



GEELONG REGION CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM NEWSLETTER



Issue # 30

July 2003

GEELONG WINS SANDOWN ROAD RELAYS

The Sandown Road Relays are the Grand Final for Victoria's best distance runners. Run well on the time-tested Sandown Raceway course and you can claim to be in fine form. A time under 18 minutes for senior men or under 20 minutes for senior women has you in a very select group. Be part of a winning team at Sandown and you can create history, for it's at Sandown that a club's distance running talent and depth are put to the ultimate test. Team wins at Sandown are not just created by the stars twinkling - it's how well the lower ranked team members perform that often decides the final positions.

Our planning for Sandown began weeks ago. Team selections, running order and likely opposition were thrown around like military leaders discussing battle plans. But like all dangerous conquests, there were casualties along the way with injury, illness, work commitments and holidays taking their toll. Even last minute fitness tests or misplaced registration numbers and singlets on race morning had the nerves jingling. Surely the D - Day Invasion was not this complicated!

Eventually, after enough phone calls to send the Telstra share price through the roof, thirteen fit and committed Geelong Teams assembled at a windy Sandown Raceway ready for action.

There was even whispered talk of a possible win by our Division One Men. However, could our 2003 team accomplish what top class athletes such as Mottram, Troop, Lynch, Tucker, Perrott, Jeremiah and Fountain had been unable to do when we always seemed to fall one fast runner short in our six man team? The answer was an emphatic "YES!"

Leading off for the Division One Men was the smooth-striding Matt McDonough who worked his way through the field on his second lap to have the team beautifully placed.

Second runner, Kym Morgan, was in doubt leading up to Sandown with tendonitis of the foot which resulted in a ten day rest from running. However, a spirited fartlek session on Tuesday night convinced Kym, and coach Scriven, that everything was OK. Despite not being at 100% fitness due to lost training time, Kym ran a gutsy leg to keep us up near the lead.

Two years ago, as an Under 20 athlete, Ritchie Jeremiah ran a blinding final leg of 18.25 to almost snatch second place on the line. This year, Ritchie was determined to go sub 18. However, even though he ran Geelong into the lead, Ritchie had to be content with a very solid time of 18.36.

A fired-up Mark Tucker took off like a Stawell Gift winner, perhaps thinking of running under Steve Moneghetti's Sandown course record of 17.16. A half-way split of 8:50 was excellent in the wind and had extended the lead. Humming Eminem on the second lap to relax, Mark was able to record an excellent time of 17.53 - being one of only four runners who went sub 18 for the day!

Naval Sub-Lieutenant, Rowan Walker psyched up for his leg by reading "Maritime Power In The Twentieth Century" on the team bus to Sandown. When he finally tagged with Mark "8 Mile" Tucker, a focused military man took off determined to blow any chasers out of the water. Urged on by his team-mates, Rowan dug deep to

hold off all but a charging Steve Moneghetti.

Lee Troop has recorded many fine victories over the years. After ten previous attempts, a win at the Sandown Road Relays was not one of the them. And so, it was a pumped-up Troopy who took off on the final leg, determined to cut into the 100 metre deficit A.S.A.P. Flying around the course at the speed reminiscent of the Road Runner tattooed on his shoulder, Troopy quickly went into the lead and onto the sweetest Athletics Victoria victory of all. Even the blisters caused by wearing new green and gold Nike Roncero racing flats (that's one green shoe and one gold shoe) were ignored as jubilant team-mates cheered Troopy over the line.

Great running Matt, Kym, Ritchie, Mark, Rowan and Lee - our first senior win in the Sandown Road Relays is 'special', as one famous commentator has been known to say.

(Note: Troopy's Roncero racing flats were specially made by Nike for the Sydney Olympic Marathon. Only Troopy and Mona have these racing flats. The shoes he wore for the Sydney Olympic Marathon were auctioned at a Geelong Cross-Country Team Fund Raiser for \$550. The next time Troopy uses the flats he wore at Sandown will be in the up-coming World Championship Marathon.)

Also recording a fine victory were our Under 20 Women's Team. Leading off was Canberra resident, but still proud Geelong athlete, Rebecca Wiasak. Rebecca is in great shape at the moment after many months of longer, endurance training under A.I.S. Coach, Dick Telford. Rebecca's time of 11.15 indicates that many good middle-distance races are ahead. Well done, Rebecca - it's great to have you back in the Geelong Team. Under 18 athlete, Chantelle Faraguna moved up an age group for 'team balance' but showed many of the older girls a thing or two as she sped around the 3.1 km. loop course at under 4 minute kilometre pace. Final runner, Emily Rooke then set about sealing a Geelong victory with a final lap that gave any potential chasers no chance. As a bonus, our 'terrific trio' also won a \$250 bonus from a "Runners World" sponsorship. Fantastic effort, Rebecca, Chantelle and Emily.

Injury and unavailability played havoc with selection of our Division Four Men's Team. However, when the gun fired a team of five fired-up athletes were ready to go. As mentioned in the last newsletter, Darren Riviere is slowly returning to form with improved training form evident, especially in the Saturday morning hills session around the Eastern Gardens scoria track and the Eastern Beach ramps. And while Darren's final 2003 time of 21.41 was well adrift of his 19.27 Sandown P.B., he was most pleased to have team-mate, Geoffrey 'Osama' Purnell's time covered.

Second runner, Andrew Chalmers has benefited from months of steady, longer running as he prepared for April's Canberra Marathon. On Saturday he was able to run two strong, evenly paced laps before handing over to Paul Wilson, who continues to show great team spirit despite working hours that would test Rip Van Winkle.

Former World Bare-Foot Water Ski Champion, John Stekelenburg has stepped up his run training this year, obviously so he can keep up with speedy daughters, Amy and Laura. Running the vital fourth leg and showing his customary determination, John was able to pace a flying Steve Moneghetti

down the finishing straight to record an improving sub 24 minute time. Well done, John - as Mona has said, 'you're a much better runner than he is a bare foot water skier!'

Eventually, after all the calculations were completed, our Division Four Men finished a very creditable third. Well done, guys!

Due to late withdrawals, Travis Zimmer was our Division Seven Team! And showing great team-spirit, Travis even talked of completing all four legs if valuable team points were available. Fortunately, the talk on the bus of completing the full team quota of 24.8 kilometres was quickly forgotten as Travis finished his leg. Great effort, Travis - we really appreciate how you're always prepared to put the team first.

