

The Development Director looking at how orienteering is being developed in Scotland and what is about to happen

Scotland's 23 orienteering clubs are at the forefront of the development of the sport in Scotland. Thank you to the members of all these clubs, especially the hard-working committees who essential behind the scenes work is often overlooked, for your week in week out volunteering ensuring events of all levels, socials and training take place; welcoming new members to orienteering; networking within their local community; coaching and most importantly of all providing fun and sport for orienteers.

Meantime the SOA development officers Louise and Heidi are working hard to support the clubs in their activities; promoting orienteering nationally through networking with schools, colleges, university teacher training schools and youth group organisations and helping to support the sport for young orienteers at a regional level and in areas where there are no clubs. Judy, our newly appointed coaching and volunteer officer, ensures the standards of the orienteering coaching qualifications with Qualifications Scotland, develops the volunteer courses and manages the delivery of the courses.

You will have seen at the beginning of the year the Scottish government announcement of additional funding towards a 2026 Summer of Sport and additional funding to support sport in general. In order to facilitate the Summer of Sport and grassroots sport, SportScotland created four funding opportunities available for all Scottish sports to apply for over which have been opening for applications since the Spring.. The main aim of these grants is to get as many people as possible, particularly young people, active.

The first opportunity was in connection with the 2026 Summer of Sport for which applications were submitted in May. A successful application was submitted to put on 12 orienteering fun sessions for school age children and their families at the beginning of September delivered by students/ young people supported by young leaders. The sessions will be linked to coordinated club events within the following 2 weeks and offer those taking part membership of the club and Scottish Orienteering for the remainder of the year. The sessions will be fully funded, allowing those delivering the sessions to be compensated for their time with funding allowing delivery resources to be developed which should build confidence in those delivering the sessions to become involved with delivery at a club level of coaching. Sessions are planned inAberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Helensburgh andInverness to link into existing connections to Active Schools/work with teachers The application also includes the development of three new maps in and around Dundee which will benefit our clubs Tayside Orienteers and Kingdom of Fife Orienteers.

The second opportunity for funding, from SportScotland, related to Club Support Programme which aims to strengthen sport clubs and community organisations by funding paid roles which build capacity within clubs, support volunteers and ensure sustainable clubs which can grow participation in sport going forward and better support their communities. Our Orienteering clubs were encouraged to come forward to be involved in this funding opportunity and the SOA team supported interested clubs in developing their proposals - applications were submitted on behalf of three clubs MAROC, TAY and CLYDE. We are keeping fingers crossed for these applications and should hear in the next few weeks. orienteers but

Currently the development team are looking at the final potential funding opportunity relating to growth and innovation fund which is looking at initiatives to increase participation and sustainability of sport. Any ideas are welcomed and please get in touch with either myself or Nikki Howard with any ideas.

There will be further SOA Development funding available in the autumn which will be focussed on our Strategic aim of attracting more 20- to 40-year-olds into orienteering. I would encourage everyone to consider if they have any ideas linked to encouraging this age group which would benefit from funding support to develop their plans over the summer so they are ready for submissions in September..

As a 75 year old and am very aware of that the average age of our volunteer community in orienteering is increasing. To recognise and encourage young people to use their talents to support their club in coaching and planning and organising events as well as the IT side of events, Scottish Orienteering is launching a junior volunteer award scheme. The junior volunteer award scheme will be launched at the Jamie Stevenson Trophy event this weekend and will be awarded at the Junior Inter Area weekend at the end of October.

Good orienteering and thank you to all of our orienteering community volunteers whatever your age.

Mary Williams

Development Director, SOA