



Creating a thriving club for juniors

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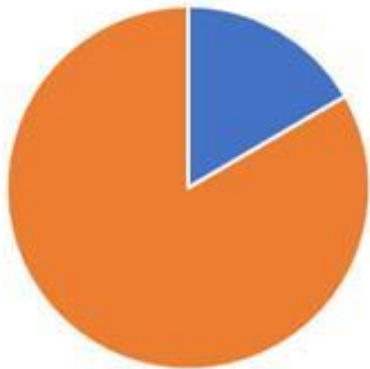
25th Jan 2024



Club development programme

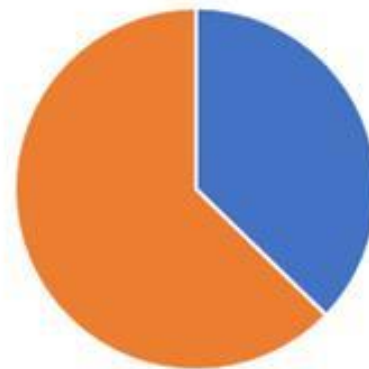


BOF



■ Junior ■ Senior

SYO



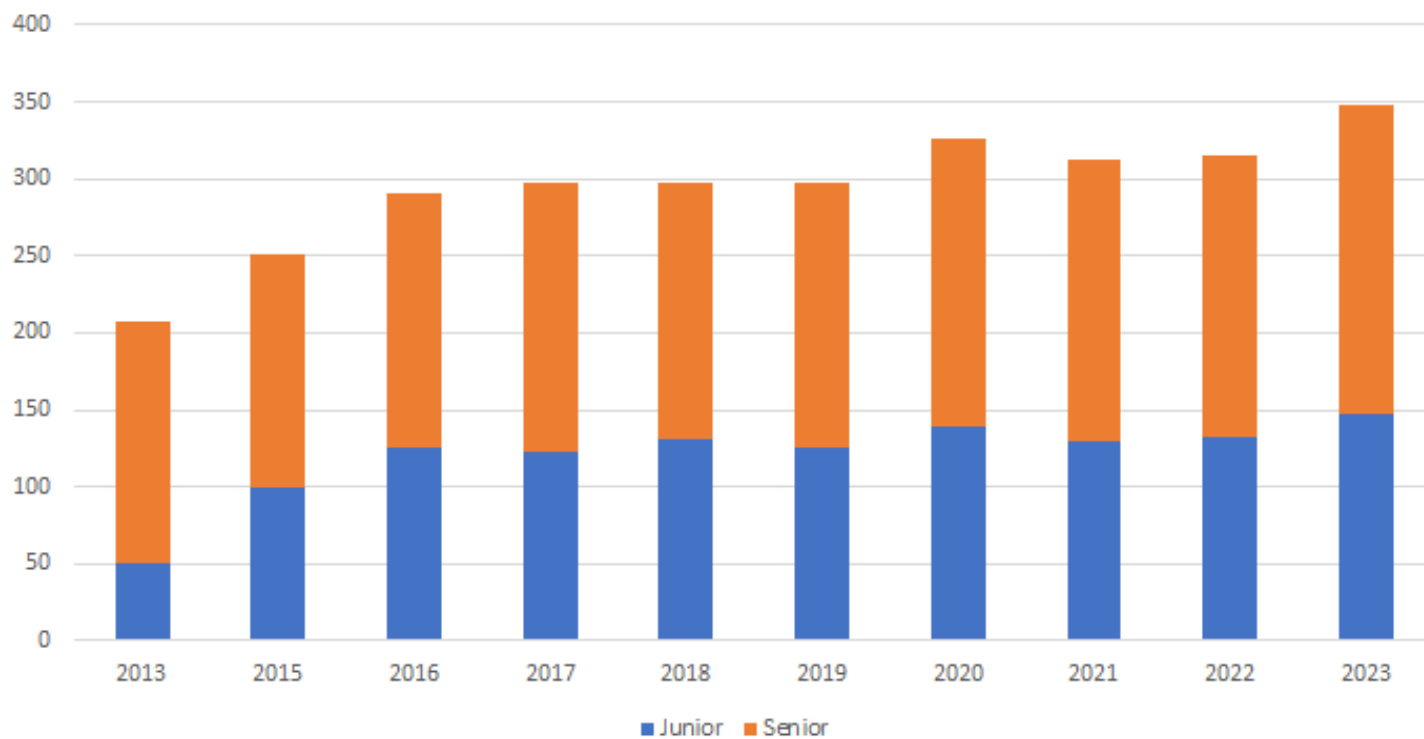
■ Junior ■ Senior

- Impact of family focused development programme
- High proportion of junior membership in SYO versus national.

SYO membership



Chart Title



Develop active club members



- Attract new people to the sport through newcomer focused series
- Promote club membership – benefits of joining
- Social opportunities
- Volunteering – train, value, encourage
- Coaching – all abilities, all ages
- Fun competition
- Attend major events
- Focus on active club members

Why focus on juniors?



- 8-12 age group - 'easiest target'
- Parents are looking for an activity for their kids
- Great family sport – can do together but then separately as juniors get older.
- A new junior can result in 2 new adults plus siblings
- Focus is really on families – parents encouraged to join in.

Selling orienteering:



- Why orienteering? What are the benefits?

mud running-wild
forests fun competition
resilience map-reading
exploring friends independence
adventure
playful
managed-risks

- Appeal to kids and their parents/carers!

Sheffield Saturday Series



- 10th season this year!
- 155 runs on white at last event
- Rebrand from schools league to ‘Saturday Series’ – cater to all newcomers
- Schools league incorporated - Parents rather than schools bring kids.
- Same time, same format, familiar parks with cafes.
- Relaxed with as few rules as possible!
- Promotion and celebration

Why join the club?

- Club night
- Cool kit!
- Socials
- Promotion and celebration
