

VICTORIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS ORIENTEERING REPORT

from Philippa Lohmeyer-Collins

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The Australian Orienteering Championships is an occasion for the Schools Championships as well. NZ always sends a team which adds to the competitive aspect and sets a good standard. All teams stayed together in various houses that made up 'Swanleigh', located in the north-east outskirts of Perth. The accommodation was excellent and included rooms for team meetings and fantastic food.

Co-captain Matt Doyle had an excellent carnival to take out National Orienteering League champion ahead of Oscar Mc Nulty from WA. He won outright in M20 Elite class including over the New Zealanders in the Australian Middle and Long Distance events. He won the Schools Individual event by 8 seconds over the New Zealander. But even 1 second would have been enough and reflects his commitment to training. Most deservedly he was also selected as a member of the Schools Honour Team and to compete in the Australian Schools team at Oceania.

Co-captain Asha Steer led the girls placing consistently in the top 3 except for the Schools Individual. Whilst disappointed with the Schools result it was her terrific demeanour which shone through and was a great example to the team.

As well as good results, both Asha and Matt led the team in preparing for events, debriefing and general encouragement. Warm-ups before events happened in groups. Stephen and I have been introduced to a whole new range of music to help 'pump us up' before events courtesy of Asha and Sequoia.

On the first rest day before the big Schools events we journeyed to 'Supa-golf'. Playing in ad-hoc teams all schools members enjoyed the hilarity of learning a new skill. On the second rest day all teams visited Fremantle Prison. This proved to be a most interesting and sobering journey for everyone. Our treatment of Indigenous people has not always been as best it could and neither has our treatment of prisoners.

Other significant results from the members of the team included:

Senior Age category:

- Patrick Jaffe winning the Australian Long M16A and coming 3rd in the WA Long M20A championship.
- Nicholas Collins coming 8th (4th Australian) in the Australian Long M20E and being chosen as 3rd reserve for the Australian Schools Team to compete at Oceania.
- Louis Cameron placing 8th (5th Australian) in Schools Individual.
- Peter Collins winning M20A for most events he competed in! Elite classes next?
- Leisha Maggs placing 10th in Schools individual and being chosen as 2nd reserve for the Australian Schools Team to compete at Oceania.

Junior Age category:

- Aston Key winning Schools Individual and Australian Middle Distance and runner up in the Australian Sprint. Aston was also selected as a member of the Schools Honour Team and to compete in the Australian Schools team at Oceania.
- Glen James consistently placing 5th-7th in most events.
- Caitlyn Steer, competing in her first championships in the W12A class and only just missing out on the podium on nearly every occasion.

The Team did themselves proud. The performances I have noted are those in the top of the field. But there were many outstanding personal achievements. Some younger members of the team had not done a lot of bush orienteering before. They did not give up. They finished. They worked hard on new skills. Their behaviour and ability to bounce back signalled them all out as amazing people with generous spirits.

Stephen Bird has been coaching the Victorian schools Team for quite a few years now. His patience and skill in growing young novice orienteers into people who love and are skilled at the sport is significant. He makes the job look easy but this would be to underestimate all the thought and effort he puts into this work. Stephen and I were most appreciative of his presence and learnings as newbie co-managers.

Over the last 5 years Nicola Stevens has managed the Victorian Secondary Schools Team. She has worked tirelessly to encourage people into the sport, produced various T-shirts and Hoodies that have helped unite the members into a team, helped with the training members and encouraging the parents of members of the team. Stephen and I, on behalf of all people involved with the Schools Team over the last 5 years, would like to thank Nicola for her efforts, kindnesses and support. It is because of her efforts that our job as co-managers was made so much easier. Thank you Nicola – thank you.

Finally – to the team – well done.