

LEGENDS

Yukon Orienteering Association Newsletter

December 2011

President's Note from Bruce McLean

A Memorable Year: 2011

It was a great year for orienteering in Yukon. The Canadian Orienteering Championships, together with the Western Orienteering Championships. An action packed season included the Sass Peepre Training camp, the regular Wednesday and the Yukon Championships. Thanks to our amazing volunteers who organized a world class series of events along with the regular club events.

To say we did quite well as a club in the COCs and WCOCs would be an understatement. From the youngest age classes up to the older classes we were able to be competitive.

In addition to the COCs and the WCOCs we hosted 8 regular Wednesday meets, one of which was a night-o and one was a fun relay. The Yukon Orienteering Championships (YOCs) were held in June, over 3 different dates.

There will be a few challenges for next year and thereafter. Building our membership, especially among younger people is an ongoing challenge. Summer is a busy time in the Yukon but to continue to have an active and thriving orienteering community we need to find ways to get more people out in the woods. Our membership for this year was at 165.

We are also losing a few key volunteers this year. Pam James is moving back to the Maritimes, which will leave a sizeable hole in the executive. Pam helped keep all sorts of things going, especially the accounting and the grant applications, not to mention organizing meets, helping with training and competing herself.

Needless to say, we could always use a bit of help, either on the executive or organizing a local meet, training or coaching. We would like to hear any ideas the membership might have about our current way of doing things, whether we should be trying a different approach or anything else on your mind.

Yukon Sports Award Night:

The annual Yukon Sports Award Night was held in Whitehorse on November 24th. The Yukon Orienteering Association (YOA) was prominent with our own Active Member Awards as well as the Yukon government Awards of Excellence. Congratulations to all recipients!

YOA Active Member Awards:

Volunteer of the Year: Erik Blake
Male Athlete of the Year: Lee Hawkings
Female Athlete of the Year: Kendra Murray
Most Improved Athlete: Trevor Bray
Sportsperson of the Year: Pia Blake

Yukon Awards of Excellence:

These awards are given for a Bronze, Silver or Gold at a national championship or a Gold at a Western Canadian Championship. The Yukon team featured prominently in this category with our results at the COCs and the WCOCs. The number of people is definitely a reflection of the range of ages and categories that are a part of orienteering. The following received on Award of Excellence:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Savannah Cash | Kendra Murray | Karen McKenna |
| Amanda Thomson | Kerstin Burnett | Brent Langbakk |
| Hannah Shier | Trevor Bray | Forest Pearson |
| Leif Blake | Lee Hawkings | Ross Burnett |
| Caelan McLean | Philippa McNeil | Nesta Leduc |
| Pia Blake | Pam James | |

Canadian and Western Canadian Orienteering Championships by Barbara Scheck

Already five months have passed since the Canadian and Western Canadian Orienteering Championships. Although many members will think that those ten days in July came and went quickly for YOA, it was a project that spanned more than three years. Back in the winter of 2008 the Executive and a small committee began seriously planning for the event. Foreign mappers travelled to the Yukon in the summers of 2009 and 2010 to work on the new maps for these events, along with our local mappers Afan Jones and Ross Burnett. Afan and Ross put many hours of their own time into map preparation and verification. Major officials were recruited from Alberta and British Columbia, as an event of this size required more course planners and controllers than YOA has at hand.

The result of all that work? New and revised maps for Yukoners to explore for years to come! And the satisfaction experienced by all of our amazing volunteers, who once again showed Canada and the world the special community we have

here in the north.

Thank you to everyone who pitched in and made the 2011 Canadian and Western Canadian Orienteering Championships one that will be remembered for years. Hope to see you on those great maps in the upcoming season of 2012.

