



ONE DIRECTION: Joanna Hill.

Duo claim short distance course

ORIENTEERING

MIKKO Salonen and Rachel Effeney have taken out the short distance competition at a state orienteering festival in the Armidale Pine Forest on Saturday.



Salonen led from the outset in the male's 21 and over class, making it to the first control 10 seconds faster than runner-up Lee Coady.

He continued to extend his lead throughout the course, making it through the 3.5 km course in 22:47.

Effeney managed a time of 23:53 in the women's 21 and over class, leading at the first control by more than 30 seconds.

But the end result was closer than the men's, with runner-up Tracy Marsh finishing in 24:51 compared to Coady's time of 26:49.

Saturday's competition was the first in a three-day festival held in Armidale across the long weekend, but was not counted as a state league event.

Yesterday's competition was set to take place at Mt Brown, with harder courses between 2.5km and 5km in length across open to semi-open paddocks and areas of granite.

Today competitors will move to Banalasta, southwest of Uralla, to tackle 3.5km to 9km courses through steep forested slopes and extensive granite outcrops.

Northern Tablelands Orienteering Club (NTOC) publicity officer Rowena Childs said the courses had proved to be more challenging than expected for some participants.

"A few people who we expected to perform better experienced trouble with some of the controls, but some of the more experienced orienteers were showing fine form," she said.

More than 200 orienteers from across NSW, southeast Queensland and the ACT have descended on the town over the long weekend, which is being hosted by NTOC in association with Bullecourt Boulder Bounders and Orienteering NSW.