

Jells Park XC Relays

Sat Apr 19, 2008

On a beautiful autumn afternoon, a small, but dedicated Geelong Region crew tackled many other teams in the first race of the Athletics Victoria Cross Country season. At the sun-soaked picturesque Jells Park, four Geelong teams competed in the Cross Country Relay competition.

In their defence of last year's Premiership, the Division One Men's team were always likely to be victorious fielding a team boasting two current Olympians in Craig Mottram and Lee Troop. Brett Coleman (18.56) got the team off to a solid start, while Michael McNaughton (19.25) and Andre La Gerche (18.59) consolidated the position to hand over to Lee, who ran beautifully to record a time of 17.23 minutes. Sandwiched between the two Australian Beijing representatives, Colin Thornton (18.55) put in a fine performance placing Craig into third position at the start of the final leg. It was great to see the crowd appreciate the free flowing running of Craig Mottram as he burned up the Jells Park course to record a sizzling time of 16.39 minutes for the 6km and take Geelong to a famous victory.

Unfortunately, due to an illness to Freyja Troop, the Women's Division One team were unable to field a full team, however Kristen Wyatt (22.31), Cathryn Hoare (25.31) and a new recruit to the Division One team this year, Eliesha Byrt (32.01), all ran strongly in the very warm conditions.

Five of the six Junior Women team members ran for the first time in the Geelong singlet (or crop top). In the Under 16 Women's team, Clare Hodgson (11.45) ran a slick time to pass over to newcomers Wendy Parish (12.17) and Shantelle Maurer (13.13) to finish in a creditable 7th position. This is a fine achievement considering both Wendy and Shantelle are eligible for the Under 14 age group. Thanks girls, for being so willing to help us field a team we otherwise would not have had.

In the Women's Under 14 competition, the combination of Jmara Hockley-Samon (11.31), Darcie Verstraten (12.02) and younger sister Claudia Verstraten (11.32), managed to win a bronze medal in their first outing for the Geelong team, which was an excellent effort - well done girls.

Thanks must also go to Lyn Taylor and Peter Samon for fulfilling the important role of duty officials for AV and to Andrew Hodgson and Jack Verstraten for managing the junior teams.

Results:

Mens Open Div 1 (6 x 6km)	1st overall
Brett Coleman	18.56
Michael McNaughton	19.25
Andre LaGerche	18.59
Lee Troop	17.23
Colin Thornton	18.55
Craig Mottram	16.39

Womens Open Div 1	
Kristen Wyatt	22.31
Cathryn Hoare	25.31
Eliesha Byrt	32.01

Girls U16 (3 x 3km)	7th overall
Clare Hodgson	11.45
Wendy Parish	12.17
Shantelle Maurer	13.13

Girls U14 (3 x 3km)	3rd overall
Jmara Hockley-Samon	11.31
Darcie Verstraten	12.02
Claudia Verstraten	11.32

Geelong Region Team Awards:

JELLS PARK RELAYS

Junior Women:

2 votes: Jmara Hockley-Samon
 2 votes: Claudia Verstraten
 1 vote: Wendy Parish
 1 vote: Shantelle Maurer

Senior Women

3 votes: Kristen Wyatt
 2 votes: Cathryn Hoare
 1 vote: Eliesha Byrt

Senior Men

3 votes: Craig Mottram
 2 votes: Lee Troop
 1 vote: Colin Thornton

BUSH INN AWARD:

This award goes to Colin Thornton, who made himself available for this race only five days after the birth of his first child. Colin may also have felt under some pressure as he was the "meat in the sandwich", linking our two Olympians together in the relay. Colin, we hope you enjoy your meal at the Bush Inn.