

## **Orienteering Foundation Coaching Day 8th November - Merthyr Mawr, South Wales**

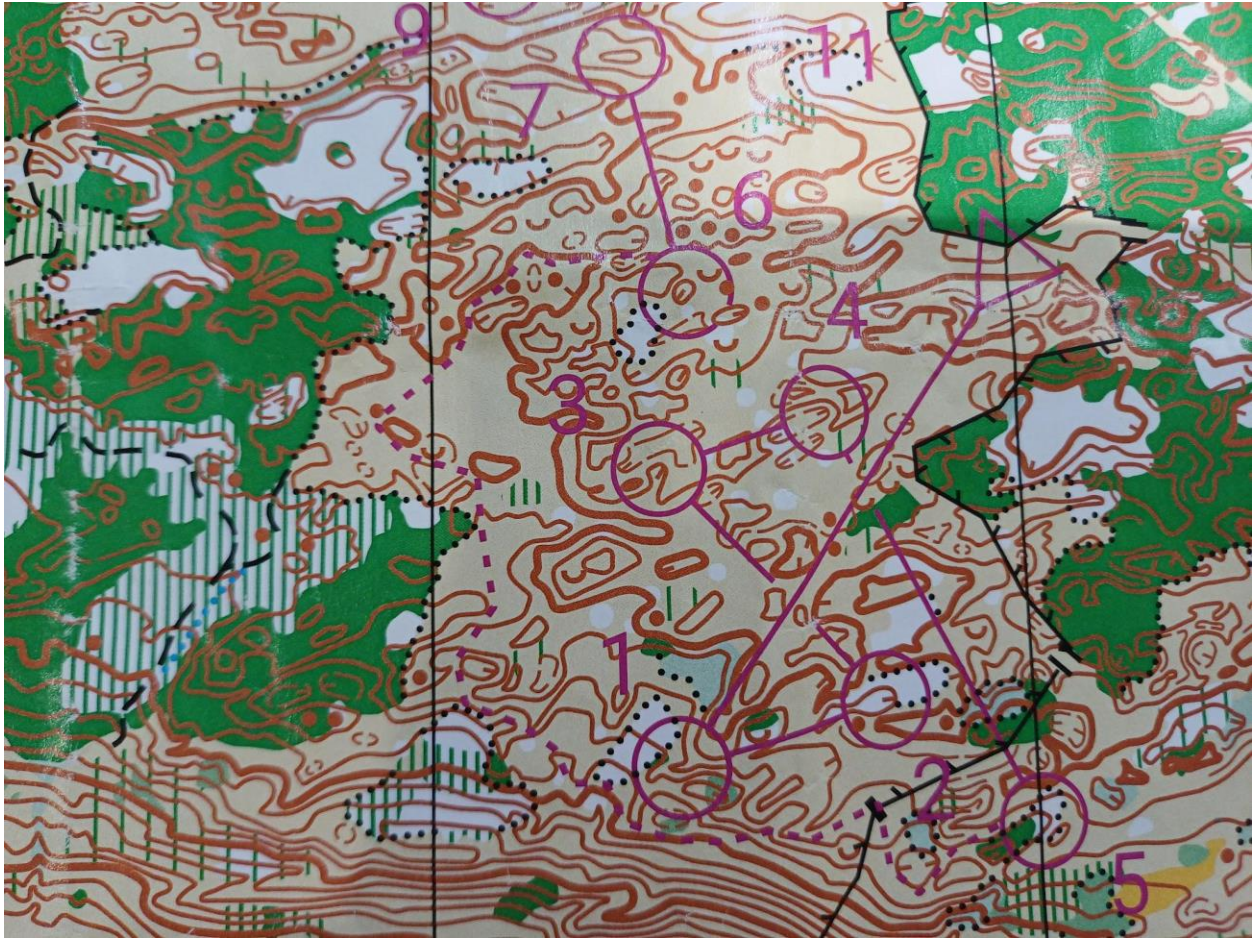
Early November, SBOC hosted an Orienteering Foundation coaching day open aimed at adult orienteers (and open to junior squads also). Over 180 participants, coaches and helpers enjoyed a gloriously sunny day on Merthyr Mawr - a complex sand dune system offering the chance to practice techniques in fast open land, sloped woodland and on complex contours.

Adult participants were asked to complete a quick pre-event questionnaire to help coaches plan the activities and organise participants into groups with similar training objectives. The light-hearted questionnaire asked you to rate your abilities for example: ability to cover terrain (1 = Deer to 10 = Sloth), running speed (1 = Cheetah to 10 = Tortoise), fitness/energy level (1 = Duracell Bunny to 10 = Voltaic pile) On the needle or Round we go? Best O moment & Worst O Mistake? ....and other questions including what you wanted to specifically work on?

The coaching activities were split over two locations (hubs) and the adult participants were split into small groups, each group having an assigned coach to explain the activities and provide supportive, constructive debriefing. The junior squads trained together in the north of the area in the morning in an area of flat open and sloped woodland dunes. The adults ventured into the south area with complex contours. After lunch the adults and juniors swapped areas giving everyone the opportunity to experience the differing terrain.

The morning session was an opportunity to focus on exercises to strengthen the weaknesses expressed in the pre-joining questionnaire. Exercises included: What lies beyond? Control picking, Beacons and Attack Points, No Compass, 'Using the Force (feeling how far you have gone) Relocation in pairs, to name a few. Additionally, there was advice on warming up and cooling down, the importance of personal safety, the benefit of creating a personal legend whilst walking to the start, the value in orienteering smoothly rather than running fast and the importance of Plan, Direction, Picture (Distance).

The afternoon session was Multi-tekka course - a course which challenged you to use various techniques practiced in the morning, and the importance of simplification - what is and isn't important for the successful completion of a leg. Part way around the course, you had to follow a marked route (purple dashed line) between two controls (# 5 to 6) with the objective of seeing how little you can do when your line is given to you. Arriving at control # 6, one of the SBOC coaches was on hand to do a mini debrief, before you continued on the course.



Map extract courtesy of SBOC

For those with spare energy and up for competing with excitable juniors, the day was rounded off with a race up and down the 'Big Dipper' - a huge sand dune, the second largest of its kind in Europe at 200 ft. - apparently it's a Strava Segment!

To read more <https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/south-wales-coaching-day-2025-report>

I really enjoyed the day, and learnt a lot. If this sort of thing sounds like something that others would be interested in, either at Club or SCOA level, then do let our Club Coaches / Committee SCOA Reps know.

Thanks to Kerina Lake and all at SBOC.

**Lisa James**