Vancouver Sprint Camp by Trevor Bray

I attended a sprint camp which was held in Vancouver last February. We did many creative training exercises that forced you to push the boundaries of your orienteering abilities. We also competed in a chase sprint event which begins with an ordinary urban sprint race. Later in the day the top 25 compete again in a sprint race. This fastest orienteer from the first sprint begins first and everyone else starts on intervals behind them depending on your time from the first event. This sprint was especially fun because it involved small loops bringing you back to the spectator control several times. If you do not have a great first race and do not make the top 25, you will still run the second sprint but as a mass start.

The camp also had a World Ranking Event, which was held in a very thick forest with tons of trails. This really made us focus on basic orienteering skills such as orientating the map and following along with your thumb.

The sprint camp is a great experience to be able to run on challenging, urban sprint maps. The sprint camp is a well known event in western Canada, therefore many elite orienteers attend, allowing you to learn from them. This coming year the Sprint Camp is being held in Victoria. You can find more information at <http://sprint.whyjustrun.ca/>.

Night Orienteering by Ryan Kelly

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to orienteer in the dark? Over 20 orienteers brought along their headlamps and did just that at the second annual night-o held on September 30. Except for the darkness, night-o is basically the same as daylight orienteering. Similar to regular meets, there were three courses offered: novice, intermediate and advanced. The difficulty of the courses was on par with regular meets, and the advanced course had some controls that would have been challenging in daylight, let alone at night! It's interesting to experience how terrain that might be familiar in the daylight can seem quite different, and become more challenging, in the dark.

Like the regular meets, night-o is for everyone including families.

One question that's often asked is, how easy is it to see the controls at night? For night-o, the controls are equipped with reflective tape, and once your light falls on the control it's very easy to see it from a distance.

Yukon Orienteering Association website <http://www.yukonorienteering.ca/>

We hope you'll consider trying this exciting twist on orienteering in the upcoming season!

North American Rogaine Championships by Pam James

The North American Rogaine Championships were held September 10 & 11, 2011 at Lundbom Lake, BC, just outside of Merritt. If you have never participated in a rogaine, this area of BC is a great place to try one. There are lots of open areas for travel at night and wooded sections to stay out of the sun in the heat of the day.

A rogaine is a 24 hour team score event. You have to stay with your teammate for the whole event. For this specific event there were 60 controls with different point values. There were 6 each of 100,90,80,40,30 points and 8 each of 70,60,50 points for a grand total of 3600 points. The object was to collect as many points as possible in a 24 hour period. The controls were spread over an area of about 120 square kms. The start was at noon on Saturday and the finish at noon on Sunday. If you took over 24 hours you would lose points at a rate of 10 per minute. At the end if you were tied in points with another team it was the team that was back first that won or moved ahead in the results.

The start/finish (hash house) is often in the middle of the map. We got our maps at 9 am to start planning. The trick is to figure out a route that will maximize your points in the distance you can cover. Katherine Hagen and I figured we could go about 65km to 70 km. The higher the point value means that generally the control is further from the hash house or in a more difficult location. The trick is to have options to change the route if things aren't going as planned. We changed our route numerous time over the course of 24 hours. It was a hot day (30 degrees) so we started in the forested section and stopped for a refreshing cooling dip at one point. We had some problems finding controls when dusk came so we decided to skip a few and head to the open area for the night portion. It was beautiful and warm all night long. The moon was almost full so there were times we could turn off our lights and run by moonlight.

In the end we covered about 62km and scored 2930 points. We tied in points with 4th place but because we made it back to the hash house first we ended up in 3rd overall and 1st female team. It was a long tiring event in a beautiful area with a great companion!

Combine Travel and Orienteering: Scottish 6 days, 2011

By Bruce McLean

This past summer my son Caelan and I travelled to Scotland for the Scottish 6 days Orienteering Event. The competitions were in the Oban area, on the west coast. With 50 courses and more than 3000 competitors it was a bit of a contrast

from usual Yukon O-meets. We had a lot of fun, enjoyed the atmosphere and the challenging orienteering. It was a little wet under foot at times but the courses were on a good mix of terrain. With such a range of courses you can be as competitive (or not) as you like. Check out <http://www.scottish6days.com/2011/> if you'd like to see results, photos, and related information.

