



# GEELONG REGION CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM NEWSLETTER



Issue # 37

May 2004

## GEELONG JUNIORS OPEN SEASON IMPRESSIVELY AT THE CROSS - COUNTRY RELAYS

With steady, soaking rain falling on Friday and more rain forecast for the Saturday opening of the Athletics Victoria Winter Season, Geelong athletes travelled to the pancake flat Werribee Park Equestrian Centre expecting mud, water and wind. Well, there was a little sticky clay, a few small puddles, a rather strong breeze, a few rhythm breaking horse jumps and a Percy Cerutti inspired miniature sand dune, but generally the conditions were favourable for fast racing. Unfortunately, the normal winter ailments and a few niggling injuries meant that last minute changes were necessary to our selected teams. However, the conditions, the course and the team changes did not faze the 45 supremely fit athletes making up the fourteen Geelong Relay Teams as they nervously awaited the starter's gun.

Leading the way for Geelong were our talented Under 14 Men's Team who recorded an impressive victory in their first outing in Geelong colours. Leading off was Tom Perkins, who sped around his 3.05 kilometre leg in 'swish' new running shoes purchased from Tony Stewart at "The Athlete's Foot" on Thursday night. Then second runner, Ryan Saunders consolidated Geelong's lead by running sub four minute kilometre pace despite enduring four torrid quarters of junior football on Saturday morning, before tagging with Tyron Cover, who showed his liking for the tougher cross-country courses with an impressive display of front running. Great effort. Tom, Ryan and Tyron. Hope you all enjoyed your first race in Geelong senior colours.

In 2003, our Under 14 Women ran brilliantly to win the Winter Season Team Premiership. And with Georgie Buckley, Kate Sly, Amy Stekelenburg and Laura Stekelenburg all still under 14 and with new recruits Eliza Curnow and Emma Hockey adding depth and talent, our girls were keen to defend their team title. Unfortunately, Laura Stekelenburg woke on Saturday morning feeling less than well and was not able to run the opening leg for the Under 14 "Champions". However, younger sister Amy stepped up to the line and ran an excellent opening leg to have her team in third place at the change-over with great mate, Georgie Buckley, who sped around the course in her brightly coloured new racing flats to record third fastest split of the day. Final runner, Kate Sly then set out after the lead team and, like Georgie, ran an impressive sub 12 minutes to cross the line for a fine second placing. Fantastic running, Amy, Georgie and Kate - I can see some fabulous races developing this year between our "Under 14 Geelong Fliers" and the girls from Essendon.

Leading off for the Under 14 "All - Stars" was Emma Hockey, who ran strongly and performed much better than her beloved Richmond Football Club over the testing terrain in her first race for Geelong. Second runner, Eliza Curnow warmed up for her leg with a vigorous Saturday morning game of netball, (Eliza played Centre) then a quick dash up the Melbourne Road to Werribee. However, this did not stop the diminutive Geelong College Year 7 student from running a very promising 12:30 second leg. Despite still feeling unwell, Laura Stekelenburg showed a lot of courage and determination to battle on gamely for her team. Well done, Emma,

Eliza and Laura.

Kelsey Rau excels at cross-country running (Kelsey won last year's Under 14 Australian Cross-Country Championship at Yarra Bend) and showed on Saturday that she would again be a Winter Season force, despite stepping up an age-group, with an excellent opening leg for the Under 16 Women's Team. Second runner, Harriet Brown has spent the summer months recording some impressive performances on the Nippers Surf Life Saving circuit. However, Harriet is also an accomplished runner and ran impressively considering the limited run training she has undertaken over the last few months. Running the final leg for our Under 16 Women was Jessie Couch, fresh from a summer season of personal bests over the longer sprint distances. However, Jessie showed that she is not just a track sprint specialist by running four minute kilometre pace over the unfamiliar cross-country terrain. Excellent running, girls.

The talented trio of Chelsea Merry, Bianca Cheever and Chantelle Faraguna all ran very well to secure a fine third placing in the highly competitive Women's Under 18 Division. All three girls have excellent track racing credentials and are keen to use the fitness gained from cross - country running to enhance their middle - distance times over summer. Well done, girls - a team medal at the cross - country relays is a great start to the winter season.

Due to team requirements, Charlotte Curnow was asked to compete in the Under 20 Women's Team. However, despite Saturday morning sport, a dash up the Melbourne Road and a warm-up that was little more than a jog from the car to the starting line, Charlotte ran very well in her first competitive outing for the Geelong Team. Interestingly, Charlotte is a promising Pentathlete who competes regularly at the Werribee Equestrian Centre, so there were few surprises as she negotiated the course, this time on foot. Ashleigh Wall has only been back into serious training for a short time. However, Ashleigh showed that she is not far away from top form as she recorded the fastest one lap split for her age-group. Well done, Charlotte and Ashleigh.

Leading off for our Division One Women's Team was talented Under 20 recruit, Rebecca Forlong, who made light work of the challenging, windy course as she recorded the 9th fastest split of the day. Nadia Semjanov then took over and ran solidly to keep her team in the medal hunt. Joanne Lambert is in her best shape for a couple of years, thanks in part to a new Graeme Watkins training program that has her body fit and sound. Jo also obviously appreciated Werribee's flat terrain as she recorded a time just 2 seconds faster than team-mate Nadia Semjanov. Final runner, Celia Cosgriff has stepped up to Open Competition this year and despite feeling, 'as toey as a Roman sandal' before the race, Celia showed that she would be a great acquisition to our Senior Women's Team. Eventually, our Division One girls finished an excellent 4th in the highly competitive eleven team competition. Excellent running, girls!

Interestingly, Sydney Olympian at 1500 metres, Sarah Jamieson recorded a time of 19:50 that would have won her a place in most Division One Men's Teams.

Melissa Coghlan (partner of Richard Jeremiah) and Freyja Stott (partner of Lee Troop) have both put in solid preparations over the summer, obviously inspired by Richie and Lee. Well, both young ladies were most impressive as they easily negotiated the Werribee course, Freyja in her Geelong debut. Third runner for the Division Three Women, Cathryn Hoare, has also put in a lot of work over the last few months, which has her in great shape for the up-coming winter races. Great running, girls.

