



## **MCofS Youth Climbing Series 2012 – Scotland South Round 2**

### **The Peak Wall, Stirling Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

Round 2 and with the temperatures hovering around freezing we were glad to be indoors. The sun was shining through the Peak Leisure Centre window and the Zumba ladies were dancing away in their studio as fifty- nine climbers and their supporters gathered together for another day of camaraderie and competition.

Whether it was the different wall, the different route setters, or just the awareness that the stakes were rising, the routes and problems seemed far more challenging this time and only Matthew Fall in the Youth D Boys achieved a perfect 480 score.

Once again there were new faces with climbers taking part in their first ever competition and parents watching on tensely. This meant we had at least 3 climbers in each category so should be able to field a complete team at the British finals in June if they all come back for round 3.

The Youth E (8-9) boys and girls were once again combined and started off on a green/pink spot climb on the slab wall which they all topped (eventually) with much encouragement from the audience. Leo Harland-Sendra and Katie Moore repeated their success in round 1 to take the top spots ahead of Ben Freireich and Miles Davis in the boys and Caitlin Storie and Stephanie Millar in the girls.

While climbers are normally eased into things with an easy first route and boulder, the tight space of the Peak Wall meant things were jiggled around a bit so Youth D's first challenging brown boulder was a bit of a surprise. Rhiannon Freireich and Holly Davis worked it out on their second attempt and the pair were in close competition throughout the day, with Emma Davidson once again snapping at their heels.

Youth D (10-11) is largest boys' category and there are 5 boys hotly contesting the top positions. Matthew Fall had an amazing day attacking every boulder and route to take a perfect 480 score. Winner of the last round Rory Whyte had to settle for second place, while an excellent second route from Evan Davis gave him third.

Youth C (12-13) Girls is in a similar predicament with 5 girls in the running for the 3 final's places. The last group up to climb on the day we had to wait until the final climber before we knew the podium positions. A tricky blue that had outsmarted all the demonstrators, the placings on this route were reflected in the final score. Kirsten Gray's extra move gained her first place with Gabriella Stewart in second and Kirsten Taylor doing enough to take third place.



Sam Harlend-Sendra once again took pole position in the boys' Youth C with Robert Davidson's better bouldering score taking him into second place ahead of Ewan Davidson.

The first route for the Youth B and A climbers was a slab climb with large pink holds that required balance and the use of wall features. It confused several of the climbers who came off at the first crux leaving them 60 points down on those that reached the top. They must have been wondering if this was their first route what were the next two going to be like.

Scores recovered on route 2 and 3 but the pink holds came back to haunt them in the shape of their third boulder problem where no one could top it during the competition. In the Youth B girls Eilidh Vass Payne once again took the podium with Megan Saunders in second and Beth Scott in third. In the boys' category the same three took the certificates but in a different order this round, with Ivan Bialy finishing ahead of Hamish Loening and Calum Hall. Alasdair Kitching shared the same points with Hamish and Calum but count back on the individual climbs left him in fourth place.

The introduction of Youth A has allowed 17 year old climbers to compete in the YCS for the first time so it was great to see Glasgow climber Mattie Harvie use his height and skills to great advantage and achieve the only top on the final blue route. His success secured him second place behind Fraser Mcilwraith and ahead of Alexander Bosi. Not to be outdone Fraser went on to top the pink boulder on his fourth attempt – no additional points just the satisfaction that he was the only one to do so.

We only have 3 girls in the oldest category and Christie Macleod once again out-climbed her competitors to take first place. Abigail Blunt's better results on the routes gave her second place just 2 points ahead of Sophie Fitchett. Both girls now have 145 ranking points so their result in round 3 will determine their final placing.

We take a break now for 3 weeks to allow for the February holidays. Round 3 in the Glasgow Climbing Centre on 18<sup>th</sup> February is going to be extremely exciting for the results there will determine the 3 climbers from each category that go forward to represent the Scotland South region at the British Finals at EICA: Ratho on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Tiso have generously donated prizes for the Series winners so it's not just certificates up for grabs next time. While climbers with 200 ranking points at the moment are fairly certain of a place on the team, their final position and who will join them is up in the air. Thank goodness for computers as I'd hate to have to work it all out by hand.

**Avril Gall (Depute AYC Scotland South)**

