

## Czech report 2023

The 10-day trip started with an 8km run with the group of 4 people I would be flying out with followed by an early wake up of 4 for our 7 o'clock flight the next day. We arrived in Prague at around 10 in the morning and took the bus and the metro around Prague to do some sightseeing with a couple of the coaches. It was boiling and after exploring the castle we ventured into the main shopping area to hunt for some much needed ice cream. At 3 the group flying from Scotland joined us and they were taken to our accommodation in the yellow van. Four of us took the metro to the end of Prague, followed by an hour bus journey to Liberec where we were picked up; which was a longer journey, but we had good fun and I enjoyed the bus and the scenic route we went. Once the Stanstead flight had arrived, we spent some time all together in the evening playing volleyball (which the girls won!) and headed to bed ready for our first day of training.



Having been given our purple and map tour tops the day before we ventured into the mountain terrain which was only a 5-minute drive from Potkávárna. I did 3 exercises with 2 of them being shadowed by coaches before we headed back for lunch, with soup and a main! The food was delicious all week and I was inspired with a new breakfast idea. After lunch we headed back into the mountain terrain for a pairs relay which I did with Kate, it was great fun on a crazy map scale. In the evening we talked about training played some locals at a game of half volleyball/ half netball.



For day 2, we had our first taste of Czech Sandstones which was a 50-minute drive from where we were staying, it wouldn't be the tour without the music but sadly our speaker died half way there 😞 We were told today would be hard and it did not disappoint, the terrain was tough and hilly with the combined heat and racing style day meant we were all pretty tired. In the afternoon after exploring the steep valleys and massive cliffs was the peg race, everyone's favourite, it was a gruelling race with a variation in the pegs so we ran a lot further than we thought we would. 6.4km instead of 2.6km... We travelled back to the lake for a much needed recovery dip however I was way too tired to swim so I just wallowed towards the beach. In the evening we had a talk from the planner of the world cup that had happened a few weeks previously which was really interesting, where we discussed route choice and how to orienteer in the Czech sandstones.



For day 3 we headed back into the sandstone terrain but in a more runnable area, we started off the day with micro o through really cool rock passages and did a terrain interval style course with a partner. We didn't do much training in the day as we had the night O that evening! After the training and a delicious remote lunch, we walked to the big sandstones to explore and take photos before heading down the hill to the river for a swim to cool off. I was pretty tired before the night O which was due to start at 8:45 however once I got running, I absolutely loved it. There were options to bail out by telling a coach at 4 of the controls of the 17 control course as it was due to be a brutal race. On my way to 4 I met Rory, Freya and Ben and we navigated to 8 together. I ended up running the rest of the course with Ben Perry and ended up running 7km! The steep slopes at the beginning were great fun and we finished first in time for cake and headed to bed once everyone had finished around midnight. Thankfully it was the rest day the next day....

After a nice lie in and a relaxed breakfast we walked into the local forest for Micro which was good fun and picked a lot of bilberries. The afternoon adventure was Liberec Water park for 2 hours and a stop at the shops for snack and fuel 😊



Day 5 was another trip to the sandstones however training was delayed by 40 minutes whilst our bus waited for everyone else which involved removing a tree that was blocking the car park. The steep slopes were amazing here and I really enjoyed traversing under the huge rocks. Pavel greeted us with homemade quiche for lunch before a fun vampire O relay in the afternoon. We paid the lake another visit before heading back for dinner and relaxing. Then it was time for the tour champs, both races were great fun and despite everyone feeling quite tired was a great race. On the last evening we had a BBQ by the firepit and stayed up quite late talking and chatting after singing with the coaches whilst Ben Winsor was on the piano . We said our goodbyes as the Stanstead lot had to leave at 6 in the morning and had one more adventure to the tower before heading to the airport to come home. It was a brilliant week and we had a lot of fun, thank you to the coaches who made it very fun and to SWOA and WSX for the money which allowed me to go on this trip. It was by far the best yet.