

HUNTER VALLEY HOSTS NSW JUNIOR TRAINING SQUAD

Seventeen members of the 2008 NSW Junior Training Squad boarded a bus for Tocal Agricultural College at the conclusion of the State League 3/4 weekend. The first training camp for 2008 beckoned.

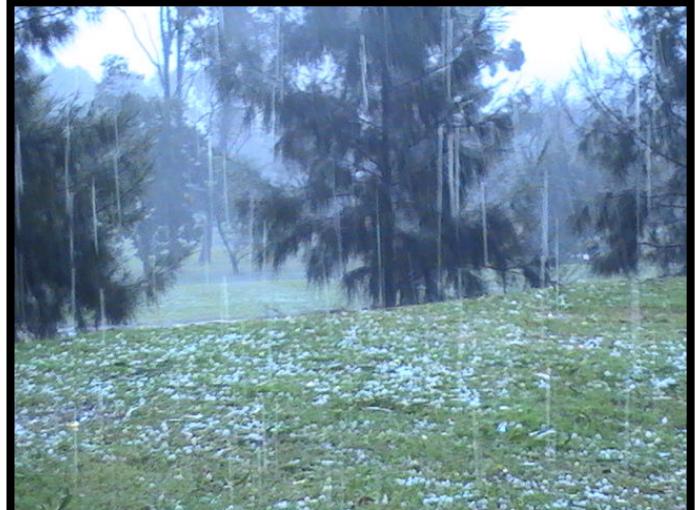
At the end of each day, squad members were given the responsibility of contributing to a camp report. Very at home on a lap top, and equally as comfortable talking about the challenges confronted on each day of an intensive training camp, this combined effort report has been posted for your unrivalled reading pleasure!

Enjoy.



Day 1:

After SL4 event at 'The Chimney' we headed off to Tocal Agricultural College where we were staying for the next week. Phoebe Dent from the 'Stingers' also joined us. We unloaded our bags to discover the accommodation was WAY better than the Hut. Not long after, there was a huge hail storm and we were stuck inside for the wait for tea. The food was AWSOME, much better than what we expected and way better than Dubbo last year! After we had eaten tea we played a few games in the hall and enjoyed the student recreation room before heading off to bed. None of us realised that coach Mark arrived some time after 10:00 pm, having driven home to Sydney following his run earlier in the day – it was great to have him with us for the first three days of the camp.



Day 2:

We were allowed to sleep in until 8:00 and then we got up to have breakfast and make our lunch. We departed at 9:30 to go to the 'Decapitated Poppethead' map where we were paired up to run a course together with a shadower. Phoebe and Mark had the controls in place by the time we arrived. Before we ran our courses we did a team warm up and stretch and then found out who our partners were.

The aim of the run was to make sure we had a plan and to discuss our route choice and attack points with our partner. Tom's quote: "It was a very mentally exhausting day. I thought so much today!!" We all returned happily from our run to each eat our poorly, self made bread rolls. After that was done we drove to 'Poppethead Park' where we played a game of 'Wana' (continuous cricket). The Purple team defeated the Pink team by just one run. On the way home we stopped at the shopping centre to stock up on lollies and we just got back in time for tea.

After dinner, and when everyone was showered, Mark gave a power point presentation that he had prepared. It focused on helping us improve our Orienteering PROCESS, and in particular on simplifying the map and our routes. Russell made us aware of 'Attack Point' as a way to keep informed on training logs and performances of other orienteers, and perhaps as a way to log our own training. Phoebe was very happy to share her training log as an example.

Day 3:

Today was skills day, or lack there of. It started off with the juniors doing map memory courses. We all managed to get where we were meant to, without *much* difficulty. After 16 controls of brain torture, we were all but exhausted. And, guess what, more running was to follow. Everyone ran a 9 control score course, with letters instead of numbers. The letters were to form a word; 'memorises', and a little cheating allowed everyone to unveil the word. The results for the competition: a random draw and the first correct entry was Huon's, second was Boahdan – both receiving a welcome block of chocolate!



