

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP TO CONSIDER FUTURE STRATEGY FOR AND FUNDING OF THE PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

1. The Issue

Sport England ceased to give financial support to the Performance Programme in 2017. It is likely that they will withdraw the current funding from the Talent Programme in 2021. Assuming this does come to pass, this will then be the first time for at least 20 years that the Performance Pathway of British Orienteering has been without significant funding from statutory bodies such as UK Sport, Sport England and equivalents in the other Home Nations. Indeed, even as long ago as 1982 British Orienteering was in receipt of an annual Sports Council grant for "performance" of more than £150K in today's money

It was therefore considered an appropriate time to perform a thorough review the current programmes and consider the future strategy for them, from the point of view of them as part of the whole "Orienteering Development Pathway" – "Learning to train through to performing at World class level", and .

To that end a working group was set up at the start of 2019 under the leadership of Mark Saunders to carry out this review and make recommendation for the future.

This document is the report from that working Group.

2. Starting point - Aim of the Performance Pathway

It was recognized in the 2016 strategic plan that one of British Orienteering's current weaknesses is that "projects are mainly delivered at the behest of funders, rather than for the benefit of the sport, as the organization is not financially self sufficient enough to act independently".

The working group therefore started off its work by trying to address this weakness and be very clear about the purpose of the pathway from the point of view of its benefit for the sport in the UK. It came up with the following statement ;

Aims of the Talent and Performance pathway

Why should the sport of Orienteering in the United Kingdom invest resources – be its own finances or finances it can pull in from outside the sport, or volunteer time – in a "Talent and Performance Pathway"?

To achieve sustainable success at an international level including winning medals in the belief that this

Helps increase the profile of orienteering as a serious competitive sport.

Makes it more likely to attract participants into the sport.

Provides role models to inspire young athletes to try to be the best they can.

Promotes innovation and excellence in the sport in the UK

Having an inclusive, clearly defined and appropriately supported pathway which

Matches the needs and circumstances of Orienteering in the UK

Takes into account an athlete's welfare, including both physical and mental well being

Takes into account their development as a person as a whole, not just as an Athlete

Should result in

More athletes aspiring to be the best they can be.

Greater motivation, resilience and commitment of those athletes.

A higher level of performance at an international level.

More athletes enjoying and staying in the sport at whatever level competitively throughout their life

More athletes contributing to their clubs and regions in the future as coaches, organisers, controllers etc.

This statement of aims is then central to the rest of this report – both in looking backwards at how we have done over time and also in considering the current pathway and what things influence our achieving these aims.

It is worth expanding on a few of the statements.

"sustainable success at an international level" begs the questions what do we mean in this context by "international level" ? and what counts as "success" ?

World Orienteering Championships. This is the pinnacle of our sport, and so ultimately is our main measure of "international success" and if the reason we are interested is that it helps increase the profile, attracts participants etc – then we really are most concerned about medals or at least top 6s. That's not to say that Top 10s, 20s and even 30s aren't important measures. But they are more of an indication of how close we are getting to the top 6s

World Cups – Success at these is clearly to be celebrated but their most significant role is as steps on the way to WOC success.

World Rankings - the main significance of World rankings is in how they influence start seedings at WOC – i.e. a higher ranked athlete is likely to get a later (usually more favourable) start time. They also as indicator of strength in depth, and influence the number of places available to federations in the World Cup series – and hence number of development opportunities available. As of Oct 2019 GB are 7th ranked nation in both Mens and Womens Federation Leagues (based on scores of top 10 ranked athletes) Top 6 nations are allowed to enter 8 athletes at World Cups. Similarly results at previous WOCs are used to work out quotas of the number of athletes nations can enter in future World Championships.

JWOC –the main function of JWOC is as a motivator and preparation for Senior Elite performance, and as a goal/ motivator for young athletes.

EYOC - its value is as a stepping stone and motivator for younger athletes. Ditto JEC – maybe some of the older athletes too.

World Schools – more about fun and motivation

Interland – ditto

Prestigious international club competitions – Jukola, Tio Mila etc - Again not in their own right for Orienteering in Britain. However they are relevant as stepping stones, motivational opportunities and confidence boosters – performing well against the world's top athletes.

WMOC – very much a self selected competition - so whilst success should of course be celebrated, and it does provide a focus for some in their post- elite sporting life, it is not something this working group considers central to the Talent Pathway.

“Helps increase the profile of orienteering as a serious competitive sport.”

With regard to “profile”, it should be emphasised that the achievement of medals at a world level is no guarantee on its own of increased “profile” for a minority sport like orienteering. Success at an international level does provide ammunition that promotional efforts can use, but you also need the artillery to fire that ammunition. An opportunity for publicity etc. but this needs to be coordinated and those seeing the publicity need to have a way to get involved.

This profile is also significant internally within the sport.

“Provides role models to inspire young athletes to try to be the best they can.”

From the point of view of this, all the above mentioned contexts of success are relevant. A young athlete meeting a World Champion can provide what the “Great British Medallists Study” calls “an inspirational pathway moment” . And at the more routine level, young athletes will often look up to, and be inspired by young athletes, just one or two stages above them in the pathway. This was highlighted by a number of the athletes in their responses to the survey on their experiences of talent pathway, as one of the things they got out of membership of a Junior Regional Squad or other squads.

“Matches the needs and circumstances of Orienteering in the UK”

Worth considering that from two points of view – the nature of Orienteering, and the particular circumstances in the UK.

The essence of orienteering involves navigating in "unknown" terrain using just a map and compass. That puts a premium on travel to "unknown" areas to compete and for training purposes. That in turn makes "inclusivity" from a socio-economic point of view a real challenge for the sport as a whole, not just Talent and Performance.

Becoming a top "medal winning" elite performer, is a hugely demanding, long term task.

Most of the world's top orienteers started when very young – 10, 11, 12 or earlier. And many don't peak until their late 20s or even 30s.

Whilst Orienteering is a late-specialisation sport in LTAD terms, the basic map reading skills are much more easily learnt at a young age.

The requirement for practice / experience in different terrain types found across the world, requires a lot of travel, time and expense.

Self-sufficiency and resilience are key attributes for a top class orienteer. Athletes have to make their own decisions in the forest, and are often only one mistake away from "disaster".

The very length of time it takes to become a medal winner, makes it difficult to attribute causes to particular parts of the pathway.

There is very little in external reward, even for the world's best performers. Whilst the IOF's and other's attempts at greater TV exposure are arguably having some impact - for example;

- This year's World Championships attracted their highest ever live TV audience.
- New more TV friendly formats such as "Knock out sprint"
- And more locally, TV exposure on BBC Scotland's Adventure show

- this situation is unlikely to change very quickly if at all.

This puts a premium on passion for the sport in its own right.

Orienteering is an individual sport, but you cannot excel at it all on your own. It is not just the logistics of permissions to use areas, maps, course planning, control hanging, sharing of transport and accommodation to make it affordable, etc. but also the need for social support -what Scott Fraser called the "social orienteering culture". That is true at ALL levels within the sport, not just for juniors. E.g. even our potential WOC medal winners are motivated to train harder by involvement with a group of peers even if those peers are not potential medal winners in their own right. Similarly the independent fund raising efforts which have happened within the sport are appreciated by the athletes not just for their real practical benefits, but also as confirmation that they are valued by the rest of the orienteering community in the UK.

One of the fundamental and positive characteristics of the sport is the way it caters for participants at all levels and ages. Top elite athletes run on the same "playing field" as us mere mortals, and indeed relative beginners, not just in occasional mass participation races (e.g. London Marathon = JK = Jukola) but also in run of the mill regular local races the world over.

More specifically regarding the UK;

There is massive variability across the country in terms of availability of terrain and maps.

- For somebody in the South of England to access the best forest training areas in the Lakes or Scotland requires many hours travel.
- Ditto, for somebody in Scotland to access similar terrain to that which they might encounter in continental Europe might require a long journey to the South of England.
- Areas for sprint training are much more evenly dispersed around the country.

The location of the active orienteering population is also highly variable across the UK.

The current focus of the various Sports funding bodies on Olympic Sports at a performance level.

“Takes into account an athlete’s welfare, including both physical and mental well being”

The experience that (mostly young) athletes receive has a lasting impact not only on their sporting performance but also their physical and mental health. Youngsters involved in British Orienteering’s talent pathway, should leave the pathway having fulfilled their potential and relished the opportunity. Training to win and enjoying the experience are not mutually exclusive. It is not just good for the athlete. A healthy pathway is more likely to deliver sustainable world class performances. Athletes who suffer illness, injury or a lack of motivation are not going to be able contribute to the programme as a whole.

3. Assessment of how well we have been doing over the long term against those objectives.

The working group undertook various pieces of work to examine the current Talent Pathway and understand it in the overall context of Orienteering in the UK..

Performance and major event participation data.

Simon Errington (Happy Herts) maintains two data bases;

- One collecting together results data from World Championships , Junior World Championships etc. going right back to the 1960s
- Another collecting JK and British championships results for all classes going back to 1998

See <https://www.maprunner.co.uk>

This data was then used to try to make an assessment of how the GB talent Pathway has been doing over time with regard to

- delivering international success
- how competitive it is to get in to GB teams
- retention of athletes in the sport in later years

For full details see appendix 1, but the broad conclusions are

WOC medal success is very uneven being highly dependent on a relatively few high performing individuals. By that measure the era of GB greatest success was the late 1990s early 2000s. Using a measure of the IOF points (as used to allocate number of WOC places) GB has typically been 8th or 9th in the world over the last 15 years or so having been 5th for a period in the early late 90s early 2000s.

JWOC performances have been significantly improving in recent years. Two simple indicators of that;

GB had 8 athletes who achieved a top 15 in one or more of the forest individual races in the 1990s, 8 in the 2000s and 16 in the 2010s

For the 14 year period that Sprint has been on the JWOC programme , GB had 3 athletes who achieved a top 15 in the first 7 years (2006-12) and 8 athletes in the subsequent 7 years (2013-19)

Even more recently results have continued to improve at the sharp end – with 5 medals in the last two years – compared with 2 over the whole of the previous 27 years.

It is to the great credit of those currently involved across the whole pathway that this improvement has continued even as external funding has drastically been reduced.

However there has been no sign yet of that filtering into WOC results.

Competitiveness at M/W 21 level has not shown any signs of increasing

Competitiveness at M/W 20 & 18 level a slight kick up in the last few years.

No immediately apparent trend with regard to retention of Athletes who went to JWOC. Tho' some worries about some of our recently most successful juniors at JWOC not choosing to continue challenging for senior selection. Probably early days yet for many of them.

Potential for much more work in this area to understand and track the trends particularly with regard to things like retention and competitiveness which haven't to date received any attention when monitoring the effectiveness of the Talent and Performance system. Ranking system data would also be of use in this regard.

Coach and Athlete Surveys

Coaches and Athletes were asked for input on their experiences of their journey through the whole talent pathway from starting to compete in the sport seriously right through to their ongoing involvement post elite. This was written in the context of the published aims of the pathway with a request that they focused on what the key things which we need to get right in the pathway (or avoid getting wrong) to achieve those objectives.

There was good range of age, gender and geography of respondents. But there was no attempt to get a statistically representative sample, and whilst the survey was disseminated as widely as possible, inevitably the population who answered were self selecting with responses also more likely to come from those still involved in the sport. However there was a large response – approximately 200 responses – and this for a survey which required a significant amount of thought and effort to complete. It was not a 2 minute tick box exercise. Given the size of Orienteering in the UK this was an excellent result and in its own right testament to the passion and engagement of at least some of the UK orienteering community with the talent and performance pathway.

Needless to say, of course, a wide range of views were expressed - sometimes in direct contradiction to one another. However there were also a lot of common themes. Appendix 2 contains a summary produced by Roger Scrutton(ESOC) and as athlete welfare was a particular area of focus, the responses were also specifically examined for views around those areas by Grace Molloy(FVO) summarised in Appendix 3.

A lot of the analysis around the current Talent Pathway framework which follows, draws on the responses received to these surveys.

History of the GB Orienteering Pathway

Nick Lightfoot (SYO) compiled a brief history of the development of international orienteering and coaching in the UK to give context to the current pathway, help to understand different perspectives and hopefully learn lessons which might inform the future direction. See appendix 4. As with any history it is of course a personal view – albeit informed by a lot of research and discussions with many former athletes and coaches. No doubt there will be some interpretations and emphases that some readers will disagree with, whilst accepting other parts of the broad narrative.

One aspect that perhaps does not come out very strongly is the magnitude of the changes in level of external funding for talent and performance. A brief trawl of my (Mark Saunders) own boxes of old, results, newsletters etc gives the following snapshots of approximate amounts of external funding for talent development and international performance

1982	£150K
1993	£157K
2000	£950K
2007	£500K
2010	£383K
2018	£ 75K

All figures in 2019 equivalents

Which begs the question as to why haven't international performances dropped away much more? And indeed at the junior(JWOC) level continued to improve.

Some possible factors :

- The lag effect – many of the athletes now involved at a performance level benefitted from the investments in them as young juniors in the 2000s
- The professionalism effect – the investment in the 2000s, drove up the quality and "professionalism" of the pathway at all levels. Much of that has become ingrained in the pathway, even as tasks which used to be done by paid professionals have had to be taken over by volunteers. The Lagganlia summer camp is a good example of that.
- Scandinavian club effect – one noticeable change over the last two decades or so, is how many more of our top athletes are now also members of Scandinavian clubs. Taking part in the big club relays – Jukola, TioMila etc – but more importantly benefitting from the training opportunities that provides even if it is only for one or two weeks or a few weekends in the year. What used perhaps used to be the province of our top M/W 21s is now routinely part of what many of our 20s or even 18s do.

Finances of the current Talent and Performance programmes

In order for the working group to get an understanding of where the money currently goes and what the significant cost drivers are, the financial spreadsheets of the last couple of years of current talent and performance programme were examined. And Some estimates were also made of how much athletes had to spend to travel to take part in specific parts of the programme. In the past this was funded but in the last couple of years, generally Athletes have had to pay for their own travel, including airfares.

The current Talent Programme – including all training camps, competitions, and all associated expenses including travel cost on average in 2018 and 2019 a total of about £125 K made up approximately as follows

Accommodation, Food	£ 42K
Travel costs	£ 40K
Staff costs	£ 32K
Entries, accreditations	£ 5K
Sports Testing	£ 4K
Misc other costs –incl kit, admin	£ 2K

Of this

Athletes contributed	£ 67 K
British Orienteering (Sport England)	£ 58 K

The 2019 Performance programme – including all the competitions attended, WOC and three World Cup Rounds - cost in total about £48k

Accommodation, Food	£ 14K
Travel costs	£ 19K
Staff costs	£ 5K
Entries, accreditations	£ 8K
Misc other costs –incl kit, admin	£ 2K

Of this

Athletes contributed	£ 20 K
British Orienteering	£ 27 K

Note, none of these costs include the significant cost to athletes of funding their own training activities or things like attending selection races, which require significant extra spend – in particular of course travel and accommodation.

Many athletes will get some help from their Clubs and Regions within the sport and from other funding bodies to partially fund some of their contribution, but in the main, for juniors, the largest financial burden falls on the bank of Mum and Dad.

Individual journeys through the pathway.

Squad data and selections to international competitions (EYOC, JWOC) and summer camps (BOF talent programme and JROS) from the last 5 years were collated to get a picture of numbers involved at different stages. And to see the flow in and out of athletes through different aspects of today's talent programme.

4. The Current Pathway Framework

The current Talent Pathway framework may be summarised as follows

Level	Programme	Age	Num	/yr	Competitions	Summer Camps
1 Fundamentals	Clubs & Schools	9-18	1800*	200	YBT/JST, PPR	
2 Learning to Train	Regional	12-18	250**	40	JIRCs, JHI, W Schools	Lagganlia, Hawkshead, Junior Squad Scandi Camps
3 Training to Train	Talent Tier 1 & JROS	16-18	15	5	EYOC, JEC	Talent Camp Deeside, Stockholm Gothenburg
4 Training to Compete	Talent Tier 2	19-20	9	5	JWOC, JEC	Pre-JWOC
5 Training to Win	Senior Squad	21+	24	2	WOC, WC, Eurom, W Unis	

/yr indicates the approximate number of athletes per year group (total men and women)

* BOF membership 2019 in this age range

** 200 at JIRCs plus a few not available or not selected average of 20 per region

Some of the more active Regional Junior Squads provide a regular Scandinavian Summer Camp - Scotland, Wales, YHOA and NW consistently, every two years, a couple of the other squads more occasionally.

JROS provide 3 summer tours at Level 3 but extending to 20s – these are attended by some Talent Squad athletes.

The Talent Squad operates primarily as one unit but with less direct involvement in the weekend camps by Tier 2 athletes – away at uni' etc. Separate summer tours (Talent Camp and Pre-JWOC if selected). The summer Talent Camp is also used for talent identification including some 15s – i.e to select into the Talent Programme.

The Senior Squad has until recently operated a two tier system with Development and Performance groups although any activities have tended to be combined.

Universities play an important part for 18-22 at all levels. Edinburgh operates as a centre of excellence primarily for Talent Tier 2. With the majority of Tier 2 athletes currently opting to attend one of the Edinburgh Universities partly because of the level of support they receive there for their orienteering ambitions and the possibility of reduced entry offers.

Scotland's regional squad is nearer to Level 3 with 3 Area Squads offering Level 2 training for younger athletes.

Scotland also operate an athlete led Elite Development Squad (SEDS) which organises informal training for Scottish based athletes aspiring to senior GB level, but has struggled in recent years to be as active as it used to be.

Northern Irish athletes, have for reasons of geography tended to have close links with Orienteering in the rest of Ireland. That has on occasion included joining in with foreign camps

5. What do athletes need from a Talent Pathway

Rather than just addressing perceived strengths and weaknesses with the current system it's useful to look at the needs of the athletes at each level in the pathway.

Level 1 Parents and Clubs

Clearly important for bringing in and initial development of junior youngsters – no surprise that virtually every successful senior athlete can be seen in results at JK, British etc as an M/W 10 or 12 - not necessarily winning - in fact usually not.

