



The Athlete's Foot Geelong Cross Country Championships Aug 16, 2008

The 2008 Athlete's Foot Geelong Cross Country Championships were held under trying conditions this year. Not only was the event held in the middle of a low pressure trough bringing wind and rain, but also in the middle of an Olympic fortnight bringing bleary eyes for those who actually managed to drag themselves off the sofa.

As always, Chris Sly dedicated the prerace hours to the course set up. Not wanting any of the backlash that followed the Sandown 10k road race earlier in the year, he took the measuring wheel out over the 1.5km loop and there was a rumour going around that the 30cm ruler came out to make a couple of last minute adjustments to the precise location of the start line!

The first event was for the juniors over a course I feel confident (because the ruler reportedly had mm markings) in saying was 3.0000km (or 2x1.5000km laps). With no U'20 runners, it was the U'16's who stole the show. Jackson Hamill-Beach led the boys race from start to finish to be a clear winner in a time of 10.28 with Clare Hodgson doing the same for the girls to finish in a time of 11.34. Full results can be found below.



The 2nd event was the open 6km race that started with a significantly reduced field compared with past years. In fact not only were there more juniors than seniors, but there were also more women than men in the open race! Ryan Christian had clearly taken note of the field and was keen to practice his victory salute during the warm up. There were a few Usain Bolt dance moves to follow but I refuse to put the video on the web unless my hand is forced!



In the men's event, the big 4 (ok, the only 4) of us were mostly together until just after 3kms when Ryan decided that it was time to put his prerace preparations into action and surged to a 30m lead. Nick Wightman tried to follow and started putting time into myself and Wes Benson. With less than 800m to run, Ryan still held his 30m lead but Nick clearly couldn't bear the thought of being witness to another victory dance, and pulled up alongside him at the bottom of the final hill. And so the scene was set for a titanic battle that would surely have those still on their sofas wish they had come out to brave the elements. I'm sure Bruce McAvaney would have loved to call the final parts but in his absence, you'll have to rely on my distant (about 100m by now) recollection. Neck and neck it was before a final surge saw Nick run away with the win. Ryan finished only 3 secs back but his arms stayed firmly by his side!

The women's event wasn't quite as close but showed that Ashlea Clifton remains in good running form despite her recent focus on triathlons. She ran away with the win in a time of 24.40, almost 1½ mins clear of Cathryn Hoare in second.

A big thanks to our sponsors including Tony Stewart at **The Athlete's Foot** who again donated a \$150 voucher gratefully won by Jack Hockley-Samon, the **Bush Inn** for their \$30 Bush Inn Award and Craig Goddard at **Subway** for all of the Subway vouchers. A big thanks also to those who helped to set up and officiate on the day including Chris & Janette Sly, Mary McDonald & Neil MacDonald.

Good luck to everyone competing at the Australian Cross Country Championships next week again at Eastern Gardens. Check out the [timetable](#) for further details or see the [Athsvic website](#).

Results:

Junior Boys (3km)

Jackson Hamill-Beach	10.28
Jesse Shields	11.10
Lewis Clark	11.25
Samuel Shields	12.16
Jack Hockley-Samon	13.23
Gabriel Shields	15.34

Junior Girls (3km)

Clare Hodgson	11.34
Jmara Hockley-Samon	12.10
Holly Curtis	12.12
Ricci Curtis	13.39



Open Men (6km)

Nick Wightman	19.34
Ryan Christian	19.37
Brett Coleman	19.56
Wes Benson	20.38

Open Women (6km)

Ashlea Clifton	24.40
Cathryn Hoare	26.04
Sharon Pedersen-Jones	26.17
Joanne Rowan	29.09
Eliesha Byrt	30.53