

Local team claims second Athletics men's premiership

Geelong is full of run

BRADLEY GREEN

THE Geelong region is building a reputation as a powerhouse of Victorian Athletics after claiming its second division one men's premiership in four seasons.

The Geelong Region Cross Country team stormed home in the last four rounds to snatch the trophy from reigning premiers Glenhuntly, sealing its win by taking out the final event of the season the Tan Relay around the Kings Domain in Melbourne on Saturday.

The Geelong team of Scott Rantall, Brenton Rowe, Jason Woolhouse, Mark Fountain, Mark Tucker and David Carver won the Tan Relay by a combined total of three minutes and 19 seconds and recorded the fastest ever time of 67 minutes and 41 seconds in the race's six-year history, breaking the previous best by 41 seconds.

It was fitting that Carver - who celebrated his birthday

recently by winning his first half-marathon at Burnley - anchored the relay team.

Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Mark Fountain ran the day's fastest time of 10.53 in another encouraging sign for his comeback from a chronic achilles injury since the 2006 Games in Melbourne.

Geelong topped the ladder on 119 points, five clear of Glenhuntly.

Team manager Brett Coleman said the support they had from athletes over the season was outstanding.

"Mark Tucker and Jason Woolhouse have gone out of their way to run for the team when it really didn't suit their individual programs at the time," Coleman said.

"Scott Rantall and (assistant team manager) Ryan Christian did a lot of work behind the scenes and that made a difference to the morale of the team."

He said Geelong's premiership in 2007 broke the stanglehold the powerful Melbourne club had on the com-

petition over the previous decade.

"Glenhuntly is such a proud club and that's what we're trying to build down here, as well as our reputation as a middle distance powerhouse," Coleman said.

Nine teams competed for Geelong on Saturday with its Open Women team recording its best ever series finish - runners up to Glenhuntly - to end the season in fifth place overall.

It was the team's second podium finish of the season.

In other divisions, Geelong's under-14 boys were also crowned premiers and the under-16 girl's team finished runners up overall after scoring a podium finish on Saturday.

The over-40 men's side ended its season in style by winning a bronze medal and the club is planning to put a lot more effort into building up this team next year after some encouraging results this season.



ANCHOR MAN: David Carver completes his leg of the Tan Relay for the Geelong region team that delivered the club an AV premiership.