

On Tuesday 14th of April 2009, our team consisting of ten girls and eight boys from around Scotland travelled out to Madrid after being lucky enough to be selected to represent Scotland in the World Schools Orienteering Championships. We set off with our minds buzzing as we thought about the week to come.

We arrived extremely early on Wednesday morning. After only a few hours sleep we were awoken to begin training, so that we could become accustomed to the Spanish terrain. It was not the best start to our trip, as we ran through the hail and rain, many of our team mates caked in clay and mud.

When we were dry and warm we made our way to the opening ceremony in Alcala de Henares, in traditional kilts though some of them didn't quite reach the length standards. There were numerous speeches by many important people who welcomed us to Madrid and opened the event by hoisting the ISF flag.

The next day we competed in the Long Distance race. Thanks to the preparation the day before at the Model Event, we were ready and keen to get started. The environment was steep but the vegetation mild. The climb itself to the finish was the part which exhausted everyone. Banchory Academy had good results with Rhona McMillan coming first and Jessica Mason coming fourth. Fellow teammate Rona Lindsay did well coming fourth in her own category, D2 Select.

Luckily, the next day we had a fantastic excursion throughout the city of Madrid. Sight-seeing included a tour around Real Madrid Football Stadium, visiting the University of Alcala des Henares, and other tourist attractions.

After our day of relaxation and socializing, we participated in the middle distance race. Although the course was short it was still technically difficult and there was a large amount of climb. Rona Lindsay had an exceptionally good run with a placing of third position.

Once recovered from our race, the Festival of the Nations took place that evening. Each country had to display a stall about their country giving an insight into their culture and a taste of their traditions. The Scotland stall gave tasters of Irn Bru, shortbread and haggis. In addition to this, each country had a few minutes of the stage to present their performance. Scotland entered with Jackie playing the bagpipes, we then broke into a Dashing White Sergeant followed by a Gay Gordons. We were thoroughly impressed with the New Zealand's topless Hakka!

On the penultimate day we competed in the friendship relay. Everyone was put into a team of three with athletes from other countries who spoke different languages. All teams had an hour to plan their route. Each member of the team had to punch the controls that were assigned to them during the planning process. On the final leg we crossed a large river supported by ropes (this felt refreshing after the heat of the run!) and crossed the finish line with the whole team holding hands. Two Scots were part of relay teams who did outstandingly well. Frances Wright was in a team who came 2nd overall and Kate Robertson also gained 2nd position in the coaches race.

In the overall individual results (combining the times for the long and middle distance races) a few members of the Scotland team did remarkably well: Jessica Mason 3rd in D2 Schools, Rona Lindsay 5th in D2 Select and Rhona McMillan 8th in D2 Schools.

In the Closing Ceremony Banchory Academy D2 Schools team consisting of Jane Lenton, Morgan Pihoda, Jessica Mason, Frances Wright and Rhona McMillan were on the podium to claim their bronze trophy and medals!

We all thought that our week in Madrid was a great experience; we all had lots of fun and made many new friends. The team are very proud of what they have achieved. All our hard training (in all weather conditions) and preparations were worthwhile. To raise money for Madrid we baked and sold many cakes for local events and produced a recipe book. Additionally, we organised a family bingo evening.

We hope to inspire many newcomers to compete in this fantastic event that truly is a once in a lifetime experience.

The Scotland Team:

Morgan Prihoda, Adam Hunter, Craig Nolan, Jessica Mason, Jane Lenton, Adam Telfer, Frances Wright, Craig McDonald, Rhona McMillan, Alexander Lyon, Morven Dean, Chris Galloway, Karen Maxwell, Andrew Lindsay, Rona Lindsay, Mark Haley, Rachel Barr, Kirsty Brown.

Coaches:

Kate Robertson, Blair Young, Terry O'Brien, Jackie Riley

