

European Round up

NSW on the move

When Sappa Bulga feels like home, you know every rock in Carwell's Labyrinth, and South Australia doesn't feel that far away when you



feel like a Sunday run, it is time to head north and try something new. Over 100 Australians, a fifth of which were from NSW, did exactly that this winter, and travelled to the Northern Hemisphere to participate in a glittering array of orienteering carnivals across Europe taking in Hungary, Finland, France (WOC), Scotland, Austria, Switzerland and Sweden. Some attended only one representing Australia in the World Masters Orienteering Championships based around Pecs in Hungary, others picked another for fun, and a small number went to more.

The Austrian 6 days caught the eye of some of the WMOC

leg strength was tested on the moist spongy ground unlike the dry Australian terrain which is easier to spring about on. Some good results here for the Australians included a 3rd placing for Jan Hardy W55 Day 6, and Valerie Brammall W65 Day 3, with Uringa's Ian McKenzie M60 in 15th on Day 1. Dick Ogilvie had a fistful of top ten places from the Austrian which put him in good form when he continued on to the O-Ringen in northern Sweden.

'Every orienteer should aspire to the O-Ringen at least once in their orienteering career,' says Dick. With a camping ground the size of an airfield catering to 7000 orienteers the sheer

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The sound of no cow bells ringing in Switzerland



Treeless orienteering in Switzerland

competitors as they headed back into central Europe. Smaller than the WMOC, it hosts about 800 runners and feels more like an Australian event, though the terrain is somewhat different. Sub-alpine, the courses still took in a significant amount of climb and

logistics of the O-Ringen are mind boggling. Buses are laid on from camp to starts, beginning at 7am and ferrying runners continuously until late afternoon. Walks to the starts are long, up to 3km, as there are multiple starts to cope with the volume of competitors. 'Of all

the races I went to this season, the O-Ringen was the toughest. The terrain was hugely difficult and it took a while to get your eye in, as even white areas on the map were rocky,' explains Dick. Dick had a good set of

results notwithstanding, with a best result of 57th but the champion of the match for Australia was Susanne Casanova of Top End Orienteers with a 6th place on day 5, and coming 10th overall in W35. Josh Blatchford was racing, fresh from the JWOC, whilst Julian Dent was there to prepare for the World Orienteering Championships in late August.

Some of the other WOC competitors chose the Swiss O week in Flims to sharpen up their skills and accustomise themselves to the European terrain. Simon Uppill, a team member who comes from South Australia, had some confidence boosting results, his best 32nd on Day 5, with Robbie Preston,

the other NSW representative on the WOC team, finding the week's races helpful for practising running at altitude. Day 3 was on the Vorab Glacier which required a trip on 2 gondolas and a cable car to get to the starts at Vorab 2600m. Starting on the edge of a glacier, the race was over rocky moraine, with small lakes, snow patches, and boulders; Robbie described it as a 'highlight of the week'. World No 2 Daniel Hubmann was competing and running well but it was fellow Swiss Elite Matthias Merz also running on home territory that Robbie Preston picked out as the man to watch. Merz won Day 1&2 ahead of Daniel and Robbie reported that on the form



Tent bedlam at the Scottish Six Days

The Orienteering Association of NSW acknowledges the support of



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Merz was showing he could threaten the World Champion, Thierry Guergiou, in the WOC. 'If Thierry makes a mistake in WOC, Merz will punish him.'

Those who didn't go to the Swiss O Week found themselves at the Scottish 6 Days near Oban, which was running concurrently with the Swiss event. The Scottish 6 Days competition is unusual in that it is based on the best 4 results from 6, with the scores based on finishing position in each race, the competitor with the lowest score for their best 4 events being the winner.

Contacts made at the last NSW Christmas 5 days with British club, North Gloucester Orienteering Club, resulted in the Australians being lent a club tent to hide their belongings from wind, rain, sun and midges. Over 30 Australians were running at the 6 days which tested them on terrain ranging from open moorland and oak woodland, to beaches, birch, bracken and gorse thicket. Day 1 map was based around two ruined castles Dunollie & Dunstaffnage and had typical Scottish vegetation of bracken and gorse growing over intricate contour detail.

Day 2 saw competitors head north west of Oban to compete on the Achnacloch Estate which

is Gaelic for "field of stones", and home of one of the most important herds of Highland cattle. The assembly area was normally the home of Alasdair Mhor of Roisbheinn, a fine pedigree bull, but he had been moved elsewhere, so the only problems facing the competitors were of their own making.

