

XCR 17 Captain's report Round 9 Burnley Half

Round 9 at Burnley is always a mixed event, where the short events for the under20s contrast the 21.1k of the Half Marathon. Although many think of the Burnley course as flat, it is in fact undulating and can be made more difficult by the prevailing weather and wind direction. Luckily, this year conditions were close to ideal.

In the shorter event, the under 14 men got us off to flying start with Kye Gillingham 6th in 19.02, Will Kennedy 10th in 21.07, Tom Kennedy 12th in 22.27 and Aidan Cram 13th in 22.58. All four ran well for a fine second place. Jacob Bell (17.18) led in our under 18 team followed by Dom Sykes (20.25) and Izaak Long (24.44). Unfortunately, we only had two under 20 runners with Alex Sykes 6th in 16.05 and Pat Matthews 15th in 18.38. Injury has cost the under 20 team dearly this year as there have been some great individual runs and times. None of these teams are in premiership contention, with the under 20's in 4th, the under 18s in 7th and the under 14s in 3rd position.

In the Half Marathon, there was concern at the beginning, when we learnt that we would be without Shea and Gerry Brown due to recent injury and with John Moloney and Russell Cram still unavailable, that we might be struggling for numbers. It was soon clear that we would be fine, and that we would be fielding two open age teams.

Sean Stevens ran a PB (68.46) for 10th in an outstanding performance. With Shea injured our next runner was the versatile and consistent Dave Abfalter (83.02) and then Dom Michienzi (86.46) despite having a worrying knee tendonitis. John Kondogonis who arrived in a bit of fluster, but had a fine day on the road was next in well under 90 (88.12) and completed our Div 3 team, John was ahead of Laz (90.51) and Peter Keighery (93.45) who our first two runners in Div 6. The really close tussles of previous rounds between these three were not repeated at Burnley. Tom Gorman (97.39), Greg Moore (98.11) completed the Div 6 team and were followed by Paul Kennedy (109.26) rounded out the KSB men's teams. With both Tom and Paul being underdone for a half marathon before the race, they did great work to finish as well as they did.

So the KSB men were able to put 4 full teams on the track and 2 open age teams for the longest event of the series. For the more observant among you, Lachie Youn, still in mourning following the recent passing of his dad did run; and he ran well. However, he was not an official entrant for the event and so did not score for us. Hence the results outlined above.

So despite our best efforts, this was probably the most disappointing event of the XCR. In Div 3 Nunawading and Waverley both had good runners and a good round. The way things now stand on the ladder are as follows: Nunawading remains in top spot on 114 points, KSB are second on 107 points, and Waverley are third on 103 with Williamstown 4th. So KSB Div 3 are no longer in contention for the premiership but with the final relay may still be up for promotion to Div 2, if we can keep Waverley at bay.

Our Div 6 team finished 3rd and is a clear 3rd on the ladder, but is well out of the promotion zone. Our 40+ team finished 7th and is 9th on the ladder, while the 50+ team finished 9th and remains in 7th position. So overall we did not have the best of rounds despite some great individual efforts, in a round that is often our season's best.

In the women's event, our KSB women fielded a Div 2 team. Steph Kondogonis came in 7th in the women's Half in a near PB and her first top 10 placing. Emma Brown, Julia Ferlazzo and Tania Kapetanovic all did a great job in completing the half despite some injury worries, making sure that they stayed well clear of the relegation zone. It was also great to see Mitch Brown continue his fine

form running second to Liam Adams. Rob Trott also had a fine return to form running 84.21 after some strong training weeks.

On an individual level, we do have some cause for celebration. Alex Sykes finished 6th on the under 20 ranking as did Gerry Brown in the 55+ group. Gerry has had a great come back to competition this year and came in 3rd in one event. Liz Bell and Maria Abfalter were equal 9th in the 45+ group and Kerryn Walsh retained her 8th position in the 55+ group despite missing rounds due to injury. Greg Moore finished 2nd in the 60+ group but well behind the leader Alan Hammond from Western Aths.

We can now look forward to the final relay round of XCR17 at Princes Park. It will be a short, flat, fast course and perhaps the fate of our Div 3 season will come down to how well we can perform on that day.