Strangely, our Vet's Team have been scouring Retirement Homes in search of a 50 year old + male prepared to have a run every few weeks. This is because 47 year old 'youngster' Geoff Purnell forces Vin Gasper (54) and Geoff Clark (54) into racing in the super competitive 40 + Veteran's Division instead of the slightly easier 50 + Division. However, despite giving away many years, Geoff Purnell (21.56), Vin Gasper (23.12) and Geoff Clark (21.50) all recorded times that many athletes half their age would be proud to claim.

(Please note: if anyone's Grandfather is up and mobile, could you please contact Vin Gasper at the "Silly Old Bugger's Rest Home")

This year the Under 20 Men's Division is particularly strong. Leading off for Geelong was Michael McKenzie who ran an evenly paced 22.10 for his two lap circuit. Second Geelong runner and this newsletter's Profile Athlete, Brenton Rowe would normally compete in the Under 18 Division. However, once again, due to 'team balance', Brenton moved up an age division. The step-up in age did not stop Brenton from recording an impressive time of 21.23. Fresh from his selection in the Athletics Victoria Under 20 Cross-Country Team that will contest the Australian Championships on August 16th, Andrew Tucker also ran well to dip under 22 minutes in taking his team to a creditable fourth placing.

Under 16 lead-off runner, Michael Kenny used his strength to power around the Sandown course and have his team in second place at the first change-over with Under 14 athlete, Tom Burns-Wallace. Tom, an accomplished swimmer but relatively new to distance running, then recorded sub 4 minute kilometres for his leg. Final runner, Steven Wishart then ran an impressive split of 11.02 to take his team to a solid sixth placing.

Despite a frantic rush to the start line that had the adrenaline pumping, Daniel Payne was able to run a solid opening leg for the Under 14 Men's team. Second runner, Tom Allan then set about picking off older athletes who started ahead on him as he flew around the course in an impressive 11.17. Anchoring the team was talented hockey player and improving athlete, Hamish Wishart, who was able to race our youngest male team into an excellent second placing. Well done, Daniel, Tom and Hamish.

Loretta McGrath's build-up to the Melbourne Marathon continued on track with an excellent time of 22.56 as lead-off runner for our Division One Women. Loretta has been a little 'flat' in training and racing of late so she was most pleased to run a good strong pace around Sandown. Jo Wall, fresh and tanned from an overseas holiday in Phuket, where she marvelled at the exploits of the local elephants, found the Sandown chill a little hard to handle despite running the fastest time for the Geelong Women. The reliable Cathryn Hoare, then ran two evenly paced laps before handing over to Pattie Galvin. Pattie also has the Melbourne Marathon in her sights and is rapidly returning to top form with lots of quality racing at the Wednesday night Masters' Program, where she continues to smash age group records, and at the Sunday Geelong Cross-

Country Club. At Sandown Pattie was most pleased with her time despite going into the race with a lower leg niggle.

Under 18 athlete and Paula Radcliffe look-alike, Ashleigh Wall also prepared for the Sandown Road-Relays in a much warmer Phuket. With new look braided hair, Ashleigh led off with a solid opening leg before handing over to Bianca Cheever, who also clocked a strong sub 12 minute leg. Final runner, Taryn Rau has had a frustrating run with breathing problems over the last few months. However, despite her difficulties, Taryn has shown remarkable determination and heart to persevere in a sport that she loves and excels in. Taryn, it's fantastic to see you on the way back to your best - hang in there, kiddo!

Representing our Under 16 Women's Team were Chelsea Merry, Paris Nielsen and Brianna Ricketts who combined brilliantly to win silver medals in their division. Perhaps it was the cold weather preparation at altitude that made the difference as both Paris and Brianna spent time in the Victorian snowfields in the lead-up to Sandown. Great work, Chelsea, Paris and Brianna!

Geelong is particularly strong this year in the Under 14 Women's Division. At Sandown we entered two teams; the "Under 14 Champions" made up of Laura Stekelenburg, Kelsey Rau and Kate Sly and the "Under 14 Super-Stars" comprising Georgie Buckley, Amy Stekelenburg and Holly Lipson.

Leading off for the "Champions" and fresh from P.B.'s at the Victorian Short-Course Country Swimming Championships, was Laura Stekelenburg. Laura loves to race aggressively and Sandown was no exception as she led throughout to reach the change over point in first place. Second runner and this year's leading A.V. Under 14 Women's athlete, Kelsey Rau then set about consolidating the team position as she sped around the course. On the final leg it was touch and go throughout as Kate Sly ran brilliantly to join Laura and Kelsey with a fine sub 12 minute time. Eventually, after all the times were double-checked, our "Under 14 Champions" collected silver medals, just 4 seconds away from gold, in a wonderfully competitive race with the Doncaster team. Great running, girls!

Lead-off runner for the "Under 14 Super-Stars" was Victorian Primary Schools Cross-Country representative, Georgie Buckley. And like another well known 'Geelong Georgie', Georgie Buckley loves to run. And run she did as she gave many of the older girls a shock as she sprinted into the change over zone with the clock just ticking past 12 minutes. Second runner for the "Super-Stars", Amy Stekelenburg, also recorded swimming P.B.s last weekend at Wangaratta. However, Amy's aquatic pursuits did not stop her from running an excellent lap of the Sandown Race Course. Finishing off for the "Super-Stars" was Holly Lipson who is preparing for the Under 14 Australian Cross-Country Championships at Yarra Bend on August 16. Holly ran a strong final leg to take her team to an excellent fifth placing. Well done, Georgie, Amy and Holly!

And well done to all athletes who represented Geelong at Sandown on Saturday 12th July. It was a fantastic day, arguably the best in our relatively short history, with team wins, high placings and fast times. **GO GEELONG!!!**

Finally, thank you very much to: Sue Buckley, Heather Cheever, Elwynne Dunstan, Bea Lipson, Ashley Payne, John Perrott, Peter Rau, Tracy Rau, Chris Sly, Mary Stekelenburg, Greg Trevarthen, Michael Tucker and Kev Varker who all

managed teams at Sandown, and to all the supporters who turned up to cheer us on as we dug deep to find that extra ounce of energy - I'm sure your encouragement took seconds from our finishing times. We couldn't compete without your wonderful support so any success we experience is your success too. Thanks also to Bea Lipson who organised an extra bus to accomodate our growing junior ranks.

SANDOWN ROAD RELAYS

(Saturday 12th July.)

DIVISION 1 MEN (6 x 6.2 km.)