All courses started out traversing the tussocks, marshes and bogs, before making their way to an area of mature pine. Amongst the Australians who managed to come to terms with the terrain and the course planner, there were some great results; SHOO's John Hodsdon was 9th in M70L, Tintookies' Tony Radford was 11th in M60L, Grace Crane 3rd in W21E, Waggaroos Debbie Davey was 14th in W50L and SHOO's Val Hodsdon was 20th in W60L closely followed by NCN's Toy Martin in 21st. The best combined result for NSW of the match was Judith Hay of Bennelong Northside Orienteers, clearly well recovered from her accident at the QB3 and in sparkling form taking 6th place in W60S.

Many of these European events are using technology to enhance the spectator experience. The Scottish 6 day organisers provided wifi, and on Day 3 an enormous articulated truck was wheeled into the assembly area which had a magical pop-up top showing a massive TV screen which they had borrowed from Scottish Racing. This was used to display a live feed from a TV camera out on the courses and also live feeds from GPS trackers fitted to the elites. Exciting news just in from Orienteering Australia is that this method of bringing the heat of the competition to spectators in the Assembly arena is going to be at the Oceania carnival!



North Gloucester Club provides logistic support

Maggie Jones
 ONSW Communications
 Officer

Presidents Report. . .

While this newsletter will not reach you until after the event, I hope that all who competed in this year's State Middle and Long Distance Championships, once again held out west near Lithgow, had an enjoyable run and achieved your own goals from the events. It was good to see Gardiners Gap and Rydal being used again after a long layoff.

For the recently selected NSW Schools Team the State Championship events were probably their last opportunity to compete in the bush prior to this year's Australian Schools Championships which will be held this year near Wagga. We wish the team and their managers Karen and Russell Blatchford good luck in this year's competition. The Association is very fortunate to have Karen and Russell as the Schools Team managers, and Nick Dent as their coach, and we thank the three of them for their continued support of junior orienteering in NSW. I hope that all NSW orienteers attending this year's Oceania Carnival will give the team, the managers, the coach and the organising Waggaroos club their full

support during the two days of the Schools competition.

With the State Championships now behind us, and most NSW orienteers looking forward to the Oceania Carnival in early October, it won't be long before the Sydney Summer Series of urban orienteering is once again upon us.

As some of you will already know, this year sees the Association expanding the "Wednesday night" score format into the Southern and Western regions of Sydney. The Southern Spring Series will commence shortly after the regular SSS (Sydney Summer Series) in early November with 5 events taking place on a Tuesday evening using the same 45 minute score format as the SSS, and the Western Series will commence in the new year on a Sunday morning. It is planned that all three series will use SportIdent timing for all events, so those of you who have not yet invested in your own stick (or "dibber" as they are known in the UK), might want to seriously consider purchasing your own. The Association is planning a promotion of SI sticks during the

first month of the SSS when they will be on sale at a special offer price. More details on how you can get a stick will appear on the Association website and in its weekly bulletin in the near future. ONSW is fortunate to have secured funding from the Australian Sports Commission's Participation Grant to enable it to expand urban orienteering into these two regions of Sydney, and the Association's plans would not have been possible without the continued support of Ross Barr, who not only liaised with clubs to establish the SSS calendar, but also persuaded them and the Illawarra Kareelah club to support the expansion into Southern Sydney. Thank you Ross, your continued support and enthusiasm is greatly appreciated by the Association and its members, and I hope that like myself the regular SSS devotees will also be looking forward to navigating around the parks and streets in these new-to-orienteering areas of Sydney.

Paul Prudhoe
 ONSW President



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Tending the little green shoots

A committed orienteer has a long life in the sport. From the earliest adventures, chasing a piece of string through the undergrowth, to the excitement and challenge of races aimed at school aged children, through the years of long courses, and out to the cut throat competition of wily age groupers, an orienteer introduced early could have 90 years of racing. Looking after the children that come along to orienteering is important in so many ways. Youngsters coming into the sport through junior focussed activities will bring adults with them. Adults already in the sport but in their child rearing years will stay if their children find orienteering events great places to be. Happy Juniors = Happy Adults = Happy Future for Orienteering. Juniors (under 18s) make up over a quarter (26 %) of our members so what are we doing with our juniors to make them feel welcome, and part of this sporting community?