The depth of our Division One Men's Team has been strengthened this year with the inclusion of talented overseas visitor, Michael Herron as well as the steady improvement of Under 20 athlete, Nick Wightman. However, we were still without Lee Troop (recovering from an excellent 8th placing in the London Marathon), Craig Mottram (overseas training and racing in the lead-up to the Athens Olympics), Richard Jeremiah (slowly recovering from an achilles injury), Louis Rowan (returning to full fitness after a short break in training), Matt McDonough (recovering from a minor operation to drain a Baker's Cyst) and Rowan Walker (on a Australian Navy ship somewhere north of Geelong). Eventually, after all the 'ins and outs', our men gave it everything to finish a highly creditable sixth with Mark Tucker recording the second fastest split for the day. Special mention must be made of: Rohan Perrott, who showed that he's returning to top form after an injury interrupted last few seasons and a recent nasty 'virus'. Rohan also showed impeccable pacing, running laps of 9.16 and 9.16, which had the team handily placed and up with the leaders at the first change-over. Also, third runner, Nick Wightman raced out of his age group but was most impressive in his Geelong cross-country debut and will greatly benefit from the experience of running with the 'big boys'. Interestingly, our number 3 - 6 runners (Nick Wightman, Ross Young, Michael Herron and Simon Taylor) all recorded 20 minute splits to illustrate the evenness of our team. Well done, guys - you all did a fantastic job to finish sixth!

Leading off for our Division Four Men's Team was Kevin Hoare, who has decided to join sister Cathryn in Geelong colours this year. Well, we think it was an excellent decision as Kevin ran very well in his debut before handing over to experienced A.V. athlete, Paul 'Tucky' Wilson. Over the last few weeks Paul has been stepping up the tempo in training and is not far away from scoring points for the Division One Team. At Werribee, Paul was moving like a well oiled machine as he ran his team into second place at the change-over with Jamie Godwin. In previous years, Jamie has been a Cross - Country Relays specialist. In fact, Jamie has only raced the Cross - Country Relays with various injuries cutting the last three winter seasons short. Consequently, coach Perrott was keen to put Jamie in cotton wool, favouring a cautious return to racing. However, after signing a 'Stat Dec' that he would run conservatively and not injure himself, Jamie was given the 'all-clear' to run. Good to see you in Geelong colours again, Jamie - the Cross-Country Relays would not be the same without you and your highly entertaining bus trip quiz.

Also making his debut for Geelong was Chris Colley, coming off a summer track and field season of top performances in: sprints, middle distance, shot, triple jump, discus, high jump, pole vault, javelin, relays, long jump ..... (yes, Chris likes to compete!) Anyway, well run on Saturday Chris, and add cross-country to your curriculum vitae!

It's always tough to run the final leg at the Cross - Country Relays. Standing around watching and waiting to run can drain a competitor's energy levels. However, Travis Zimmer is a true 'team player' and gave it everything he had with a strong final leg for the Division Four Men. Well run, guys!

A fit and trim looking John Stekelenburg was the lead-off runner for our Veteran's Team and despite a nervous false start, he flew out of the blocks to have our 'old codger' team up in the medal hunt at

the first change-over. Over the last few weeks, 'Doctor John' has dropped a few kilograms and is slowly returning to the running form that enabled him to win an Australian Age-Group Triathlon Title a few years ago. Not only was new recruit Russell Johnson keen to keep his Geelong Team up with the leaders, he was also determined to run a time that would give team-mate and old adversary, Geoffrey 'Osama' Purnell something to think about. Well, at the final change-over the bar had been set at a very respectable (and rather symmetrical) 22.22. Final runner, Geoff Purnell ran his first lap as if he had a bus to catch. And despite slowing a fraction on the second lap, Geoffrey recorded a mighty fine time of 21.33 to cross the line in third place, a mere 29 seconds from a team victory. However, even more impressive was Geoff's head wear - no one has ever run faster around the Werribee Park Equestrian Centre wearing a tea-cosy! Great running, John, Russell and Geoff!

## CLUB UNIFORM

A reminder to all Geelong athletes that when competing in Athletics Victoria Races you must be attired in the correct Geelong uniform with current registration numbers firmly attached to the front and rear of your singlet / crop top.

Any athlete who fails to wear the correct uniform will be penalised.

The Geelong uniform is:

Geelong singlet / crop top  
and navy blue shorts / nicks  
or bike shorts.

Other variations or shorts with  
extra logos / panels are not  
correct. A.V. Team shorts are also  
not correct attire.

Michael Kenny has stepped up to the Under 18 Age - Group this season and, despite being bottom - age, he was determined to run aggressively. Well, Michael ran stride for stride with long - time junior rival, Sam Gibb of Ballarat YCW for the 3.05 kilometre circuit to have his team handily positioned as he tagged with the "Dunkeld Dynamo", Brenton Rowe. Brenton has only just returned to easy training after a week's rest but this did not stop him from running a very speedy time of 9.46 (third fastest split) for his leg. Final runner, Sam Withington is eligible for the Under 14 Team. He also played junior football before heading to Werribee. However, in his Geelong debut, Sam was able to use his sub 60 second 400 metre speed (second place in the State Little Athletics 400 metre Final) to almost grab third place (just 1 second behind bronze medallist Knox) in a frantic sprint for the line. Excellent running, Michael, Brenton and Sam.

In the Under 16 Men's Division, Tom Burns-Wallace (another junior athlete with a swimming / surf life-saving background) took off like a 'scalded cat' to be in a large group, just off the placings, at the first change-over. Tim Kilfoyle then took up the running and decided on a more conservative approach to the first part of the race so that he could use his track speed over the last half of the journey. Final runner, Daniel Payne used a novel approach to warming-up for a cross-country race - he ran a Little Athletics Cross-Country race only hours before lining up for Geelong but still managed to clock a very respectable 11.25 for the 3.05 km. circuit.

With fourteen teams racing at the Werribee Park Equestrian Centre, lots of assistance was needed to keep things ticking over. Special thanks to: Carmel Brown, Sue Buckley, Heather Cheever, Elwynne Dunstan, Richard Jeremiah, Carol Kilfoyle, Tracey Rau, Brad Saunders, Chris Sly, Mary Stekelenburg, Greg Trevarthen, Lee Troop, Kevin Varker and Wendy Wall who assisted with cheer-leading, time-keeping, marshalling and team management. Also, thank you to Lyn Taylor and Tom Paton who took control of the very challenging Division Five change - over! Without you guys and gals we would not be able to put teams on the course. And lastly but certainly not leastly, a big thank you to John Stekelenburg for supplying and erecting (in record time) the magnificent large blue tent that served not only as a fantastic meeting place / storage area but also as a shelter from the biting Werribee wind. Great work, John!

