

SWJOS Review of 2020



The South West Junior Squad provides a focus and a series of training activities for developing junior talent within the South West. Athletes from BOK, Devon, NGOC, Wessex and Wimborne made up the 2019-20 squad of twenty-six juniors.

After a successful Junior Inter-Regional Champs in autumn 2019, hopes were high for 2020. The cancellation of most of the major spring races was a major setback, having put so much effort into training for them. Many of our squad were also selected for national training camps in summer 2020 but none of these were able to actually take place. It's been a tough year.

Finances are stronger than planned due to the cancellation of the heavily subsidised Junior Inter Regional Champs and the absence of any residential training camps.

Squad Training

Most training takes place during September-March aimed at achieving peak performances in the main Championships and selection races in March, April and May.

Following training days in at Haldon and in Dorset, most of our M/W16s joined the annual Hawkshead weekend in late November 2019, training on excellent Lake District terrain with all the other regional squads. Our Christmas weekend was held in the Forest of Dean, incorporating the NGOC Soudley Ponds event. Early in January 2020 we had a Sprint/Urban training day and this was followed by the whole squad returning to Hawkshead during February half term for three excellent days of training. Then lockdown happened

Since March, we have held nearly 50 SWJOS Zoom sessions lasting 1-2 hours, covering a wide range of topics, lots of quizzes and numerous guest speakers. These included ex squad members and several athletes from the GB orienteering squad. The Zoom meetings have been strongly supported by squad members, with over 20 people participating at their peak and they still continue every week.

We restarted training in August, with a day in Wales, then a day on Dartmoor in September. As with all orienteering currently, access is a major headache and all the unknowns this means we have not been able to plan much ahead. However we do have days scheduled for Ham Hill in mid-October and Lyncombe in November. Our plan is to train whenever opportunities present.

Thanks to Jeff Butt, Dave Hanstock, Jim Hayward and Jamie Hayward for all their help with coaching this season and to all the parents who help and support SWJOS at each training day and enable many of the Zoom sessions.

Achievements

Jim Bailey (BOK) and Flurry Grierson (Devon) continue to be part of the national Talent Squad. Finlay Anderson (BOK), Jessica Ward and Rose Taylor (NGOC) were selected for the Lagganlia summer camp. Will Thomas (Devon) was selected for the Deeside summer camp. Rebecca Ward

(NGOC), Olly Tonge (BOK) and Lizzie Horsley (Wim) were selected for the Stockholm summer camp. None of these took place but some virtual activities have been arranged.

In February, Tom Perry (Devon) and Lyra Medlock (WSX) ran for the England Interland team at Burnham Beeches.

SWJOS provides development opportunities for junior athletes who are usually bottom year M/W14 or older, willing to and able to travel widely for their orienteering and keen to progress beyond Light Green courses, club and local races, to compete in major races nationally and progress towards the British Orienteering Talent Development Programme.

If you have anyone in your club who would like to find out more, please take a look at www.swjs.co.uk/about.html or contact any of the SWJOS families, Jeff Butt (Sarum) or me.

Peter Maliphant
BOK