

Victorian Schools Orienteering Team Report – 2015

The Schools Orienteering Championships were held in Victoria this year along with the Australian Championships. The Victorian Team was made up of 7 girls and 12 boys and so a complete team represented Victoria. These young people also represented 7 different clubs, although almost half the team (9 students) were from the Bendigo club with Melbourne Forest Racers sending 4.

The team was accommodated in the Welcome Stranger Big 4 Park in Ballarat. This location proved convenient and worked well for all teams from Australia and New Zealand. There was less driving to events than last year and this proved a big winner for everyone. The use of cabins meant teams/individuals were provided with flexibility for meeting food needs, younger members of the team could go to bed earlier than the seniors by being grouped in cabins of similar age and there were multiple spaces for various activities, including a study area for those preparing for year 12 exams from Victoria. The food was provided by outside caterers who did an excellent job in both quality and quantity. The on-site facilities of a pool and mini-golf as well as the communal dining hall were well used and facilitated interstate mixing. All teams co-operated and mixed well, with a great sense of camaraderie, collegiality and support. This interstate support, friendship and respect for rivals was noted by the School Sport Victoria representative, who was impressed by the friendly, supportive and positive atmosphere at all the events.

This year saw the inaugural Sprint Championship added to the calendar of events for the Schools Teams. This Sprint event was given equal weight with the Bush Classic and the Relays, and so it was always going to be interesting to see how the various States went and how performances in the Sprint affected overall placings. Unfortunately for the Victorian team, the sprint proved to be their weakest day of the three, and at the end of the Sprint Competition the team was sitting in equal 4th place with SA behind Tas, ACT and Qld. A superb team effort on the Bush Classic day brought the team back into contention into 3rd place and just 4 points behind the overnight leaders, ACT. This set up an exciting relay day. It all went down to a thrilling finish to the Senior Girls relay, in which the finishing order of several teams, including Vic, would decide the final competition. Ultimately it was Tasmania who triumphed, thanks to the Vic and WA teams finishing ahead of the ACT. On the day the Vic team displayed some strong relay performances, but was unable to close the gap on the two leading states, and the team finished the competition equal 3rd with Qld, behind Tasmania and Act.

Many in the team achieved personal bests during the championships, and for this they deserve hearty congratulations. It takes good presence of mind to put aside a hiccup from the day before, to stay focussed and perform at your best when there is extra pressure from spectators, as well as living away from the comforts of home. Some of our team members were quite young, just 13, and these younger members especially deserve congratulations for rising to the many challenges so well.

Throughout the carnival the team benefitted from expert input from various sources, including Ralph Street and Peter Bray (on visiting orienteering scholarships from the UK), as well as Warren and Tash Key, and their invaluable input was appreciated by all. Additionally the input of many others in the months leading into the Championships must be recognised, including Roche Prendergast who contributed to the training activities on the camp in August, and Nicola Dalheim for her general organisation of team activities and fund raising.

There will be 5 students leaving the team this year after a significant contribution: Peter Collins, Louis Cameron, Asha Steer, Leisha Maggs and Sequoia Weightmann - all have their year 12 exams in a few weeks. They have given generously to the younger members of the team and will be missed. One observation that many reading this report will already have made is that all our Senior Girls are leaving. I believe only one Junior Girl moves up into the Senior category next year, and we hope to see the return of one other who was unavailable for selection this year. Consequently, without a full team comprising of 4 Senior Girls, we will have a big hole in the team in 2016. It's been noted that other States in Australia who have experienced this same problem have been actively recruiting Junior Girls and then providing them with excellent experience in navigating in the bush as well as serious help with running well and fast. Maybe this is something we can think about and be strategic in our recruiting to Orienteering.

As already mentioned, this year's carnival saw the addition of the Schools Sprint event, which was a very positive inclusion. The only downside being that it resulted in the team members competing in 8 events in 9 days, which inevitably caused some accumulated fatigue. Planning has begun for the 2016 carnival, which is in Queensland, and has the 'state championship event' dropped from the programme – presumably to be held at another time in the year. This has the advantage of enabling the Australian Sprint, Middle, Long and Relays to be held over the 2 weekends, with a rest day on the Monday, the 3 ASOC events (Sprint, Classic and Relay) to be held Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and another rest day on the Friday. This would seem to be a desirable format as it allows some form of recovery for the participants, albeit that the rest days become travel days in Queensland due to the use of 3 different locations across the 9 days. Nevertheless, I would advocate for a similar format for the future, with no state championship, but the 4 Australian and 3 ASOC events in 9 days, thereby allowing 2 rest days in 9.

This year Steve Bird acted as Coach with Stephen Collins and Philippa Lohmeyer-Collins as Team Managers. Philippa, Stephen and Stephen would like to acknowledge the role of the various parents of Team members who worked tirelessly running the Juniors cake, drinks and toasties tent and raising precious funds that helped send the team away. And a big thank you to the clubs who also generously supported these youngsters. They are our future in orienteering and we couldn't be more hopeful and privileged to have been a part of this group for this year and last. Finally a big thank you to the team captains Patrick and Asha, who embraced the role of captains and lead from the front: not only with their personal performances, but also with their initiation of training activities, arranging team gear, and many behind the scenes details, all of which contributed to the overall cohesion of the group.

Philippa Lohmeyer-Collins

Stephen Collins

Stephen Bird

Monday 12 October 2015

Results summary

ASOC carnival includes a team from NZ, who compete for the 'Southern Cross' trophy, but are excluded in the points calculations for the ASOC championships. The ASOC results below, therefore refer to placings with the NZ participants removed.

Top 10 performances for the (ASOC) Schools Races (excluding NZ):

- Aston Key (Junior Boy) – 1st in Sprint; 1st in Bush
- Glenn James (Junior Boy) – 9th in Sprint; 7th in the Bush
- Asha Steer (Senior Girl) – 3rd in the Sprint; and 3rd in the Bush
- Leisha Maggs (Senior Girl) – 8th in Sprint; 5th in Bush
- Patrick Jaffe (Senior Boy) – 1st in the Sprint; and 3rd in the Bush
- Louis Cameron (Senior Boy) – 6th in the Bush
- Karina Cherry (Junior Girl) – 8th in Bush

Team results (excluding NZ) were:

- Sprint: SB 3rd; SG 4th; JB 3rd; JG 7th
- Bush: SB 2nd; SG 3rd; JB 3rd; JG 3rd
- Relay: SB 3rd; SG 3rd; JB 2nd; JG 6th

Three students were selected into the All Australian Team, previously known as the Honour Team. Congratulations go to Patrick Jaffe (Senior Boy), Asha Steer (Senior Girl) and Aston Key (Junior Boy).

There were also some outstanding performances in the Australian Middle, Long and Sprint championships events, with top 10 finishes by.

- Mason Arthur (M14A): 7th in Sprint; 9th in Long.
- Aston Key (M16A): 1st in Middle; 1st Sprint; 1st in Long; won all events by a healthy margin including being faster than his Dad on the same course for some events.
- Jimmy Cameron (M16A): 3rd Middle.
- Glenn James (M16A): 5th Middle; 8th Sprint; 3rd in Long.
- Asha Steer (W17-20E): 10th in Middle; 4th in Sprint; and 4th in Long; coming back from injury earlier in the year, so pleasing results.
- Leisha Maggs (M17-20E): 10th in Sprint;
- Patrick Jaffe (M17-20E): 2nd in Middle; 2nd in Sprint; 2nd in Long; continues to enjoy a healthy rivalry with the New Zealanders, Ed Cory Wright and Tommy Hayes.