Matthew McDonough	18.35
Kym Morgan	19.23
Richard Jeremiah	18.36
Mark Tucker	17.53
Rowan Walker	19.40
Lee Troop	17.35

1st place in 111.42 (second place Doncaster in 113.31)

Fastest - L Troop (Geelong)	- 17.35
- S Moneghetti (Ballarat YCW)	- 17.41
- M Tucker (Geelong)	- 17.53
- S Field (St. Kevins)	- 17.59
- D Ruschena (Glenhuntly)	- 18.12
- D Paulin (Doncaster)	- 18.22
- S Nankervis (Ballarat YCW)	- 18.24
- S Quilty (Doncaster)	- 18.31
- M McDonough (Geelong)	- 18.35
- R Jeremiah (Geelong)	- 18.36

DIVISION 4 MEN (5 x 6.2 km.)

Darren Riviere	21.41
Andrew Chalmers	25.03
Paul Wilson	23.16
John Stekelenburg	23.54
Neil MacDonald	24.34

3rd place in 118.30 (first place Ballarat YCW in 104.15)

DIVISION 7 MEN (4 x 6.2 km.)	
Travis Zimmer	29.08

Team D.N.F. (first place Doncaster in 85.57)

VETERAN MEN (3 x 6.2 km.)

Geoffrey Purnell	21.56
Vin Gasper	23.12
Geoff Clark	21.50

4th place in 66.58 (first place Keilor St. Bern. in 64.09)

Fastest - M Bialczak (Keilor St. Bern.)	- 20.06
- L Purtil (Bendigo)	- 20.57
- C Chambers (Bendigo)	- 21.19

UNDER 20 MEN (3 x 6.2 km.)

Michael McKenzie	22.10
Brenton Rowe	21.23
Andrew Tucker	21.59

4th place in 65.32 (first place Box Hill in 61.15)

Note: Brenton Rowe is Under 18

Fastest - A White (Box Hill)	- 19.50
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- M Warrington (Frankston)	- 19.57
- B Toomey (Knox Athletics)	- 19.58

UNDER 16 MEN (3 x 3.1 km.)

Michael Kenny	10.24
Tom Burns-Wallace	12.03
Steven Wishart	11.02

6th place in 33.29 (first place Box Hill in 30.42)

Note: Tom Burns-Wallace is Under 14

Fastest - M Coloe (Box Hill)	- 9.58
- C Hamer (Box Hill)	- 10.01
- T Duncan (Knox Athletics)	- 10.03

UNDER 14 MEN (3 x 3.1 km.)

Daniel Payne	11.55
Tom Allan	11.17
Hamish Wishart	12.20

2nd place in 35.32 (first place Ballarat Region in 34.50)

Fastest - K Fitzgerald (Ballarat Region)	- 10.52
- T Allan (Geelong)	- 11.17
- J Huggett (Ballarat YCW)	- 11.20

DIVISION 1 WOMEN (4 x 6.2 km.)

Loretta McGrath	22.56
Joanne Wall	22.40
Cathryn Hoare	29.53
Patricia Galvin	24.26

8th place in 99.57 (first place Malvern in 91.36)

Fastest - H McGregor (Knox Ath.)	- 19.59
- V Mitchell (Eureka)	- 21.20
- K Seibold (Malvern)	- 21.22
- R Barton (Eureka)	- 22.02
- R Gibney (Ballarat Harriers)	- 22.04

UNDER 20 WOMEN (3 x 3.1 km.)

Rebecca Wiasak	11.15
Chantelle Faraguna	12.18
Emily Rooke	11.29

1st place in 35.02 (second place Eureka in 36.03)

Note: Chantelle Faraguna is Under 18.

Fastest - K Fry (Ringwood)	- 10.56
- L Biffin (Eureka)	- 11.10
- R Wiasak (Geelong)	- 11.15

UNDER 18 WOMEN (3 x 3.1 km.)

Ashleigh Wall	11.30
Bianca Cheever	11.46
Taryn Rau	11.54

3rd place in 35.10 (first place Doncaster in 34.40)

Fastest - F Nash (Doncaster)	- 11.13
- A Wall (Geelong)	- 11.30
- K Katsenavakis (Doncaster)	- 11.32
- G Maini (Frankston)	- 11.32

UNDER 16 WOMEN (3 x 3.1 km.)

Chelsea Merry	12.36
Paris Nielsen	13.14

Brianna Ricketts 12.18

2nd place in 38.08 (first place Frankston in 33.49)

Fastest - Z Warrington (Frankston) - 10.59
 - S Grahame (Frankston) - 11.12
 - R Owen (Frankston) - 11.38

UNDER 14 WOMEN (3 x 3.1 km)

Laura Stekelenburg 11.41
 Kelsey Rau 11.50
 Kate Sly 11.53

2nd place in 35.24 (first place Doncaster in 35.20)

Fastest - J Holdsworth (Frankston) - 11.19
 - L Stekelenburg (Geelong) - 11.41
 - A Paulin (Doncaster) - 11.43
 - S Kondogonis (Keilor St. Bern.) - 11.43

UNDER 14 WOMEN (Team Two) (3 x 3.1 km)

Georgie Buckley 12.10
 Amy Stekelenburg 13.27
 Holly Lipson 13.15

5th place in 38.52

**VOTES FOR
 "BEST PERFORMED GEELONG REGION
 ATHLETES" AT THE
 SANDOWN ROAD RELAYS**

Senior Men.

3. Lee Troop
 2. Mark Tucker
 1. Matthew McDonough
 1. Richard Jeremiah

Senior Women.

3. Joanne Wall
 2. Loretta McGrath
 1. Rebecca Wiasak

Junior Men.

3. Tom Allan
 2. Brenton Rowe
 1. Michael Kenny

Junior Women.

3. Laura Stekelenburg
 2. Kelsey Rau
 1. Kate Sly

THE BUSH INN AWARD

The winner of the Bush Inn Award for the Sandown Road Relays is
Pattie Galvin
 for her excellent run in the Open Women's 6.2 km. and her outstanding form during the Winter Season.

Well done, Pattie.
 Enjoy your meal and the Bush Inn's famous hospitality.

RUNNER PROFILE

This profile features Brenton Rowe, one of our promising junior athletes. Brenton, a winner of the 1500 / 3000 metre double at the 2002 Australian Youth Championships, obviously has talent. However, talent will only take you so far. Brenton also exhibits the desire and application needed to reach the top. An example of this was the lengths he went to early last year to race for the Geelong Team. Brenton lives on a farm at Dunkeld in the Grampians and wanted to race in the Cross-Country Relays at Brimbank Park. The only problem was transport. Problem - what problem? Brenton's Mum, drove him to Halls Gap where he caught the bus to Warrnambool. A train from Warrnambool then took him on to Geelong, where he had breakfast, then caught another bus to Brimbank Park. Brenton raced very well over 3 kilometres at Brimbank Park then had to find his way home. Problem - what problem? Living on a farm also made Brenton's track sessions tricky. Well, not if Dad uses the slasher to mow a 400 metre track in the back paddock. Yes, Brenton certainly has what it takes.