Clubs should be the main providers of coaching

- Local, club-based training (maybe with neighbouring clubs but not too much travelling)
- Developing skills in a non-competitive environment
- Giving them opportunities to discover the fun and excitement of orienteering
- Meeting up with their peers and interacting with that group

Athletic development

- Orienteering will be a small part of their physical development at this stage
- Other sports and general physical activity to develop agility, balance and co-ordination
- Learning to run in forest terrain

Sports skills development

- Map familiarization and reading on the run
- Introduced to the basic techniques (up to TD3)
- Using races to develop skills rather than any pressure to win.
- Some competitive element in eg schools leagues,

Develop as Individual

- Gaining independence and confidence in the forest environment

Level 2 Regional Squads

Training to Train

Aiming to cater for all M/W14 – 18 who consider themselves to be orienteers (interested and engaged) whilst giving support to those who are starting to become more focussed on their orienteering careers

The regional squads should be a source of motivation

- Opportunities for competitions JHI, JIRCS
- Regular training in local terrain with fun/quality training
- A strong social element, team spirit and role models

Athletes gain a solid foundation of technical skills and become confident in their use

- Train and compete with their peers and learn from the older athletes

- Train and compete on a variety of different terrains across Britain and occasionally including abroad
- Get support from experienced squad coaches

Start to develop athletic performance

- Regular running training but other sports still important
 - Complementary sports: athletics clubs, cross country and fell running
- Introduced to planning and recording training

Develop as individuals

- Learn to become personally organised and independent

Level 3 (Post Regional Squad)

Athletes entering this level will ideally be competent technically after skills training at Club and Regional level and with a basic level of athletic ability through multiple sports. There may also be some less experienced orienteers with a stronger running background. To continue to progress athletes need to start to focus more on their orienteering careers finding time for running and orienteering training at the expense of other activities.

The programme should be a source of motivation

- Opportunities for international competition
- Camps in inspirational places with quality/fun training
- A strong social element, team spirit and role models

Athletes continue to develop technical skills and racing processes

- Train and compete with the best of their peers and older athletes
- Train and compete on a variety of different terrains including abroad
- Get support from experienced coaches (personal coach and/or squad coaches)

Start to develop athletic performance

- Learn basic training principles and training techniques
- Regular running training and occasional races (targeting minimum standards)
- Contact with a coach to help plan and monitor training (not necessarily a squad coach)

Develop as individuals

- Advice in lifestyle, time management, social media etc.
- Orienteering related skills planning, mapping, coaching, organising

Level 4 (Junior Elite)

Athletes at this level will typically be highly proficient technically with junior international experience and several years of regular running training. Athletes need to learn how to prepare technically, physically and mentally for specific races. They need to be increasingly committed to training and racing and become more independent to be able to cope at senior level.

The programme should include all aspects of the Level 3 programme plus the following:

- More structured training programmes targeting specific races

- Specialist sports science support and education
- Specialist orienteering training and coaching
- Informal self-help group training
- Training and competing with foreign clubs
- Opportunities for paid coaching, mapping etc

Level 5 (World Class)

Athletes at this level are dedicated to orienteering and will typically have made career decisions to enable them to commit to training and competition schedules targeting world class performance.

Levels of support required vary to suit individual athletes; some will prefer to manage their own programmes others prefer a more structured programme with more support similar to Level 4 above.

Specific requirements include

- Event support staff familiar with the athletes (TM, Coaches, Physios etc.)
- Opportunities to meet as a team

6. Strengths and perceived issues with the current Talent pathway

Overall

- There is a great deal of passion and commitment to developing and supporting our talented athletes as evidenced by
 - Stepping up of Volunteers as external funding waned – JROS summer camps
 - 200 responses to the surveys carried out earlier this year.
 - The supportive input at 2018s Clubs and Associations development conference
- This should not be exaggerated – whilst those in the working group are passionate about Talent and Performance and the benefits it brings to Orienteering as whole in the UK. It is not top of the agenda for a large portion of the Orienteering public. Any requests for extra resources from the membership needs to recognise balance with other demands and to look for synergies wherever possible.
- The current pathway has evolved over many years adapting as circumstances have changed, in particular to the levels of external funding available, and so does not appear as a coherent whole.
- There is a significant disconnect between what is now a relatively small professionally led BOF Talent Programme and other parts of the Talent Pathway which are almost exclusively volunteer led – Clubs, Junior regional Squads, JROS summer camps etc..
 - Limited sharing of resources – e.g. training camps, coaches - across different parts of the pathway.
 - No shared strategy for development of volunteer and coaching work force
 - Some misunderstanding of what actually happens within the talent programme
- The talent pathway is already massively dependent on volunteer time and financial resources from within the Orienteering community in the UK. In the absence of significant external funding, the only way it is going to continue to be supported is by deepening that engagement, ensuring buy in and involvement. Top down communication on its own won't do it.

Taking each level in turn.

Note. there is a great overlap with the issues addressed by British Orienteering's "Every Junior Matters" strategy published in 2018 - especially but not exclusively, with the earlier levels. Whilst that report's focus was on participation and this is on Talent development and eventual performance, there is clearly a great deal of common interest.

Level 1 – Fundamentals – Clubs and Schools

Events - Good structured STEP system - White , Yellow, Orange , Light Green etc. Always some exceptions, but in the main widely understood and adhered to.

Competition structure – variable across the country. In some places a good well supported local league system, which is motivational to young athletes, in other places less so.

Training - Most clubs are largely focused on events, with not enough focus on coaching and training.

There are pockets of good practice, where clubs have a good junior development programme that almost invariably includes training opportunities and coaching.

In some cases clubs have abdicated responsibility to Regional Junior Squads

Level 2 – Learn to Train – Regional Squads

The regional junior squads are a hugely important part of the current talent pathway. Respondents to the survey particularly emphasised the social aspects and the impact that has on motivation.

There is a great deal of variability in the Junior Squads in terms of

- Numbers of youngsters

- Terrain availability

- Availability of coaches

- Geography – some regions 5 hours drive across

- Age range taken

- Ability to provide broader athlete “education” as well as “flags in the forest”

Many of the Junior Squads provide support to youngsters with a wide range of technical abilities, and highly variable levels of commitment to the sport.

Some are able to provide regular monthly training weekend/days. Others less frequently.

Some provide regular Scandinavian Summer camps – Scotland, Wales, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, others more occasionally or not at all.

JROS summer camps highly regarded with a natural progression year to year – Lagganlia –Deeside –Stockholm - Gothenburg and flexibility in allowing for late as well as early developers.

Level 3 – training to Train – BOF talent squad tier 1

Training Programme received by those athletes that are selected, is in the main well regarded.

Initial Summer Talent Camp perceived as too pressured

- Athletes see themselves as under the “spot light”

Only a few athletes selected for the Talent programme at 15

- Many of those of that are selected feel that pressure
- Demotivating for athletes not selected
- Less competition for places at Level 4

There is a widespread perception that if you don’t get selected to the talent programme at 15 or 16, you are unlikely to be able to get selected some years down the line for

things such as JWOC. This is not fully supported by the data – for example in both 2019 and 2018, 25% of the JWOC team had not been members of the talent squad as a 15/16 or 16/17 – i.e. first two years of possible talent squad membership.

Big jump in level from Level 2 for some athletes

- Perceived by many as “too serious, too soon”
- Too much travelling to national camps at an early stage
- Arguably too much focus on sports science at Tier 1

Not enough connection to the rest of the pathway

- Little involvement with parents, other coaches etc.

EYOC has the potential to be a big motivator for many athletes at this stage, but it can only do so if athletes and their coaches can understand what they need to do to or achieve to be selected. If there is no such clarity, especially if full teams aren’t taken, the result is de-motivation, upset and a lot of wasted energy from all concerned.

JEC – in a similar way there is a lack of clarity in the mind of many athletes and their Coaches about the purpose of JEC and what they need to do to get selected.

Level 4 – Training to Compete – BOF talent Squad Tier 2

Support for JWOC preparation well regarded by the athletes.

Coaching input at camps

Reviews of training plans and practice well received – but a lot of work for just one or two individuals to provide that input.

Focus on JWOC a good preparation for what athletes will face as senior athletes.

However for some, the perceived focus purely on JWOC leads to a feeling of “relief that it’s over” when they turn 21

No support for junior to senior transition

- Little post JWOC support for selected or non-selected athletes
- Sudden change of culture from junior (managed) to senior (self-help)
- Shortage of coaches and support staff
- Limited opportunities for mixing with other athletes

Support of a centre of excellence at Edinburgh has had real benefits in terms of bringing together a group of like minded individuals with support for orienteering. However it has also had adverse consequences, which need to be addressed. See section on Universities later in this report.

Level 5 - Training to Win – BOF Senior Squad

There is currently very little in the way of support structure outside competitions for senior athletes.

Too much for one individual volunteer to take leadership on his or herself.

Summary of the key issues to address to help us better meet our aims.

1. Developing a coherent joined up talent pathway which reflects a shared vision understood and bought into by all those involved – volunteers and professionals alike.
2. Encouraging more and better training consistently at level 1 and 2
3. Widening the pool of athletes supported at level 3 and reducing the pressure and demands (e.g. travel time) time on those that are involved
4. Providing support for athletes in their junior to senior transition
5. Making sure Athlete welfare is at the heart of how the Talent Pathway operates

The existence of this working group is just a starting point for achieving point 1. In the following section a framework is presented which the Working group believes will result in a more joined up pathway. However it needs to be shared and ideas tested with all those involved.

Point 2 is very much the province of the “Every Junior Matter’s” strategy and the ideas contained in British Orienteering’s Junior Development Framework. So it is not specifically covered any further here. However this should in no way detract from the importance this working group place upon this area of work from the point of view of achieving the stated aims of the Talent pathway. Good quality coaching and training at this stage of the pathway has a huge impact on results and performances 15 or 20 years down the line.

A separate section of this report specifically addresses issues point 5

The following section makes a proposal for a new framework which we believe will address items 3 and 4.

7. Proposed New Framework

There is a clear distinction between the needs and circumstances of schools age and university age athletes which would be better served by a programme restructured to suit those age ranges.

The proposal seeks to broaden and smooth the Pathway at Level 3 by introducing a school age programme with three new 'Super-Regional' squads and combines the best of JROS and the current Talent Squad Tier 1.

It also extends Tier 2 of the Talent Squad to include the first few senior years to provide continuity to the pathway beyond JWOC, give access to a more structured programme for young seniors, and a better fit with university age groups.

We've suggested re-using existing terminology but at different levels so the new GB Talent Programme would include Talent Squad Scotland, Talent Squad North, Talent Squad South and the new GB Performance Programme includes 'Development Squad' (Level 4) and 'Performance Squad' (Level 5)

Level	Area	Age*	Nb	Yr	Competitions	Camps
Level 1	Clubs	9-18	1800	200	YBT/JST, PPR	
Level 2	Regions	13-18	250	40	JIRCs, JHI, W Schools	Hawskhead, Lagganlia
Level 3	Super-Regions	16-18	45	15	EYOC, JEC	Deeside, Stock, Goth
Level 4	National	19-22	30	8	JWOC, Eurom, W Unis	Pre-JWOC, Winter-Sun
Level 5	National	23+	15	2	WOC, WC	

- Entry to the programme would be typically in the autumn/summer of the year before the age given

Level	Programme	Development	Athletes	LTAD equivalent
Level 1	Club	Basic skills and processes,	social	Fundamentals
Level 2	Regional	Advanced skills, mixed training	Keen	Learning to train
Level 3	Talent	Racing skills, structured training	focussed	Training to train
Level 4	Development	Race focus, targeted training	committed	Training to compete
Level 5	Performance	World class performance	dedicated	Training to win

Level 1 Clubs

No suggestions for changes to the framework at club level.

Level 2 Regional Squads

No changes proposed to the framework at regional level other than closer working relationships with other squads at all levels in particular Level 3.

Level 3 Talent Programme

The programme would include three 'Super-Regional' Squads plus JROS style summer tours.

Taking athletes at 15/16 to 17/18. (Approximately 15 from each year and 15 in each squad).

The programme would typically start at 15 with the Deeside camp followed by three years in the Squad.

Possible split based on current strength of regional squads (Rankings/Summer Tours):

Talent Squad North (NW, NE, YH, NIOA)

Talent Squad South (SE, SC, SW, EM, WM, WOA)

Talent Squad Scotland (SOA)

Tours, Camps and Internationals

Summer Tours: Deeside 15/16, Stockholm 16/17 (additional tour if demand/resources)

1 National Camp (all 3 squads together)

3 Local Camps (some combined with other squads)

EYOC and JEC used for motivation and experience – with separate selections

JEC 20s and Gothenburg camps coordinated by the Talent Programme primarily for non JWOC athletes.

Culture, Focus, Content

Blend of JROS (fun and skills) and BOF Talent Squad (commitment, athletic performance and education programme).

Camps focus on orienteering training with some classroom (O' theory , analysis, and education – things like injury prevention, Strength and Conditioning ideas, training principles, nutrition, other sport science etc – all at a level appropriate for the audience, and allowing for deepening understanding over a 3 year period)

Minimum standards running (increasing with age)

Ensure athletes have coach support/monitoring from within or outside squad

Involve regional squad and personal coaches

Include coach development and broader athlete development (mapping, planning, coaching)

Level 4 Development Squad

Athletes typically but not exclusively from 19-22 targeting JWOC, World Unis, Eurometing and some World Cups

More focus on competition, structured training, peaking for target races.

JWOC important but not the only end product.

Core set of coach organised camps

- Planning Camp (Nov)
- Race Prep Camp (Feb)
- Optional specialised camps (sprint, forest, physical, sports science)
- Pre-JWOC summer tour
- Summer development camp for U23s

Encouragement to aim for senior selection

Squad Manager coordinates camps and ensure athletes have coach support/monitoring
Team coaches and support staff work with athletes targeting specific races

Additional SEDS style 'self-help' camps

Links with universities for local training resources and sport science support

Level 5 Performance Squad

Focus on WOC, and World Cups. Typically but not exclusively 23+

Athlete managed individual programmes

Planning weekend for all athletes (combined with Level 4 athletes)

Athletes make use of Level 4 training camps.

Support teams for internationals (TM, Coach, Medical, etc)

Overlap and sharing

The proposed bottom age range would be the normal entry level, but exceptional athletes may progress to a higher level at an earlier age, in particular juniors at Level 3 with potential for JWOC.

As with the current framework juniors in Talent squads would also be members of Clubs and Regional Squads and be able to take advantage of training opportunities with all three.

Where appropriate squads at different levels come together to share resources (permissions, maps, exercises, accommodation, coaches). Younger athletes benefiting from training alongside more experienced athletes.

Individuals from Level 4 and 5 squad members encouraged to take advantage of Level 2 and 3 camps (training alongside and/or contributing to coaching).

8. Welfare Recommendations

Aims and Principles

The attitudes and behaviours of athletes, coaches, parents and sports administrators within the programme are perhaps the biggest factors in maintaining welfare standards. We have recommended a new set of aims and principles which refer to development of individual athletes both as a specific target of the Pathway as well as a means to achieve performance aims and benefits to the sport as a whole. The welfare of athletes and coaches is not only important in itself, but a healthy pathway is more likely to deliver sustainable world class performances. Athletes who suffer illness, injury or a lack of motivation are not going to be able contribute to the programme as a whole. Decisions relating to coaching, athlete development, selections, recruiting, programme content, etc. should all refer back to these key principles.

A shared vision respecting this common set of aims and principles will in itself remove sources of stress, frustration and confusion benefiting athletes and coaches alike. An "orienteering development pathway" document which has been referred to many times by British Orienteering in various strategy documents over the years – most recently in the 2016 strategic plan would be a great way to create and share such a shared vision. However as far as these authors are aware, a finalised version has never been published or fully disseminated across all those involved in the Talent Pathway.

We recommend that British Orienteering invest the necessary resources to get it completed, agreed and disseminated.

Framework

The proposed changes to the structure of the pathway are in part designed to address welfare concerns. Introducing a separate Level 3 Talent Programme at 16-18 allows for a more gradual change of culture from Regional through to junior elite with less pressure on younger junior athletes and allowing for individuals to develop at different rates. Combining older junior and younger senior elites into a single Development Squad is designed to reduce the significance of JWOC so athletes don't feel it's the pinnacle of their orienteering careers or their last international opportunity reducing risk of over training or training through injuries and reducing the impact of non-selection. It's also intended to help the transition to a more self-help environment at senior level to stop athletes feeling abandoned.

The current initiatives to strengthen University clubs including making sure they have a performance angle as well as simply being about participation, will give more options for students wishing to continue to develop their orienteering beyond Regional and Talent Squad levels and also guards against discriminating against students who are unable to secure places at 'orienteering universities'.

Education

Athlete education is important in promoting good practice in training and competing and highlighting potential welfare risks. It's important to set the amount and content of sports science education to suit the level of the pathway.

Coach education is equally if not more important. Coaches need to be able to support athletes but a coach education framework is also a means to share the vision and define the culture for pathway. In addition to specific coaching courses, web seminars and conferences, coaches should be encouraged to attend to camps to share ideas and benefit from education opportunities.

Athlete Monitoring

Even with a less pressurised well educated environment most athletes will benefit from advice or encouragement to get the right balance of training. Support with planning training can be helpful but monitoring is particularly important from a welfare point of view to identify where intervention is needed.

As juniors progress through the pathway into more competitive environments monitoring becomes more important, but part of the transition to senior level is to ensure that athletes are able to monitor their own training and have an appropriate support network including a personal coach if needed.

This is especially important at the stage athletes move away to new environments – for example starting University. This is equally true whether we are encouraging "hot houses" – as for example currently at Edinburgh University which has been the source of some welfare concerns in recent years with some athletes suffering chronic illness. Or where athletes are in less supported environments - e.g. "non-orienteering" universities.

Ensuring we have enough personal coaches, appropriate to the needs of the athletes – for example gender – has to be a priority of the programme.