## WERRIBEE PARK EQUESTRIAN CENTRE CROSS - COUNTRY RELAYS

(Saturday 24th April.)

### DIVISION 1 MEN (6 x 6.1 km.)

Rohan Perrott	18.32
Mark Tucker	17.40
Nick Wightman	20.33
Ross Young	20.31
Michael Herron	20.25
Simon Taylor	20.57

**Note:** Nick Wightman is Under 20

6th Place in 118.38 (first place Glenhuntly in 112.17)

Fastest - M Power (Glenhuntly)	- 17.19
- M Tucker (Geelong)	- 17.40
- N Adkin (APS)	- 17.56
- S Forrest (Aths. Nunawading)	- 18.00
- M Chettle (Glenhuntly)	- 18.08
- R Ellis (Ballarat YCW)	- 18.12
- D Quinn (Melbourne University)	- 18.26
- R Perrott (Geelong)	- 18.32
- P Wilson (APS)	- 18.35
- L Adams (Aths. Essendon)	- 18.36
- J Marsh (APS)	- 18.46
- A Patti (Doncaster)	- 18.51
- R De Highden (Doncaster)	- 18.53

### DIVISION 4 MEN (5 x 6.1 km.)

Kevin Hoare	23.20
Paul Wilson	21.58
Jamie Godwin	22.35
Chris Colley	24.46
Travis Zimmer	29.51

7th Place in 122.30 (first place Box Hill in 106.48)

### DIVISION 7 MEN (4 x 6.1km.)

Neil MacDonald	24.24
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D.N.F. (first place Melb. University in 95.18)

### VETERAN MEN (40 +) (3 x 6.1 km.)

John Stekelenburg	23.35
Russell Johnson	22.22
Geoffrey Purnell	21.34

Fastest - M Bialczak (Keilor St. Bernards)	- 20.46
- G Purnell (Geelong)	- 21.34
- C Harvey (Malvern)	- 21.40

### UNDER 18 MEN (3 x 3.05 km.)

Michael Kenny	10.31
Brenton Rowe	9.46
Sam Withington	12.06

4th Place in 32.23 (first place Yallourn Newborough in 29.19)

**Note:** Sam Withington is Under 14.

Fastest - K Symons (Yallourn Newborough)	- 9.36
- R Lindsay - Johns (Ringwood)	- 9.37
- B Rowe (Geelong)	- 9.46

### UNDER 16 MEN (3 x 3.05 km.)

Tom Burns - Wallace	10.57
Tim Kilfoyle	11.29
Daniel Payne	11.25

5th Place in 33.51 (first place Knox in 29.58)

Fastest - M Bayley (Knox Athletic)	- 9.28
- A Watson (Ballarat Region)	- 9.40
- M Frey (Frankston)	- 9.55

### UNDER 14 MEN (3 x 3.05 km.)

Tom Perkins	11.31
Ryan Saunders	12.10
Tyron Cover	11.33

1st Place in 35.14 (second place Keilor St. Bern. in 38.02)

Fastest - D Talia (Keilor St. Bernards)	- 11.21
- A Davis (Ballarat YCW)	- 11.28
- T Perkins (Geelong)	- 11.31
- T Cover (Geelong)	- 11.33

### DIVISION 1 WOMEN (4 x 6.1 km.)

Rebecca Furlong	22.23
Nadia Semjanov	23.29
Joanne Lambert	23.27
Celia Cosgriff	25.59

4th Place in 95.18 (first place Peninsula R.R. in 89.34)

**Note:** Rebecca Furlong is Under 20.

Fastest - S Jamieson (Essendon)	- 19.50
- A Thompson (Glenhuntly)	- 20.39
- S Gibbs (Peninsula R.R.)	- 21.12
- L Weightman (Knox Athletic)	- 21.18
- S Wallace (Peninsula R.R.)	- 22.06
- K Smyth (Glenhuntly)	- 22.08
- L Dick (Ringwood)	- 22.20
- K Dick (Doncaster)	- 22.20
- R Furlong (Geelong)	- 22.23
- L Furst (Knox Athletic)	- 22.26
- S Clarke (Peninsula R.R.)	- 22.26

### DIVISION 3 WOMEN (3 x 6.1 km.)

Melissa Coghlan	27.55
Freyja Stott	28.47
Cathryn Hoare	27.06

8th Place in 83.48 (first place Doncaster in 73.36)

**UNDER 20 WOMEN** (3 x 3.05 km.)  
 Charlotte Curnow 12.45  
 Ashleigh Wall 11.13

D.N.F. (first place Eureka in 39.05)

**Note:** Charlotte Curnow is Under 18.

Fastest - A Wall (Geelong) - 11.13  
 - G Maini (Frankston) - 11.18  
 - L Boyle (Bendigo) - 11.20  
 - R Owen (Frankston) - 11.21

**UNDER 18 WOMEN** (3 x 3.05 km.)  
 Chelsea Merry 12.33  
 Bianca Cheever 12.14  
 Chantelle Faraguna 11.52

3rd Place in 36.39 (first place Frankston in 35.15)

Fastest - Z Warrington (Frankston) - 10.53  
 - F Nash (Doncaster) - 10.53  
 - A Uys (Frankston) - 11.01

**UNDER 16 WOMEN** (3 x 3.05 km.)  
 Kelsey Rau 11.38  
 Harriet Brown 12.26  
 Jessie Couch 12.28

4th Place in 36.32 (first place Frankston in 35.37)

Fastest - M Bell (Frankston) - 11.30  
 - S Grahame (Frankston) - 11.34  
 - K Rau (Geelong) - 11.38

**UNDER 14 WOMEN ('Champions')** (3 x 3.05 km.)  
 Amy Stekelenburg 12.46  
 Georgie Buckley 11.55  
 Kate Sly 11.56

2nd Place in 36.37 (first place Essendon in 35.00)

**UNDER 14 WOMEN ('All-Stars')** (3 x 3.05 km.)  
 Emma Hockey 13.46  
 Eliza Curnow 12.30  
 Laura Stekelenburg 13.27

6th Place in 39.43

Fastest - B Nash (Essendon) - 11.06  
 - L Hall (Essendon) - 11.50  
 - G Buckley (Geelong) - 11.55  
 - K Sly (Geelong) - 11.56  
 - T Stockford (Frankston) - 11.56

### VOTES FOR "BEST PERFORMED GEELONG REGION ATHLETE" AT WERRIBEE PARK EQUESTRIAN CENTRE CROSS-COUNTRY RELAYS

For each race of the A.V. Winter Season 3, 2, 1 votes, or a variation of, will be given to Men and Women athletes in Senior

and Junior Age Groupings to decide the "Geelong Region's Best Performed Male and Female Athletes". For these awards Senior Age Groupings will be Open Age and Under 20 while Junior Age Groupings will be Under 18, Under 16 and Under 14.