Falling Trend in Junior Member Numbers

Junior member numbers have reflected the NSW trend of children's falling participation in organised sport over recent years, falling 9% over the period 2003 to 2009 (318:288) and still further in 2010 (266). To combat this, initiatives to encourage juniors orienteers have been increasing around the State, some building on tried and tested approaches, and others trying out new methods of engagement. Spear heading some of the new ways is Barbara Hill, Promotions Officer on the NSW Executive. In a few short years she has established an in-house orienteering club at North Sydney Boys School, Falcon-O, set up a holiday race for juniors in Sydney Olympic Park called 'The Space Race' and established the Junior League competition in Sydney. The Junior League has been running for three years now and piggy backs on club events over the winter months. Children can compete individually but also as part of a team. It is an efficient

way of setting up a league of events which are child appropriate, and has the added advantage that adults who come in support can also get a run. Its growth has been hampered by the fact that for most schools, orienteering is not offered either as part of the curriculum or as an extra mural activity. Juniors who compete in the League come from the existing club memberships and run as club teams; this allows juniors to access club coaching opportunities. This approach also avoids some early problems encountered around insurance when the team were run on school lines, where the children didn't technically have permission to represent the school as they were not sanctioned races under GPS, CIS or CAS. The series has also attracted a few Scout groups who have asked that a Scout/Cub category or event be considered.

Schools Regional Championships

Schools are being engaged through the Regional Championships which precede the NSW Schools Championships.

Children involved in organised sport in NSW (age 5-14yrs)

2003 548,300 62.3% of all children in NSW
2009 535,600 60.3% of all children in NSW

Some of these, such as the Hunter Valley and South West Championships have been running for many years, but others have been added with this year seeing an inaugural Sydney North race held at St Ives. In all there are five regional races conducted by the Schools Sports Units but organised by the local clubs on their behalf: Sydney West (Ted Mulherin), Sydney South West (Sandra Stewart), Hunter Region (Colin Bailey), Sydney North (Barbara Hill), and Armidale (Maurice Anker) attracting between them some 1500 students. This is a number improving every year, but without the wholehearted support of the Schools Sports

Unit the championships stall; they will only conduct races if numbers include public school students. The proposed new championship in Wagga Wagga fell foul of this; with public schools interested but insufficiently organised only an independent school was ready to compete. The event has been postponed until next year, when the Association is hoping that advance notice and increased contacts with the schools will encourage already busy teachers to prioritise orienteering.

After Schools Community Programmes

Schools have also been involved through the Active After Schools Community programmes. These programmes are designed to involve students in sports who would not otherwise be active. Students targeted are in Yr5&6 and the programme supports 20 children with each coach. A set of coaching materials has been developed to support this work and the courses run for around 7 weeks. An event is organised in the final week, where parents are invited and families are given information about the

sport, local club, coming events and presented with a free entry voucher. Six programmes have been running in northern Sydney, on the Central Coast and around Newcastle this year. The reaction of the orienteering coaches to this initiative is mixed; where the AASC programme is run by the school there is scope to target the appropriate age group but where the AASC is part of the after-school care there is a wider age range which has led to some issues in terms of matching age group to the activity. In one instance 40 infant schoolers were brought to a session with 2 coaches; this issue has been acknowledged and the AASC are working on this with the

Association. One of the key elements of the programme for the Australian Sports Commission is that interested students are linked into events and club members. Carolyn Rigby and Maria Orr have been very busy with this program in the Hunter Valley and are having some success in getting children, exposed to orienteering through this programme, along to Newcastle club events.

In addition to their work with the AASC Development Officers are also actively responding to schools requests for one-off days at school or the development of programmes for schools to deliver. These can take the form of direct coaching for students, or training teachers to Level 0 coaching standards. One such example is the annual orienteering event which Lyn Malmgron coordinates for Barker College students in the Lithgow area.

Some senior schools have encouraged their students to participate in orienteering as part of their school sport, but these are in the minority and we are not seeing many of these students at the Sunday events, or at the Junior League. Barbara Hill and Airdrie Long of Garingal have been instrumental in promoting orienteering at North Sydney Boys High School, which has its own in-school club, Falcon O. Private school Knox Grammar also holds orienteering events for their boys, but with so many children going on outward bound camps with schools, it is surprising there are not more students coming through to the club level sport.

Is the best day Saturday or Sunday?

This could be due to the fact that the majority of events run on a Sunday and are not easily included in the selection of school sports which traditionally happen on Saturdays. Running the Junior League on a Saturday and making it a sanctioned Saturday event in the CIS, CAS, GPS series, however, might extinguish the races for those whose schools do not adopt

orienteering and insist on rugby or football. An ongoing conundrum for Promotions Exec Barbara Hill.