Lunch was a welcome relief before plunging straight back into the bush. For the juniors, this was a 2.6km timed run. The boys amazingly didn't beat all of us girls, WOW. Overall, the juniors learnt a lot from today, most of all the skill of running without looking at the map so often – we were moving much quicker! After the l.o.o.o.ng trip back, everyone showered and relaxed before dinner. After dinner comes the beautiful relaxation time, followed by our much needed beauty sleep.

The seniors had a heavy emphasis on short bush intervals which required fast orienteering. All were told at the beginning that all but a few main tracks were taken off the map, which made a strong emphasis on using the contours. We were taken away from the juniors to the top of a hill to begin our fitness training. This consisted of several quick loops of about 1km in length. These courses produced very fast times with about 15 minutes allowed for recovery in between. These courses began to tire the seniors quite quickly, with Rob having to pull out after 1 loop because of a badly sprained ankle, which broke his heart as he had to rest in the bus while his fellow seniors smashed themselves!

After this, we proceeded on to map memory, which the juniors had already completed. This lead to general confusion as we got halfway round and became confused at another colour coded map change and we proceeded to sit down and wait for someone to come along. After 15 mins, we realised that we needed to continue on and eventually we found Karen and Russell at the correct finish control, who were wondering where all the seniors had disappeared to! After this we continued on to the same score course as the juniors, who were waiting to help us cheat or unscramble the letters at the finish.

After our own pre-prepared lunches and a small well earned rest, we travelled the short distance to the second map called 'Wattle Ponds Road'. Here the seniors continued on their tiring interval extravaganza! The tracks here were also taken off, and it became a challenging slog up the larger hills at the end of the day. After picking out many grass seeds, and saying farewell to Phoebe, we travelled back to our luxury accommodation where we showered, rested and ate dinner. Most seniors took the opportunity to rest up, except for Rob, who only had to rest his dodgy ankle. Some had to rest bruises from continuously falling over at high speed (Tom). Pretty sure we can still feel the tremors in the ground from those falls! Both the seniors and juniors are now participating in some fun games organised by Josh and Tamara. Soon we will all be sleeping, we hope, to rest up for the strenuous line courses tomorrow.

Many thanks to Newcastle members Chris, Helen and Louis Welbourne, and club legend Denis Lyons, for placing controls, on both maps, from 8:00 am in the morning – hope they enjoyed the chocolates.



Day 4

Today was the day of the 'Camp Long-Distance Champs', everyone was excited. Not only was there the honour of being crowned champion but the winner also got a ticket for 2 into the prestigious 'Reward's Room'. We arrived at the map (Shotgun Avenue) at about 10:30 in the morning, Rob Preston and Geoff Todkill from the Newcastle club had put the controls out for us, and they were thanked by Boahdan and Alex M with a card and a box of chocolates each.



Courses commenced at 11, after a short pep talk by Mark about the terrain. Josh, Michele and Matthew started first on the Long Red, Short Red and Orange courses respectively. The Long Red was a challenging 6.6 km (23 controls!), the Short Red ran the 4.1 km second loop of the Long Red, and the Orange was 3.8 km. The Long Red was run by most of the senior boys and Emily, with Rob recording splits at control 10 (due to his injured ankle.) The Short Red was run by the junior boys, Huon and Tamara. The junior girls ran the Orange.



Competitors found the Orange course easy, saying that there was obvious route choices and that the processes and skills from the previous 2 days contributed to their success. Nicola won with a time of 37:21. The Short Red course was physically strenuous although the navigation was relatively easy, especially with the additional coaching over the camp. Glen won in a time of 44:07. The Long Red was initially unproblematic but after the split the fatigue set in with navigation and running speed going downhill. Josh won the split (17:13) and won the course in 44:18. Josh Roberts competed in the Long Red and posted a competitive time of 58:53, coming in second.

Entry to the Rewards Room was gained by Josh B, who also was allowed to nominate two people to be 'slaves', after his winning margin of 14 minutes. Josh took Tamara into the Room (no surprises there) and he enslaved his sister (Nicola) and Glen, giving them tasks such as removing contact lenses (not completed) and assisting Josh up the stairs. After that we went to the park and had a play on the equipment while Mark went over the courses, unfortunately, he then had to return Sydney. Although he had taught us much in the few days he was here, it was time to say goodbye.