#### Senior Men.

3. Mark Tucker  
 2. Rohan Perrott  
 1. Geoff Purnell

#### Senior Women.

3. Rebecca Furlong  
 2. Ashleigh Wall  
 1. Joanne Lambert / Nadia Semjanov

#### Junior Men.

3. Brenton Rowe  
 2. Tom Perkins  
 1. Tyron Cover

#### Junior Women.

3. Georgie Buckley  
 2. Kate Sly  
 1. Kelsey Rau

For each race of the Athletics Victoria Winter Season, **Tony Kelly and the Bush Inn Hotel** have generously donated a lunch or dinner for two. Winners will be selected for outstanding running / team spirit contributions.

The first winner for the Werribee Equestrian Centre Cross - Country Relays is **Rebecca Forlong** for her excellent Geelong debut, out of her age group, and over an unfamiliar distance. Well done Rebecca. Hope you enjoy your meal and the Bush Inn's famous hospitality.

### UP-COMING RACES

Our next two Athletics Victoria races are:

- \* the Cross - Country Race at Lardner Park, Warragul.
- \* the Sandown Road Race at the Sandown Motor Racing Course (Melways Map 80C - 10)

**Don't forget:** if you have not entered with a Season Ticket, you need to enter individual races by 5:00pm. on the Monday prior to race day either on-line ([athsvic.org.au](http://athsvic.org.au)) or fax (9427 9183) with full credit card details.

### LARDNER PARK CROSS - COUNTRY (Saturday May 15)

1:20 pm. Women Under 14 2 km.  
 Men Under 14 2 km.

1:30 pm.	Men Under 18	4 km.
	Men Under 20	4 km.
	Women Under 20	4 km.
1:50 pm.	Men Under 16	3 km.
	Women Under 16	3 km.
	Women Under 18	3 km.
2:10 pm.	Women Open	6 km.
2:45 pm.	Men Open	8 km.

**A Team Bus** will leave Norlane Water World at 10:00 am. for those who require transport to Lardner Park, Warragul. Cost of a seat on the bus will be \$5. Please contact Neil MacDonald (52 231620) to confirm your seat on the bus.

## SANDOWN ROAD RACE

(Saturday May 29)

1:30 pm.	Women Under 14	3 km.
	Women Under 16	3 km.
	Men Under 14	3 km.
	Men Under 16	3 km.
2:00 pm.	Women Open	10 km.
	Women Under 18	10 km.
	Women Under 20	10 km.
	Men Under 18	10 km.
	Men Under 20	10 km.
3:00 pm.	Men Open	10 km.

**A Team Bus** will be leaving Norlane Waterworld at 11:00 am. for those who require transport to Sandown. Please phone Neil MacDonald (53 231620) to confirm your seat on the bus.

## RUNNER PROFILE

Loretta McGrath has come a long way since 1993, when, at the age of 22, she joined a group of friends from a local gym for a leisurely jog. Last year, after only two years of serious training, she broke through for an impressive, come from behind win in the Melbourne Marathon. However, Loretta has her sights set on bigger things and is prepared to put in the work required to reach her goals. For Loretta, the words "Dream, Believe, Work Hard, Achieve" certainly apply.

### Loretta McGrath

**Occupation** Pharmacist **Age** 33  
**Date of Birth** 15 / 11 / 1970  
**Height** 173 cm. **Weight** 57 kg.  
**Married / Single** Married to Shane.  
**Coach** Graeme Watkins

#### Personal Bests

5000 m.	17.35
10 000 m.	35.49
Half Marathon	79.09
Marathon	2:49.02

**Favourite Food** Lentil Burger from the Vegie Bar in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy.

**Food Eaten Before a Race** Toast with Vegemite

**Favourite Drink** Wine  
**Favourite Movie** "Meet Joe Black".  
**Favourite Book** "Every Second Counts" Lance Armstrong  
**Favourite Music / Band** George Michael, Robbie Williams.  
**Favourite TV Show** "Any Sport"  
**Favourite Night Spot** "Home with Shane and my dogs!"  
**Favourite Holiday Spot** Japan.

#### A Normal Training Week.

Mon.	am.	50 - 60 minutes easy.
	pm.	Gym (weights).
Tues.	am.	<b>Week 1:</b> 90 minutes run over Barrabool Hills. Surge the up - hills.
	pm.	Gym (weights).
	am.	<b>Week 2:</b> 30 minutes. easy plus gym.
	pm.	3 km. warm-up 3 x 3000 metres (continuous build-up) 1st 3000m. @ 4:10 min. / km. pace 2nd 3000m. @ 4:00 min. / km. pace 3rd 3000m. @ 3:50 min. / km. pace 3 km. cool-down
Wed.	am.	60 minutes easy run.
	pm.	Pilates.
Thur.	am.	30 minutes easy run.
	pm.	Track Session: eg. 1600m. 1200m. 1000m. 800m. with half distance jog recovery <b>or</b> 4 x 1600m. (400 metre jog recovery) <b>or</b> 6 x 1000m. (400 metre jog recovery).
Fri.	am.	60 minutes easy run.
	pm.	Gym (weights).
Sat.	am.	Race or "Mona" Fartlek.
	pm.	30 minutes very easy jog.
Sun.	am.	2 hours plus easy run (maximum of 2 1/2 hours).