Public training diaries such as Attack Point and Strava are useful for monitoring and indeed the social media element in each encourages athletes to comment on each other's training, usually with sensible advice. However they can also encourage competitive training where athletes attempt to outdo each other or copy older role models or more experienced peers leading to over training. Athlete and Coach education need to warn of these downsides alongside recognising the positives.

Junior Internationals

The focus at Talent level should be on motivating and developing athletes and in that context international competitions offer invaluable experience and inspiration. As argued below, the GB programme should select full teams for EYOC but take particular care to ensure an appropriate level of preparation and expectations setting especially for younger MW16s.

JEC has primarily been used in recent years to give additional international experience to prospective JWOC athletes adding yet another race to a busy calendar. It would seem appropriate to use JEC to give experience and motivation to athletes who aren't yet at JWOC level either 18s in the Talent Programme or 20s who haven't yet progressed to the Development Programme.

Athletes are also competing in Club, Regional, Schools and Home Nation events all of which offer great social and orienteering experiences but better coordination of event dates and selection policies help to reduce the pressure on athlete schedules.

Selection

Selections or rather non-selections were one of the most frequently reported sources of stress and demotivation. They are also one of the most controversial and difficult aspects to get "right" – as evidenced by the survey responses where many contradictory views were argued.

There are however some common themes

For juniors the importance of selections should be played down to reduce the impact of non-selections and reduce pressures that might lead to over training, over racing or competing when ill. This can be achieved by:

- Ensuring there are similar opportunities in the future
- Encourage squads, coaches and parents to measure success/progress in terms of performance rather than results and selections.

The importance of clarity - athletes should understand why they weren't selected and how to give themselves a better chance of selection in the future. Non-selection or de-selection can be used as a motivator to encourage more determined athletes to raise their standards of commitment and or performance, but for younger athletes this often has the opposite effect and risks losing talented athletes who might have responded better to encouragement.

Not selecting full teams for internationals is particularly demotivating for juniors who feel they are being labelled as "not good enough" at a young age. This is especially true in a sport such as Orienteering where it is very difficult to give a completely definitive definition of the "standard" which is expected – in contrast for example with track athletics. It also makes it very difficult to explain such decisions to parents, coaches and others. Only taking one or two athletes in a particular cohort can also be very stressful for the selected the selected athletes – "I am not worthy....." .

On occasion always selecting full teams might mean taking young athletes to competitions such as EYOC when they may not be really ready for the experience. But on balance this is to be preferred to the amount of noise, upset and energy being wasted that we have seen in recent years, and which would be better deployed supporting our young athletes to be the best they can. It does of course put an onus on sensitive team management and appropriate preparation – for example at an EYOC prep camp.

The importance of how selection/non-selection decisions are communicated - Any athletes involved in marginal decisions should be contacted with an explanation. British Orienteering should invest in developing training and good practice guidelines for those

giving selection/ deselection conversations as recommended by Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson in her 2017 independent report to Government on "Duty of Care in Sport" .

For things like membership of squads consideration should be given to judging performance standards over a large number of races rather than specific selection races (for example rankings at major events).

Although there are many arguments in favour of a 'head coach' style approach to selection especially if combined with independent scrutiny, on balance an independent selection panel approach addresses more of the welfare issues:

- independent decisions are more likely to be perceived as objective, fair and unbiased
- Coaches are better placed to support and re-motivate non-selected athletes
- Athletes are better able to give honest feedback to coaches and management without fear of prejudicing future selections.

Coach input is still important though:

- To input subjective views for marginal decisions
- Make selectors aware of exceptional cases (athletes worthy of selection despite not meeting selection criteria)
- Inform selectors of any welfare concerns.

Exiting the Pathway

Athletes who progress through the pathway will inevitably exit it at some time and even if they've won a WOC medal dealing with what comes next can be hard. The aim would be to limit the stress and demotivating effects of leaving and encourage athletes to continue to orienteer and ideally continue to contribute to the sport.

There are number of options could help:

- Make the culture of the pathway about improving performance with competitive goals a short term focus at various stages.
- Instil a passion for the sport of orienteering itself not just about competitive success
- Encourage links with foreign and domestic clubs and participation in club competitions – reduce the focus on JWOC and WOC.
- Exit at a specific age along with other athletes rather than by deselection
- Ensure it is possible for athletes to re-join the pathway at later stage
- Provide options for these athletes to continue to compete, train and socialise within orienteering
- Provide easy routes into coaching for athletes

All of the above also help to achieve the pathway goals of sustainable world class performance, athlete development and benefits to the wider sport.

Most juniors exiting the pathway at 18 have the opportunity to go to universities and increasing the number of universities with active orienteering clubs would make it easier for athletes to continue to develop or enjoy their orienteering.

Seniors not progressing from the Development to Performance squad could still have access to the self-help camp programme

Coach Welfare

Coaches and programme managers whether volunteer or employed need to be motivated, happy and healthy in order to perform at their best and consideration should be given reducing potential sources of stress, for example

- Pressure to achieve results unrealistic targets
- Job descriptions / roles that unrealistic or don't match experience

- Frustration with the aims, content or culture of a programme
- Unclear, unfair or inconsistent selection policies
- Too much work

Duty of Care

In 2017 Baroness Tanni Grey Thompson produced an independent report to government - "Duty of Care in Sport". This included a number of recommendations which we should look at implementing in British Orienteering's Talent Pathway including

- Induction process
 - Including with parents and personal coaches
- Independent Exit interviews
- Training and good practice guidelines for those giving selection/ deselection conversations.
- Mental Health Awareness training
- Retention rate monitoring
- Complaint procedure

9. Implementation challenges

Many of the ideas discussed above have been suggested in the past. Most recently for example in 2016 British Orienteering's then performance manager Jackie Newton proposed replacing today's nationally organised tier 1 level talent squad with 3 "regional centres for talent confirmation". With the vision of "integrating the JROS programme with the talent programme" and "widening the pool of talent, creating a more competitive environment for selection.....and to provide broader experiences that will retain athletes within the wider sport system". This all rather got lost in the fallout from managing the significant reduction in Sport England funding that happened soon after.

Finance and volunteer availability

By now, some readers of this report might be asking themselves, you've been asked to recommend what we should do with the Talent and Performance pathway, in a situation of massively shrinking external funding, and what you have come up with is something which aims to support more youngsters at the 16-18 level, maintains support for 20s, and adds support for U23s. How is that going to work?!

The answer of course it is going to crucially depend on their being sufficient volunteers to make it happen. We should not be too pessimistic about this. It has been happening over a long period of time already. For example funding was reduced in the early 2010s and things like some of the formal BOF summer camps to places like Halden and Uppsala were reduced and BOF financial support for camps such as Lakeside (= today's Hawkshead) and Lagganlia removed. What happened as a result was that the Junior Squads got themselves organised, JROS was founded, some key individuals stepped up and made things happen.

There is actually already a huge amount of volunteer time and effort applied across the whole talent pathway. This includes volunteers on the formal BOF organised talent and performance programme. In fact we are already down to just something like £35k p.a. of BOF money spent on staff/consultancy time across the whole pathway.

The key roles we would envisage are

Talent Squad Managers (Scotland, North, South)

- coordinate coaching/training programme for juniors 16 - 18
- *Scotland already managed by SOA*

Talent Manager

- coordinate the various talent squads
- responsible for EYOC and JEC support teams
- liaise with wider pathway regions/clubs/universities/centre of excellence

Development Squad Manager

- coordinate coaching/training resources for junior and senior elite
- responsible for JWOC, World Uni and Euromeeting support teams

Senior Squad Manager

- responsible for WOC and WC athletes and support teams

Some or all of these might actually be some sort of committee, with a chair, and individuals taking on particular roles – for example in the Senior context, volunteers committing to manage particular competition camps.

Selectors

- Selections managed independently at 3 levels Talent, Development, Performance

The key to getting the lead type volunteers we are going to need to make this deliverable is going to be devolving responsibility

- not a case of “BOF telling them what to do”
- BOF – facilitator not “doer”

Also supporting volunteers

Financially - expenses
Developed, educated
Acknowledged

Giving them materials / resources they can use

“curriculum”
“teaching materials”
ODP

(See section on investment below)

But involving them in creation, buy off, ownership etc

It is important not to put all our eggs in one basket. These are big roles, even if the resources were available to professionally fill them. It is even more important where they need to be staffed by volunteers. This also has implications for governance – see section at end of the report.

There will be some aspects where it might make sense to use some paid consultancy resource for specific tasks. For example

Specialist coaching
Physiology
Physio support on camps

Coordination is going to be key. There is a great deal to be gained by sharing resources across the pathway – camps etc - not just in terms of efficient use of resources, but also

in terms of sharing knowledge and fostering a common vision. The proposed smoother pathway progression will in itself help with this sharing.

As noted elsewhere there is much overlap and shared interest between Talent & Performance and development. There are a number of specific "development initiatives" which would benefit both areas- see appendix 6 has some ideas

Developing more Junior Coaches
Training hubs
Universities support
Elite Development Squads

The most significant of these is probably developing more junior coaches. British Orienteering's "every Junior Matters" strategy includes a work stream to "develop a plan to increase the number of qualified junior coaches". Discussions have been initiated with British orienteering's Development officer responsible for this strategy to look at specifics.

Impact on Regional Squads

The introduction of 3 super-regional squads alongside the existing junior Squads will need to be managed carefully to ensure that it does not involve "decapitating" the existing squads – be it in terms of the athletes or the coaches. The key is going to be coordination, communication and close working with the junior squads. This should be a lot easier to achieve than it is today with a nationally organised talent programme.

From the point of view of the athletes, the requirement for less travel will also help.

And what if we fall short of our ambitions because of lack of volunteers?

The above framework has the ambition of trying to deliver as far as possible

- A similar quality of training support to the level 3 (today's tier 1) athletes, but to more athletes, more locally and with a more gradual step up, reduced pressure.
- A similar quality of support to the level 4 athletes (today's tier 2 + U23) but effectively longer – to cover their transition years to senior

Realistically, it will take time to develop enough volunteer leaders and coaches to deliver this without denuding the current junior squads. So what would things look like if we fall short of our ambition – and for example, because of lack of coaching/volunteer resource are not able to deliver the same quality or quantity of experience the current tier 1/level 3 get today.

We think that would be a question of degree rather than total failure. So for example if instead of today's 10 or so training days, plus education and focussed coach support for 15 to 20 athletes we were to initially only deliver half the number of training days, reduced quality of education, and direct coaching input - but to more youngsters. Is that better or worse than what happens today?

On balance we think that would still be better in helping us meet our stated aims in the long run. The more local ownership and joined up nature of the proposal, gives us far more opportunity to bring on the necessary coaches and volunteers. And over time we believe we will be able to develop enough volunteers to deliver the full vision.

Finance

Key assumptions

- It is unlikely that significant external funding will be forthcoming to support British Orienteering's Talent Pathway.
- This means that the talent pathway at all levels will need to be lead and staffed mainly by volunteer resource.
- Such funds as are available - for example as agreed by British orienteering's board or voted for by its membership - need to be primarily applied to supporting that volunteer effort.

Feedback to consultation so far has been positive. The Working Group consider that it is likely that sufficient lead volunteer resource will step forward. This needs to be further tested as the working group recommendations are further consulted on and plans / costings revised as necessary.

So taking those assumptions and applying the following principles

Similar to today's performance squad

- BOF (= membership) funded – entries, licences, etc to Representational races – WOC, World Cup, JWOC, EYOC, JEC, WUOC
- BOF funded – volunteer expenses for support at those competitions
- Participant funded – travel, accommodation, food etc at those competition camps

Extend same principles to training camps

- BOF funded volunteer expenses – travel, accommodation, food – for support at those camps
- Participant funded – travel, accommodation, food – for their own attendance at those camps

Assume a ratio through out of something like 1 volunteer/coach/support per every 4 athletes.

Assume we will continue with a small amount of BOF Funded specialist coaching and sports science support for Level 5 and 4

Ditto - Athlete Personal Awards for those most likely to deliver WOC medals. Today 9 of the top athletes receive £8.25 K between them – to help with their expenses to attend WOC, World Cups or however they want to prepare. This means of providing some support is not universally popular, with some for and some against. However in the context of very limited funding and a fair number of athletes being based abroad, it has the merit of allowing them to make their own choices as to the best way to prepare given their own personal circumstances.

Results in approximately (see appendix 7 for details)

Level 3 -	£31K
Level 4 -	£32K
Level 5 -	£31K
Admin and kit-	£ 9k

Total - £103K

So approximately £66K more than BOF provides today from its current revenue.

Appendix 7 also includes shows priorities for those various elements of spend

Investments

As well as ongoing items of spend, there are a number of one off streams of work that will enable the vision described above to be implemented

- To define a curriculum for level 3 and 4 and a set of resources that Volunteers can use to deliver that curriculum.
- Completing the "Orienteering Development Plan" including getting it consulted on, and disseminated as a vehicle for trying to ensure a shared vision – see also section on Welfare below.
- Developing the Welfare monitoring processes and tools mentioned in section on "Duty of Care" below
- Developing an appropriate wider set of measures of the effectiveness of British Orienteering's Talent Pathway in line with the "Aims of the Pathway" defined in section 2 of this report. For example including measures of "competitiveness" and "retention" alongside those of medal won or other measures of international performance.

Estimated one-off cost £20k

10. Governance

The current governance model for British Orienteering's Talent and Performance programmes should be reviewed to take into account

1. The reduction in external funding and shift to a much more volunteer lead pathway.
2. The wider set of goals defined in section 2 of this report "The aim of the talent pathway".

11. Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all those who helped in the compilation of this report

- All the working group members
 - Nick Lightfoot
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- All those who responded to the survey
- All those people who engaged in car park and other conversations

12. Appendices

1. Maprunner data review
2. Survey metrics
3. Survey- welfare report
4. History of the GB Orienteering pathway
5. Congruent Development Initiatives
6. Draft Costings

Appendix 1- Maprunner database review

Analysis of data from the Mapunner databases: ARBOR and JWOC/WOC to give ideas about changes over time for

- success in terms of medals and placings and international ranking:
- domestic competitiveness within the different age classes
- retention within the sport of our junior international athletes

Success

Medals and placings

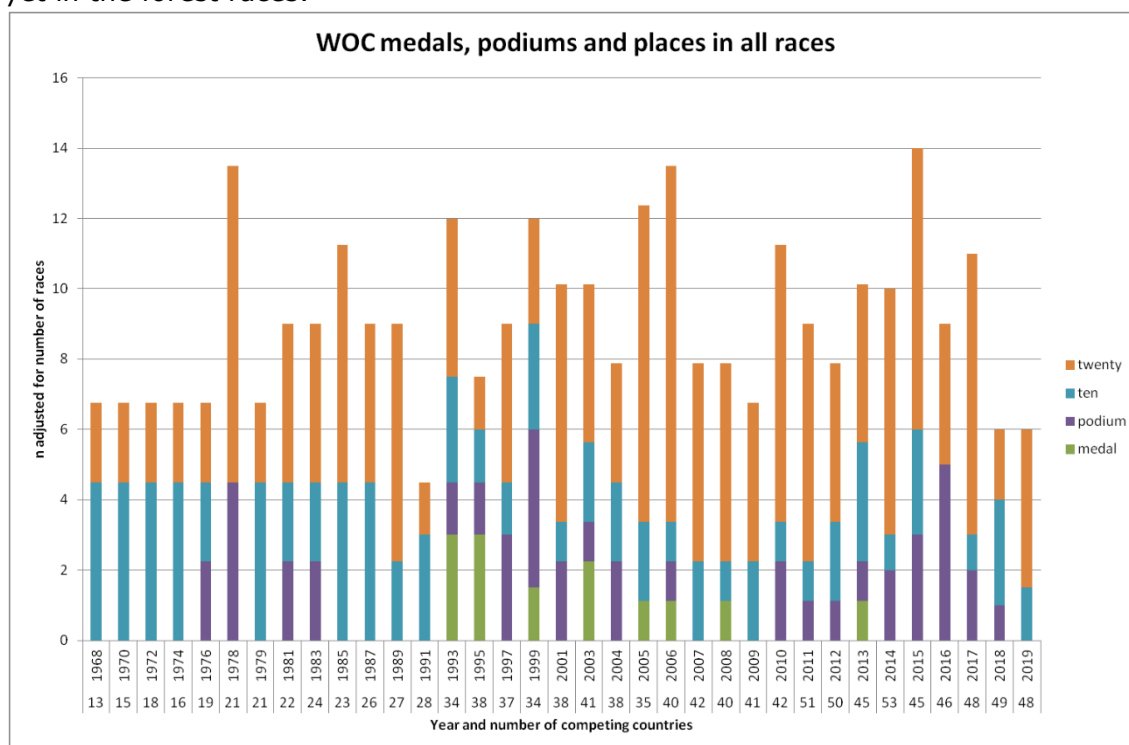
The following charts show the numbers of medals, podium places (places 4 -6), top 10s and top 20s for WOC and JWOC. Medals from individual and relay, and forest and sprint are all included.