- Image of sport and club is good in Sheffield
- Junior only competitions
- Other competitions including relays
- Junior development

Club night

- Re-launched in 2017
- Importance of FUN and SOCIAL side
- All ages (8+), inclusive
- Improve physical fitness
- Experience lots of different terrain
- Learn new skills/practise techniques
- Groups split by age (juniors) and speed (adults)
- Cater for complete beginners to GB juniors
- Non-pressurised environment in which to improve

Club kit



- Juniors are desperate to get their hands on an O-top!
- Hoodies and jackets popular too
- Junior only top
- Second hand kit sale
- Bee mascot
- Face paint, nails – feel like a team





Socials

- Regular social gatherings open to all ages
- Annual club champs/AGM with meal
- Summer BBQ
- Monthly evening events with meal
- Social opportunities at club night
- Coach trips/car sharing

Promotion and celebration



- Use of social media
- Flyers
- Events like SHAFF, Cliffhanger
- Prizegiving with role models
- GB athletes at events (eg Charlotte Ward with medals at Saturday series)
- Regular emails & newsletters
- Personal invites

Image of sport and club



- Orienteering has a good image in Sheffield
- Collaboration with Outdoor City
- Social Media
- Kit
- Success stories (eg JWOC athletes, British Schools victories, Yvette Baker Trophy)
- Friendly and welcoming at events

Junior only competitions



- Personal invites to come and run for the club
- Celebrate all (not just 'counters')
- Coach travel/car sharing encouraged

- Feel like a team with face paint, mascot, captain etc



Other competitions

- Invitations to compete for the club
- Subsidised runs
- Encouraged to compete in relays at JK and British even if not running individual (especially when nearby)