Once juniors have joined a club, the coaching available around the State depends on the particular club. Basil Baldwin of Goldseekers holds a coaching session before each club event, focussing on a particular technique, such as start procedure, thumbing the map, and reading contour. Newcastle has coaching sessions aimed at specific levels skills run by Geoff Todkill. Garingal and Uringa training which is open to all club members, encourages juniors to participate and learn, and there are adhoc training sessions after events such as the Metro League where juniors can have a coach walk them around the more technical courses.

National Schools championships

Juniors of senior school age who race regularly at bush events and show promise at Orange level are invited to Junior Squad training camps. This is a feeder group to the NSW Squad and Team which contests the National Schools Championships in spring each year. Karen and Russell Blatchford are team managers, with Nick Dent as Head coach. The camps are well attended and help juniors develop both their orienteering technique and their sense of community across the state with other orienteering club juniors. Juniors are introduced to online resources such as Routegadget and WinSplits and social media,

such as facebook and Attackpoint, giving them opportunities to communicate and train between camps, setting courses for each other on line and discussing technique.

The youngest runners are not being neglected. Little Foot is the junior part of Big Foot for children between 7 and 10 years old and has been running since around 2006. More a community than a training group Little Foots have fun together holding "Refreshment Stores" at Big Foot events and participating in both foot and mountain bike orienteering events. ONSW is mirroring this initiative, with the launch of the Wildfires, the sub-junior group of orienteers from 7-12 years old, which will give them their own club tent at big events, branded T-Shirts and a series of specific Wildfires events to encourage the community of youngsters to play and learn together.

Nurturing the youngest

Keeping children happy at the big events is getting easier as more and more families are joining and coming along, and with more children meeting each other, and getting a chance to play in the forest a community of youngsters is developing. Cath Chalmers has championed a 'bring back string courses' initiative this year which has been very popular, not only amongst the youngest runners but also the older children who have been managing the running of the courses once they have been set up. Ewan Shingler (Big

Our competition? Top 10 sports for children in NSW 2009		2003	2009
1	Swimming	162,000	158,000
2	Soccer	185,000	157,000
3	Netball	82,400	66,700
4	Tennis	67,800	62,400
5	Rugby League	49,200	59,100
6	Martial Arts	32,700	53,900
7	Cricket	43,700	39,900
8	Gymnastics	27,100	37,500
9	Athletics, track and field	35,200	31,600
10	Soccer (indoor)	Not available	30,900

Foot), Sophie Jones, Jared McKenna (Uringa) and Joanna Hill (Garingal) have been showing the way in interclub co-operation acting as starters and guardians of the lolly jar. Happy children are happy parents and with 94% of our young members being part of club family membership it is important to recognise the importance of keeping parents happy too. Parents need to find it easy to bring children along and be confident that those children will enjoy their time at an orienteering event. One element being discussed at Association level is the focus which is given to the Blue and Green courses at State League races. Problems have arisen with these courses, which are notoriously difficult to set on some of the bush maps the major events use, and were felt keenly at a couple of the State League events this year. Issues with excessive distance to the starts, or starts which are too far away from the adult courses, putting pressure on split start timings in small fields of

competitors have been the biggest bones of contention. Representations to the Association have been made and Gordon Wilson is encouraging reviews of State League events as well as greater discussion around event management and course setting within the NSW orienteering community.

Is it possible to reverse the trends?

All this represents a massive effort to reverse the trends we are seeing in memberships amongst the youngest orienteers, and there is anecdotal evidence already that this is working with families being positively encouraged to come along to events. The Executive Board will be watching the junior members' numbers with great interest to see if all this cultivation is helping to grow our sport.

Maggie Jones
ONSW Communications
Officer

Christmas 5 Days 2011



Tuesday 27th Dec - Saturday 31st December
Newcastle / Central Coast Region, NSW

Five events and five different formats:
Sprint Distance, Middle Distance, Long Distance, Mass Start, Loops

Organised by the NSW Junior Orienteering Squad
All courses set by NSW Juniors
Online entry and event details: corienteering.org
Enquires: nickdent7@gmail.com

RESULTS

Results for all events in NSW
can be found online.

For State League, Metro
League and MTBO Super Series
results go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/4yhtbhf>

For results from club events
visit the organising club
website.

Find club details via the
Clubs page on the
Orienteering NSW Website:
www.nsw.orienteering.asn.au/clubs/