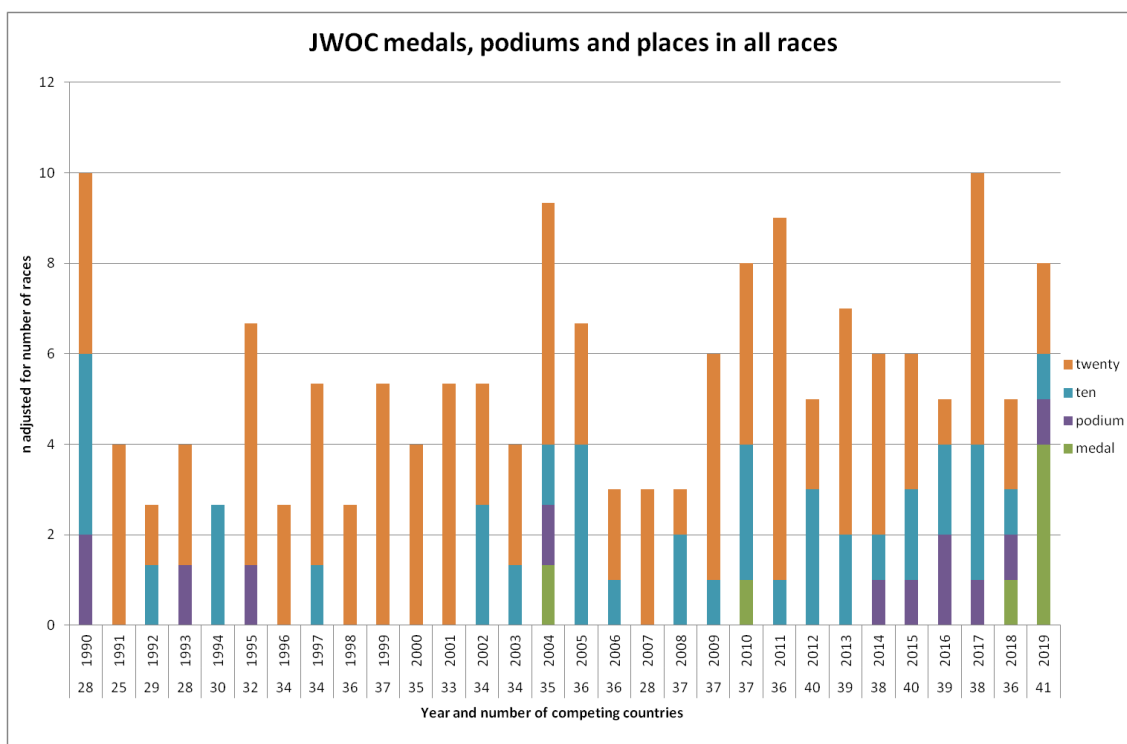
The number of races and therefore the number of chances to win a medal or place at each championship has varied over the years: prior to 1991 there was no middle (short) forest race at either JWOC or WOC: the sprint was introduced into WOC in 2001 and JWOC in 2006; and the mixed sprint relay was introduced in 2014. The data has been adjusted to compensate for the different numbers of races.

Even without this year's brilliant successes, the JWOC performances have improved – for example podium places in 5 of the last 6 years in the forest races.

Senior athletes can have a much longer career than JWOC athletes, so can contribute to "trends" eg Yvette Hague/Baker had a 16 year WOC career (1985 to 2001) and has won 4 of the 5 WOC forest individual races.

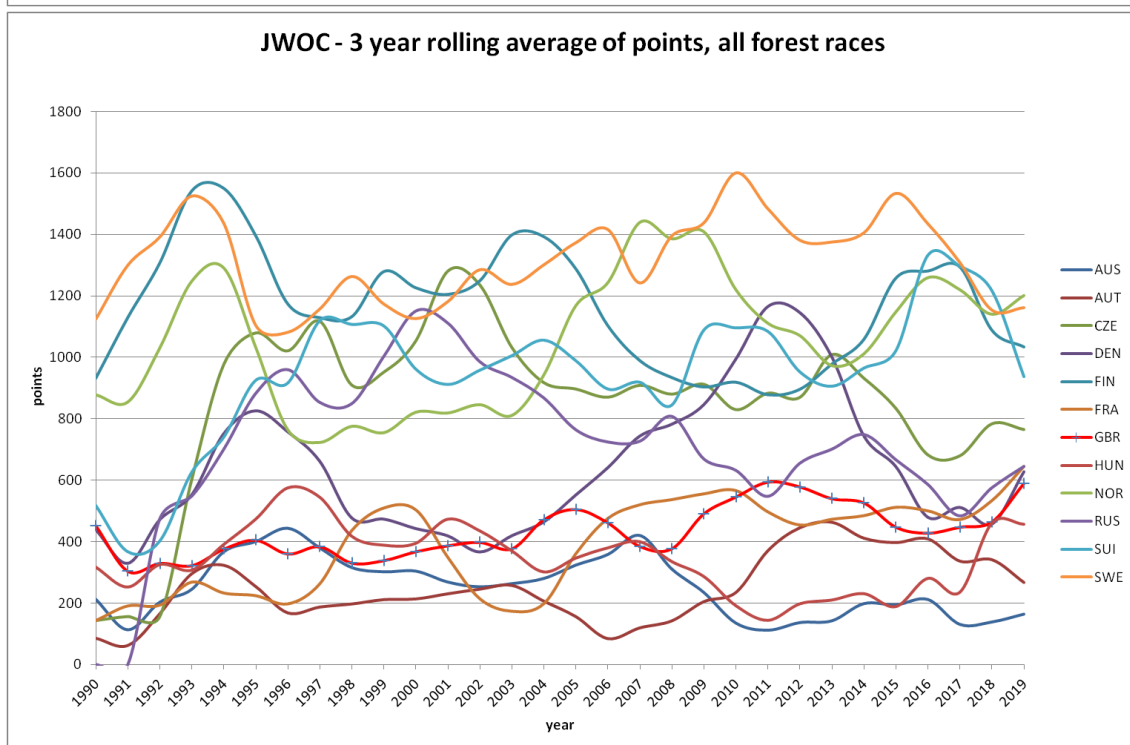
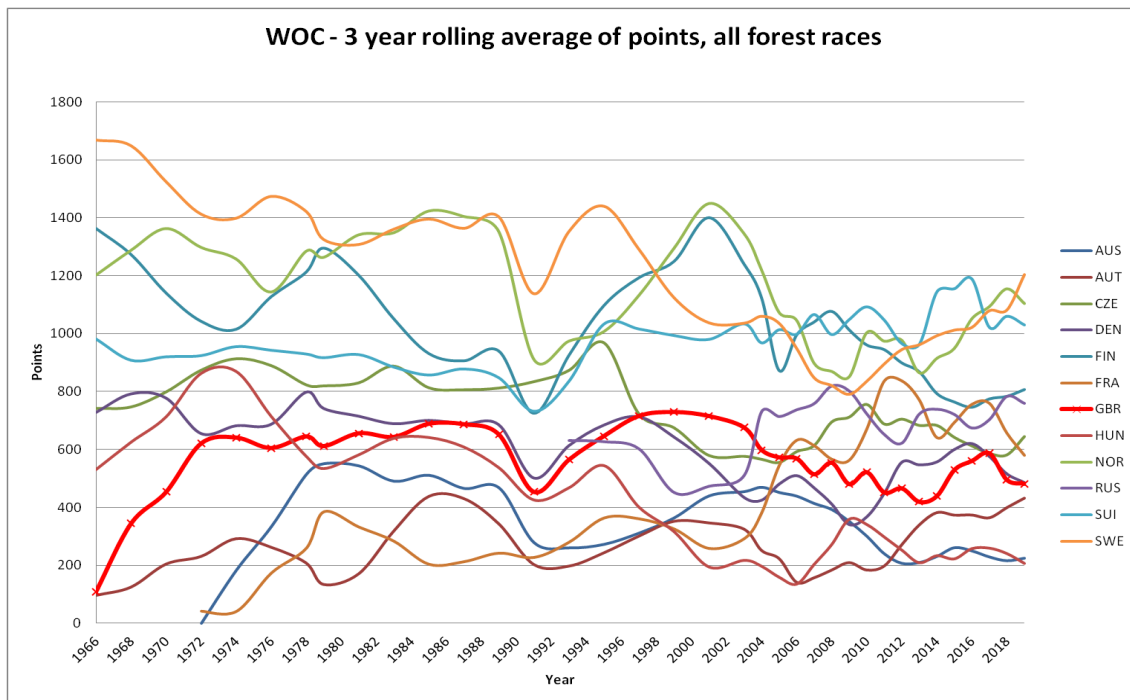
The improvement in JWOC performances has not been reflected in WOC improvements yet in the forest races.





International points

A points system is used by the IOF to determine the number of WOC places awarded to each country: points are given to individual athletes in the top 60 and relay teams in the top 30 and the points for each nation are totalled over all races. The scoring system has changed over the years but the data presented here uses the current system applied to all years. The charts show the points for forest races as a rolling average of the past three years for the top twelve nations. The data for the WOC races has been adjusted to account for there being no middle/short races before 1991.



Competitiveness

An attempt at a measure of competitiveness (strength in depth, athletes vying for selection) over the time period 1998 – 2019, by looking at the number of results within 5 and 10% of the winner's time in the M/W16A, M/W18E (L before 2008 and A before 2003), M/W20E and M/W21E, at the JK days 1 & 2 ie the forest races.

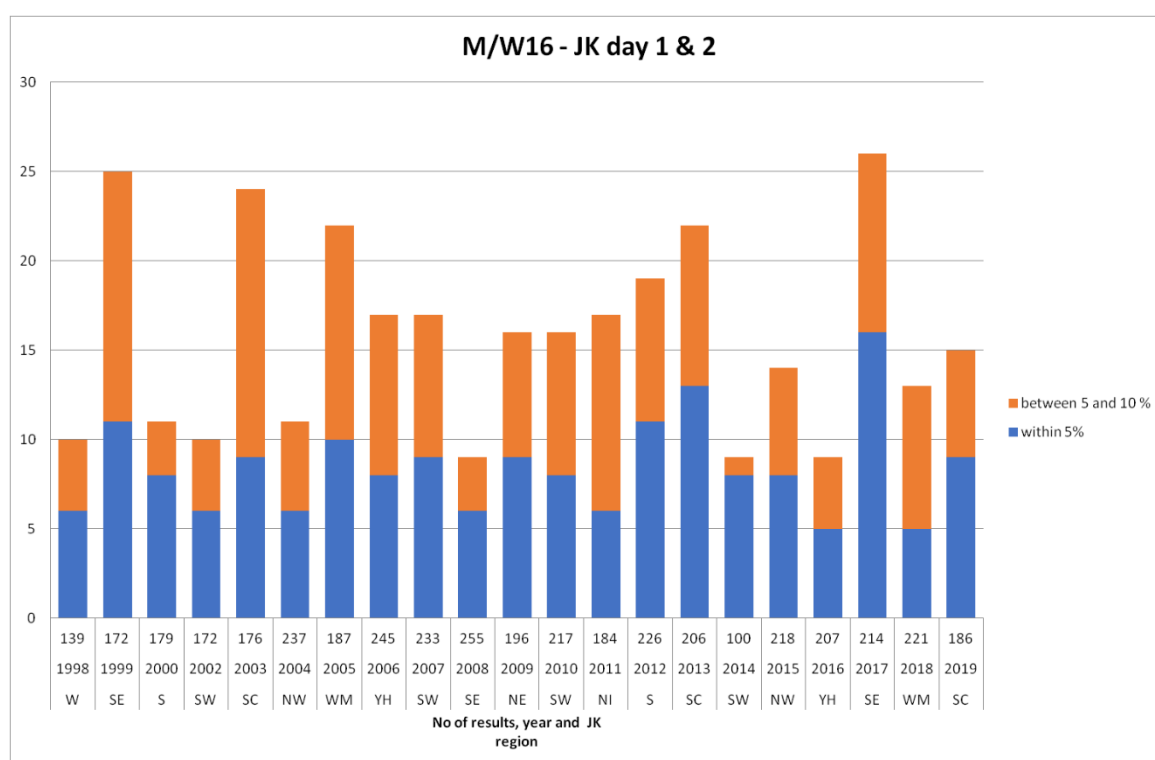
The numbers for both days and for both M and W were totalled for each age group. Thus the graphs show the number of runs within 5 and 10% rather than number of athletes: there will be considerable overlap between the athletes within 10% on day 1 and day 2.

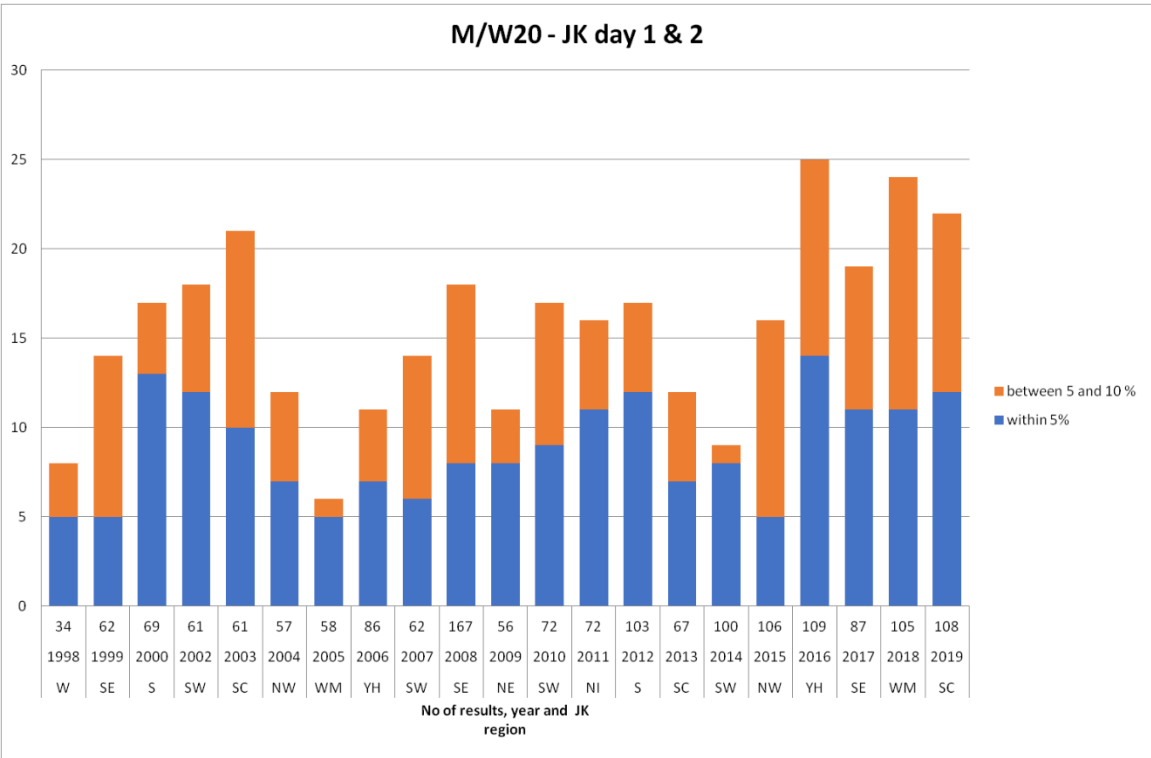
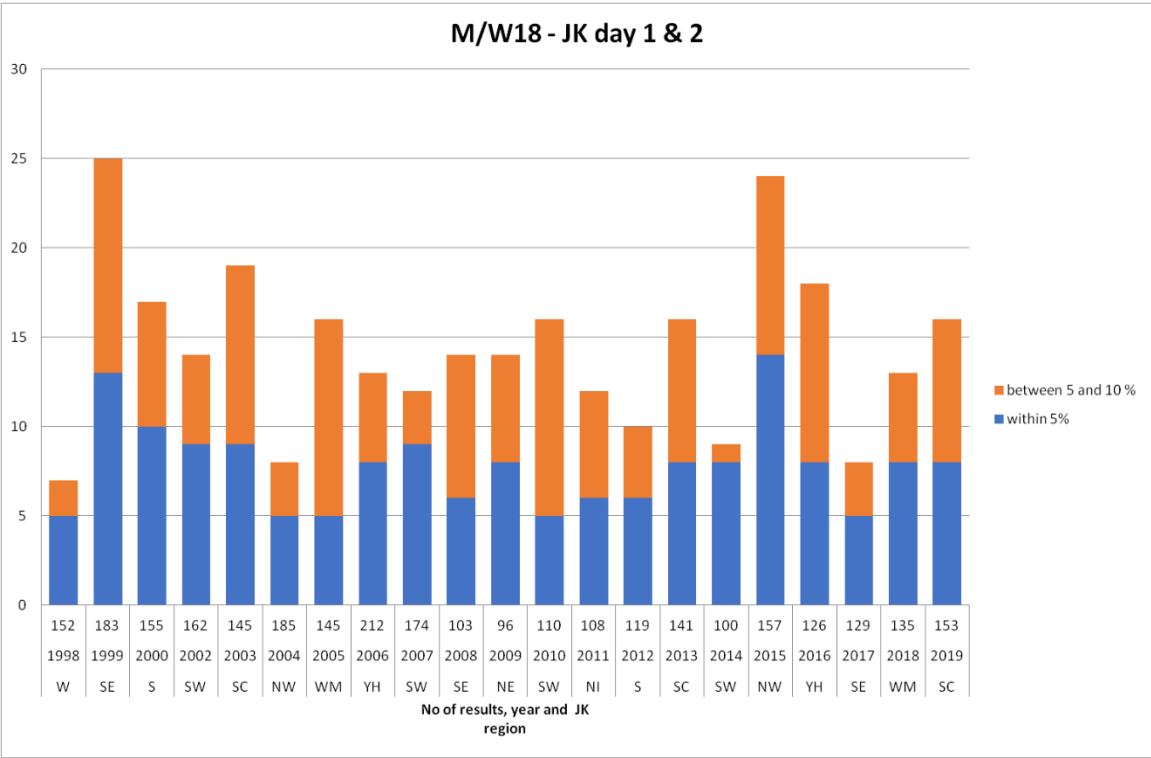
In the junior classes particularly where obviously the athletes are moving quickly through the age group, this will be strongly influenced by an outstanding athlete (this is a bit of a circular argument).

