



MCofS Youth Climbing Series 2012 – Scotland South Round 1

EICA: Ratho Saturday 14th January 2012

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As the British YCS final will take place at EICA: Ratho on 23rd June this year it was quite fitting that this was the location for the first round of the Scotland South series.

The local instructor had done a fantastic job of promoting the event to the various kids clubs and school groups that use the arena so that, together with the 'regulars' from the Quickdraw and Glasgow Climbing Clubs, we had 59 climbers, aged from 8 to 17 taking part.



On a chilly day the EICA: Ratho bouldering room was popular.

This year saw the introduction of IFSC Youth groupings which meant an increase in the number of categories but a reduction in the number of climbers in each. Each category now includes only 2 years rather than the 3 previously, meaning competitors are closer in age. In addition 17 year olds can take part for the first time.

We combined the boys and girls in youngest category Youth E (8/9) and Judge Arlene Stewart did a fine job in keeping these amazing little climbers engaged (with the help of a pack of jelly babies). All first time competitors, they took to the event easily, although the same cannot be said for some of the parents who looked a tad nervous watching. Top spots for the day went to Katie Moore over Stephanie Millar and Leo Harland-Sendra ahead of Ben Freireich and Miles Davis.

Youth D (10/11) boys was one of our bigger categories with 10 climbers and the competition was fierce with only Rory Whyte's bouldering success giving him the top spot ahead of Connor Moore (Katie's brother). I forecast the next two rounds will be equally close with Quickdraw club mates Declan Currie, Matthew Fall and Evan Davis nipping at their heels.



Some of the Youth D girls contemplate their next problems.

The Youth D girls group was smaller but the competition equally exciting with Rhiannon Freireich's outstanding top of her second route securing her the first spot ahead of Holly Davis and Emma Davidson.

Following a MCoFS route setters' induction course the previous week several new setters had been brought onboard resulting in a varied selection of challenging routes and problems. This was particularly evident in the bouldering room with fewer tops than would usually be expected. In many categories success in the bouldering room resulted in success on the podium. This was the case with the Youth C (12/13) boys where Sam Harland-Sendra's 2 boulder tops meant he finished ahead of Ewan Davidson and Robert Davidson.

Youth C (12/13) is the youngest category that can try out for the GB team and several of the girls had been down to Sunderland in December to tryout. An excellent top on her second boulder problem secured Keira Farmer first place ahead of Quickdraw club mates Gabriella Steward and Kirsten Gray.

For many of the boys in the Youth B (14/15) this was their first ever competition and given the challenges they faced they all did well. As a couple of them normally climb with their schools we hope to see them taking part in the Scottish Secondary Schools Climbing Series next month. Hamish Loening took first spot ahead of Ivan Bialy and Calum Hall.

In the girls Youth B group we were able to accommodate one of the climbers nipping off for a choral audition at lunchtime, even so the day went smoothly with Eilidh Vass Payne pipping Megan Saunders by only one point, the closest girls' result of the day. Jodie Brown took third place



Christie on her winning boulder problem

The closest boys result was in the Youth A (16/17) category where we had to look at the number of bouldering attempts to separate Fraser McIlwraith and Alexander Bosi who both finished with full marks (480pts). Fraser had only taken one attempt on the first boulder compared to Alexander's two so he took first place. Euan King was third.

The oldest girls group only had 3 competitors and it was very close with Christie Macleod's careful top on their second boulder giving her first place. Newcomer Sophie Fitchett was second ahead of Abigail Blunt.

The next round is on Saturday 28th January at the Peak Wall in Stirling. This wall is smaller and has more features so the route setters will no doubt have different challenges in store for the competitors playing to different strengths and maybe mixing things up again.

Our Scotland North climbers have their first round at Dundee's Avertical World next Saturday 21st January. The first time the North region YCS has used this wall we are expecting an equally exciting competition.

All photos by Rachel Carr