

# The WMRA International Youth Mountain Running Challenge

Ostheim vor der Rhoe/Hausen, Germany

Sat. 27<sup>h</sup> June 2009

Junior Men (92/93)

5<sup>th</sup> Billy Pinder, Skipton, ,  
12<sup>th</sup> Jonathan Bradshaw, Wharfedale,  
17<sup>th</sup> James Ellis, Warrington  
23<sup>rd</sup> Ashley Kay, Rossendale 3<sup>rd</sup> team

Junior Women (92/93)

4th Rachel Robinson Scunthorpe  
6th Rachel Jefferson Warrington

We arrived at Manchester airport early on Friday morning (26/6/09) at around 5 am, meeting up near terminal 3. Everyone stood with their family and was a bit distant from each other, nobody really knew what to expect from the trip and were anxiously waiting for the team managers, Bashir and Jackie.

Finally they arrived along with our kit, which was so exciting, they handed out our bags and we all looked inside in shock of how much we actually got! A few of us went to the toilets to change into our brand new kits ready to travel, we walked out feeling so proud to be wearing them, it was a fantastic feeling walking through the airport hearing people whispering about us, it felt like we were royalty! We then were waved off by our parents and boarded the plane, ready for the trip ahead; everyone was quiet on the plane, because we still didn't really know each other as most of us had only met from the previous training camps and knew barely the names.

We got to the airport at around 10am where we met the Ireland team, we quickly tried to pick up some German but this was quite hard! We learnt 'damen' from the toilet doors and 'danker' but that's about it! The woman that was supposed to be taking us to the hotel came and told us that we couldn't get on the coach until 2pm so it was a long wait in the airport, we used this time to bond with our team and I think this helped a lot as we were a lot closer when we left when we arrived at the airport, we looked around the shops and went on the computers that we tried so hard to get on! We were speaking to people back home, they were wishing us good luck and saying how proud they are for us, this made us feel even better! After this long wait we then got on the coach for a 3 hour journey to the race venue, this journey seemed to take forever and we were all really tired, but we were welcomed with open arms to the country and the hospitality was fantastic! They gave us drinks and snacks when we got there and we were shown around the course along with the other teams, we got mentally prepared for the race the following day and worked out our tactics for the race.

When we got to the hotel we were impressed with our rooms! We loved it and made ourselves at home right away, we then got showered quickly and got into our kits again! Still excited and unaware of what was next, it was a short walk down the road to get to where we were having our dinner, it was a well-prepared buffet of the local delicacy, I liked the food but it was completely different from the food we are used to in England. The teams were introduced by their national anthems, stood at the front of the hall, it was nice to be stood there representing our country alongside all these other countries. A few of the countries sang their national anthem which was amazing, It would have been better if everyone sang theirs but no body knew what to expect still because we'd still only just arrived. After this long day we went back to our rooms and settled down in bed as the Italians were still very excited running around being really loud! Their team spirit obviously was an advantage the next day!

On the race day we were quite nervous and the wait for 6pm seemed to take forever we passed the time by doing fashion shows in our kits, which we loved, everything was such good quality and the fit was perfect! We went into the town for pre-race dinner, which was difficult trying to tell them what we wanted or even trying to work out what we wanted from the German menu! Luckily some of our team understood some German! It was things like this that brought the team closer too, as we were all in the same situation and felt weird not knowing what was going on! The coach finally arrived to take us on a 15 minute journey to the course. Once we arrived we were welcomed again with drinks and snacks, which was nice, I was

shocked how calm the atmosphere was, it was nothing like the competition in England, everyone was so friendly and there was no nasty competition. It was a fun atmosphere I thought it was great, the teams began warming up on a small field by the finish line, and people were taking pictures of us and wishing us good luck it was like we were famous! Finally the race was here, we were eagerly lining up at the start, the countdown began, 10,9,8,7,6,5,3,4,2 ... Then some people ran! We were laughing because he counted down wrong, the gun went! It was now or never so we ran settling at a steady pace up the first part of the course, as we got onto the second lap people were slowing already because they got the pace judgement wrong, we stayed at our steady pace working together through the crowds screaming at the side of us, the adrenaline they gave us was outstanding, we worked into around 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> from being in the twenties on the previous lap. The final lap came around so quick and we got into 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Our pace had worked, but I felt it was over too quickly! I did enjoy the course because it was different from any other race I'd done before. There was no time to wait around we then went to cheer on the boy's race, which was also a great race for the England team, who had also paced it well.

After the race there was a small ceremony where they presented the teams with the team prizes and the first 3 individuals with theirs. It was quite an emotional ceremony and everyone was on a high after the race. The national anthems were played again and everyone was singing again, Louder! There were a few speeches from the organisers thanking and congratulating us, and then we were given another buffet! This was even nicer than the night before. Our team then went back to the hotel for a football match against the Italians, the England team won! We ended it with a pillow fight, which turned into a water fight! The Italians surrendered and we called it off! The end of this brilliant day was here, we cleared up our mess and went off to bed.

The next day we packed up all our stuff which was collected and stored away ready for our departure. We went down to the Sports Ground pitches and played rounders, this was a really good game, and this shown that our team was fully bonded as we worked well together. We waved off some of the parents who were on an earlier flight back to England. We then went to play crazy golf, and had a nice mug of hot chocolate. It was sad to be going back home but we were all grateful to have had this opportunity; we got on the coach and were taken to the airport by Manwell who had won this race a few years before! This journey was a lot quicker than it had taken on the way there and the time was passed by playing traditional car games like eye spy (Even 'I Spy' !)

The plane journey back was a loud one! The team was very thunderous and our team spirit was at its peak! We spent the whole time laughing and joking, and planning what we were going to do when we got back! We planned a reunion which is going to take place this summer. When we got to the airport the parents were waiting there with flags and they cheered as we came out, this was fantastic, the feeling was indescribable! The trip was an overall success and everyone loved every minute of it!

Jerome Jefferson  
(a.k.a Rachel Jefferson)