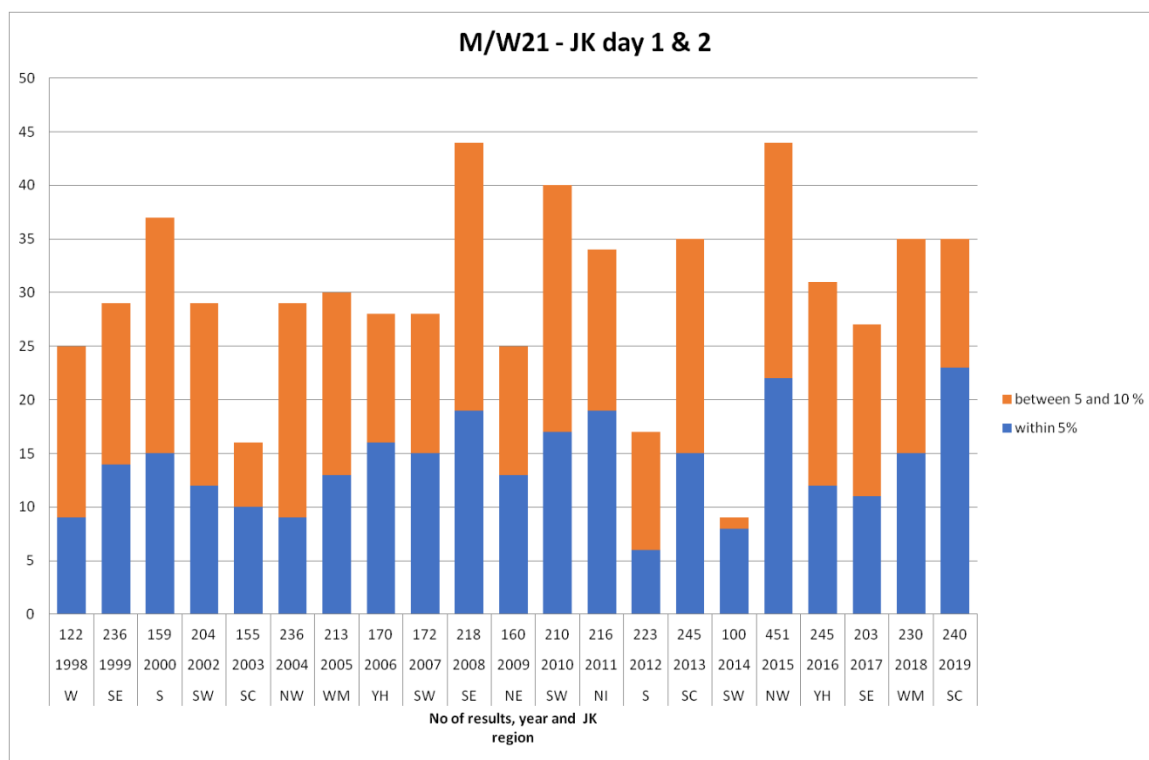
This measure does not distinguish between i) more athletes improving towards the outstanding and ii) the top athletes being less outstanding.

The data is just from one event and therefore just in one terrain type – it may be easier to be closer to the winner in easier terrain .

There is a suggestion that the 20s have been more competitive over the last 4 years, but you might have expected that these “competitive years” would have been apparent earlier in the 18s and 16s graphs. There is no evidence that the competitiveness has improved or got worse in the other age groups







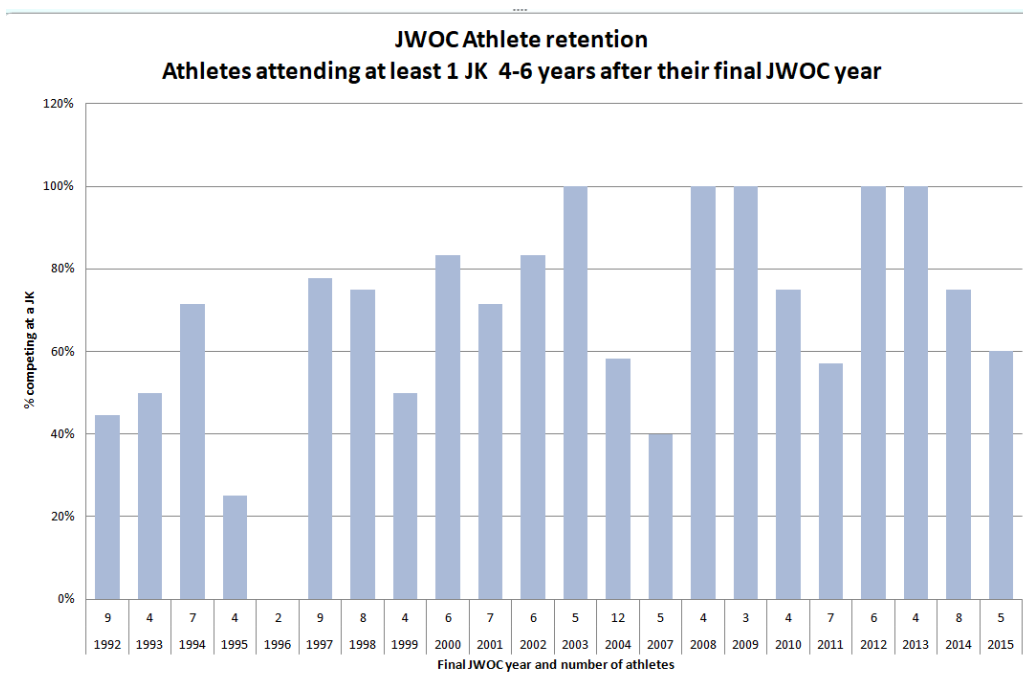
Retention

The following charts show the number of athletes who ran in at least 1 JK races 4, 5 or 6 years after their final JWOC race. The data is shown as a percentage of the number of final JWOC athletes for that year.

Three years was chosen, rather than all later JKs, to avoid biases by having more opportunities to attend for athletes who ran in earlier JWOCs

This three year interval could miss people who are having time out (the obvious example being women with young families) even if they return later eg 1996 was Kim Baxter and Jo Smith.

There is no evidence that the retention rate has got worse recently



Among the highest placed JWOCers (with at least one top 15 placing shown below), there are few that have gone on to a regular but recreational orienteering career: they have either run in WOC or almost totally dropped out of orienteering.

Claire Bolland	1990
Alasdair Thin	1990
Heather Monro	1991
Kim Buckley	1995
Sigmund Gould	1997
Anthony Squire	1997
Rachael Elder	1999
Ed Nash	1999
Hannah Wootton	2000
Matthew Speake	2002
Mhairi Mackenzie	2004
Alison O'Neil	2004
Graham Gristwood	2004
Scott Fraser	2006
Anne Edwards	2009
Hollie Orr	2009
Kristian Jones	2010
Alasdair Mcleod	2010
Ralph Street	2010
Mairead Rocke	2011
Julia Blomquist	2011
Lucy Butt	2012
Charlotte Watson	2013
Jonathan Crickmore	2013
Zoe Harding	2014

Julie Emmerson	2014
Aidan Smith	2015
Megan Carter Davies	2016
Alexander Chepelin	2017
Jennifer Ricketts	2017
Fiona Bunn	2017
Grace Molloy	2019
Matthew Fellbaum	2018

Appendix 2 - Survey metrics

Key words and phrases have been sampled and placed in rank order of their frequency of occurrence for each question. The words or phrases have been taken from a) prompts in the questions, b) the word cloud, c) my own reading of the responses.

Athletes' Survey

80% started O at 10 or under

72% started with their family (17% with school)

Formal training pre-GB: parents, club and regional squad equally important up to age 13 (12-14 transition), thereafter regional squad clearly the most important but club still relevant.

Q7 Formal training pre-GB

Provided/engendered:

- fun & friendships (75% of respondents mention this)
- motivation to train to improve - "lots of controls", regular events (64%)
- importance of basic coaching (27%)
- the pleasure of racing (24%)
- dedication to the sport (23%)
- fun & friendships (75%)
- a target - peers, role model, selection (20%)

This is essentially a solid foundation. The relatively few negative comments refer to lack of enough coaches, potential injury and lack of opportunities for non-selected juniors.

Q8 What training camps?

Essentially, all camps, tours and competitions are seen as a good thing across all ages, with JROS Lagganlia getting the most responses. A few fuller answers highlight:

- need for managed progression
- danger of creating a them-and-us culture between those regularly selected and those rarely selected
- greater inclusion
- need for flexibility to cater for early developers v. late developers

Q9 Comments on selection (seems to cover camps, GB squads and international competitions)

- No issues or satisfied – 22 responses (30%)
- Need for clarity and consistency of the selection process (there should not be an "old boy network" or favouritism) - 11 responses (15%)
- The relative importance of qualitative as opposed to quantitative evidence (try anonymised selection; what to do about temporary injury) – 12 responses (16%)
- Provide feedback (quality, quantity, sensitivity) – 6 responses (8%)
- The importance of filling all available team places (camps as well as competitions) – 11 responses (15%)
- Other areas of concern (handful of responses each):
 - Ability to get to key selection races and relevant training in the run-up (widen range of qualifying races; timing w.r.t. exams)
 - Tailoring selection races to competition terrain
 - Importance of discipline specificity
 - Overall structure of process (a mix of qualifying and final races, e.g. FCC; keeping as many athletes in the pool as possible)
 - Pleasure versus pressure

Of the 30% satisfied, vast majority have been successful in the selection process, but some not successful and see process as motivating to do better, which might result from the situation being handled well, e.g. through feedback. Because not every respondent gives their name it's not possible to know whether the disgruntled ones have left the sport. However, there are about half a dozen responses (8% of respondents) of leaving the sport as a consequence of their selection experience.

Q10 What benefits from camps/competitions?

Clear themes:

- Training, how to and the discipline of, but some negative comments on too much classroom time (esp. BO camps) and too much physical as opposed to technical – 39 responses (53%)
- Motivation – 34 responses (46%)
- Value of coaching, all positive comments – 17 responses (23%)
- Social, all positive – 14 responses (19%)
- JROS camps, all positive – 11 responses (15%)
- Improvement of performance – 10 responses (14%)
- Other areas with a few responses:
 - Value of overseas camps and experiencing foreign terrain
 - Feeling as though making progress as an orienteer

Camps have a big impact. Very important to provide quality coaching and inform athletes how to train and self-coach in their own time. Since own time training is largely physical, camps should focus on technical. They provide an important social dimension.

Q11 Impact of being in a GB squad

- Training, but felt by some to be over-elaborate at the earlier end of the pathway – 50 responses (71%)
- Coaching, generally positive, with comments on need for female coaches – 20 responses (29%)
- Technical training, mostly positive responses with limited criticism of quantity and quality – 19 responses (27%)
- Physio support valued - 16 responses (23%)
- Physical training, with recognition of the benefits of being educated in the more effective approaches - 14 responses (20%)
- Other areas with a few responses:
 - Motivation and progression
 - Analysis of performance
 - Psychological, nutritional etc. information
 - Challenge of getting to squad training sessions

Important to note that there is a higher proportion (maybe 25-30%) of responses here from former squad members as well as from some who have not actually made it into a GB squad. Generally, responses are more critical than those at Q10. Athletes have reached a more discerning level, training is now very serious and the social element relatively less important.

Q12 How did transition to GB squad go?

Themes:

- Influence of university – 26 responses (42%) - numerous aspects:
 - time management,
 - involve more universities
 - links with foreign clubs
 - social groups

- what opportunities when leaving
- opportunities for those who don't make it to university
- relationship to BO programme
- Important to have opportunities to compete, such as JEC, Euromet – 19 responses (31%)

This is a very one-dimensional set of responses. Age 20+ is clearly a huge watershed time – junior orienteering has been lively with camps, junior regional squads, progressive BO pathway and lots of hopes and aspirations. The BO pathway is now weak, but initially university clubs provide an environment in which orienteering can flourish, clubs and national senior squads less so. Eventually, only a very small number of athletes continue in the GB Senior Squad and many of those move overseas.

[For info. There were about 175 runners at BUCS 2019; BO's membership over the university years is c.150/year, i.e. universities host about one third of BO members at that stage. There are 25 members of the Senior Squad (probably all university students past or present; ages spread over c.10 years); the BO membership over the same age range totals nearly 1000, i.e. we are looking at a tiny percentage of BO members at this stage.]

Q13 What impact did membership of BOs national programme have on you?

With the focus on Seniors, as might be expected, responses dropped to only 39, as opposed to over 70 to early questions.

- Training (12 responses). Camps or tours very important at early Senior stage to bridge gap from Junior, but time to participate and cost can be difficult. With decline in support, self-coaching and training for both physical and technical development now the norm.
- Coaching (6 responses). Issues are decline in support and resource across the board, too top-heavy structure, not best use of coach availability – now coaching a group of individuals rather than a recognisable team; however, what is available is appreciated.
- Selection (5 responses). Do it yourself preparation is mentioned twice, otherwise not much of a theme.

The underlying theme is that there has been a decline in support and the athletes do much more for themselves (including funding and seeking support overseas). The burden of organising this affects performance.

Q14 Transitioning to competing at Senior level

- Training (13 responses). With less support, having to work to fund quality training sessions and logistics, training has become harder. But quality training is altogether easier in Scandinavia.
- Motivation (12 responses). Together with aims and seeing what others do, this seems to be a major factor in keeping many squad members going. Can be critical at the transition to Senior and can be coach dependent – coaching support has declined.

Responses reflect individual circumstances and needs. Much-loved coaches from the past who could provide tailored support are frequently mentioned.

Q15 Contributing afterwards

- Coaching (19 responses)
- Planning (9 responses)
- Organising (8 responses)
- Controlling (3 responses)
- Mapping (1 response)

Reasons for continuing to contribute are knowing the importance of doing it, recognising opportunities, putting something back, fascination, desire to improve on standards, and some other rather trenchant comments about disfunctionality.

Q16 Other input

This is a very interesting set of responses because there are no leading suggestions in the question. Prominent themes in approximate order of frequency are:

- Inclusion. Filling squads and teams and keeping the base of the pyramid as wide as possible. Have a Watch squad, allow squads to interact more, make provision for those who don't go to university or to an orienteering university.
- Importance of camps and tours, training opportunities. Possibly more, and cheap and cheerful.
- Improving the quantity and quality of the coaching workforce.
- Resolve issues facing Senior athletes to create a more coherent squad and programme even though by this time they have individual needs, e.g. forest vs sprint.
- Selection issues.
- It should be fun.

Coaches' Survey

[N.B. 20% of responses come from one club – SYO. Next most is 9% from DEE and HH. For the statisticians amongst us, this raises the possibility of collusion or bias, although I wouldn't for one minute expect that it has taken place!]

Q3 Involvement in coaching

79 responded out of 94 questionnaire returns. 50% of the 79 involved as a coach, 29% as a parent.

Q4 Direct involvement with youngsters, specifically for orienteering

76 responses. Here the balance is fairly even between coaches (55%) and parents (45%)

Q5 Most important things youngsters got from this coaching

- Training, the importance of basics, with technical seen as slightly more important than physical, and regular opportunities – 30 responses (48%)
- Social interactions, various aspects – 29 responses (47%)
- Coaching, consistency leading to managed progression – 26 responses (42%)
- Group, importance for social and team spirit – 21 responses (34%)
- Motivation – 19 responses (31%)
- Competition, seen as important but as much for experience and satisfaction as winning – 15 responses (24%)

Good broad foundation – many aspects equally important.

Q6 What camps/competitions did juniors aspire to?

- JROS camps– 27 responses (52%)
- JHI teams/squads - 16 responses (31%)
- At international level: GB squads (6 responses); JWOC (5 responses), EYOC (4 responses), JEC (3 responses), Interland (7 responses), World Schools (5 responses), from 52 responses
- Selection, this issue goes hand-in-hand with attendance at camps/competitions – 21 responses (40%)

All opportunities are aspired to and seen as a good thing, but JROS is by far the most popular.

Q7 Comments on selection

[Only 46 of the 94 returns, about a half, commented on the selection process]

- It is difficult to provide metrics for this question because many returns are essentially personal case studies. However, the clear common denominator is that the selection process should be transparent, unambiguous, consistent, carefully communicated, fair, recognise limitations for parents and school work, provide useful feedback, catch as many juniors as possible. Although a few recognise that it's a difficult process, and others see it as motivating, only a couple feel the process is good. 46 responses (100%)
- Full squads/teams – 8 responses (17%)
[At M/W18, c.50% of the BO membership is in a regional squad. At Senior level only 2-3% of BO membership is in the Squad.]
- Opportunities, alternatives to selection – 4 responses (9%)

Q8 What benefits from camps/competitions

- Experience and training, of technical training, competition, being immersed in orienteering, social environment, the more the better – 30 responses (65%)
- Motivation, strong until GB selection kicks in, then more patchy – 17 response (40%)
- Lagganlia camp, all positive – 13 responses (28%)
- Coaches and coaching, generally positive, but some criticism of attitude at major internationals – 10 responses (22%)
- Performance, in some case improved, in others overemphasis – 9 responses (20%)

Q9 Impact of being in a GB squad

- Athletes. I looked at this because it is top of the word count with 20 responses (44%) and was surprised how many negative comments emerged. These comments focus on overload on juniors (who might be in two or three squads), pressure to achieve, disappointment when dropped or not selected for competitions, difficulty of accessing all camps, vagaries of coaching support.
- Training, more mixed responses positive and negative, questions on amount of physical as opposed to technical – 20 responses (44%)
- Motivation, similarly mixed responses – 13 (29%)

Overall, for something that should be seen as an achievement, the responses are very mixed. Pastoral issues are common.

Q10 Journey through the talent pathway

- Clubs, the role these could play in retaining juniors, especially linking with universities, catering for the appropriate age group, in Scandinavia – 21 responses (50%)
- Need - which caught my eye in the word cloud - focusing on the route to Senior level: opportunities to compete, international experience, coaches to understand needs, learn independence, more physical training, aspirations. 16 responses (38%)
- Athletes – again a useful search (see Phil Conway's response specifically) as the structure becomes more focused around a few athletes who have to have the right mindset. 16 responses (38%).
- Universities – exploit this by increasing number with O clubs – 9 responses (21%)

Q11 Coaching GB athletes

- This question has yielded no stand-out answers, but the common theme is the need for a coach-athlete relationship that is excellence in the coach and a level of independence (self-coaching) in the athlete. From 31 responses, no more than 6 (19%) appeared under any key word search.

Q12 Continuing in the sport

- A flattish response similar to Q11, but prominent are role of club, potential to be good coaches and having had an enjoyable experience up to this time – 5 or 6 responses from 31 (16-19%).

