



KRIS JONES

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QUICK FIRE

Describe orienteering in three words:

Every race unique

Favourite area/course:

Open sand dunes or tricky sprint orienteering – something where I can run fast but still have a technical challenge.

Trickiest area/course:

Anything with low visibility

Best result:

2018 European Championships
Bronze Medal.

Forgettable moment:

None that I would want to forget. I have had plenty of disasters but that is part of sport

Goal for 2023:

In Orienteering – the European Orienteering Championship in Italy in October 2023

HOW DID YOU GET INTO ORIENTEERING?

Through my family. We started going to local events organised by Swansea Bay Orienteering Club when I was around 12 years old. I enjoyed the sport and made friends through it, which made me want to do more and more.

YOU RACE MANY DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES AND DISTANCES; TRACK, MOUNTAIN/TRAIL RUNNING AND ORIENTEERING-HOW DO YOU DESIGN A TRAINING PLAN THAT FITS THEM ALL?

I try to keep things relatively simple in training. I don't think that we need to train super specifically all year round. Rather, I spend most of my time doing the basics (for me, that is a relatively high volume of easy running with some tempo running and fast strides) and then look to do more specific sessions in the run up to different races.

DO YOU FIND ANY OF YOUR ORIENTEERING SKILLS CROSSING OVER INTO YOUR MOUNTAIN/TRAIL RUNNING RACES?

I raced in the forest for years and think that the skill of running in terrain serves me well in trail running. It is the ability to constantly adapt your stride to cover the ground efficiently. I think this is somewhat natural having grown up orienteering. I am certainly better than people expect given I have raced mostly on the road and track recently

YOU'VE HAD A GREAT SEASON- WINNING TRAIL MARATHONS, HALF MARATHONS, BEING PART OF THE WOC SUCCESS! WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR HIGHLIGHT??

The WOC sprint relay is a standout. I felt it was the culmination of many years of 'nearly' performances as a group. More than that, I hope it is the start of much more success, as we take that belief forward into future races.



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WHAT WAS THE WOC LIKE FROM AN ATHLETE'S PERSPECTIVE? DID YOU FEEL AS A TEAM PRIOR, THAT GB WOULD BE AS SUCCESSFUL AS YOU ENDED UP BEING?

It was an intense week. The races came thick and fast (I raced 7 times in 5 days). There were big highs from my own good performances and watching others perform so well, but there were also low points amongst that where things didn't go well. It was my first WOC for a few years (since 2018) and it was great to be back as part of the team. I really felt that everyone was genuinely rooting for each other to perform.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELIEVE THE BOREDOM/PRESSURE WHILST YOU WAIT IN QUARANTINE, ESPECIALLY FOR SUCH A BIG RACE AS A FINAL AT THE WOC?

It depends how long you are in quarantine and how you like to get 'in-the-zone' before the race. Sometimes it is a bit of distraction – playing cards or chatting amongst the group – or you might want to sit on your own for a while to focus your thoughts. I just try to relax and enjoy the experience; we train a lot to be in that position.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTING FOR YOU TO MISS OUT ON THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES KNOWING THAT YOU WERE TALENTED ENOUGH TO BE IN THE FINAL, HOW DO YOU BOUNCE BACK FROM THAT? DOES IT LESSEN OR INCREASE YOUR MOTIVATION FOR THE TRACK?

Absolutely. It is frustrating to sit at home watching a 10,000m race with less than 10 athletes on the start line, knowing that you could have been there. I focussed on being the best track athlete I could be for a couple of years, and I am proud of what I achieved in aiming for the games (28:23, 9th Welsh all-time 10,000m). I will focus on other goals for a while but wouldn't rule out going back to the track.

THE WORLD MOUNTAIN AND TRAIL CHAMPIONSHIPS COMING UP POSE A BIG TEST, HOW DO YOU TRAIN FOR THE CHALLENGES SUCH AS THE HUMIDITY YOU WILL BE FACING WHILST OUT THERE?

There are some things I can do to prepare for the heat, but I don't think I can be fully prepared for the challenges. The conditions in Dundee in October are quite different to Thailand! That is exciting. So often we go into races knowing what to expect. In Thailand I will have to draw on my experience to adapt and run the best race I can on that day. I will do my best to let go of expectations and focus on managing my performance the best I can.

FINALLY, IF YOU WERE TO 'SELL' ORIENTEERING TO FELLOW TRACK/TRAIL RUNNERS WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ONE/TWO SENTENCE SELLING PITCH?

Orienteering can provide a unique racing experience where you are completely in the moment and all that matters are the next steps. The learning curve can be steep, but I think it is worthwhile for the experiences you can unlock.



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