The Scottish 6 days is held every 2 years with the venue generally changing. Check out the website for the 6 days in 2013, which will be near Moray, east of Inverness.

<http://www.scottish6days.com/2013/>

If you are really planning ahead the 2015 World Orienteering Championships will be held in this area, apparently in parallel with the 6 days.

There are also a host of other orienteering festivals in the UK and Europe. Welsh 6 days, Swiss 6 days and O – Ringen in Sweden, some of which happen annually or every 2 years.

Junior World Orienteering Championships - 2011 Wejherowo, Poland by Lee Hawkings

I attended my fourth and final Junior World Orienteering Competition (JWOC) this year in Wejherowo, Poland. Every year the event has exceeded my expectations! I would like to share with you all some highlights of the trip, both orienteering related and from the amazing experiences that come along with this type of international travel.

The terrain in Poland was different from anything I've ever run before. Most of the time it was almost perfectly open and amazingly fast! The great visibility and smooth footing made for extremely quick times, however the numerous hills made it very physically demanding as well.



Running through the dreamy woods (photo Randy Kemp)

Another great thing about the 2011 JWOC was having the opportunity of the Whitehorse Summer Training Centre beforehand. This not only allowed us to all be really sharp on our orienteering but also made a great environment for team bonding. It was awesome making friends with everyone on the team over the summer in Whitehorse and in Poland. A HUGE thanks to Brent Langbakk and everyone else who made this a reality!



Team Canada at the opening ceremonies

The racing itself was very well organized and challenging again this year as it is every year. A highlight for me was the sprint race, which included both fast forest sections and extremely tight, technical city navigation, combining for a difficult but fun course. The excruciatingly painful long distance was a straight up fitness test this year and another highlight for me, with my best result from JWOC coming in that race. I would like to also thank Randy Kemp, Carol Ross and Magnus Johansson for all their preparation and work that allowed our team's JWOC to go off without a hitch.



Me leaving a control in the sprint

I am very sad to have seen my last JWOC come and go but so very grateful for the experiences and opportunities that this sport and these competitions in particular have given me. For any up and coming juniors out there, stay with the sport! I cannot put into words how much this sport has given me and I can only hope that I have helped inspire the next generation of Canadian Juniors to follow in our footsteps and continue with this great sport!

My First Time Orienteering in Europe by Kerstin Burnett

Before this summer, the largest orienteering event I had competed in was the Asia Pacific Orienteering Championships in Alberta in 2002. This July and August, I experienced something completely different, when my dad and I went to Switzerland for the Swiss Orienteering Week (SOW) and to France for the French six-days event that corresponded with World Orienteering Championships.

Both of these events were unique experiences. I had never seen so many orienteers in one place, nor had I competed against so many other girls, and at such a high caliber.

The terrain was quite different from that which I am used to. In the Yukon, and in other places where I have orienteered, the contours are smooth and easily discernable. One of the first things that I noticed in the Swiss forest was that the terrain was uneven, with hummocks that were too small to be knolls, yet large enough to confuse me about the shapes of contours. A couple of the maps even had insets at 1:5,000 for the most complex parts. The contours themselves were intricately detailed in many areas, especially on the maps in France. The entire week there was an exercise in picking out and filtering details. I had a lot of trouble with this at first, but slowly I became more proficient and confident.



Kerstin Burnett at Swiss O week

Being thrown into a higher level of difficulty of courses allowed me to learn quickly, and completing each course gave me confidence; now I know what I can accomplish. This experience has raised my expectations of myself, based on knowing my abilities, and on the inspiration that I have gained from seeing the other athletes at these events. Competing against girls I don't know, who are so good at the sport, I found it difficult to relate my races to theirs. But I had some Canadian teammates in Europe - Molly and Emily Kemp, and Emily Ross - with whom I could compare results and splits and debrief after races. Seeing the top competitors' achievements gave me something to strive for.

