

Junior world orienteering championships

On the 25th of June I flew out to Karlskrona Sweden to compete in the junior world orienteering championships (JWOC). With quite a busy schedule we had flown out a few days early so i could get some experience in similar terrain to the racing areas and learn how to navigate in Sweden. The schedule involved a sprint on the 29th, sprint relay on the 30th, forest long distance on the 1st, rest day on the 2nd, middle distance on the 3rd and forest relay on the 4th. JWOC was my debut for Great Britain as id never competed internationally for the country before, so I'd put a lot of pressure on myself and was both nervous and very excited. Over the past few months leading up to the race id done a lot of preparation at training camps and spent a lot of time planning courses and exploring the sprint map on google maps.

After 4 days of preparation in Sweden, it was time for the first event, the sprint. As a more running focused orienteer, sprint is my stronger event but as this was my GB debut nerves were high. The day before the race, start times are given out with everyone staggered 2 minutes apart, on the day we are all taken into quarantine without electronic devices so no one can watch the broadcast or the GPS tracking. I had a late start, so it was a long few hours sitting around. When it was my turn to start, it was like walking out into a movie scene. You walk out of a white tent and suddenly there are cameras and sponsor names everywhere. My sprint didn't start how I wanted as due to nerves I made mistakes and misses losing over a minute in the first 5 controls. After that I got my head in the right place and from there I was gaining places to finish in 65th, a run I know I can improve on a lot in future.



Next was the sprint relay, I was lucky enough to be selected to run second leg for the GB first team, a team consists of 2 girls running legs 1 and 4 and 2 boys running legs 2 and 3. I had more success in this as the navigation was slightly easier and it suited my faster running style. I ended up placing 9th on my leg with the team placing 14th nation.

After this the forest events begin, the first of which being the long distance. I knew I was going to have a hard time in the Swedish forests as a young athlete with not as much experience in Scandinavian terrain. I set off making a few smaller mistakes early on and ended up overcooking myself and

becoming tired very early on. along with me losing my watch in the forest this led to me making the decision to retire as to preserve my body for the rest of the week.



After a rest day it was time for the middle distance, The terrain was quite unique and very difficult but really rewarding. Once again, I didn't have the navigational speed for the difficulty of the area but still a lot of positives from the day and a great experience.



Finally, it was time for the forest relay. In the same terrain as the middle distance, I knew it was going to be difficult. I was running 3rd leg and was hoping I would be sent out with a pack of a few other runners but sadly it was not to be and had to run virtually all the race alone. I had a decent run, and it was a great day to finish off an amazing experience.

All in all, I learnt a lot from this experience. Although my results were mixed, I was able to spend a lot of time with some very good orienteers and learn and understand their race process which has helped me with my own race preparations. It's nice to have some experience under my shoulders on an international scene so hopefully more to come!

Finally thank you to all the people who have helped me get here, my coaches, friends and family and the John Taylor foundation for helping me fund this experience.

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