can think of some small, as yet unmapped areas, that would be excellent for training. I recall 'Breasty Haw', an area once mapped by the British Squad just for training – now known as Grisdale.

Steven has certainly been an inspiration to me growing up and I would like to thank him for all the advice he has given me over the years. I hope it is not too long before another Linton is competing in WOC. ▀

COACHING CORNER

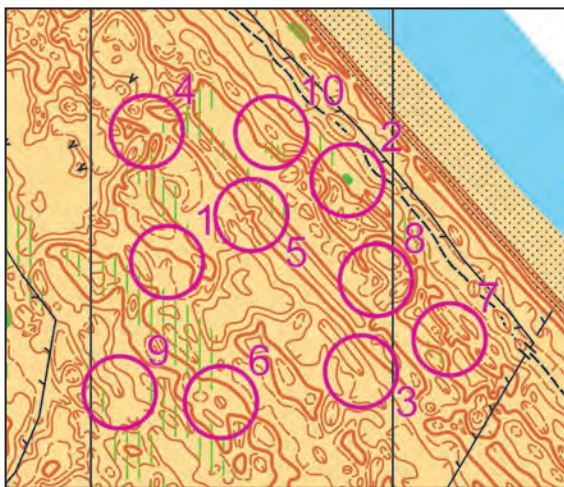


ARMCHAIR TRAINING FOR ORIENTEERS

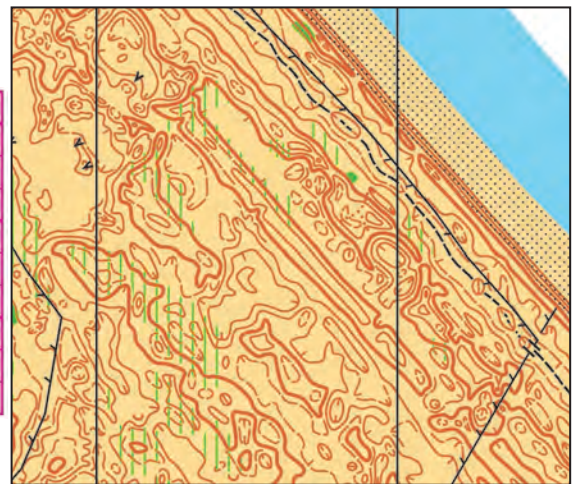
We often hear the term ‘armchair orienteering’, but what does it mean? And how do we do it? My interpretation of armchair orienteering is anything that can be done from home that potentially leads to improved orienteering technique. I would class marking and analysing routes as armchair orienteering in its simplest of forms. However with a little imagination we can come up many different ways to armchair orienteer.

Below are a few examples I have used over the years:

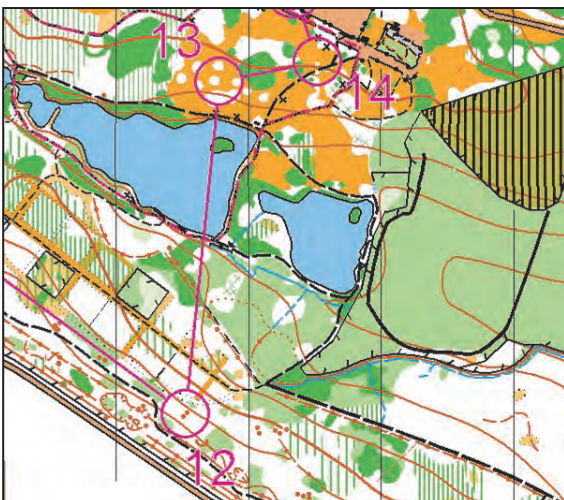
MAP MEMORY Study the map on the left for 45 seconds and then cover it up before attempting to draw as many controls as possible onto the map on the right. Exercises like this are easy to replicate, for example after any race find a blank map of the area and try to re-draw your course from memory.



1	∩		
2	⊗		
3	○		○
4	∩		∩
5	∩		
6	○		
7	∩		
8	○		
9	○		○
10	○		



SIMPLIFICATION Study leg 12-13 below for 30 seconds then cover the map and attempt to draw a simplified version of the map only including features that you would use to navigate to control 13. By simplifying legs you will be able to store more (necessary) information about the leg from each glance at the map. ◀




RDO UP-DATE:

HELEN BAXTER



LVO's WEE series is now up and running. They ran the 101st WEE series in June! There have been some changes over the years - this year has seen the introduction of coaches at as many of the events as possible to help newcomers get

started. This is working really well but there is always room for more volunteers and it is an easy way to get into coaching. The coach meets newcomers


and beginners at Registration and takes them through the basics of setting the map and understanding the colours and symbols; they can have access to the Short course map before they start and use it to look at the techniques to use when taking part. This approach is really appreciated by the participants and adds to the friendly aspect of the club - at least 1/3 of the participants are not club members and we hope that this may go some way to encouraging them to join. The Coach gets a late run as there is usually someone else to chat to the beginners when they finish. 

ARDO UP-DATE:

MARK HUDSON



Over the past couple of months I have been busy delivering coaching sessions at various schools in both FERMO and NWOC areas as these schools prepare for the NI Schools Championships in June. Easter saw the establishment of a NI Orienteering coaching programme and we will develop this further in the summer months when there will be coaching sessions held in July at various locations throughout the province. Over the next couple of months I will also be working on introducing a new concept to the

the orienteering calendar working in conjunction with Causeway Coast Adventure Racers - the concept of the event will be the following - you will have 5 hours to visit as many points (controls) as you can. Some can only be collected by mountain bike others by foot. Start anytime from 9.30 to 10.30 electing to run or cycle first. At the start you will be given a list of control descriptions each assigned a value. After 5hrs penalties will be incurred - massive score event so if you wish to be involved you may wish to beg borrow or steal a mountain bike over the summer months!! 



ONE FOR YOUR DIARY...

JUNE

WEDNESDAYS	WEE	LVO	See LVO website for details
THURSDAYS	TEE	NWOC	See NWOC website for details
Fri 15th JUN	Urban Race	LVO	Newcastle
Sat 16th JUN	Colour Series 5	LVO	Meelmore
Sun 17th JUN	LVO Middle Champs	LVO	Tollymore

JULY

TUESDAYS	TES	FERMO	See FERMO website for details
WEDNESDAYS	WEE	LVO	See LVO website for details
THURSDAYS	TEE	NWOC	See NWOC website for details



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SCHOOLS ORIENTEERING

Do your children go to Primary School? Have you ever considered starting an after-schools orienteering club?

This is not as daunting as it might sound and it is an ideal way to spread our knowledge of orienteering to a wider audience.

Recently Violet Linton decided to start an orienteering club in her daughters' school, Kilross Primary in Tobermore.

She ran a 5 week program for 22 children from P4 to P7. The children took part in simple orienteering exercises to teach them the basic skills such as map symbol relays and score events. Violet has found that children of this age can easily grasp the fundamental skills of orienteering and have great fun in the process.

Alan Elwood (another orienteering parent) has also recently started an after school club in his son Andrew's school, Riverdale Primary. Their club ended with them all competing in a schools' competition in Oakfield Glen (Carrickfergus) organised by the Northern Ireland Schools Orienteering Association.

Throughout the year NI Orienteering run several BOF Teaching Orienteering courses which provide teachers (or parents) with the skills needed to introduce orienteering to primary children. However I would suggest that with a bit of enthusiasm most regular orienteers would be well equipped to start a simple club for primary school children. If you would like any advice on this do not hesitate to contact Helen Baxter, Mark Hudson or myself (Allan Bogle). 