I feel that my skills have grown a lot in terms of fine contour detail, seeing the shapes of contours, and traffic light orienteering. This was also a great chance to

practice tuning out distractions such as announcers, spectators, and the constant presence of other competitors all around me.

It was fun to be in an atmosphere where orienteering is such a big deal, with large arenas, thousands of competitors, loud speakers, and cheering spectators. The sponsors at SOW gave out mini cowbells to everyone, so it was kind of exhilarating to run down the finish chute while people rang cowbells at me from all directions. I was constantly amazed at the sheer number of people in the arena.

Aside from the orienteering, the trip was also a wonderful cultural experience. This was my first time to either Switzerland or France. Switzerland really was full of classic Swiss-style buildings and cows with bells. The scenery there was beautiful, but in a different way than our Canadian wilderness. Instead of “wild”, there were farms and pastures, even on steep slopes and high up the mountains. During races I ran among grazing cows on the summer ski slopes. My dad and I took a week in between the two orienteering events to hike in the Alps. We did a 5-day loop trail in the Grindelwald region, passing under the famous slopes of the Jungfrau, the Eiger, and the Mönch, and staying in guest lodges each night.

All in all it was a great introduction to orienteering and I look forward to going back. If you are considering an orienteering trip to Europe I can highly recommend it. There are many multi-day events in many countries throughout the summer.

Congratulations to Brent Langbakk

On October 5th the Canadian Orienteering Federation (COF) and the High Performance Committee (HPC) announced that Brent would be the new coach of the Junior National Orienteering Team. Brent is a certified NCCP Level 3 coach and is also currently the head coach of the Yukon Orienteering Team. As testament to Brent's success, in 2011 there were 7 Yukon athletes in the Canadian High Performance Program and Yukon athletes won 38 medals at the 2011 Canadian Championships. In 2010, Brent was awarded Coach of the Year by Sport Yukon. Brent was also one of three coaches involved in the 2011 National Summer Training Centre in Whitehorse and has served as the Athletes' Representative on the COF Board. In this role he also served as the Chair of the High Performance Committee. Previously to his work as a coach, Brent had a long and impressive elite career himself as he represented Canada as an athlete at 5 World Orienteering Championships.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

The YOA is looking for a Treasurer for the New Year. Our current treasurer will be leaving the territory. If you have any questions about the Treasurer position you can contact Pam James at 668-3142 before December 22nd. Or are you

Yukon Orienteering Association website <http://www.yukonorienteering.ca/>

interested in another position on the YOA board? We are looking for board members as well as people interested in doing special projects. If you have an interest in special projects you wouldn't necessarily have to be a board member but could just report to the board. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Nesta at nleduc@northwestel.net

Member's Survey coming very soon...

GREAT DRAW PRIZE!

After a wonderful 2011 season, triumphing in our hosting of the Canadian and Western Orienteering Championships, the YOA Exec recognizes that 2012 is the time to regroup and take the lead from our membership. We are asking for your input to make sure we meet your needs. In a few days we will email out a survey to members. Please take the time to fill out the survey. **Every completed survey will be entered in a draw and the lucky winner will receive a 2012 membership including regular events for the season.**

Important Notice

The **Yukon Orienteering Association AGM** will be held in the Sport Yukon Boardroom on Wednesday January 25, 2012 from 7 - 9 pm. All members are welcome.

Current Executive:

President: Bruce McLean

Vice-President: vacant

Treasurer: Pam James

Director of Training: Brent Langbakk

Director of Communications: Wendy Nixon

Past President: Barbara Scheck

Director: Linda MacKeigan

Director: Ryan Kelly

*Yukon Orienteering Association
4061 4th Avenue
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 1H1*

Newsletter contributors: Bruce McLean, Ryan Kelly, Barbara Scheck, Lee Hawkings, Kristen Burnett, Pam James, Nesta Leduc, Wendy Nixon