**Other Training** Massage once a fortnight / Weights three times a week / Pilates / Walking my two beagles

**Favourite Training Session** Running the Barrabool Hills.

**Favourite Race** Any Half - Marathon.

**Best Ever Performance** Winning the 2003 Melbourne Marathon in 2:49.02

**Favourite Place To Train** Torquay.

**Toughest Ever Training Session** Anything on the track!

**Most admired Runner / Person** This is constantly changing but at the moment it's: Ian Thorpe for how he handled his disqualification at the Australian Olympic Swimming Trials, Jana Pittman for her determination at the World Championships and Benita Johnson for her fantastic win at the World Cross - Country Championships.

**Advice to Other Runners** "Don't be afraid to get help in areas that aren't your strong points - you can't be good at everything!"

**Goals for the Future** To run well in the 2004 New York Marathon. (Loretta's prize for winning the 2003 Melbourne Marathon was a trip to the 2004 New York Marathon).

**A Scary Running Story** "Early one Sunday we were out

for a long run, starting at Torquay, then on to Point Addis and back along the beach. I was running with the boys down "Snake Gully" when from behind we heard a loud cry of "SNAKE!" Apparently we had run past two large tiger snakes, who had become a little excited at being disturbed and were slithering their way up the hill towards the stragglers at the rear of our pack. 'Goodie' (Andrew Goodwin) was right at the back and had to beat a very hasty retreat up the hill until the snakes decided to go their own way. Needless to say, Watto (Graeme Watkins) and I felt the boys were only crying 'wolf' so we continued running for a further five minutes until we went back to investigate.

## AROUND THE TRACKS AND TRAILS

On the other side of the world, Lee Troop finished an excellent 8th in the London Marathon, running 2:09.58. Lee went into the race in great shape and was hoping to break Rob de Castella's Australian best time of 2:07.51. However, the weather Gods were not kind, with rain and head-winds over the last 7 kilometres slowing runners. Great running Lee - sub 2.10 in those conditions was an outstanding effort. The winner was Kenyan, Evans Rutto in 2:06.18.

Also competing overseas at the Mt. Sac Relays in California were:

- \* Georgie Clarke, 11th over 5000 metres, running a P.B. of 15:39.32
- \* Mark Fountain, 1st in the Mile Invitation recording a P.B. of 3:59.63.

Then, on Friday 30th April, Georgie Clarke posted another P.B. over 5000 metres, running 15:34.52 for 5th place at the Cardinal Invitational (Stanford University, California). As winner of the Australian 5000 metre title at the Olympic Trials in February, Georgie was hoping to run close to the Olympic B Qualifier of 15.20.

A little closer to home, Loretta McGrath comfortably won the Women's Division of the Geelong Half - Marathon in 81:04. Well done, Loretta.

Finally, congratulations to Darren Lynch, who has been inducted into the "Stawell Gift Hall Of Fame" for his outstanding middle - distance performances at the world famous Easter footrace.

Despite being a relative late starter in athletics, (Darren initially started pro running to get fit for football) he quickly progressed through the ranks and was extremely close to representing Australia at both the Atlanta and Sydney Olympic Games. However, Darren did represent Australia at the 1996 (Cape Town) and 1999 (Belfast) World Cross - Country Championships as well as the 1999 World Indoor Championships (3000 metres) in Japan.

At the World Indoors, Darren competed against the legendary Haile Gebrselassie and has a wonderful photo of the Ethiopian champion and himself posing in their team track suits. The diminutive, (and smiling - what else!) Gebrselassie would comfortably fit under Darren's arm-pit!

Many older athletic followers will also remember Darren storming home (pun intended!) to win a rain swept Australian 1500 metre Championship in 1995 (3:53.30)

Darren's Personal Best Times certainly make impressive reading:

1500 metres	3:39.32	(Cork, Ireland 1996)
3000 metres	7:45.53	(Sydney, 1999)

5000 metres 13:30.96 (Melbourne, 2000)

Well done, Lynchy!

## CORIO BAY SPORTS MEDICINE CENTRE

283 Latrobe Terrace Geelong, 3220  
Phone: 52 218822

Thank you very much to Jeff Oxley and staff at the Corio Bay Sports Medicine Centre who will provide fantastic support to Geelong Region Cross-Country Team athletes during the Winter Season.

This support will include:

- \* reduced physiotherapy fees.
- \* free access to physiotherapy advice and diagnosis on a Sunday morning (provided phone contact is made initially)
- \* discounted rates for other services available at Corio Bay Sports Medicine Centre (ie. Sports Medicine, Massage, Podiatry, Dietetics, Sports Psychology, Acupuncture)
- \* a possible evening talk to athletes and parents by physios, doctors, podiatrists etc. on running related topics.

Corio Bay Sports Medicine Centre has a list of our athletes and support staff so please say you're from the Geelong Region Cross - Country Team if using their wonderful services.

## ELOISE POPPETT. AIMING FOR ATHENS AND BEYOND.

The last few years have been a roller-coaster ride for Eloise Poppett. As a junior athlete, Eloise was world class, posting times that were astounding, even for a senior athlete. However, just when the Sydney Olympics beckoned, Eloise was forced to take time off and re-evaluate. Now fully fit and healthy, Eloise is back and ready for a serious tilt at Athens.

**N.M. Eloise, we're a few days away from the New Year and you're back at Falls Creek. How long are you here for and what are your immediate plans?**

E.P. I'm up here for exactly two weeks. I arrived on Boxing Day and I'll leave on January 9th and head back home where I'll sharpen up for a couple of races.

**N.M. What sort of training are you planning for your time at Falls Creek?**

E.P. There will be a mixture of longer running and some shorter faster work, especially on Thursdays. There will also be threshold runs on Saturday and a long run on Sunday, so basically it's a pretty standard program that I would do at home, except that the trails are tougher up here and the air is a bit thinner. Also, training with a group makes some of the running a little faster and more competitive.

**N.M. What races do you have scheduled for the next month or so?**

E.P. I have a 3000 metres in New Zealand on the 15th of January then a 1500 on the 17th of January. Then after that there's the State 5000 metres on the 28th of January where I'll hopefully have a few pace-makers to help out - it would be really good to run an Olympic A or B Qualifier there. Then there's the Melbourne Grand Prix 5000 metres on the 12th of February, then

the Nationals so it's all crammed into a couple of months.

