

## Geelong Region Cross Country



### Report: XCR09 Rd 4 - Ballarat Road Races (Sat June 20)

On the shortest day of the year, Ballarat was never going to be anything other than cold, wet and windy. Fortunately, we were spared the 'wet' which is obviously the way things are in Ballarat these days judging by the level of the 'lake' we were running around. As a result, Geelong wasn't alone in having some difficulty recruiting runners for this event - all teams were missing a few of their 'stars'.



The juniors kicked off proceedings over a 5km course with all age groups starting at the same time. For some of our younger members, this was certainly a step up in distance! By far the most amazing performance came from U14 Claudia Verstraten. Having been on holiday for Sandown, she blitzed the field to finish 36 secs ahead of her nearest rival! In a more closely fought battle, U18 Georgie Buckley also claimed a podium finish in a sprint finish to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> by 1 sec – great work!



Our U16 women claimed another 3<sup>rd</sup> in the team results with Jmara Hockley-Samon 5<sup>th</sup>, Holly Curtis 7<sup>th</sup> & Ricci Curtis 21<sup>st</sup>. Kate Sly took a brief break from her VCE studies to record 7<sup>th</sup> in the U20's & Matilda Skok also ran very well to finish 8<sup>th</sup> in the U14's with Claudia.



We didn't have quite so many junior men but those who did compete performed very well with Tom White 7<sup>th</sup> in the U20's, Jackson Hamill-Beach 9<sup>th</sup> in U18's & Isaac Hockey just missing a podium finish in 4<sup>th</sup> & Jack-Hockley-Samon 18<sup>th</sup> both U14.



The open men & women were all racing over a 15km course. Scott Rantall, who, through some unidentified strain of flu had barely been able to get out of bed since Sandown, returned with a vengeance and led the Geelong Div 1 men home in a very impressive 48:11, securing 11th place. Brett Coleman managed to stride away from Ryan Christian in the final km with Nick Wightman not far behind. All 3 runners coming in under 50-mins. Mick McNaughton, in his last race before moving to Belgium indefinitely, ran a very solid race in 50:30. All the best in your new Belgian adventure Mick and Annalise. Mick your regular and consistent performances will be sorely missed by the club for this season and in seasons to come. Colin Thornton was next in to round out the Div 1 team and secure us a very pleasing 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall behind the 2008 premiers Box Hill. .



The Div 4 men were led home by Gold-Coast marathon entrant, Simon Gower, running a confidence-boosting 53:45. Simon managed a good gap on Andrew Bell with Jack Verstraten not too far behind him. Leslie Elms was a little further back running over 15k for the first time with Drago Skok, making his debut for the 2009 season, bringing rounding out the Div 4 men's team to secure another very pleasing 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall.



In the open women's 15k, Natalie Mensch led the Geelong contingent home in her debut appearance for the team, in the fantastic time of 60:39. Welcome aboard Nat! Kristen Wyatt suffering from an upset stomach courageously ensured that she finished for the team & was next in followed closely by Julie McNamara and Cathryn Hoare. Our Div 1 women finished 5<sup>th</sup> overall, their best result this season – great running!

Good luck to everyone running at the Gold Coast marathon in a couple of weeks and to everyone else - who will naturally be running at the Coliban relay!

## Awards



The **Steigen Team Player Award** goes to **Kristen Wyatt** for this round for two reasons. Firstly, she brought Natalie Mensch along to join the team for the first time (welcome aboard Nat). Secondly, she also put the team ahead of herself & ran despite being unwell and despite having the Gold Coast marathon only 2 weeks away. Thanks Kristen and we wish you well for Gold Coast & hope you recover quickly.



The **Barking Dog Award** for this round goes to **Scott Rantall** for stepping into the team when given an SOS call at the last minute, despite having been unwell. This gave us a very strong Div 1 team and also a strong & complete Div 4 team. Thanks Scott & we hope you enjoy the hospitality at the Barking Dog.



### Closest Time Predictions (each win Subway Vouchers)

1 <sup>st</sup>	Claudia Verstraten (-2 sec)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ryan Christian (+12 sec)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Brett Coleman (-15sec)

### Next Race

- **XCR09 Rd 5** – Coliban Relays – Sat July 4.