Q13 Other input

- Juniors, move emphasis of junior development to regional squads and JROS and home nation squads to involve a greater number. BO, Interland, World Schools/universities can still select for camps and competitions as appropriate. 13 responses (34%)
- Implications for coach quantity and quality – 11 responses (29%)

Appendix 3 – Survey Welfare Report

Areas that led to negative athlete welfare experiences

1. Selections
2. BOF Squads/Camps for Juniors
3. Transition to Senior
4. Overlap/Conflict Between BOF and JROS
5. International Competitions

Almost all of these points were also commented on positively. For example, many athletes said they found selections to be motivating and many also said how much they had benefitted from being in British Junior Squads. However these were the areas which survey respondents raised concern about.

1. Selections

- Lack of clarity with selection processes
 - JROS use more objective selections than BOF (percentage behind winner) whereas BOF use more holistic approach
 - This leads to athletes being unsure as to what they have to do to be selected or as to why some people are selected over others
 - Athletes can then feel seriously demotivated or upset and can affect their life outside orienteering
 - However, if selection is more objective (only on selection races and doesn't consider illness, injury, previous results, commitment to training etc.) then this puts more pressure on selection races
 - Some responses in support of more objective selection and others prefer subjective but general agreement that there should be more clarity
- How athletes are informed about/supported during selection announcement
 - Athletes/coaches feel that they do not receive clear information as to why a certain selection or non-selection has been made
 - Lack of support for athletes who miss selections or advice as to how to improve
 - Selections delivered insensitively – timing clashes with school/university exams (thought not given to this), some athletes only find out about selections through online announcements, some young people find phone calls awkward/difficult ways to receive news
 - Athletes reacted in different ways to non-selection, some found it motivating but others either felt demotivated or over-trained and suffered injury
- Not taking complete teams
 - Very demotivating for athletes
 - Athletes make big time/effort/financial commitment through the year to attend selection races and perform to the best of their ability so seeing incomplete teams undermines their efforts
 - No clarity in advance as to what standard is required to make a team
 - No responses in favour of incomplete teams, lots of passionate responses wanting full teams
- Missing selections (however fair) meaning missing opportunities to see friends and to improve skills
 - Regardless of how fair people view a selection for a camp/competition/squad to be, being selected gives opportunities to improve/gain experience/receive advice that those who miss out don't get

- It also means people who don't get selected don't get as many social opportunities to go away with their friends and to build friendships that keep them in the sport
- Pressure to perform/running through illness for selection races
 - Athletes find selection races a very stressful experience
 - Athletes feel pressured to compete in selection races when they are injured or ill as they feel they need to compete in order to be considered
 - However, the selection races are also the only races in the British calendar in which all the best athletes compete and race their hardest and thus it provides the strongest competition and best simulates international races

2. BOF Squads/Camps for Juniors

- Some athletes and parents felt that the BOF junior squad and BOF junior camps were too serious and focussed too much on training and performing rather than on enjoying the sport
- Talent camp in particular was mentioned several times as a negative experience due to athletes feeling under pressure to perform well as it is a 'selection camp' for the Talent Squad
- There are lots of 'race situations' on this camp to trial athletes on and this can be a lot physically as athletes want to prove themselves so pay less attention to their fatigue/well-being and don't want to risk sitting out activities
- Lots of mentions of both the squad and camp being a pressured experience to live up to coach expectations and athletes comparing themselves/being compared to others

3. Transition to Senior

- Lack of squad support and clear goals for young/developing/B-team seniors is very demotivating (commented repeatedly)
- Athletes feel abandoned by British Orienteering as there are very limited competition or training opportunities
- Where you go to university has a huge impact
- If you go to an 'orienteering university' there are suddenly lots of training opportunities and older athletes to train with and there is a risk of over-training and becoming too focussed on orienteering
- If you don't go to an 'orienteering university' then athletes can feel left out as they miss out on funding and training opportunities and risk feeling demotivated
- On the other hand, many athletes flourish in these new environments and find their enjoyment of the sport and ability both improve
- Athletes who have had training advice through regional squads/BOF squads are left to fend for themselves and have unsupervised training which can risk overtraining
- The load of moving to a new environment, starting new courses, new training opportunities can be overwhelming and athletes are unsupported during this challenging period

4. Overlap/Conflict Between BOF and JROS

- Athletes selected for both a BOF and a JROS summer camp risk fatigue (some may be able to deal with this and others might not) whereas other athletes don't get selected for either

- Similar issue with athletes combining regional squad training weekends with BOF squad weekends – lots of travel and lots of training opportunities which athletes are not mature enough or don't feel able to turn down
- Different selection races for BOF squads/competitions, regional squad selection and JROS camp selection mean athletes have to do a lot of travel and perform at many different events
- Risk of fatigue from over-competing or over-training and fatigue or reduced enjoyment due to lots of travel

5. International Competitions

- A few comments that international competitions can be a stressful experience when for juniors especially it shouldn't be
- Lots of work has gone in to preparing for competitions which is in itself exhausting physically and mentally but can also lead to big emotional lows when results don't live up to expectations

Key issues

- Extreme demotivation
- Over-training, training/competing through injury/injury, too much travel and orienteering leading to fatigue and risk of illness/injury
- Too much pressure
- Athletes feeling abandoned and unsupported
- Athletes feeling upset

All of these can have a negative effect on an athlete's life outside of orienteering and can also lead to them becoming disengaged with orienteering and potentially leaving the sport.

Appendix 4 - History of GB Orienteering's Talent Pathway

Nick Lightfoot – Version 3 - Oct 2019

Introduction

As part of the review of the Talent and Performance Pathway I've compiled a brief history of the development of international orienteering and coaching in the UK to give context to the current pathway, help to understand different perspectives, and hopefully learn lessons which might inform the future direction.

The account is partly from my own experience and records as an athlete, coach and parent at club regional and national level, but I've done quite a bit of online research and spoken to former athletes, coaches and committee members to fill the gaps and verify my assumptions and memories where possible.

Dates, details and interpretation of events often conflicted so I chose a narrative style in an attempt to identify the best fit with the various contradictory 'facts'. It also helps link the various threads of the story. I've included details of UK orienteering generally including governance, events and participation to help understand the pathway in the context of the development of the sport as a whole.

The decades referred to in the titles only loosely follow the actual timing. There seems to be a pattern of a transition period at the end of each decade so I've followed that pattern starting each section with events that occurred towards the end of the previous decade.

I've included a few names, but there are many other athletes, coaches, managers, policy makers, clubs, etc. who don't get a mention. My own clubs, Walton Chasers, Sheffield University and South Yorkshire Orienteering, all get a mention, but I hope not disproportionate to their significance in the pathway at various stages.

1960s *Early Years*

Orienteering originated in Scandinavia in the late 19th century but only started to spread to other European countries in the 1940s and 50s culminating in the formation of the International Orienteering Federation with 10 founding nations in 1961. At this time the UK had only isolated groups of orienteers in Scotland, Lake District and South England. The Scots were the first to organise themselves with formation of the Scottish Orienteering Association (SOA) and introduction of the Scottish Championships in the early 60s. By the mid-60s a group of track and cross country internationalists including John Disley, Chris Brasher, Roger Bannister, Gordon Pirie, Martin Hyman, Peter Palmer and others, spurred on by the young Swede, Jan Kjellstrom, formed the Southern Navigators club and started to develop orienteering in the Surrey area.

In 1966 Brasher and Disley teamed up with Gerry Charnley, who'd been pioneering orienteering in the North West, to form the English Orienteering Association in order to send a team to the inaugural World Orienteering Championships (WOC) in 1966. The English team dominated by track athletes, struggled to make an impression against the orienteering specialists from Scandinavia and Switzerland, and battled it out for minor places against the likes of Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The IOF insisted that a GB team should compete at WOC and in 1967 the English and Scottish associations combined to form the British Orienteering Federation (BOF).

Throughout the 60s enthusiastic school teachers started to introduce their pupils to the new sport, but it was the Scots who led the way in junior development with the introduction of the Scottish Schools Association and the first 'instructors' courses. In 1966 Peter Palmer, one of the Surrey based athletes, organised the South East Schools Championships and took the 8 best competitors to the Swedish Oringen. The following year he organised the inaugural British Junior Championships in the Forest of Dean.

Several clubs were formed with schools as the nucleus, most notably Walton Chasers formed when Palmer moved from Surrey to Stafford. Older kids went off to university where they set up new University clubs and the first British Universities Championships was organised in 1969.

1970s *Early Pathway*

By the early seventies BOF was established as a federation of 12 regions to suit the requirements of the Sports Council funding body. Clubs sent representatives to regional committees who in turn had representatives at national level. The BOF executive committee set up a number of sub-committees with specific remits such as 'Competitions', 'International', 'Schools and Junior' and later 'Coaching'. The offices moved from Scotland to Derbyshire and a professional officer (Tony Walker a former GB team member) was employed to support the work of the various committees, and develop relationships with the 'Sports Council' and sponsors (typically drinks companies). When Tony left in 1976 he was replaced by Brian Porteous another former team member.

The event structure was similar to today's with the JK at Easter, British, Scottish, Northern, Midland and Southern Championships, regional 'Badge Events' and local 'Club Events'. The 21-35 age class was by far the largest followed by the older junior classes and there were far fewer female than male competitors. The British Junior Championships was a separate competition and junior classes at regional and national events typically ran team competitions with a mixture of school and club teams competing for points won in the individual races.

WOC continued biennially with the GB team largely fighting over the minor places with the exception of Geoff Peck who finished 11th in Czechoslovakia in 1972 and Carol McNeil 12th in Norway in 1978 and 7th in Finland in 1979. Peck made a rapid rise to world class level starting orienteering in the mid-60s at school, progressing to Edinburgh University from where he dominated domestic races and competed in WOC 1970 at the age of just 20, but although he continued to compete at WOC for the rest of the decade he couldn't better his 11th place. McNeil had a slower rise to world class level dominating the domestic scene and competing at WOC for over a decade before finally breaking through and competing on a par with the Scandinavians in their own countries. McNeil also contributed on the governance side representing the interests of women, the SOA and elite orienteering on the BOF executive committee.

The hosting of the World Championships in Scotland in 1976 was a focal point for UK Orienteering. The orienteering world descended on Britain in the preceding years with the JK and British Champs dominated by the Scandinavians and orienteering was transformed into a proper sport with professional maps, and big race atmospheres. WOC race director, Brasher, was able to use his media connections to maximise coverage including a 45 minute highlights programme on primetime BBC. The following year BOF membership doubled.

In the run up to WOC 1976 Brasher, the chair of the International Committee, set up the 'Senior Pool' an elite training group which he dubbed the 'Troika' and asked fellow Southern Navigator and athlete Martin Hyman to take charge. Training was supplemented by special long 'elite' courses at national and regional events and Internationals Matches against other countries.

Meanwhile the Schools and Junior Committee set up the 'Junior Pool' which catered for 12-18 year olds offering a series of locally organised weekend and week-long training sessions. Some sessions were for specific age groups, some were boys or girls only and some were open to the whole group. The week long courses usually in North Wales or the Lake District were typically led by Scandinavian coaches. A few of the best juniors joined the 'Troika', notably Jean Ramsden and Chris Hirst who went on to run at WOC in Scotland and formed the core of the GB team for the following decade.

There were a handful of Junior Internationals, and Junior Tours in the summer provided experience of competing abroad primarily for juniors without international experience. The tours offered two places from each region with stronger regions taking any spare slots. Selection was primarily based on performance at major events but with some places offered to juniors who'd shown a talent for mapping or course planning. 50% of the cost was subsidised by British Orienteering.

By 1976 WOC had grown with new countries like Ireland, Belgium, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand scrapping it out for the minor places, but although the men's team finished a credible 6th place in the relay, expectations on home terrain had been

higher, so the International Committee set up a working group led by Brasher to look to the future. Hyman was to continue as Chair of the rebadged 'GB Senior Squad', and on the back of the success of Walton Chasers juniors and 15 years of coaching and committee work at club regional and national level, Peter Palmer was asked to set up a GB Junior Squad and given 'carte blanche' to develop a junior coaching system targeting long term success.

1980s *The Squad System*

BOF became a limited company in 1981 and a new management committee was formed although the regional representation and committee structures remained unchanged. Brasher and Disley moved on to focus on setting up the London Marathon leaving the governance of the sport they'd pioneered in new hands.

Buoyed by the success of the 1976 WOC, the Scottish Orienteering Association introduced the biennial Scottish 6 Days coordinated by a full time event manager which became the most successful of a series of summer domestic multi-days, but still dwarfed by the 20,000+ competitors at the equivalent Swedish Oringen. The 7-person overnight Harvester Relays became an established fixture, but a fraction of the size of TioMila and Jukola, the Swedish and Finnish equivalents. The Scandinavian model of major orienteering competitions combined elite competition and mass participation into single event, something that Brasher and Disley were to emulate at the London Marathon.

As a cross country runner Palmer valued athletic ability and a competitive mind-set, but as a teacher he recognised that the technical skills could only be acquired through experience in the forest so he set about increasing the opportunities for juniors to compete and train in the best terrain at home and abroad. He put the emphasis on learning experiences and youngster generated fun/social activities rather than training load or competitive success. Additional summer tours were introduced at different age groups as well as an Anglo/Swedish exchange enabling juniors to spend time living and training with Swedish families.

The GB Junior Squad focussed on the 15-18 range with week-long courses in Lakes and North Wales and weekend courses often shared with Regional Squads some of whom were becoming more active and even organising foreign tours of their own. In the south where regional squads weren't as well developed a training group known as the South Centre of Excellence was set up to coordinate local training for promising juniors and seniors.

Squad and team management was entirely volunteer led with a mixture of former athletes, parents and friends. Costs were minimised through borrowed school mini-busses, self-catering, floor space accommodation, and any money from BOF, Sports Council, fund raising, and sponsorship (notably Silva UK) used to subsidise athlete and coach contributions. Coaching and training activities were based on the models learnt from the visiting Scandinavian coaches in the 70s with exercises targeting basic skills, terrain time trials and local competitions.

Selections and demotions were flexible with Palmer using a mixture of competition results, squad introductory courses and recommendations from regional squad coaches and others. This resulted in a cross section of talent with faster novice orienteers training alongside more experienced 'navigators' and learning from each other.

Older juniors with potential were invited to join the Senior Squad where they were introduced to more serious physical training regimes and a more competitive environment, although Hyman shared Palmer's sense of fun and encouraged a relaxed atmosphere at camps. Former athletes like Peck and McNeill were retained as squad coaches, older athletes like Hirst and Ramsden acted as mentors and younger athletes were invited as control hangers at regional and national junior camps and tours. Although squad and team activities were subsidised, athletes were largely self-funded with some taking part time jobs to leave time for travel and training, in some cases helped by Scandinavian clubs, and others making money as map makers.

University clubs played an important role in bridging the gap from junior to senior, providing opportunities for athletics and fell running as well as orienteering competition,

local training, ad-hoc foreign tours and reinforcing the social/team aspect of orienteering for elite and novice orienteers alike. Edinburgh dominated the 70s but by the early 80s squad athletes were playing key roles in establishing university clubs throughout the country with university teams, in particular Sheffield, featuring strongly in domestic competitions. The status of the British Universities Championships rose as it became a selection race for the World Universities Championships with BUSF sending teams biennially from the inaugural event in 1978 providing a first taste of major international events for many young athletes.

WOC performances were solid with the regular top 20s and the GB team established itself in the top half of the 20 or so nations at WOC with a young team drawn largely from the early days of

the Junior Squad with notable contributions from Martin Bagness and Colin McIntyre in particular. By the mid-80s young athletes such as Yvette Hague and Steve Hale were making their WOC debuts as juniors with over a decade of orienteering and coaching behind them and the difference showed when Hague won a World Cup race in France in 1986, the competition's inaugural year.

Our top juniors were also starting get noticed with Stephen Palmer and Claire Bolland winning their classes at the prestigious Swedish Oringen. The European U21 Championships was introduced in the mid-80s and although the GB juniors didn't quite have the impact hoped for, they made a breakthrough at the end of the decade with Hague winning the Gold medal at the World Universities Championships in Latvia and the women's relay team of Hague, Bolland, Kirsty Bryan-Jones and Jenny James winning Silver.

In 1986 Palmer retired from teaching and was appointed as BOF Coaching Director on a full time basis - a dual performance and development role which gave him more time to focus on increasing the number of coaches, both within the squad system and the broader orienteering community through clubs and schools. He started the British Schools Championships in 1987 and worked towards establishing orienteering on the National Curriculum. Coaching qualifications were introduced with courses available for teachers and novice coaches, and the more senior qualifications for squad coaches initially awarded based on experience. Coaching materials were sparse and although books by Palmer, McNeil, Ramsden and others on orienteering training and teaching in schools covered the basics, there was little shared knowledge of elite coaching techniques.

Welfare and safeguarding took a low profile, with athletes and young coaches being given a long lead and a work hard and play hard approach which contrasts sharply with today's more professional approach, but serious incidents were avoided and arguably the more relaxed approach helped to keep athletes healthy and fuelled the long term commitment needed to develop as a world class athlete.

1990s *Medal Success and the Next Generation*

The UK's influence in the International Orienteering Federation continued to grow due largely to former athletes such as Sue Harvey and Brian Porteous, but by the early 90s the vision and drive of the founding fathers had begun to wain within BOF itself and the self-interest of the rapidly ageing membership became something of a barrier to elite orienteering and junior development. The political climate in the 1980s had impacted on the level of school support for extra-curricular activities generally which was compounded for outdoor/adventure sports like orienteering by health safety clamp downs following several high profile incidents in other sports. BOF membership began to decline particularly in the younger adult and older junior classes.