**N.M.** You don't get that many chances to run 5000 metres so you have to be ready when they're scheduled.

**E.P.** Yes. That's one of the reasons I'm up here putting in a couple of solid weeks before I start sharpening up and tapering down in preparation for the important races.

**N.M.** What are the Athens' Olympic A and B Qualifiers for the Women's 5000 metres?

**E.P.** The A is 15.08 and the B is 15.20. They're pretty tough and a bit faster than the Qualifying times for the Sydney Olympics but they are definitely achievable. However, I've seen it before where harder qualifying times force athletes to lift their performance. It's funny, but when you first hear the qualifying times you think 'no way!' but after a while you start believing in yourself and you become more positive. If you believe you can do it, you can do it! Also, I'm lucky that I have Haley McGregor and Benita Johnson to push me along.

**N.M.** You are in pretty good shape at the moment. Last month you successfully paced Haley McGregor to a 31:43 Olympic A Qualifier for 10000 metres at the Zatopek Meeting. That must have been very satisfying?

**E.P.** Oh yeah. It was fantastic for Haley. She just ran so well and I was really happy for her because I know how hard she has worked. And I was really glad that I could help her out. It has also motivated me to train harder and run faster.

**N.M.** You and Haley embraced as she crossed the line. You obviously have a really close relationship.

**E.P.** Yes, we're been really good friends for a couple of years now and we clicked straight away. We have a lot of laughs together. We've been away on a couple of trips together to the World Cross - Country in Switzerland and the World University Games in South Korea. We also have similar training ideas and similar interests so we get along really well.

**N.M.** Have you paced anyone before?

**E.P.** I paced Susie Power in last year's Zatopek but I was not fully fit and could only make it to 3000 metres and I was going at a slower pace than I was with Haley. Generally, I'm an even pace runner as I don't do many 'kick down' sessions in training so I'm suited to pace making. In training most of my sessions are even paced running.

**N.M.** How tough was it out the front into the wind?

**E.P.** It was pretty tough for the first ten minutes but after that I didn't seem to notice it too much.

**N.M.** So the plan was to run 75 / 76 second laps for as long as you could?

**E.P.** Yes. That was the basic plan. I would have liked to have continued on a little longer, perhaps to six or seven kilometres but I was starting to feel the pinch at about five kilometres and I was worried that I was holding her back. However, Haley said that she was so focused on looking at my back that she lost momentum for a few laps after I pulled out, before she got going again.

**N.M.** You also won the World University Games 5000 metres this year. That must have been a thrill?

**E.P.** Yes it was, even though we didn't expect a good time over there because of the heat and humidity so 15.47 was OK for the conditions. However, there wasn't much competition because the World University Games clashed with the World Championships in Paris so many of the top athletes weren't running in Korea. In many ways it was a fairly easy year to win but it was great for me because a win is a win! I've also now won at that level and can hopefully step up a level to Commonwealth Games, World Championship and Olympic level. But the trip was a great experience competing in a different country.

**N.M.** Your coach is Rod Arnold. How long have you

been with Rod?

**E.P.** I started with Rod when I was eleven or twelve. At that stage we just trained twice a week and have gradually built up from there.

**N.M.** What were some of your early successes?

**E.P.** I qualified for the 1998 World Juniors in France when I was 15, finishing 11th in the final of the 3000 metres. (Ed. Eloise ran 9:36.64 in the final after running 9:23.67 in her heat) Then, when I was 16, I ran at the World Youth Championships in Poland. I went into the 3000 metres at the World Youth Championships as favourite but finished 4th in 9:05.05. I was absolutely shattered with my result in Poland but Rod and I sat down and decided to really have a go at qualifying for the Sydney Olympics in the 5000 metres. About two months later I ran 15.18 for the 5000 metres at a Sydney Inter-Club meeting. However, two weeks later I got injured and couldn't get back.

**N.M.** What is Rod's basic coaching philosophy?

**E.P.** He has a lot of variety in my training in that we don't do exactly the same things every Tuesday or Thursday. The sessions might be similar and have the same effect but they are rarely the same. However, we do a lot of longer, slower running in the winter to build strength and a base then in the lead-up to the track season we do more intense lactic threshold running and shorter, faster running.

**N.M.** And Nic Bideau has some input too?

**E.P.** Yes, Nic gives some guidance and suggests some sessions that might be of benefit. He also manages me and looks after me as far as races, flights and accommodation are concerned. He's also been a mentor as he has a wealth of athletic experience.

**N.M.** How many sessions and kilometres would you do in a normal week?

**E.P.** I usually run twice a day except for Friday and Sunday. At the moment I'm probably covering about 110 kilometres a week but weekly it can vary between 110 - 130 kilometres. But if I'm racing, it's a lot lower, down to 95 - 100 kilometres.

**N.M.** What other supplementary training do you complete?

**E.P.** I do a 20 - 30 minute circuit every second day that involves using body weight and core stability exercises, things like push-ups, squats, lunges, sit-ups. Then there's Swiss Ball and I have a massage twice a week. I also do water running and swimming if I'm feeling sore. I often go for a swim at the beach after a hard track session.

**N.M.** You have mentioned some of your early successes as a junior. How did you begin in athletics?

**E.P.** I started off in Little Athletics. My Mum was actually a pretty good runner who was ranked nationally for the 3000 metres when she was 21 years old after only running for about a year or two. She then got married and had kids but managed to keep running and has been to the World Masters. Also, my Uncle was a pretty good runner who placed highly in the City to Surf quite a few times. So the interest of my Mum and my Uncle helped me get started when I was younger. I think I was six when I started at Little Athletics.

**N.M.** Were you always going to be a middle-distance runner?

**E.P.** Yes, I never had any speed for the sprints or spring for the jumps. However, I did hold the Under 6 Shot Put record until last year when it was finally broken.

**N.M.** Looking at you now I find it very hard to believe that you once held a shot put record.

**E.P.** Yes, I know.

**N.M.** When you were a junior athlete, how did your training progress from the initial two sessions a week you completed when you first began with Rod?

**E.P.** I'm not sure how quickly we built up the training but when I reached 15 I was probably doing up to 60 kilometres in a big week. However, when you're that young you can't afford to be doing too much. However, it's a lot different when you get older. If you've got some talent you can get by without doing too much training as a junior, but when you hit seventeen to twenty your whole body has changed and it can be tough to get through those years. However, I reckon if you can get through those difficult years, you're better for it.

