

XCR 17 Captain's report Round 4 Bundoora

The once feared Bundoora run is now only 10k rather than the traditional 12k. It no longer features in the debate about the season's toughest run, but it is still a hard and testing run as many of us discovered. However, conditions for a cross country were ideal with the course a near perfect track, sunny winter weather and barely a breath of wind. This round was marked by some very close contests between KSB runners in both the men's and women's events.

Once again for the KSB men, we had a good numbers and many strong performances. The results show that there were some very close races between our members – races within races. Sean and Shea Wellington again led our team, both finishing within the top 100 and Sean 56th in 34.54. He was followed by Shea 36.45 with a bit of gap and then Gerry Brown in 40.37 (5th in his age class) and Dom Michienzi and Dave Abfalter both in 41.04 with Dom just in front after an epic battle between the two. It was good to see Dave running so well with a heavily taped ankle after he rolled his ankle and was unable to finish the Cranbourne run.

We finished third on Saturday, but after four rounds, we are second on the ladder – a few points behind top but only one point clear of the improving Waverley. Perhaps, it is now time to seriously look at our prospects for promotion to Div 2 at the end of the season. We need to do all we can to field our strongest teams, and need as many of our runners as possible to commit to future events. We have a tradition of fighting our way back after relegation for one season. We really owe it to those under 20 runners who will come into senior ranks in 2018-9 to have our team in Div 2.

Our Div 6 team finished fifth and was led in by Owen Leggett in 41.42 and then John Kondogonis 43.42 and Laz Sarras 43.46 and Greg Moore 46.50. John and Laz have been close all season, and this round saw John get up. It will be worth watching this rivalry through the season as both are running well and the competition can only improve things for both of them. Our Div 6 team continues to be equal third on the ladder in a congested field that sees only 5 points separating the top 5 teams. Again a couple of good performances could see this team also in contention for promotion at the end of the season.

This round we missed Tom Gorman, Peter Keighery and Paul Kennedy and so failed to field a Div 7 team. However, in another close intra-club rivalry Russell Cram 50.15 was just ahead of John Moloney 51.00(7th in his age group). Both are improving their pace with every round. In the overage competition our 40+ team finished 13th and our 50+ team 9th, but at the individual level, Gerry Brown is 3rd in his highly competitive age class.

With schools rather than AV events this round for most of our under age men, we only had under 20 competition where Alex Sykes continued his fine form finishing 5th in 27.34 and Pat Matthews 32.19, but without a third runner, we again failed to have a team. Alex is 6th on the under 20 ladder. We are desperately looking for the return of Damien Hughes from injury to bolster numbers and have the numbers necessary for a team. He trained strongly on Monday night and so looks set for a return to competition soon.

For those interested in the Melbourne Marathon in October, the early entry closing date is rapidly approaching. If you are intending to run the event this year, please make sure that you join our team, Keilor St Bernard's Athletic Club using the password, ksbaths. Also let Greg

know and we will see if there is interest in some weekend long runs. Currently, it looks as though we will have stronger numbers than last year with John K, Laz, Russell, and Greg from last year possibly joined by Gerry if injury and form permits, and possibly others.

Once again the KSB men have performed better than perhaps had been anticipated before the season's start. We have placed ourselves in a very competitive position in Div 3 with promotion at the end of the season a real possibility. We need to keep our numbers up because as the season progresses and distances become longer, success will depend on our depth as well as our determination.

We missed those who were unable to run this round, but hopefully they will all be back for the Sandown relays. Rumour also has it that Lachie Youn may make his return for KSB at Sandown and Lachie always returns ready to run a good race. With our under 20 runners doing well and soon to be up in open age, our future is not only in our hands, but looks to be bright!

Our women's teams were again depleted this round, but still had the numbers for two teams. In Div 2, Emma Brown 44.42 led Liz Bell 45.08, Maria Abfalter 45.31, and Kerryn Walshe 48.13 (4th in her age group and 6th on her gae group ladder) with all running well. Emma, Liz and Maria had another KSB close tussle with Liz and Maria 5th and 6th in their age group. Tania Kapetanovic 54.07, Cathy Matthews 58.04, Tracey McGougan 62.20, Laura Salimito 63.30 and Krystal Kunig 79.48 made certain of a second team in Div 4 – well done all!

It is also pleasing to see Steph Kondogonis, 40.10, running so well for Box Hill, She is consistently coming in about 20th in the women's events. Once again we were missing Rob Trott on the track. It might be time to see if we can lure him back to our ranks, despite the tyranny of distance....perhaps it is a case of a work in progress.