

Jonathan Field

SPORT CLIMING & COMPETITION 2011 Review

The first half of 2011 was spent recovering from a long term finger injury, one that I had been fighting with for the past year, until December 2010 when I was forced to take some time off to try and help my fingers get back to a climbable state. I spent 3 months in complete rest from climbing from December-February with intensive treatment (special thanks to Theresa Binnie at Ratho who helped me greatly in this time) and I finally started to see some improvements. I then eased myself back into climbing over the next few months, slowly at first but gradually increasing the intensity of my climbing as I felt my fingers being able to cope with harder things.

It was a slow and very frustrating process as I was not able to push myself in the way I would in normal training. For the most part, it was not my fitness holding me back but the worry that, in pushing myself to try harder things, I would further damage my fingers. This was enough to encourage me to take it sensibly as the last thing I wanted was to have to take a further period of enforced rest!

I worked hard at my recovery and by July I was ready to compete in the BMC Youth Open, which would be my first competition since the BLCCs in October 2010! I was not quite sure what to expect as I had not competed in so long and my fingers were still not 100%. I went into the competition thinking that if I were to qualify for the final, I would have to drop out as I did not think my fingers would be able to cope with the final route. However, after climbing the first two qualifiers, I was pleased to get into the final and I decided to go for it! I feel I climbed very well considering I had not been able to train properly for 7 months and came out in 3rd place.

By this time I could step up my training another level and I now had my sights set on the BLCCs in October. I continued to train over the summer and was continually seeing improvements in my fingers. In September I moved to Sheffield to start my degree in Bioengineering at The University of Sheffield. With new training facilities and people to climb with I was psyched to get fit for the BLCCs a month later.





By October, I was back up to quite a good level of fitness and I was excited to see how I would get on! On the Saturday I competed in the Junior category. I climbed the qualifiers well and it felt good to be back to a reasonable level of fitness. After topping both the routes I was through to the final! In isolation, I was both nervous and excited, as I really wanted to do well in the final to prove to myself that I had come back from my injury. As I climbed the final route, I felt strong and controlled and psyched to do well! I came off about half way up after miss-judging the place of a hold round a corner but I was very pleased with my position of 3rd.

In the evening after the competition, Team manager, Ian Dunn told me that in light of my performance, I had been selected to compete in the final round of the EYC in Kranj in November. This was exciting news as I hadn't competed in an international competition since the World Youth Championships in September 2010 and it showed me that I must have returned to a high standard to be selected for a competition like this. The next day I competed in the senior category of the BLCCs and after coming in 4th the previous year I was ready to put my all into it this year. I came off on the last move of the first qualifier and about two thirds of the way up the second one. With a very strong category this year I unfortunately did not qualify for the final but missed out by 2 places, coming in 7th.

With a new international competition to aim for in November, I returned to Sheffield as psyched as ever to train hard and improve my fitness. With my fingers still not fully recovered I still had to be sensible with my training but by doing this I could manage the injury well. On the 24th November we flew out as a team to Kranj to compete on the Saturday (and Sunday for the finalists.) It was my first international comp in over a year and I was slightly nervous to see how I would do. I did not place very high in the end but I feel I climbed relatively well and I was very pleased at how far I had come in the past year to return to the standard of international competitions. It felt good to be competing internationally again after the year that I had and Ian Dunn spoke to me after the competition and told me that he was impressed by the improvements that I had made and was hopeful for my next year in competitions.

The last event of 2011 was the 2nd BMC Youth/Team Trials in Sunderland in December. I left Sheffield in the early hours of Saturday morning and arrived in Sunderland feeling pretty tired but ready to psyche myself up for the big day ahead. Warming up, I started to feel a bit better and I was all set to do my best and regain my place on the 2012 team. I topped the first qualifier, a long pumpy route, which I was not used to having moved away from the tall walls of Ratho! The 2nd qualifier proved to be a bit trickier with a very technical finish, which needed a lot of concentration and core stability to keep established on the small footholds. I reached the end and was in reach of the final hold and I was spat off trying to match my feet on one of the tiny footholds. Nevertheless, I was through to the final. After a less than desirable warm up due to the lack of facilities in the isolation area, I came out for my final climb. I felt a little unsteady in the bottom section but pulled through it and climbed towards the headwall where the holds suddenly got a lot worse and became very slopey. With the end in sight I was determined to reach the chains. I pulled it together and fought my way to the final moves. About to go for the second last hold, I pulled on two slopey pinches and pinged off! I finished the day in a very happy 2nd place and I was back on the team for the next year!



I would like to thank the MCoFS for their support as it helped greatly to fund my training in recovery from my injury and my travel to competitions throughout the year. I aim in 2012, as my last year in the Junior Team, to compete in further rounds of the European Youth Series and the World Youth Championships!