**N.M.** And a lot of talented girls don't make it through those difficult years.

**E.P.** Yes, that's right. A lot of them think that they will never run fast again after their body starts to change.

**N.M.** Can you tell us about the 5000 metres in October 1999 when you ran 15:18.6 at just sixteen years of age?

**E.P.** I can remember a lot of it actually. It was an Inter-Club mixed race and it was very windy, almost cyclonic all day. Our race was at about 5:30 in the evening and about 15 minutes prior to the race the wind suddenly died down so that the conditions were perfect. In the race I had a few of my male training partners to push me along and I felt really good. After the race I wasn't that tired because it was my first ever 5000 metres and I wasn't sure how hard to push so I held back a little. I still reckon I could have run 15:10 if I had run myself right out. However, it's easy to say that now when I have no way of proving it. I got a lot of publicity from that race but ten days later I was injured and missed out on the Sydney Olympics. Looking back it was a blessing in disguise as a lot of good things have come out of the problems I had at that time.

**N.M.** Well, you will be happy to hear that your 15:18.6 for 5000 metres is still a World Best Time for a 16 year old girl. So it's a pretty tough record to break!

**E.P.** Yes, it's tough for me to break at 21.

**N.M.** Can you remember any of the sessions you completed in the lead-up to running 15:18?

**E.P.** On the Thursday night, ten days before the race, I ran 3 x 1000 metres with a 5 minute recovery between. I ran each of the 1000 metres in 2:50. We also occasionally did 8 x 800 metres (in 2:30) with a 100 metre jog recovery or 6 - 8 x 400 metres.

**N.M.** At 16 you were very lean, meaning you had a very high power to weight ratio, which can be of great assistance to junior athletes. How tall were you and what was your weight at the time?

**E.P.** I was about 170.5 cm. tall and weighed 40.5 kgs. which was ridiculously skinny - far too skinny. As a result, my bone density got really low. My iron levels were fine but calcium and other important nutrients weren't being absorbed into my bones which is very serious for a developing girl and a distance runner. Then ten days after I ran the 5000 metres I developed a sore hip. At first I tried to ignore it, battling on for another week. I got lots of treatment on it but nothing seemed to work. At first we thought it was hip-flexor tendonitis then about eight weeks later I went down to Melbourne and stayed with Nic Bideau and Sonia O'Sullivan and had a MRI scan that showed I had a stress reaction in the neck of my left femur. Even though they did not find a fracture it took a long, long time to heal. I even started walking differently because I was favouring it. It would ache even at rest and because my bone density was so low and the area has such a poor blood supply, it just took so long to heal. Eventually, I was able to run by the time the Sydney Olympics came around. Sonia, Nic, Mona and Troopy came and stayed with me at Mum and Dad's house and I was able to

have a run with them, so that was great while I was recovering. As far as missing the Olympics is concerned, I was disappointed at the time but lots of great things have happened to me since. In that time, I have become a Christian and have become a much stronger person.

**N.M.** Your road to recovery was a long one. What changes did you have to make?

**E.P.** First of all, I had to change my mind set. It might seem weird but you can convince yourself that thinner is better and that you won't get injured, especially when you're running so well. And up until I developed the stress reaction, I had never had an injury problem at all. I had also convinced myself that I didn't like the taste of red meat so I had to work through that as well before I could change my diet and start eating properly, including more calcium and red meat in my diet. I also began taking some supplements to make sure I was getting enough of the correct nutrients.

**N.M.** Were you a vegetarian at the time?

**E.P.** Yes, although I would sometimes eat a little chicken, but I was not eating any red meat at all. Now, I still eat vegetarian meals regularly as foods like nuts and beans and tofu are highly nutritious, but I also make sure that I eat red meat twice a week, sometimes three times a week, as well as chicken and fish - I particularly like salmon steaks, which are high in Omega 3 oils.

**N.M.** How did you resume running?

**E.P.** To start I had to do light weight bearing exercise like walking before gradually progressing to slow running and walking, then just running. In that time I saw many, many doctors from all over the country and they all pretty well had the same view: that I had to get all the other external things right before I even started to think about running again.

**N.M.** How much time did you have off running?

**E.P.** I had exactly six months off running but when I came back I still had niggly problems with my shins. Everytime I have time off running I develop shin splints - I think my calves just tighten up when I'm not running. But I was able to push through the shin niggles and it was probably another three months before I was able to do some decent training.

**N.M.** Did you put on any weight while you weren't running?

**E.P.** Yes, I did. I put on 16 kilograms. I was 56 kilograms when I started back running, which was nice because I felt warm.

**N.M.** At 40 kilograms you must have had extremely low body fat.

**E.P.** Yes, it's frightening now to look back at photos of me at the time but I was able to get through it. I'm running at about 52 kilograms now and I don't think I will have to drop too far under that to be running really fast.

**N.M.** Did you make any changes to your training, like running on softer surfaces?

**E.P.** Aahhh ..... not really because we've always run on grass where possible. Our track sessions have always been on grass tracks and my easy runs were on softer trails. Obviously I had to start off with some 'cruisy' training and really communicate well with Rod about how I was feeling. While I was injured I was doing a lot of cross-training so my heart and lungs were a lot stronger and fitter than the rest of my body. Because of this, I had to be very cautious and not push as hard as my heart and lungs were capable of while coming back or I would become injured again. So I had to get into the gym and strengthen my body so it could handle the stresses and pounding of running.

**N.M.** Do you have bone density tests now to keep a check on how things are going?

A most successful night was held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at "The Athlete's Foot" where our members were able to check out the latest running shoes and clothing.

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**E.P.** Yes, I have a test every twelve months and the last one was fine - actually slightly above the normal range so it is possible to turn things around. A lot of the doctors I saw when I first got injured said that I would probably never fully recover because when I was sixteen I had the bones of a seventy-five year old woman and I only had three years to rebuild them as female bones peak at nineteen years of age. After nineteen, female bones slowly decrease in density. So, for a while my focus was not on my running but on strengthening my bones because in the long run, stronger bones would help me be a better, healthier runner.

**N.M.** Do you take calcium supplements?

**E.P.** Yes, I take Calcium Complete plus a Multi-Vitamin. As I said before, my iron levels and other nutrients are pretty good so I don't have to worry too much there.