By 1993 WOC had grown to more than 30 countries, and Great Britain finally made its mark on the world stage with Yvette Hague winning bronze in the new Short Course discipline and Steve Hale missing out on Bronze by just one second. The Men's Relay team of Jon Musgrave, Bagness, Palmer and Hale went one better winning the Silver medal with Hale's performance on the last leg earning huge respect from the Scandinavians as he chased down the leaders missing out on Gold by just 15 seconds. Bagness and Musgrave went on to make significant contributions as mappers and coaches, whilst Palmer and Hale moved to Sweden and took on the Scandinavians in

their own back yard; Palmer twice winning the first leg of the prestigious TioMila night relay and Hale winning both the Swedish and Long and Short Distance classes. But it was Hague who went on to have the biggest impact, winning two Silver medals at WOC 1995 in USA and finally the Gold in 1999 fittingly on home terrain as WOC returned to Scotland. Throughout the 90s the Men's and Women's WOC Relay teams were rarely outside the top six, and GB was established as a major orienteering nation alongside the Russians, Czechs, and Danes, but still trailing the other Scandinavians and the Swiss.

Towards the end of the 80s Palmer had taken more of a back seat in the Junior Squad and encouraged a new generation of coaches, the majority of whom had been coached from a young age themselves, some were former elite athletes and others with academic backgrounds in sports science, and a few were paid part-time to coordinate squad activities. The mix of experience brought a better understanding of orienteering processes and new coaching ideas. The Junior European Championships evolved into an annual Junior World Championships but

the GB juniors struggled to make an impact.

Race preparation became part of the curriculum but the squad continued to focus on providing a technical base and passion for orienteering with the long term aim of creating the next generation of world class athletes.

Throughout the 80s the Senior and Junior Squads had operated largely independently, with the juniors focussing mainly on technique, and the seniors on physical and mental aspects. There was pressure to work closer together and use a more consistent approach although there was reluctance on both sides to change. Junior selections were moved to the 'international selections committee' following pressure to make them more objective and transparent, and although this was seen as fairer, intuitive talent spotting played a smaller part and the squad lost the earlier mix of skills. The juniors started to combine with the seniors for the 'inaugural' weekend of planning and training in the autumn, otherwise the Junior Squad continued to operate separately with teams of young but experienced coaches at tours, camps and internationals.

The number of junior international competitions increased with the Junior 6 Nations competition and Junior Home Internationals providing opportunities for younger or less experienced juniors. In a bid to make domestic events more exciting for juniors, new junior focussed team competitions such as the Junior Inter Regional Championships and the Peter Palmer Relays were created and squad coaches were instrumental in introducing race commentaries to improve the atmosphere at major events.

Palmer retired from BOF in 1992 and took up numerous invites to lecture on the GB coaching system in countries around the world including Sweden. Frustrated with the decline in junior orienteering and inspired by the newly formed Scottish Schools Orienteering Association, he set up the British Schools Orienteering Association in 1995 to promote orienteering in schools. The BSOA encouraged regions to set up their own schools leagues and championships and from 1997 the BSOA and SSOA sent English and Scottish teams to the World Schools Orienteering Championships which became an inspiration both for schools teams and for individuals setting out on their orienteering careers. By the end of the decade almost 1000 juniors were attending the annual British Schools Championships.

Derek Allison, an experienced coach and Scottish 6 Days event manager, took over from Palmer as Coaching Director in 1992. Having worked closely with Palmer and Hyman he was able to bring continuity to the role as he worked to formalise the coaching structure and embrace the changes that were to come.

Although the medal success at WOC 99 in Scotland attracted some attention from the national media, the event as a whole failed to have the impact of WOC 76 and membership continued to decline from a peak of almost 13,000 at the start of the decade to less than 10,000 by the Millennium.

2000s Lottery Funding

By the mid-90s sport in the UK had hit rock bottom with a dismal performance at the 1996 Olympics mirrored by a decline in participation generally. In a bid to restore national pride and health, the government used some of the proceeds from the new

National Lottery to fund elite sport at GB level through UK Sport and target participation through Sport England and equivalent home nation organisations. It would be interesting to know how eagerly BOF embraced the new funding bodies, but suddenly there was a new driving force in UK orienteering.

UK Sport provided funding for National Governing Bodies (NGBs) like BOF to maintain a coaching and support framework plus grants paid directly to athletes whilst Sport England funded the junior programmes to age 20. The national squad system was rebranded as the World Class Programme in 1998, and Goran Andersson, a Swede with an impressive pedigree as elite athlete and coach, was appointed as 'Performance Director'. Although the terminology changed to suit the funding bodies and the athletes, coaches and support staff had more paid time to commit to orienteering, there was a lot of continuity with experienced orienteering coaches working alongside experts in sports psychology and physiology.

The GB team continued to make progress winning a total of 8 medals in the 2000 World Cup series led by Heather Monro who finished 3rd overall taking 2 silvers and 2 golds along the way and ending the year 2nd in the World Rankings. Jamie Stevenson started to make his mark winning a World Cup medal and the Swedish Ultra Long Distance Championships. The following

year he anchored the Men's Relay team to Gold at the prestigious Nordic Championships in Finland alongside Palmer and Hale. Like many of his fellow squad members, Stevenson had moved to Scandinavia after finishing University and was able to translate Andersson's Swedish notes to create the Squad Training Book, a comprehensive guide covering all aspects of elite training.

A second round of funding in 2001 required further restructuring and Allison was appointed as World Class Programme Director to oversee 'Performance', 'Potential' and 'Start' Programmes. Andersson continued briefly as Performance Coach but returned to Sweden and was replaced by Dave Peel a WOC athlete and junior coach, and former team mate of Palmer and Hale at Walton Chasers.

In an effort to attract a TV audience and with one eye on the Olympics, the IOF had embraced the new 'Sprint Orienteering' discipline which started in forests and parks and migrated to more urban settings and although the skills and processes were very similar to forest orienteering the Scandinavians had lost their terrain advantage giving confidence to other nations.

Much of the new funding relied on securing results targets, but with younger athletes competing for places with former medal winners and the new Sprint discipline introduced at WOC alongside the Middle, Long and Relay, the programme was confident of achieving the target of 2 medals. WOC in Finland proved a disappointment with only Stevenson's 5th place in the Sprint but two years later meticulous race preparation saw Stevenson taking the Gold in the Sprint and he recovered quickly to anchor the Relay team to Bronze alongside Dan Marston and Jon Duncan his Junior Squad team mates from a decade earlier.

It was becoming increasingly difficult to win medals at the now annual WOC with over 40 nations competing and the Danes, French, Russians and other Eastern European nations all pushing for places, but Great Britain continued to perform well. Monro became the first Brit to win the elite class at the prestigious Swedish Oringen and then finally achieved a WOC medal winning Sprint Bronze in Japan in 2005. The following year Stevenson added a forest WOC medal to his collection winning a bronze medal in the middle class in his adopted home Denmark, and at WOC 2008 Stevenson anchored the Relay team to Gold alongside Duncan and Graham Gristwood a fitting send off to coach Peel who took up a new challenge as BOF Event Manager later that year.

The World Class Programme employed up to 10 managers, coaches, and support staff on a part time or consultancy basis, mostly experienced orienteers. Junior and senior internationals were fully funded and camps and tours were subsidised. In addition to paid 'staff' there were many volunteer coaches supporting camps, tours and internationals.

Athletes were encouraged to use 'Personal Coaches' as mentors and to support their individual training programmes. Personal Coaches were welcome at squad camps and internationals and were able to share ideas and experience generally throughout the programme.

The Start Squad included 40+ athletes from 15 to 18 years running domestic camps and the traditional summer tours open to more athletes with younger groups in Scotland and older groups travelling to Scandinavia. The European Youth Championships EYOC was added to the calendar as a motivational experience for younger juniors. The Lagganlia summer camp catered for MW14s nominated by Regional Squads who had reached a minimum standard at junior selection races and was itself used in talent identification for the Start Squad. The Future Champions Cup, introduced as a domestic focus for aspiring juniors, was popular with athletes but using the final for older junior selection caused problems with exam clashes.

Allison continued with his Coaching Director role employing a part time Coaching Manager who together with the regional representatives on the Coaching Committee managed the coaching qualifications system as well as organising regular coaching days for clubs and individual members. In 2003 there was an attempt to set up a Centre of Excellence in the Lake District by converting an old barn but planning permission was refused. Most BOF regions had active junior squads with experienced coaches and regular training. Club coaching activity increased with support from BOF development staff and bolstered by junior team competitions such as the Yvette Baker Trophy and the Jamie Stevenson Trophy (the equivalent in Scotland).

The Potential Programme catered for older juniors targeting JWOC and younger seniors progressing towards the full GB team. The Junior European Cup replaced the 6 Nations International and GB juniors regularly featured in the top 10, but JWOC proved more of a challenge with Alison O'Neil's Bronze in the Long Distance and 4th place in the Middle in 2004

being one of the few highlights. The introduction of the Sprint to JWOC provided more opportunities and in the 2010 JWOC Kris Jones won Silver. There were a few cases of illness and burn-out, but whether the increased number of junior internationals or higher intensity of the funded programmes had any bearing is unclear.

University clubs continued to play an important role, with GB teams excelling at the World Universities Championships twice taking the Gold in the Women's Relay. Sheffield in particular proving a popular destination for young athletes with many of them staying on after graduating to join local club South Yorkshire Orienteers creating an unofficial centre of excellence with a strong elite training group supported by local coaches. SYO employed elite athletes as club coaches and mappers and benefited from the increased activity generally and many of the athletes went on to win medals at World Cup and World Universities level.

Much of the Sport England funding was allocated to Development and BOF were able to employ development officers tasked with increasing participation and membership, some targeting specific regions and others targeting particular demographics such as schools or higher education. Most of the development staff were experienced orienteers many of them former athletes or coaches. However the sport still lacked a shared vision and programme had limited success in engaging with clubs. The membership decline was halted and the older age groups continued to grow, but whilst schools activity increased in some areas, attendance at the British Schools Championships fell.

After her World Championship win Hague was nominated for the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year and the Observer ranked her 10th out of Britain's top 20 sportswomen and Stevenson appeared on BBC's 'A Question of Sport' but even World Champions are only of transient interest to national media. Trail O was another new discipline embraced by the British and in 2004 the GB team won Gold in the World Championships, and in 2005 BOF staged a successful World Cup round in Guildford but again the media impact was minimal.

2010s *Reboot and Rebrand*

After more than ten years of lottery funding a whole industry of professionals and academics had appeared to support sports performance and development in the UK. The funding bodies, under pressure to justify their existence, naturally looked to exert more control over NGBs, who in turn came under pressure to conform to 'best practices' and 'learn from other sports'.

In 2006 Mike Hamilton, former Performance Director at GB Hockey, was appointed as CEO and set about modernising the organisation in an attempt to maintain funding levels. The old 'Federation' was rebranded as 'British Orienteering' with a new logo. A more top down governance structure was introduced with the Management Committee being replaced by a board initially made up of directors elected by the membership, and later joined by independent directors to broaden the skillset and introduce ideas from other sports and industries. Hamilton produced a new vision document entitled More People, Places, Podium (MP3) encapsulating ambitions for participation, events and international competitions, and stressing the competitive nature of the sport.

In 2008, with UK Sport's focus on the 2012 London Olympics putting orienteering's funding at risk, a review led by Hamilton proposed a new framework and culture for the International Programme designed to secure increased Sport England funding. A generic model called Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD), developed in Canada but adopted by NGBs worldwide, was proposed, along with a new 'high performance culture', 'centres of excellence', and coaching delivered by professional staff. A lower level of funding was secured but it was deemed sufficient to justify the new approach. Gareth Candy the GB Start and Potential Manager, and former Head Coach at Orienteering Australia, was appointed as International Programme Director. Sarah Hague, sister of Yvette and a former GB squad member with athletics coaching experience but little contact with orienteering since the 80s, was appointed as Talent Squad Coach.

The terminology used to describe the new World Class Programme varied from year to year and document to document, but essentially the pathway consisted of 5 tiers including Club Talent Squads, Regional Squads, a national Talent Squad (taking juniors from 16 to 20), and a two tier Performance Squad for senior athletes. At one stage a 'Watch Squad' was introduced to monitor the progress of athletes on the edge of the squad, in particular younger

seniors, without offering coaching support. Candy left in 2011 and Hague took over as Performance Manager appointing Jacky Newton, an experienced athletics and hill running coach as Talent Coach.

The Senior Squad continued to operate with a similar structure and culture to previous programmes albeit with dramatically reduced funding. Experienced orienteers operating as part-time paid consultants delivered management and support at camps and international competitions assisted by volunteer coaches. There was some financial support for athlete and coach expenses at international competitions particularly in the run up to the home WOC in 2015, but athletes were largely self-funded with many of the senior athletes having to juggle training and racing around full time jobs, and relying on crowd-funding and public donations including support from the Orienteering Foundation a registered charity funded by bequests and donations.

Although international results weren't at the same level as the previous decade, GB athletes continued to impress on the world stage. Scott Fraser, a talented track athlete, saw his strengths in the Sprint discipline, but it was in the forest that he achieved his first WOC success finishing 6th in the Long Distance, which remains the best GB male performance at the original WOC discipline. Fraser went on to win Silver at WOC 2012 and numerous World Cup top 10s in Sprint. Kris Jones considered local terrain at Sheffield University more conducive to Sprint orienteering, following up his JWOC Silver medal with Gold in the World Universities Championships and although he just missed out on a medal at WOC 2016 he went on to win the Bronze at EOC in 2018.

GB men were particularly strong in relays, both at club and international level with Ralph Street along with Fraser, Jones and Gristwood forming the nucleus of a relay team that finished just outside the medals in numerous World and European Championships. Cat Taylor, a talented junior who missed JWOC through illness but later moved to Sweden to kick-start her career, had the most success in forest disciplines winning Bronze in the Long Distance at EOC in 2014 followed by 5th and 6th in Middle and Long at WOC 2015 in Scotland. The new Mixed Sprint Relay, introduced in WOC 2014, was seen as a particular opportunity for the GB team who've achieved some strong performances including Gold at WUOC in 2016 and 4th place at WOC in the same year.

Two Centres of Excellence were set up at Edinburgh and Sheffield in partnership with the local universities making use of student bursaries and sports science facilities and specialists in physiology, psychology, nutrition etc. The funding at Edinburgh was sufficient to award athlete support grants and appoint an experienced orienteer as part time Performance Coach to coordinate athlete training programmes including occasional tours and camps. The Performance Coach initially also operated as the Head Coach of the GB Senior Squad and later as the Talent Squad Coach. Sheffield was less well funded and continued to operate in the same 'self-help' style as previous decades with informal training organised by volunteers, typically senior athletes or local coaches, but with the addition of occasional support from Talent Squad consultants.

Early in the decade the Talent Programme embraced the new culture with more focus on generic aspects such as physical training and testing, and borrowing ideas from other sports such as Talent Transfer and Marginal Gains without considering their relevance to orienteering. The Talent Squad operated largely independently of the rest of the pathway with little sharing of resources. Squad coaches were expected to monitor athlete development plans with targets for athlete contact hours, but there was little contact with personal coaches and regional squads. Attendance at camps fell and the introduction of upfront payments was a catalyst for some talented athletes to choose not to take up invites where the programme didn't fit their plans or budget.

There was a gradual demise of the Future Champions Cup and junior selections started to focus on the JK plus 3 other races on relevant terrains. An annual Talent Camp for MW16s was used to select a handful of new athletes to the Talent Squad with little input from regional squads. The Talent Squad was envisaged as a five year programme with results at JWOC as the target. EYOC was used as a stepping stone for athletes considered to have JWOC potential and JEC and the summer tours to Scandinavia were originally considered a distraction as the timing didn't fit a JWOC focussed year plan. There was a reluctance to select younger non squad members for EYOC although squad membership wasn't a pre-requisite for international selection.

One of the objectives of the World Class Programme was to 'influence' club and regional squads in support of the national squad programmes. Attempts to do so antagonised some club and regional squad coaches who saw their role as providing a broader experience for

young orienteers not just as feeder programmes for the national squad. The LTAD model used to describe the various tiers of the programme includes an 'Active for Life' stage, a key component of the original Canadian model which connects the Performance Pathway with development of the sport as a whole as well acknowledging the importance of athlete development and welfare beyond performance goals.

All but one of the summer training tours were dropped from the junior programme due to a lack of funding and staff. The tours were seen by many as a key part of athlete development, particularly for those on the edge of the national squads and so Junior Regional Orienteering Squads (JROS) was formed as an umbrella organisation for the 12 regional squads to coordinate summer training tours and national camps for 14-20 year olds. JROS managed all aspects of the summer tours including funding, selection, safety etc. and maintained the traditional social and coach development elements. The older groups became more a self-help to encourage athlete independence.

Allison had continued as Coaching Director and was able to get UKCC accreditation for the new level 1 and 2 courses which ticked a few NGB good practice boxes as well as raising the standard of schools, club and regional coaching. The introduction of coach licensing, required for insurance purposes, raised standards of welfare and safeguarding. Unfortunately the Sport England funding included no specific provision for coach development and the Coaching Director and Coach Manager positions were lost before higher level qualifications could be completed.

In 2014 Newton succeeded Hague as Performance Manager and appointed Paul Murgatroyd, the squad physiologist as part time Talent Manager, and Mark Nixon, the Performance Coach at the Edinburgh Centre of Excellence, and former GB international as Technical Coach. The Talent Squad was split into two tiers corresponding with school and university ages with the older group reverting to paying per camp to allow more flexibility in preparing for JWOC. A pre-JWOC summer tour was introduced and the squad

camps generally became more popular with athletes. Results at JWOC started to improve with regular top 10 performances in all disciplines although not all the successful athletes were squad members.

Events benefited from a mixture of new technology and ideas inspired by international orienteering. Digital timing revolutionised event organisation and planning and proved a hit on string courses for the very young. Digital mapping and printing impacted on the quality and ease of production of orienteering courses at events and for training. GPS tracking initially used by the elite for TV presentations and training analysis, became a standard for many club orienteers. New formats such as Sprint and Middle were now part of the regular orienteering calendar and inspired others such as Urban, particularly popular with veteran classes, and Ultrasprint with large scale maps and mazes, ideal for younger kids. Commentaries had become the norm at major events benefiting from improvements in event timing and computing although some felt they were too elite focussed.

