

Lagganlia report 2023 by Eskarina Medlock WSX

The Medlock summer was packed with exciting trips to Switzerland, Sweden, Scotland, but what was definitely my highlight was the week away at Lagganlia. This had been my goal for some time after my sister got selected in 2021 and came back with nothing but happy memories and many, many laughs.

In my opinion the week was not long enough! The coaches made sure the week was full with informative training days boasting gorgeous terrain with glorious views. They made sure to focus on every aspect of orienteering to improve and hone our skills. I felt I had improved just by being there!

The terrain varied throughout the week, allowing us to test our skills on lots of different areas; including classic Scottish forests, green areas where visibility was low and running tough, exposed open hillsides and urban areas. We even got the opportunity to orienteer at night!

Besides training, it was a great way to make friends from across the country, and have fun!

The first day of training was at Heathfield. It was a bit damp but a lovely area to kick off the week. This day, the objective was to focus on pacing and compass bearing. When orienteering, I generally don't think about pacing so it was interesting to learn another skill and put it into practise. After a few exercises, we finished the day with a star relay.

Day 2 was at Darnaway, giving us a taste of what the terrain would be like at the Scottish 6 Days. The weather slightly improved but didn't dampen our spirits when singing to Shake It Off by Taylor Swift on the bus! Today we were focusing on contour details and handrails, which since being at Lagganlia I have applied to my orienteering. The day ended with an odds and evens relay.

In the morning of Day 3, Rachel Duckworth gave a talk about geeking and we looked at North Granish, the place we would be training that day. As part of the exercise for later on in the day, we drew a sketch map of the area, picking out the remarkable features, handrails, catching features etc. Once we arrived at North Granish, we then used the sketch maps to do a course. This was to show how little features we needed to orienteer. In the afternoon, we then had a distractions race, where the coaches had placed numerous distractions out on the course, including cameramen, commentary, a run-through, a double-sided map and a control that deliberately wasn't working.

Day 4 was a "rest" day, which was ironic because I did the most steps that day! Today were the sprints at Badaguish. The race was split into 3; the qualifiers (which everyone got through), the semis, and then the finals (of which the top 3 got through from the semis). To spice it up a bit, the scale of the map was also 1:2000. This threw me on the qualifier as I had never encountered a scale as such. After the qualifier, you were shown 3 snippets of maps, of which you had to choose 1 and that would be your course for the semi-final. I got through to the final, which I was very pleased about. After the sprints, we then had a go on the monkey bars which were suspended over water at Badaguish. Let's just say a, a lot of people got wet!

We then went swimming in the Loch near-by and then wandered around Aviemore. At 9pm we went back out to do some night orienteering.

Day 5 was at Creag Beag, an exposed hill side. The weather wasn't too kind today and we were all a bit bedraggled at the end. We then sought shelter in the forest afterwards to do a peg relay.

Day 6 was Tour Champs at Auchernack, with a map exchange (I completely missed that and had to go back to drop my map). We then went back to Lagganlia to do a monster relay (a relay but where at some controls were a bit of jigsaw which made a monster). Later that night, most of the athletes snuck out, and enjoyed a game of hide and seek with the coaches.

It was a lovely week and I thank WSX and SWOA for giving me grants in order to be able to take advantage of these opportunities