Brenton Rowe

School / Year Year 10 student at Ballarat Grammar

Age 15 **Date of Birth** 17 / 8 / 87

Height 171 cm. **Weight** 60 kg.

Married / Single Single

Coach Tom Patton

Personal Bests

400m. 54
 800m. 1.59
 1000m. 2.30
 1500m. 4.06
 3000m. 8.59

Favourite Food Don't really have a favourite but I enjoy most food.

Food Eaten Before a Race Bananas

Favourite Drink Water

Favourite Movie The "Rocky" movies

Favourite Book "Tomorrow When The War Began" series by John Marsden

Favourite Music / Band "70's, 80's and Country Music"

Favourite TV Show I don't really watch much TV but I enjoy Action Movies.

Favourite Night Spot "Anywhere out with friends"

Favourite Holiday Spot Menorca in the Mediteranean / Mt. Hotham for skiing.

A Normal Training Week

Mon. am. Exercises
 pm. Fartlek: 7 x 3 minutes 'on' with 2 minutes 'off' or 4 x 5 minutes 'on' with 2 minutes 'off'.

Tues. am. 30 minutes easy

Wed. am. Exercises
 pm. Hill Repeats: 4 sets of 10 x 100 metres
 Jog down recovery between repeats / walk down recovery between sets.

Thur. pm. Hockey or School Cross-Country or 30 minutes easy

Fri.	am.	30 minutes easy
Sat.	am.	Threshold Session: 12 minutes 'threshold pace' / 5 minutes easy / 5 minutes 'threshold pace'.
		or
	pm.	Race.
	pm.	Exercises
Sun.	am.	70 minutes easy

Other Training / Recovery Sessions.

Monday / Wednesday Exercises: 2 sets of the following strength and core stability exercises (20 seconds 'on' / 10 seconds 'off')

Squats, Push Ups, Crunches, Lunges, Pull Ups, Step-Ups, Ab Twists, Prone Toe Touches, Back Arches.

Saturday Exercises: 2 sets of the following strength exercises using a crow bar and concentrating on technique: Squats, Lunges, Step-Ups, Cleans, Curls.

Favourite Training Session Monday Fartlek Session.

Favourite Race Any race with good competition.

Best Ever Performance Winning the 1500 / 3000 metres double at the 2002 Australian Youth Championships.

Favourite Place To Train In the bush.

Toughest Ever Training Session Hill repeats in 2 foot of snow in Austria with the temperature below zero.

Most Admired Runner / Person Ron Clarke, Haile Gebrselassie, Hicham El Guerrouj

Goals for the Future "To keep improving and to avoid injury."

AROUND THE TRACKS AND TRAILS

Lee Troop's overseas tour culminated with the Sapporo Half Marathon on Sunday 6th July. Unfortunately, hot weather, a 26 hour plane flight from the U.S. and only 5 days off altitude all combined to take it's toll on Troop who struggled to finish 45th in a time of 65.43. (Sapporo results: 1. John Kanyi (Kenya) 62.08 2. Laban Kagika (Kenya) 62.13 3. Atsushi Sato 62.15) However, six days later, Lee bounced back to his true form with an outstanding leg of 17.35 to anchor our Division One Men's Team to victory in the Sandown Road Relays. Lee's final race in Australia will be the 12 km. Cross-Country at Bundoora Park before heading to St. Moritz for two weeks altitude training in the lead-up to the World Championships in Paris.

Athletics Victoria has selected their Age Group Teams to compete in the IGA Australian Schools Cross-Country Championship in Melbourne on August 16th. Congratulations to the following Geelong junior athletes who will represent Victoria:

Kelsey Rau	Under 14
Laura Stekelenburg	Under 14
Ashleigh Wall	Under 18
Taryn Rau	Under 18 (emergency)
Hayley Cook	Under 20
Tom Allan	Under 14 (emergency)
Brenton Rowe	Under 18 (emergency)
Andrew Tucker	Under 20

After being side-lined with iliotibial band syndrome and a stress reaction to his hip during the last seven months, Craig Mottram is back running 120 kms. a week around London's Bushy Park. And, unbelievably Craig believes he is a still an outside chance

of making the Australian Team for the World Championships in Paris. All will be decided on how Craig copes with a step-up in quality training over the next month and possibly a 5000 metre race in Huesden on August 2 and a 3000 metre race in Helsinki on August 18.

Georgie Clarke is also progressing well overseas with a solo 4:14 time for 1500 metres in a low key meeting last week. Over the next few weeks Georgie has plenty of racing planned with 800 metres scheduled for July 31 at Loughboroug, a mile in Huesden on August 2, 1500 metres in London on August 8 and an Under 23 800 metres in Zurich on August 15.

All the best, Craig and Georgie - it's great to see you both on the way back to full fitness and fast times.

Finally, congratulations to our Sacred Heart College girls who were in fine form and winning teams in the Victorian Schools Road Relays at La Trobe University on July 19. Great running: Bianca Cheever, Holly Lipson, Brianna Ricketts, Kelsey Rau, Taryn Rau and Ashleigh Wall.

FABULOUS SOCIAL NIGHT

What: Trivia Night.

When: Friday 5th September at 6:30 pm.

Where: The Geelong Cross - Country Club Rooms (the blue building under the James Harrison Bridge.)

Why: What better way to celebrate a most successful Cross - Country Season than to get together for a night of fabulous fun and fantastic prizes!

Cost: Adults - \$10

Students Under 18 - \$5

Start organising your table of 6 - 8 people now!

B.Y.O. drinks and nibbles.

Also, bring along a few extra gold coins for a fantastic raffle and some fun-filled games.

Put September 5th in your diary now!

RACE CALENDAR CHANGES

Please note that there are a few changes to the remaining Geelong Winter Season races with:

- * The "Athlete's Foot" Geelong Cross-Country Championships now scheduled for the Eastern Gardens on Saturday 9th August.
- * no Geelong race on Saturday 16th August as many of our athletes are competing in the Australian Cross-Country Championships at Yarra Bend.
- * the Geelong Athletics Cross-Country race on Saturday 6th September to be now held at the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve.

