

AUCKLAND ORIENTEERING CLUB

MEDIA RELEASE

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YOUNG Auckland orienteer Toby Scott has headed to Europe for the Junior World Orienteering Championships with high hopes of the New Zealand team achieving a standout top-six result.

And leading NZ orienteers are convinced that the team, led by the in-form 19-year-old Glendowie university student, is far and away our best yet.

Former NZ team coach Rob Garden says categorically that the junior men are “clearly the best bunch of juniors we’ve ever had.”

And he predicts that “there could be some impressive results to come” from them in the July 4 to 10 junior world championships (JWOC) in Aalborg, Denmark.

Scott, who was a member of the NZ junior team last year, rocked the established Australasian orienteering order during the recent Trans Tasman Orienteering Challenge in Woodhill Forest – winning two days of the contest outright.

He beat Australian champion David Shepherd, Oceania champion Simon Uppill and present and former NZ titleholders Ross Morrison and Darren Ashmore in each outing – leading a standout NZ junior performance that also included a win for Rotorua’s Angela Simpson.

And Scott was ably backed up by fellow JWOC squad runners Matt Ogden (who took two third placings), Jourdan Harvey (fourth in one race) and Gene Beveridge (two ninths) – prompting NZ champion Morrison to predict that the Kiwis “are going to do really well in Denmark: The sandhill terrain there is a lot like Woodhill.”

Rob Garden says that Scott's performance was astounding: "It beggars belief that a junior, just a couple of years out of school, can go and win races like those – against all of NZ's best and some of Australia's best."

Having Scott, Ogden, Harvey, Beveridge and Angela Simpson in such form is, he says, "the most exciting thing that's happened in NZ orienteering for years."

Toby credits his performance (which even drew comparison to former world champion, now NZ junior team manager Carsten Joergensen), to the intensive forest training that he and Auckland-based JWOC team-mates Ogden, Harvey and Beveridge have been doing two or three times a week.

It puts them all in great shape going to Denmark, he says: "The results (in the Trans Tasman Challenge) were all pretty close. I think we might be looking for a good result in the relay – a top six or so.

"In the individual events (the champs comprise sprint, middle-distance and long-distance events) we'll probably be looking at a few top 20s hopefully. It's really, really competitive – 'specially for new guys like Matt and Gene who haven't been over there. They'll just be looking to get their foot in the door."

Scott says that experience on the world stage is hugely important: "I didn't do so well in JWOC last year in Italy. Orienteering-wise it was quite a shock just how good everyone was."

Since then, he says, the very focused training – in similar terrain to that they'll encounter in Denmark – has been critical in his improvement: "We're really used to running in that kind of terrain now."

The evidence came in the Trans-Tasman Challenge: "I wasn't expecting to win any races. I was hoping for a few top-10s – with the Aussies over as well.

"I didn't do so well at the nationals this year (just a second place in the sprint) so I wasn't expecting too much (in the Trans-Tasman). But considering the amount of training we've been doing, I guess it makes a little bit of sense."

He's gone to Denmark for JWOC not specifically aiming at beating the previous best Kiwi performances (including 10th and 12th places for Richard Bolt in 1996 and Thomas Reynold's 14th three years ago....backed up by a number of other top-20 finishes): "I just want to focus on having a really good run and not losing lots of time anywhere. If I do that I think the results will come."

Scott, who's now doing engineering and science degrees at Auckland University, got started orienteering six or seven years ago, when he was at Remuera Intermediate School – following older sister Imogene into the sport. Since then his Mum and Dad have also taken it up.

He's a double NZ sporting rep, having played for the NZ Underwater Hockey team in Australia last year.

(A high-resolution version of the attached photo of Tony competing in JWOC 2009 in Italy is available on request)

*For more information on Toby Scott's performance at JWOC see updates
posted on the Auckland Orienteering Club website – www.auckoc.org.nz
or call Wayne Munro, AOC – Phone (09) 826 0494 or (021) 955 099*