Next it was time for a trip to the shops to stock up on supplies and have a snack. After this we returned to the cabins for a shower, well earned rest and a very 'interesting' game of Catching Features. After dinner we returned to the cabin to prepare for the film ('Drillbit Taylor') that we were scheduled to see in Maitland at 8:30.

Day 5

After a nice relaxing night at the movies and good sleep everybody was pumped for the park O. It began with warm up drills in the hall testing everyone's coordination before setting off to Maitland Park for some intense sprint orienteering intervals. The activity consisted of 4 short sprint courses ranging from 500m to about 1km with teams of 2 each running all 4 courses in different orders. Josh and Tamara (team Jozza) dominated early in Div B only to lose it in the end to Rob and Alex M (who had earlier slipped over in excitement at the





map box) due to an unlucky course order. Div A was won by a speedy Alex O and Nicola. Lunch and a game of netball followed. Despite being exhausted somehow everyone managed to participate in the game with only a few minor injuries when Tom and Huon had a collision resulting in them both lying on the ground.

The squad then headed to Walka Water Works where they were put through what was to become a gruelling race after the morning's session. There were 3 courses on offer, the longest of which contained 26 controls (almost more than can fit on a

control card).

The giant mega fauna sized kangaroos proved to be no match for anyone. Meanwhile Josh B was busy breaking the world land speed record and Rob was attempting to do a runner back to Orange along the train line to escape tomorrow's 'beep test'. Just as the pain and burning of muscles was beginning to subside, a game of skins vs. shirts soccer was fired up. "Gimme a T!" cried Tamara's personal cheer squad, which unfortunately had little effect as she was seen as one of the least valuable players by both her teammates and the opposition!

Maria Orr, Central Coast Orienteers, and Greg and Kerry Bacon from the Newcastle club had given their time to-day to place controls, along with Robert Preston once again. We hope they enjoyed their chocolates.



Back to the ranch again for hot showers and a welcome dinner consisting of deep fried seafood or a pie. Many of us healthier types feeling a little worse for wear after the greasy goodness! A hearty round of pink versus purple activities soon had us feeling back on top. Both teams came away victors in our amended versions of softball and cricket.

Then it was time for premiere extraordinaire of the 2008 NSW juniors camp movie. Lots of laughs all round (yay - they equal sit-ups- abs of steel here we come!). Following a short prize giving ceremony where the winners of today's various activities received some yummy treats it was back to our cottages for a little bit of Bavarian or cheesecake and bed.



Day 6:

Today everyone was lucky enough to be able to sleep in longer but the excitement of the day got everyone up at the normal, early time of 8:00. Today was the last day of the camp and as a reward for doing so well we only had to do one activity. However that activity was 'the beep test'. The 'beep test' was to commence at about 10:00 and before we headed over to the hall for it, we had a 'lovely' group photo.

For the beep test everyone was expected to try and get to at least the 80th percentile for their age but being a very energetic, fit squad some of us were motivated enough to get to 90th, at which stage we had to stop. After we had a little break and a drink we started doing some resistance / agility work. First the girls started with their hand weights and the boys did work on the ladders. After a while we swapped so the girls had a go on the ladders and the boys used their weights (or you could say they turned into aeroplanes.) When all was completed Karen and Russell gave us a little chat and told us what was going to be happening in the build up to the Schools Championships in Queensland, and how they would like to assist us to run for NSW in the 'O' League in the future. We then headed back to the Cottages to shower, pack our bags, and of course have something to eat.

The bus for the train station left at about 11:50 and that meant we had to say our goodbyes to Kas, Boahdan, Alex M, Felicity, Matt, and Alinta. Not long after Tom and Rob left to head back to Orange and Michele took Huon and Emily home in her car. Pheobe then left with her mum and that left Tamara, Alex O, Nicola and Josh, who were taken home in the bus I'm sure all of us enjoyed a relaxing afternoon and a great sleep that night.