Junior Pathways



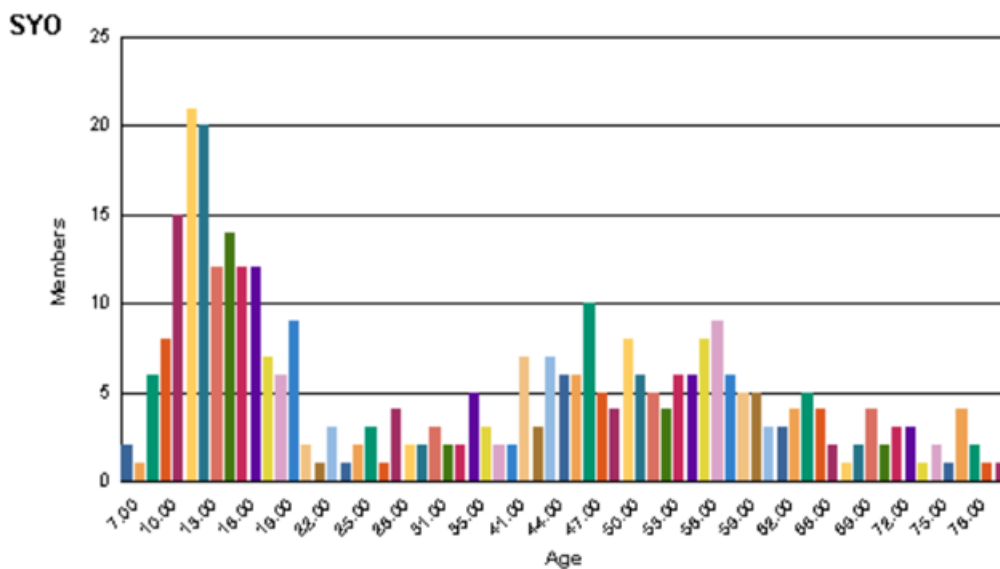
- SYO is an inclusive place for all juniors regardless of ability but we also promote training and development opportunities:
- YHOA squad
- GB Squad – 11 juniors in GB squad
- Volunteering – train, encourage & trust our juniors

Support your uni club



- Meet with key members from new committee each year – support, advice, equipment loan, training, lifts.
- Benefits to SYO:
- Lots of young adults at our event – role models for older teens
- Volunteer in return for free runs
- Plan & organise in return for profit share

A thriving club for juniors



	Female	Male	Total
10	4	13	17
12	12	24	36
14	10	22	32
16	10	16	26
18	9	10	19
20	6	9	15
21	14	14	28
35	3	5	8
40	12	9	21
45	16	15	31
50	13	16	29
55	12	22	34
60	5	15	20
65	5	4	9
70	5	8	13
75	3	7	10
80	0	1	1
Total	139	210	349

- 145 junior members!
- 11 & 12 years old = peak – 36 members
- Drop off in teenage years...although 60 members 15-20.

Why juniors leave



- Academic pressures
- Focus on different sport
- Other interest priorities
- Lack of social opportunities
- Image of the sport
- Cost & transport (uni age)
- Too elite focused – lack of recreational orienteering

Retaining older juniors



- Focus on what you can influence
- Lots of social opportunities – club night, socials
- Fun, no pressure orienteering – local leagues, club competition, team competition
- Improve image of orienteering – nice kit, young people in photos, lots of young people at events
- Share transport, lift Whatsapp, coaches to big comps.
- Support local university club

Junior Quotes



- Lots of juniors to be friends with
- Club night is good because we do a little bit of orienteering but also a lot of playing and having fun!
- It's good to have people to run with in relays
- Lots of opportunities to win chocolate
- Other juniors to train with
- Lots of coaching support and technique training
- Loads of local events
- Lots of friends here and a great way to keep active
- Freedom, map-reading, sport for life
- Lots of exercise but breaks for chatting
- See friends I wouldn't see otherwise
- Takes me to new places, do exercise, challenge myself
- Lots of variation in training, somewhere new most weeks
- Social aspect, lots of juniors, club night every week

What next?



- Introduce incentive / award scheme?
- Try to emanate what we've done in Sheffield in Rotherham
- More info for new parent – Q&A sessions
- How can we make Sunday regionals more attractive to our Saturday / club night participants?

Summary



- Inclusive
- FUN
- Focus on whole family
- Welcoming
- Socialising opportunities
- Chances for success (whatever level)
- Collaboration with other organisations
- **Long Process to reach this critical mass!**

What questions do you have?



- Any questions / comments on what SYO has done?
- Challenges you've faced within or outside of the club and need advice
- How you overcame challenges
- Success stories to share
- Do you have ideas but don't know where to start?