REMAINING GEELONG RACES

Sat. 26th July Athletics Victoria Cross-Country (Bundoora Park)

Sat. 2nd August	Athletics Victoria Coliban Road Relay (Harcourt / Bendigo)
Sat. 9th August	"The Athlete's Foot" Geelong Cross-Country Championships (Eastern Gardens) Juniors - 3 km. Seniors - 6 km.
Sat. 16th August	Australian Cross-Country Championships. (Yarra Park, Fairfield)
Sat. 23rd August	Geelong Athletics Cross-Country (Landy Field) Juniors - 3 km. Seniors - 5 km.
Sat. 30th August	Athletics Victoria Cross-Country (Coburg)
Sat. 6th September	Geelong Athletics Cross-Country (Ocean Grove Nature Reserve) Juniors - 2.4 km. Seniors - 4.8 km
Sat. 13th September	Geelong Athletics Cross-Country (James Harrison Bridge / 'Mad Mile') Juniors - 2 km. Seniors - 3 km.
Sun. 14th September	Athletics Victoria Half Marathon (Burnley)
Sat. 20th September	Geelong Athletics Cross-Country (Eastern Gardens) Juniors - 1.5 km. Seniors - 3.0 km.

RICHARD JEREMIAH. TAKING ONE HURDLE AT A TIME.

Richard Jeremiah is one of a number of Geelong athletes working hard in the lead-up to next year's Athens Olympic Games. I was fortunate to catch up with Ritchie for a bit of a chat about his recent tour of America, his junior days in athletics and his hopes for the future.

N.M. Ritchie, you are racing tomorrow at the Sandown Road Relays. In 2001, as an Under 20 athlete, you ran the final leg for the Division One Men's Team in 18.25 to almost snatch third place. What do you hope to run tomorrow?

R.J. With all races you hope to run fast. A lot will also depend on the weather, as Sandown can be windy. However, I would hope to run pretty close to 18 minutes.

N.M. Your training partners and your coach, Bruce Scriven, say that you're in the best shape of your life at the moment. What have you done to reach this new level?

R.J. It's probably a combination of things. Firstly, I have had three years of injury free running so over time I have become very fit. I have probably got to the stage now where I'm fit enough to start doing the intense training needed to go to a new level. Also, I'm doing all the little extra things needed to ensure

that I fully recover from the hard training. After each training session I spend time to stretch properly and I regularly have ice-baths and massage to keep the legs ticking over. Finally, I think the recent overseas trip to America has made me realise that you have to train very hard to be a world class athlete.

N.M. Your training group went to Flagstaff, Colorado. What was the altitude of Flagstaff?

R.J. About 2000 metres. Actually, it's a bit deceptive as Flagstaff is on the top of a plateau and it doesn't seem that high. Off in the distance you can see the San Francisco Mountains and Humphrey's Peak, which is about 3500 metres but you wouldn't know you're at altitude except for the thin air. You fly into Phoenix and drive two hours to Flagstaff and for quite a while you're just very gradually climbing. It's not like Falls Creek (altitude 1600 metres) where you drive up steep, winding mountain roads. However, the altitude took its toll on us when we first arrived. The first couple of runs we had were so tough. We were jogging so slowly and we were 'stuffed!' I reckon we did 30 - 40 minutes for our first run and we would have been lucky to cover six and a half kilometres. We were just walking and I was sucking it in like an asthmatic! However, I adapt to altitude really well. In a couple of days I was fine. A couple of the other guys would get diarrhoea from the altitude but I never seem to have any problems and after a few days to acclimatise, I'm ready to get stuck into the training. So, for the three and a half weeks I was at Flagstaff, I adapted really well and got a lot out of it.

N.M. You ran a P.B. of 8:39.70 for the 3000 metre steeple-chase in finishing 6th at the Cardinal Invitational at Stanford. You must have been happy with that run?

R.J. Yes, I was, especially considering that I competed only a few days off altitude and some pretty hard training. However, looking back I feel as though I could have run a little quicker in that race.

N.M. A lot of the Americans use Flagstaff as their high altitude training camp. What are the facilities like in Flagstaff?

R.J. The facilities in Flagstaff for distance running are awesome. Because it's situated on a plateau there are lots of flat trails to run on. So when you're really tired after doing a massive track session you can recover on the flat. There are many soft trails just like the ones we have around the Barwon River but if you want to you can run the hills in the San Francisco Mountains. They also have indoor and outdoor tracks, a pool, gyms, dining hall at the University and a nice modern town with coffee shops and cinemas. It just provides a really nice training environment where you have everything you can possibly want.

N.M. Who were your training partners in Flagstaff?

R.J. Mark Fountain, Mike Power and Shawn Forrest were the Victorians. Then there was Youcef Abdi, Todd McDonald - an 800 metre runner, Lachlan Chisholm, Emily Morris and Suzy Walsham. There was also the coaches and support staff made up of Said Aouita, Di Barnes and Mick - the masseur / physio. Dick Telford also brought over a group of young athletes - Michael Shelley, Andrew O'Neill and Lisa Corrigan. Philo Saunders came over too. He's another sports scientist who does a lot of testing with Dick Telford at the A.I.S. We had a really good group and despite living together for quite a while there was not too much clashing of personalities.

N.M. What's an average day at a Flagstaff Training Camp? Is it similar to what happens at Falls Creek?

R.J. It's a little different to Falls Creek because of the higher altitude. Because we're at 2000 metres we were more tired than at Falls Creek so the recovery process was very important. Another difference to Falls Creek was that the main session at

Flagstaff was in the afternoon because that's when the track was available. The normal time for a track session was about two o'clock in the afternoon. As the track sessions were pretty intense we did an easy 40 - 45 minute run early in the morning. Mike Power and I would be out running at six o'clock when the temperature was about zero or one degree. Often there was snow on the ground so we were pretty rugged up. Mark Fountain would be out running a little later, probably about 6:30, because he was lazy and he didn't mind running by himself. Then we would get back from our run, shower, have some breakfast with about ten cups of tea, non caffeinated tea though.

N.M. I notice that you're drinking the anti-oxidant rich green tea.

R.J. Absolutely, green tea is gold. After breakfast we would go back to bed at about 8:30 - 9:00 am. and sleep to about 11:30 am. which was not hard to do at all. Then at midday we would have something light to eat, like a banana and prepare for the afternoon track session. At the track we would 'flog' ourselves completing something like 10 x 400 metres hard with three minutes recovery between. After the track session it would be an ice bath, a snack then down to the spa where the spa jets would massage our legs. For the rest of the afternoon we would just laze around until dinner, then we'd be in bed at around ten o'clock.

N.M. Sounds like distance runner's heaven.

R.J. Yes, it was. No one got too bored because we were all so tired from the training that all we wanted to do was sit around. On non-session days we would do a little more like travel into town or go to a movie, play with a soccer ball or a gridiron ball but basically our program meant that there were only two days out of the six running days that were session free. One day a week we played basketball which was great fun.

N.M. What did you learn in Flagstaff?