**N.M.** What do you do when you're not running?

**E.P.** My older brother and I have a Personal Training business. We own a studio in Sutherland and over time have built up a pretty good client base. We've been doing that for about a year and a half and it's going well. At times it's tough having a business and trying to train but I get by. Also, I'm getting married in April so there's a lot of exciting things going on in my life at the moment.

**N.M.** You mentioned that you are a born again Christian. How did this come about?

**E.P.** One lunch time a new girl at my school started talking to me about God and God's love for me and how Jesus died for me. Anyway, she invited me to her church. And even though I was a bit confused at the time and didn't know much about God, I went along with her. I thought that God only punished people but the message was amazing and it spoke to my heart. From that moment on I wanted to accept Jesus and live for Him. My whole perspective on life and running and my family changed from that moment and now I feel a much more complete person.

**N.M.** What are your plans for after the Olympics?

**E.P.** Geeh, after the Olympics? ..... I haven't thought that far ahead.

**N.M.** Are there any plans to move up to the 10 000 metres?

**E.P.** Eventually I think I will move up in distance but not for a while. I'll still be only 22 next year so I think I can run a lot faster at the shorter distances. Also the 10 k. is a gruelling event - I've seen that running the first half in Haley's race, but I'd definitely

love to win the Zatopek one day and race some of the big 10 000 metre races overseas. Basically do what Benita Johnson is doing now.

**N.M.** What about moving back down to the 1500 metres as you have reasonable speed over the shorter distance?

**E.P.** Probably not. If anything I'd move up but at the moment I want to give the 5000 metres my best shot. Six months ago I was a 3000 metre runner who could run 8.56 any day of the week whether it be a time-trial or a race. Now I have to run under 9 minutes and keep going for another five laps so that is what I have been training for. Hopefully that will happen during the next few months.

**N.M.** I'm pretty sure that your 8:56 is still the Australian Under 20 Record although Georgie Clarke equalled it in a mixed State League race a few weeks ago.

**E.P.** Yes, she ran really well and I know all about running fast times in mixed races. Unfortunately, mixed race times don't usually count but Sonia and Benita have said that they're willing to pace me through for some fast times so we don't really need the men to run fast.

**N.M.** You mentioned Sonia O'Sullivan. She must be a great inspiration to you?

**E.P.** Yes. I think I met Sonia when I was 15 and I was down in Melbourne for the Under 20 Nationals. That was also the first time that I met Nic Bideau and he hooked me up with a sponsor. We went out for dinner and talked and talked about running and their experiences overseas which was fantastic for a young kid who wanted to be a good runner. Anyway, I've been friends with them and stay with them when I'm in Melbourne, ever since.

**N.M.** This is a chance to give some value to those who support you. Who are your sponsors?

**E.P.** New Balance and 'Live It Fitness' and ..... I'm just trying to think .....?

**N.M.** You can't leave someone out!

**E.P.** I know ..... Aaahh ..... New Balance is the big one and I love to be associated with them because they really support running across Australia rather than just a few select athletes. They support Athletics Australia and the Noosa Bolt and countless other races across the country. They also support women's running.

N.M. Eloise, thanks very much for your time and all the best for the up-coming year. I hope you run sub 15.08 in the next few months.

E.P. Thanks, Neil.

**Note:** Unfortunately, Eloise had to cut short her training time at Falls Creek and head home to receive treatment for shin soreness. However, at the time of writing, Eloise is back running and planning on heading overseas in an attempt to qualify for the Athens Olympics in the 5000 metres.

## RUNNER PROFILE

### Eloise Poppett

**Occupation** Athlete / Personal Trainer / Student studying Exercise Science at Wollongong University

**Age** 21 **Date of Birth** 9 / 11 / 82

**Height** 172 cm. **Weight** 52 - 53 kg.

**Married / Single** Engaged to Jony Wellings

**Coach** Rod Arnold

#### Personal Bests

**1500m.** 4:15  
**3000m.** 8:56 (Australian Under 20 Record)  
**5000m.** 15:18.6 (World Best for a 16 year old girl)

**Favourite Food** Fruit

**Food Eaten Before a Race** Cereal and, yoghurt.

**Favourite Drink** Tea, coffee, water

**Favourite Movie** ?

**Favourite Book** "Romans" (from the Bible)

**Favourite Music / Band** "U2" / "Delirious"

**Favourite TV Show** "Seinfeld", "Rove" - anything that makes me laugh.

**Favourite Night Spot** "Northies" in Cronulla

**Favourite Holiday Spot** Noosa and Yamba (on the New South Wales coast).

### A Normal Training Week.

**Mon.** am. 50 mins. easy  
 pm. 30 mins. easy

**Tues.** am. 30 mins. easy.  
 pm. Track Session (long)  
 something like:  
 8 x 1000 metres @ 5 km. Race Pace with  
 200 metre jog recovery between.

**Wed.** am. 60 mins. easy  
 pm. 30 mins. easy

**Thur.** am. 30 mins. easy  
 pm. Track Session (short)  
 something like:  
 8 x 400 metres with a 200 metre 'float'

**Fri.** am. 45 mins. easy  
 pm. REST

**Sat.** am. Threshold (15 - 20 mins.) or a Track Session  
 or a Race

pm. 30 mins. easy

**Sun.** am. 90 mins. easy.

pm. REST

#### Other Training / Recovery Sessions.

Massage, Swimming, Water Running, Swiss Ball, Circuits.

**Favourite Training Session** 8 x 400 metres with a 200 metre 'float'.

**Favourite Race** Noosa Bolt.

**Best Ever Performances** Running 15:18.6 for 5000 metres at Sydney Inter Club as a 16 year old.

**Favourite Place To Train** Falls Creek and at home in Sydney.

**Toughest Ever Training Session** 5 sets of 5 x 300 metres (51 seconds) with 100 metre jog between reps and a 300 metre jog between sets.

**Most Admired Runners / People** Sonia O'Sullivan, Benita Johnson, Haley McGregor, Craig Mottram.

#### Advice to Other Runners

"Enjoy your running!"

#### Goals for the Future

1. Make the 2004 Olympic Team.
2. Win gold at the 2006 Commonwealth Games.
3. Make the final at the 2008 Olympic Games.
4. Win a medal at the 2012 Olympic Games.

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