The Development Programme underwent much the same transformation as the Performance Programme. There was a much stronger vision for the sport but the staff found it difficult to sell the vision and get clubs on board. In an effort to achieve Sport England targets, participation programmes developed 'products' such as 'Xplorer' and 'The Route' which were outsourced to sports service providers with some participation success but no clear benefit to the sport.

Scotland gained a reputation for event management staging successful World Championships, Park World Tour, Junior European Cup, and World Schools Championships working with government bodies and employing non orienteering specialist where appropriate. The biennial Scottish 6-Days had built a reputation as a quality event which contributed to the local economy and played a key role along with EventScotland and the SOA in British Orienteering successful bid for WOC 2015. Events and media specialists were employed to support the experienced volunteer organising team and with improvements to TV production they were able to stage a spectacular event with extensive live TV coverage and despite the lack of GB medal success, orienteering now features regularly on Scottish TV raising the profile of the sport.

The Scottish talent and performance pathway continues to be run by experienced volunteers. Many of the domestically based GB athletes moved to Scotland to take advantage of the terrain and open programme of quality training delivered by the Scottish Elite Development Squad. The Scottish Junior Squad performs strongly in inter- regional and home international competitions and in recent years has produced a disproportionate number of GB junior team

members. Area Squads and inter-area championships were introduced to provide breadth to the pathway.

Although external funding came primarily from Sport England whose remit was participation and talent development in England, BOF were able to fund a UK wide programme including some support for seniors. The senior programme was particular under-funded although some additional BOF funds were provided to support the home WOC. The Scottish squads received some support from Sport Scotland and the SOA, and Wales and Northern Ireland received of small amounts of funding for limited periods.

2020s ***Brave New World***

Once again as the decade draws to an end orienteering in the UK finds itself in a transitional period. Hamilton retired in 2018 and was replaced as CEO by Peter Hart, a former athlete in modern pentathlon and CEO at GB Pentathlon, with some experience of orienteering. With uncertainty over future Sport England funding, Hart and the board face a challenge to find a viable way forward for developing the sport that will necessarily need the support of the membership.

Funding for the Talent and Performance programme was reduced dramatically in 2017. Head of Development, Craig Anthony, took over as part time Performance Manager with Murgatroyd and Nixon retained in their part time roles to support the Talent Programme. The decision was taken to disband the Senior Squad and use the remaining funds for

athlete support grants targeting a few prospective WOC athletes. After a temporary reprieve under volunteer management the senior squad is again without leadership.

Despite the funding cuts JWOC results continued to improve and in 2018 Matt Fellbaum won the Sprint Silver, despite his focus on the forest events. JWOC 2019 in Denmark proved to be the most successful yet with Grace Molloy winning the Bronze in Sprint and Long, Fiona Bunn winning Silver in the Middle, and Bunn and Molloy combining with Megan Keith to take the Gold in the Relay.

The IOF is splitting WOC into Sprint and Forest events in alternate years and a new Knockout Sprint format is being introduced in a further bid to increase the TV appeal with the Olympics as the ultimate goal. The split places more uncertainty over the future of GB elite forest orienteering as Sprint and Relay continue to be seen by many as the best option for medal success despite the achievements of the juniors in forest disciplines in recent years. Increased specialisation, focus on WOC and JWOC, and limited support has led to athletes taking more time away from orienteering to focus on athletics and hill running with some not returning to the sport. On the plus side the success of elite orienteers such as Kris Jones in track and road events is bringing positive exposure to the sport.

The athletes themselves continue to work hard despite the lack of funding and many have been involved in helping to develop and promote the sport with support from enthusiastic volunteers. A new web site, a podcast and a series of coaching videos have been developed to promote the team and link the athletes to the broader pathway, and many athletes are involved in mapping, coaching and event management roles.

High performance sport is not without its risks; results targets and focus on selections throughout the pathway combined with online training diaries, social media and limited coach monitoring leave athletes exposed to psychological pressures, injuries and potential long term illness. The achievements of the young GB team at JWOC 2019 are a testament to the hard work of the athletes themselves and the various coaches and squads that have supported them from a young age, and the results may well have a positive effect on future funding, but the challenge is to ensure that all the athletes within the pathway have a positive experience and the sport as a whole benefits.

Domestic events continue to evolve with the mixed sprint relay format being introduced and mobile phones beginning to be used for event management and timing, dramatically reducing the organisation and suggesting possibilities for new event models.

The uncertainty over external funding has prompted renewed focus on volunteers within British Orienteering. BOF news and social media now covers all aspects of the sport and Development has become more club orientated. Whilst many clubs remain reluctant to get involved in junior development, clubs like SYO have shown what can be done with part time funding of a

development programme which now boasts thousands of local school age participants and a rapidly expanding membership of juniors and their parents.

British Orienteering now has a Youth Strategy targeting participation in the older junior age range where drop out remains high. The team behind the strategy recognise the mutual benefits of working closely with the talent pathway but also have concerns about the effect of selection generally and the national programme's focus on a few individuals from a young age.

Meanwhile the Scots continue to lead the way with a successful bid for the Sprint WOC in 2022, and a talent programme that produced the majority of the medal winners at JWOC 2019.

Summary

Looking back there seem to have been three distinct phases:

- **The 60s and 70s** was a time of rapid development of the sport driven by passionate founder members with focus on international competition and development of orienteering in schools, universities, clubs and regions and the emergence of a talent pathway.
- **The 80s and 90s** was a period of consolidation with the sport managed in the members' interests with little change in structures and initial growth in membership followed by decline. After 20 years the talent pathway eventually delivered the medals envisaged by the early pioneers as well as an army of enthusiastic and experienced coaches, planners and committee members.
- **The 00s and 10s** was a period of modernisation and investment in performance and participation driven by external funding bodies, halting the decline in membership but leading to fragmentation of the sport. The new World Class Programme continued to maintain GBs place as one of the top 10 nations but became increasingly remote from clubs and regions.

Observations

The athletes I mentioned are those who achieved the best WOC and JWOC results, limited to medallists in later years. These few athletes may of course be the tip of a much larger iceberg of performance levels throughout the pathway, or just isolated individuals. I've tried to give an impression of the general performance levels in each era below the headlines but available data and time limited research in this area.

The significance of results may not be associated with the era they are reported in. GB WOC medal winning athletes have typically spent 20 years or more in the pathway with 10-15 years development prior to winning medals, the seeds of a medal win may have been sown two decades earlier or achieved through a change in approach in the last few years preceding the win.

References

Here are a few of the many online references I've used during the research. I also trawled the BOF news items, and happened upon copies of Focus magazine, board and committee minutes, etc. I didn't consult the BOF archives at Sheffield University as I think they focus on the earlier years which are quite well summarised online

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Appendix 5 – Some proposed congruent development initiatives

Developing more Junior Coaches

British orienteering's "Every Junior Matters" strategy published in 2018 indicates that "British Orienteering will..... Develop a plan to increase the number of qualified junior coaches". From the point of view of the Talent Pathway and the recommendations of this report this is a very important piece of work – both to support the improvement to the amount and quality of training and coaching at levels 1 and 2 of the pathway and also to help provide enough coaches to deliver the proposals at level 3 and above.

Discussions have been initiated with British orienteering's Development officer responsible for this strategy to look further at specifics. There may be some aspects where additional pieces of work may need to be considered - Development of Personal Coaches for example.

Universities

Universities have always played a significant role in the Talent Pathway at U23 level providing elite athletes with training groups and resources, sports science support, and a social aspect for motivation. In return current and former squad athletes typically take organisational roles within university clubs, introducing novices and boosting participation in student age groups.

Universities play an important role in the 'Active for Life' stage development, giving an option at for juniors exiting the Club, Regional or Talent programmes to orienteer at social level or continue to develop as athletes and possibly re-join the Performance pathway.

Edinburgh has been used as a Centre of Excellence becoming a focus for the majority of the Talent Squad and many other aspiring athletes. There has been considerable success from this with many athletes benefiting from being part of a focussed and supported group. On occasion athletes have got carried away with their enthusiasm, and become ill or injured. Clearly that is a risk of such a "hot house" system. But equally it can be argued that examples of such "over-enthusiasm" are more likely to be picked up in a situation where the talented athletes are in the same place as opposed to dispersed all around the country. In either case, the key factor is going to be the level of attention and care the coaching staff can provide.

Until recent years Sheffield also acted as a bit of a magnet for aspirational athletes. The BOF talent programme made attempts to formalise this, but the level of external support – e.g. funding from the university, did not match that offered by Edinburgh And even with support from the active local orienteering community, Edinburgh has come to dominate. This has left Sheffield, finding themselves short of experienced orienteers which impacts on the level and quality of orienteering activities and support they offer to performance athletes.

Other University clubs have waxed and waned over the years. Talented athletes who have opted to prioritise their academic studies, have typically then looked to find support from the various sporting excellence programmes most universities offer. This then is more patchy and focussed on generic support, such as strength and conditioning programmes. For more specific Orienteering support they have relied on help from their local O clubs – e.g. to get to races, or to join training groups. And of course where applicable membership of the Tier 2 talent squad.

BOF currently have a development programme supporting universities including advice and support in organising up clubs. JROS also support club training camps alongside the Hawkshead camp, and the Gothenburg summer tour has accommodated students outside the Performance Pathway.

We would suggest extending the programme to include support for performance athletes to strengthen university clubs generally. Specific ideas might include:

Coaching courses for student coaches (performance and novice levels)

Encourage links with local clubs

Use of Centres of Excellence for training camps

Links with local student performance programmes

Local inter university matches (along the lines of the Oxbridge varsity)

Self-help summer tours and competing at international relays

Links with foreign universities

Elite Development Squads

The SOA have provided limited funding to the Scottish Elite Development Squad (SEDS) which puts on informal training camps traditionally coordinated by athletes. SEDS camps have been very popular over the years but its reliance on athlete volunteers for coordination has led to variable activity.

Ideally the concept would be incorporated within the pathway and extended to other regions. Ideas might include:

- A single UK wide Elite Development Squad working alongside the GB Squads
- One or more new Elite Development Squads in England to mirror the Super-Regional approach.
- Incorporating SEDS style athlete self-help camps within the proposed GB Development Squad programme.

One feature of SEDS is that it seems to operate a fairly open door policy for camps. That would seem to be a good feature to retain in any new squads if it's practical.

Training hubs

Not an elite training group, but rather a collection of training resources and coaching services provided on a local basis for squads, clubs and individuals ranging from elite to novice.

Services might include:

Permissions, maps (blank or with exercises)

Control hanging/collecting or semi-permanent controls

Coaching services

Accommodation

Clubs or squads can choose to take a complete package including accommodation and coaching services or just take advantage of a local contact for permissions, maps and advice. The hub could also organise training days or weekends

This approach relieves squad coaches of some of the burden of organising training camps and avoids the pitfalls of armchair planning in unknown areas.

Local clubs have more control over the use of mapped terrain, and more frequent use by smaller groups might have less impact on areas than larger 'events' with parking, assembly, and other environmental issues.

From a development perspective the social and educational aspects of training camps for club orienteers are a means to motivate and strengthen clubs as well encouraging an alternative to events as a participation model.

We would imagine some initial seed money to fund a part time coordinator, but if the scheme proves popular then this could be an opportunity for local coaches or senior athletes to offer services on a professional basis and become self-sustaining.

There have been moves in the past to find a permanent base for a national centre of excellence, but people and management are probably more important. The support of local clubs would also be important.

Lake District clubs and individuals have been offering some of these services as have groups and individuals in Scotland. The concept could be developed on a wider basis as a recognised part of the Development and Performance programmes.

Appendix 6 – Draft Costings

1. New structure costings by level								
Senior Programme - Level 5								
Senior competition Programme - based on 2019 costs							£16,000	
Personal awards to potential medal winners							£9,000	
Consultant sprint coach							£5,000	
Autumn Planning camp							£1,000	Volunteer/Staff expenses
Level 5 total							£31,000	
Development programme - Level 4								
	Athletes	Coaches	Volunteer/Staff in country Transport share	Volunteer/Staff Accommodation, food etc	Volunteer/ Staff assembly	accreditation , entries		Taking averages from last 2 years actuals
Pre JWOC	12	3	£400	£1,200	£1,200		£2,800	
JWOC Prep	12	3	£150	£600	£800		£1,550	
JWOC	12	3	£300	£2,000	£800	£3,000	£6,100	
WUOC - every other year	12	3					£3,000	same as JWOC but halved as only every other year
Summer prep camp - e.g. Around Euromeeting	12	3	£400	£1,200	£1,200		£2,800	
Small amount of specialised Sports Science and specialised coaching support for Level 4							£10,000	
Autumn planning camp	24	6	£300	£1,200	£1,600		£3,100	
Spring Race prep camp	24	6	£300	£1,200	£1,600		£3,100	
Level 4 Total							£32,450	

Talent Programme - level 3								
EYOC	16	4	£800	£1,000	£800	£500	£3,100	
EYOC Prep	16	4	£200	£800	£500		£1,500	
JEC	16	4	£800	£1,000	£800	£400	£3,000	
Level 3 Domestic camps - across 3 Super regional squads, 4 camps for each squad	45	15					£15,000	£5k per Super regional squad - based on current talent programme actuals for 4 domestic camps
3 summer camps - deeside, Stockholm + another	45	15					£8,000	£3K for foreign tour, £2k per domestic tour
Level 3 Total							£30,600	
Admin support for the programme - Employment cost for 0.2 Fte @ £20K p.a.- National insurance, pension etc added.							£6,000	
Team Kit							£3,000	
Op's Manager oversight - Not costed here. Ditto any Chief Exec involvement							£0	
Grand Total							£103,050	
Note. None of this funds Athletes' own travel, accommodation, food, transport at any of the supported competitions or training camps . Those costs are significant - approximately £100K for the supported camps costed here.								
Neither does it take into account any of the costs they incur doing any other "personal" training, attending other races etc. The costs of which are also significant.								

2.New structure costings by priority

Asumptions

It is unlikely that significant external funding will be forthcoming to support British Orienteering's Talent Pathway.

This means that the talent pathway at all levels will need to be lead and staffed mainly by volunteer resource.

Such funds as are available - for example as agreed by British orienteering's board or voted for by its membership - need to be primarily applied to supporting that volunteer effort.

Feedback to consultation so far has been positive. The Working Group consider that it is likely that sufficient lead volunteer resource will step forward. This needs to be further tested as the working group recommendations are further consulted on and plans / costings revised as necessary.

	Rationale	Cost	
Priority 1 for British Orienteering spend			
Op's Manager oversight	Not costed here. Ditto any Chief Exec involvement	£0	
Basic admin support		£6,000	Employment cost for 0.2 Fte
When representing GB at WOC, World Cups, JWOC, EYOC, JEC, WUOC : Volunteer Travel - incl in-country , Accommodation, Food expenses , Athlete race entries, accreditation, licences, training maps etc.	The model that has applied for senior level (WOC and World Cups) for the last couple years, extended to JWOC, EYOC and JEC. The bare minimum we would expect British Orienteering to commit to enter and support teams on the world stage. Note this still means Athletes have to fund all their own expenses to take part in these competitions - travel, accommodation, food etc.	£31,200	See breakdown in costings by level
Team kit			
		£3,000	
		£40,200	
Priority 2 for British Orienteering spend			
Small amount of specialised coaching support for level 5	Senior athletes most likley to have developed their own support networks, but a small amount of specialist coaching support can make a big difference.	£5,000	
Athlete Awards for Senior performance athletes	In lieu of specific WOC race prep support. Our top perfoming athletes are best able to make decision for themselves as to how prepare for WOC - training, attending relevant races (incl WCs etc)	£9,000	
		£14,000	

Priority 3 for British Orienteering spend			
For foreign training camps with specifc race prep-purpose i.e.			
Pre-JWOC camp - 1 year out - level 4		£2,800	Volunteer Travel - incl in-country , Accommodation, Food expenses
Summer training - around Euro Meeting - level 4		£2,800	
		£5,600	
Priority 4 for British Orienteering spend			
Key Domestic training camps levels 5, 4 & 3			
JWOC Prep Camp		£1,550	Volunteer Travel - incl in-country , Accommodation, Food expenses
Autumn Planning camp -		£4,100	
Spring Race prep camp		£3,100	
Eyoc Prep camp		£1,500	
		£10,250	
Priority 5 for British Orienteering spend			
Small amount of specialised Sports Science and specialised coaching support for Level 4		£10,000	
Priority 6 for British Orienteering spend			
Other Domestic training camps level 3	£5K per super regional squad for volunteer expenses	£15,000	level 4 prioritised above level 3 as 18s-23s likley to be least able to fund themselves
		£15,000	
Priority 7 for British Orienteering spend			
Support for level 3 summer camps		£8,000	level 4 prioritised above level 3 as 18s-23s likely to be least able to fund themselves
		£8,000	
So full spend		£103,050	
Note. None of this funds Athletes' own travel, accommodation, food, transport at any of the supported competitions or training camps . Those costs are significant - approximately £100K for the supported camps costed here. Neither does it take into account any of the costs they incur doing any other "personal" training, attending other races etc.			

<i>Additional recommended items of investment spend</i>			
Documenting current level 3 "curriculum" and creating materials such that it can be delivered by Volunteer work force.	45	days	
Getting ODP to a completed, consulted about and bought off document	30	days	
Developing processes and monitoring Stats			
Competiveness monitoring - how we are doing with athletes aspiring to get into GB teams	10	days	
Retention stats - how well we are doing at keeping athletes in the sport	10	days	
performance stats	10	days	
Stats = a graduate summer project ?			
Welfare processes			
Induction material and processes	5	days	
Exit interview process and monitoirng	5	days	
Complaint procedure	5	days	
Training and good practice guidelines for those giving selection/deselection communications	5	days	
Ilness and injury monitornig process	5	days	
	130	days	
	= 0.5 FTE for a year	£20,000	Full employment cost – inc Pension, NI etc