R.J. I reckon I learnt how to really push myself in training. Basically, the fitter you become, the harder you can train without breaking down. In Flagstaff I was shown a new level of training. This required me to prepare mentally for sessions and I had not really done that before. I used to just turn up to the track and Scrivo would tell us what the session was and I'd ask what sort of pace do you want me to do? And I'd do it. Whereas, in Flagstaff, I'd want to know the session and the required pace two days in advance so I could mentally prepare and set my own goals for the session. Not quite the same preparation as you'd do for a race because if you did that you'd go over the top and burn out. Another thing I learnt was the importance of recovery. Just simple things like a thorough stretch after each run. I now do that religiously - just stretching the calves, quads, hammies, glutes, lower back and groin. At the time you might not think it's doing much but with consistency it does have a big effect. Actually, the days I have missed my stretching routine I have felt a little tight. Then there's other recovery things like regular massage, ice baths and hot and cold showers that really help too. It's a little harder to have an ice bath after each session when I'm back home but over in Flagstaff we had the time to do all the extra recovery sessions that can really make a difference.

N.M. Just doing all the 'one percenters' that hopefully will take you to the next level.

R.J. Exactly.

N.M. You are one of the original athletes on the Aouita Program. What differences have you noticed on his program compared to what you were doing?

R.J. Not a lot, actually. Everyone thinks it's a dramatic change but it's not. Phase One was not that different to what we were doing. It just had a bit more emphasis on longer quality sessions. Basically, in Phase One it was ten kilometres of hard running on a quality day rather than the eight kilometres I had been doing before. It was a bit different with one total rest day a week but when you're training really hard, the rest day was very beneficial. In the Competition Preparation Phase it was different. Instead of having a

weekly cycle of seven days we might have a six day cycle or a ten day cycle which is good because you can fit in more of the quality sessions in a given time frame. Fitting training around a seven day week can be quite constraining at times. It also depends on what sort of runner you are. I think the Aouita Program is awesome for 1500 metre runners. At this stage, I'm not too sure about how it prepares you for the steeple and 5000 metres. However, results will speak for themselves over the next few years.

N.M. We've all heard of Aouita's Phase One with 25 x 400's and 5 x 2000 metres and 60 x 100 metre hills. Then there's Phase Two and Three and Four and Five on the Aouita Program. What Phase did you reach?

R.J. I'm not really sure. I just did what I was told. I was told what the sessions were and what we were trying to achieve and we didn't really call them by Phase One or Two or whatever. However, when you're doing 25 x 400 metres and 5 x 2000 metres you're obviously working on strength. But because we had roughly 55 seconds recovery between each 400 metre rep in the 25 x 400's, we were able to do them at a reasonable pace - about 64 seconds for each, so there was a bit of quality there too. Traditionally in Australia we have tended to run at 3 minute kilometre pace for a ten kilometre session but we were doing about 2.40 kilometre pace. Then the 60 x 100 metre hills builds up the strength in your glutes and quads. However, I reckon I probably got to Phase Three or Four.

N.M. What were some of the key sessions you did in the later phases?

R.J. In Flagstaff we were doing Pre-Competition / Tune-Up training. I was also doing some specific steeple training. However, every session we did was vital. We did some hill sessions that were really good for working on my speed. It was just running 10 - 15 - 20 steep 150 metre long hills 'flat out' with a jog down recovery. They were the hardest sessions I have ever done. The first time we did the hills at Flagstaff we had only just arrived and I felt as though I'd ripped the lining out of the back of my throat I was breathing so hard. My throat was sore for days afterwards. Before the first session we thought it would be just a standard solid hills session where you run relatively hard but concentrate on good form, drive with the legs, relaxed arms etc. Then Said Aouita arrives and says, "I want the first one to be very fast, the second one to be very fast, the third one to be very fast, very fast, very fast and the last one to be #&%ing fast!"

He also said that whoever won the last one got free dinner so it was on from the start. I was absolutely 'stuffed' after three reps and we still had seven to go.

N.M. Who won the last sprint up the hill for dinner?

R.J. It's still disputed. However, I reckon Mark Fountain did although Lachlan Chisholm reckons he did even though he 'dogged it' for the first nine reps, then sprinted the last one.

N.M. Lachlan wouldn't have been game to take dinner, would he?

R.J. No!

N.M. Bruce Scriven tells me that a few of the guys ran P.B.'s of the last intense hills session.

R.J. Yes, the last one was 'only' 5 x 150 metres 'flat out' up a massive hill although Said did say they could do an extra three if they wished. Mark Fountain did run a P.B. off that session while many of the other guys also ran really well. I just felt that a short, really hard hills session worked on my speed. And even though they were really tough, I did enjoy

them.

N.M. In many ways, hills are 'speed work' in disguise.

R.J. Yes, they are. They help with your form because you can't get up a hill without driving your knees and that's the way to run fast - by getting good knee drive. And you can't get good knee drive if you don't work your arms. I just reckon intense hills are a great way to practice for the last lap of a race.

N.M. What were some of the other important or memorable sessions in Flagstaff?

R.J. We also did a longer fartlek style session of 5 x 1200 metres with an 800 metre 'float' recovery to keep the longer strength / endurance work going. We did that session along a two mile gravel path which had each quarter mile marked. That was tough too because of the altitude. Then there were lots of different lactic track sessions. Sessions like 10 x 400 metres in 57 / 58 seconds with 3 minutes recovery. And 3 minutes recovery when you're at 2000 metres altitude is nothing! Another session I did with Mike Power was 5 x 600's in 90 seconds with 2 and a half minutes recovery. Then there was my specific steeple training over hurdles - for example, 4 x 600's and 4 x 400's with 60 seconds between the 600's and 40 seconds between the 400's. So once again, that sort of session at altitude was so tough! Basically, as we were preparing to race we had hill sessions, longer fartlek and fast track sessions. But even the really easy jogs were so critical because if you ran too fast in those you just did not recover for the next session.

N.M. What about longer runs?

R.J. In the Aouita Program you don't run further than 80 minutes but we do up to 90 minutes.

N.M. And Said believes that many athletes run too long in the cool-down.

R.J. Yes, he believes an easy 10 minute jog and a walk is plenty. Anything more is junk and could leave you open to injury when you're fatigued. Also, after the really intense sessions you're pretty 'stuffed'!

N.M. Aouita is also a big believer in plyometrics and weights. Have you done any plyometrics and weights in his program?

R.J. I don't do any of Said's weights. All my weights I do with Eric Hollingsworth at the V.I.S. I have been with Eric for three years now and our program works really well. I do lots of squats and cleans. Eric is also big on overall body strength so I do a lot of upper body work as well - bench presses for shoulders, curls for biceps, even exercises that use body weight such as push-ups, dips and chin-ups. As a steeple chaser I have slightly different needs. In the 3000 steeple I have 35 jumps to clear in seven and a half laps so I need a lot of strength but also endurance strength. Also, because he's my hurdle's coach, I have entrusted him to work on my technique as well as my strength and stability. I also do a lot of plyometrics - hopping, bounding, hurdle jumps, frog leaps, lunges and a few other bits and pieces. I don't really know a lot about Said's weight program. Eric and I had a quick look at it but thought we would stick with what we were doing as it was working so well.

N.M. Have become noticeably stronger over the last few years?

R.J. Oh yeah, I can now clean more than my body weight, which is 65 kilograms at the moment. I can also bench my body weight, which is pretty good in terms of power to weight ratio. From the squats and lunges I'm getting really strong in the glutes and quads. I really notice the difference when I'm doing bounding and hopping drills where I feel much more in control. Overall, the weights have really improved my core stability and strength. I reckon Eric has done a fabulous job with me. I used to struggle doing a hundred sit-ups in a row. Now my abdominal sessions contain 600 sit-ups or more.

N.M. Why the steeple-chase? I would argue that the steeple-chase and the triple jump are the two track events that take the biggest toll on the body.

R.J. Maybe I'm a bit stupid! It's such a challenge and I find the challenge really enjoyable. It's multi-dimensional and it's an exciting event that requires great discipline in training. The other reason is that in Australia it has traditionally been a weak event and I always saw it as the quickest and easiest avenue to make an Olympic Team or a World Juniors Team or a World Championships Team or whatever. And in the long term, if my event becomes the 5000 metres, the experience of representing Australia in the steeple will be invaluable. However, at the moment I love the steeple so I probably would not want to change anyway. It might sound weird but it's an exciting event to race - you've got guys making moves, athletes tightly bunched coming into hurdles. I just loved the steeple racing I did in America where we had closely contested races rather than the time-trial situation we often have in Australia.

N.M. Mark Tucker mentioned that one of the reasons he gave the steeple-chase away was that he lacked flexibility (Mark can barely touch his shins when bending forward). The steeple-chase requires athletes to be very flexible if they are to hurdle with good technique. How flexible are you?

R.J. I'm pretty flexible. I can stand up straight and put my palms on the ground. I can put my head on my knees. When I'm in the hurdle position I'm not too far from putting my head on my lead leg. If you can do that, you're pretty flexible.

N.M. Are you naturally flexible or do you work on it?

R.J. I'm naturally pretty flexible. When I was a kid I was the bendiest thing you've ever seen - the original "Indian Rubber Man". I think because I always stretch before and after training my body is always pretty supple. At one stage I was feeling a little tight and inflexible but just before the World Juniors Al McLean was helping me out with my hurdling and I did a lot of stretching with him that has carried over.

N.M. Can you hurdle the water jump without getting soaking wet? We've seen some of the top Kenyans doing it.

R.J. I've hurdled the water jump once and I almost fell over. It requires a fair degree of skill as it's a real art. Actually, to hurdle the water jump you have to employ bad technique because when you hurdle you try to get up and across the jump as soon as possible. In other words, your flight time needs to be as short as possible so as soon as you extend your lead leg, you're trying to get it down onto the track. Whereas, in hurdling the water jump you have to have your lead leg out in front for too long. I was doing repeat 200's in training that included the water jump and came hooting around at 60 second 400 metre pace and at the last minute decided, 'bugger it, I'll jump it!' Unfortunately, I didn't leave my lead leg in the air long enough and was almost doing a hitch kick as I was looking for touch-down. As for the Kenyans, I don't think they gain much from doing it. They would be better off, especially in Championship races, stepping on the water jump and saving their energy for the last part of the race.

N.M. Do you think it's an ego thing with them - just trying to stamp their dominance on the race?

R.J. Probably. It could also just be a Kenyan thing - if you're a Kenyan, you hurdle the water jump. However, one day I'd like to be able to do it proficiently off both legs in a race, if needed - perhaps with 600 metres to go in a big race so I can get a slight break. At the moment not too many of the Kenyans can completely clear the water jump without getting their feet wet. Most of the time they land in the water, trudge out and lose momentum. They would be better off having a quick step on the hurdle then pushing off so the momentum

and rhythm is not lost.

N.M. The Athens Olympics next year are obviously a goal for you. What are the A and B Qualifiers for the 3000 metre steeple chase?

R.J. About 8:24.5 is the A Qualifier and 8:30.5 is the B Qualifier. Both are very attainable. I just have to get my time differential between my 3000 metre flat and 3000 metre steeple down to 20 - 25 seconds. I just have to keep working hard at being a strong, technically correct hurdler for the full seven and a half laps and running faster between hurdles.

N.M. What are your 1500 / 3000 metre P.B.s at the moment?

R.J. They're atrocious. I think my 3000 metre P.B. is 8:20 and my 1500 metre time is 3:47 something.

N.M. I'd suggest that you could run a fair bit faster than that at the moment.

R.J. Yes, I should be able to run faster now. Over in Flagstaff I was equalling or running faster than Shawn Forrest and Michael Shelley in our sessions and those guys have run 3:44 - 3:45 so I'd like to think I could run a fair bit quicker. Then, over 3 kilometres I should be able to run close to 8 minutes as Shawn has a P.B. of 8:03. However, at the moment I'm not too fussed about my other times as long as my steeple times keep coming down.

N.M. In the lead-up to Athens you've been selected in the Australian Team for the World University Games in Korea between August 21 - 31. Congratulations on your selection and who are your likely opposition?

R.J. Thanks. At this stage I don't know the opposition. I probably should do my homework to see who I've got to beat. Actually, Scrivo and I have just been concentrating on training and getting as fit as I can because they're the things we can control. Then I'll go to Korea and race as well as I can. I'll go into the race with the same attitude I took into racing off Flagstaff. So I'll have a real crack and if I 'blow-up' I won't be too disappointed because I've had a go! I expect the Americans to be particularly strong. They don't have a heap of athletes who can run under 8.10 like the Kenyans but they have a few that can run in the low 8.30's. Because the World Championships are on at the same time I expect there to be a whole lot of athletes capable of running between 8.25 and 8.40. However, I don't think anyone will run faster than 8.25, otherwise they'd be at the World Championships.

N.M. What are your plans for after the World Championships?

R.J. Initially, I'll have a few easy weeks of just jogging around then I'll get back into it. Short term, I hope to go back to Flagstaff for another month of altitude training. Then it's the Zatopek steeple-chase in December where I hope to run a fast time. After the Zatopek I'll probably have a few weeks training at home before heading to Falls Creek for another few weeks at altitude. Falls Creek hopefully will be just an 'altitude top-up' for me. Falls Creek is good but without a track it doesn't offer as much as say Flagstaff for my event. And with Nationals just around the corner, I feel that a track is essential for me. To get around that I expect to drive to Albury occasionally for some track fine-tuning. After that it's a few of the bigger races around Australia before heading to Brisbane for the National Championships where I'll hopefully come away with a win and either a B or an A Olympic Qualifier.

N.M. Let's go back to your junior years. How did it all start?

R.J. I started in Little Athletics at the age of 7. No, actually, it started at Fyans Park Primary School when I beat all the Grade 6's in an 800 metre race. At Little Aths I was a 100 metre specialist. But one day I ran a 1500 metres in Under 8's and ran

6.01. I still reckon it's one of my best ever performances because to run 4 minute kilometre pace as a 7 year old was 'flying' so I was pretty impressed with that! After that race my Dad said he thought I could be alright as a runner. Then as people started to beat me over the shorter distances, I moved up in distance until no one was able to beat me.

N.M. When did you start with Bruce Scriven?

R.J. I went to the 'Man With The Iron Mo' when I was 12. At that stage I trained with Timmy and Georgie Clarke. We had a good little group. However, we didn't train very hard. Usually we'd turn up and Scrivo would give us my favourite session - 2 sets of 3 x 200 metres with a 200 metre jog between reps. Actually, we were supposed to jog two laps between sets but Tim and I used to just walk. I'd run the 200's in about 30 - 31 seconds. We'd come down two or three times a week and we'd seem to do the above session at least once or twice a week. Then, when I was 16, I started to train a little more seriously.

N.M. In Geelong we have a few promising juniors coming through at the moment. When did you say to yourself, "I can be a really good runner?"

R.J. I'm not sure. I suppose I kept focusing on the next level, changing my goals along the way. When I was really young, it was winning a Geelong Little Athletics Championship, then it was making a Junior Victorian Team. Obviously, I dreamed of lining up at the Olympics in the 5000 metres or the 800 metres or whatever but I could never come out with the corny line, "when I saw blah, blah, blah at the Olympics I knew that's what I was going to do!" I also remember being selected to represent Geelong at the Victorian Primary Schools Cross - Country at Bundoora Park. I went up there feeling pretty confident but ended up finishing about 90th - I was absolutely shattered! Then in Under 12's I went to the State Championships for the first time in Track and Field. Before my race Dad said, "Good luck fella!" Anyway, I won my heat and I said, "I reckon I can win this!" and Dad said "yeah, that would be good" even though I'm sure he didn't really think I could do it. In the final I beat Clinton Perrett by .01 in 2:21.99 in the Under 12's 800 metre Final to win my first State Title. Then the next year I made it to the National Championships in the Under 14's over 800 metres. And from there I just worked my way through the levels - World Junior Championships, World Junior Cross - Country and now the World University Games.

N.M. I have actually done a little homework and in 1996 you set the Geelong Little Athletics Under 14 records of 4:42.6 for 1500 metres and 2:13.5 for 800 metres. Those records still stand despite Michael Kenny four times coming within a second of your 1500 metre time. Can you remember those races?

R.J. Yes I can and I can't believe that those times still stand. The 800 metre time was pretty ordinary because that year I ran 2.07 or 2.08. The year before, when I was Under 13, I ran 2.09 to finish 7th in the National 800 metre Final. I remember that at Little Aths they'd start the 800 metres half way along the back straight. When I set the Little Athletics 800 metre record I went 'nuts' from the start and 'blew-up' big time. I think I ran the first lap in 63 seconds. I can't really remember the 4.42 because the 1500 metres wasn't really my event then. When I was young I couldn't really concentrate for three and three quarter laps. I'd start looking at the crowd and mentally wander off a bit during the third lap. But 4.42 and my name still in the record books sounds pretty good.

N.M. Michael Kenny has since run about 8 seconds quicker for 1500 metres but he was not

able to do it at Little Athletics.

R.J. Yes, it was always tough to do it at Little Athletics because you can't wear spikes and usually it is just a time trial without any competition so people tend to just bolt from the start and then blow-up. In fact, I probably 'blew-up' in most of my longer races in Little Aths.

N.M. You are a university student. What are you studying?

R.J. Commerce / Arts at Melbourne University.

N.M. Are you studying full-time?

R.J. No, I did two units last semester and if I pass those I'll have completed 18 units. So, I have about three or four years to go in a five year course.

N.M. Well, Ritchie - thank you very much for your time and all the best for Sandown tomorrow, for the World University Games in August and the next twelve months in the lead-up to Athens.

R.J. My pleasure, Neil.

(**Note:** On a windy day at Sandown, Richard Jeremiah ran the third leg for Geelong in the Athletics Victoria Road Relays in 18.36. While a little disappointed in his time for the 6.2 km. time - tested course, (Ritchie was hoping to run close to 18 minutes) he was delighted to be in Geelong's first winning Division One Men's Team at Sandown.)

TOP TIMES ON THE TAN

Interesting to see that the amazing Steve Moneghetti continues to record brilliant times despite cutting back his training schedule to 'only' 130 - 140 kilometres a week. A few weeks ago Mona ran a blinding lap of the famous Tan Track around the Melbourne Botanic Gardens in 10 minutes 41 seconds. This is the fastest ever time by a non Kenyan and eclipses the old "Australian Best" of 10.47 set by Mike Hilliart in 1986.

A couple of years ago top Kenyan athletes, Noah Ngeny (Sydney Olympic 1500 metre Gold Medallist) and Luke Kipkosgei (three time winner of the Zatopek) had a crack at Hilliart's time and recorded 10.22 (Ngeny) and 10.26 (Kipkosgei) although there are some who believe that current top Kenyan middle-distance athlete, William Chirchir may have run 10.19.

"The Age" athletics journalist, Len Johnson has even suggested that Ron Clarke (trying to drop a relentless Derek Clayton) or Herb Elliott may have run pretty speedy times around the Tan as well.

The great Steve Ovett, on a rare visit to Melbourne in his athletic prime, once completed two laps of the Tan in an amazing 22.10. Anyway, Mona has thrown down the gauntlet to the young guns. How long will his 10.41 last?

Note: the distance around the Tan is 3.85 kilometres.

GEELONG TEAM WARM-UP TOPS

There are a few Geelong Nike Dri-Fit Long Sleeve Warm-up Tops still available (large size only). The cost is \$40, well down on the retail price of \$60.

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