

## XCR 17 Captain's report Round 7 Ballarat 15K

The 15k event at Ballarat is always a hard run. The longer distance, camber of the road and the wintery conditions virtually ensure it. There is, however, always the prospect at the finish of a warming afternoon tea in the pavilion that KSB usually commandeers for the afternoon. The signs for a tough day had already presented a couple of days earlier with weather predictions of severe winds and gale force gusts of up to 110k/hr – hardly ideal long distance running conditions!

The first thing that we noticed on arrival was that the AV starting area had changed. There would be no KSB pavilion this year, just a windy site under a big old pine. The up side of course was that unlike last year we would be running 15k not the longer 15.7k course of last year. The down side was that while the course was accurately measured, we were going to be running into cold, gale force winds. All those plans about running to goals and times were out the window. This was going to be a hard slog and all that really mattered was the race and where you finished in relation to other runners in your division.

The ordinary conditions, or perhaps it was the welcome return of Peter Gaffney to our crew and the return of Ian Upton from South Africa that brought out the best in the KSB men. We rose to the occasion by recording our best results for the season by far. Our Div 3 men recorded their first win of the season, gaining a buffer of 2 valuable points at the top of the ladder in the process. It was a clear and compelling win. Not to be out done, our Div 6 team also had its first win of the season again by a healthy margin, and our 40+ and 50+ teams also had their best season results finishing 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively but by close margins.

We always appreciate the support and words of encouragement given by KSB supporters and officials as we race. It was great this year at Ballarat in such tough conditions to have some extra support around the course in unexpected places from Peter Gaffney, Ian Upton and Janet Moloney as they did a circuit of the lake and from Russell who was hovering around the start/finish area. It was much appreciated and does make a difference.

Our Div 3 team outclassed its opposition this round with the inform Sean running 50.07 (34<sup>th</sup>), Shea Wellington 53.57 (72<sup>nd</sup>), Lachie Yours 58.02, Dom Michienzi 58.04 (9<sup>th</sup> in his age) and Dave Abfalter 58.40 (11<sup>th</sup> in the age). KSB was well in front of our rivals Waverley and Nunawading and we now have a 2 and 5 point gap over second and third respectively, and Williamstown finished 11<sup>th</sup> and so their gap to the top three has widened considerably.

The next event, the Anglesea relay, could well make or break the season for KSB Div 3. We will lose runners to the City to Surf and it will be a matter of who we have available and whether other teams are depleted by the City to Surf as well. **So please let Ron know if you will be available for Anglesea or if you are not available as soon as possible. Our Team entries have to be in by next Monday.**

Our Div 6 team clocked up its first win of the season, again led by Gerry Brown 60.25 (6<sup>th</sup> in the age). The close rivalry between John Kondogonis 63.17 (9 in the age) and Laz Sarris 63.39 continued as did the consistency of Peter Keighery 64.40. Once again the closeness of the times tells you of the epic battles taking place between the KSB runners that are bringing out the best in all of them. Greg Moore 67.33 and John Moloney 73.2 (11<sup>th</sup> in his age

division) rounded out the KSB men, but we were two short of a Div 7 team. John M missed the close competition with Russell Cram who was injured training for..... pole vault??!!

In the highly competitive over-age competitions, as the results above for individual placings in the age categories would suggest, we had our best round of the competition. Our 40+ team's 6<sup>th</sup> was due to fine runs by Dom, Dave and Laz and our 5<sup>th</sup> position in the 50+ men was due to great runs from Gerry John K and Peter. Many of our over age runners have now had top ten placings in their various divisions for events this year. For individual ladders we now have only the half marathon to go, so ladders and rankings are close to being finalised.

In contrast to recent events, we only had 2 under 14 runners this round for the 6.1k with Elias Kahsay 24.24 and Aidan Cram 29.18 representing KSB but without a third runner for a team. We did have an under 18 team with Jacob Bell 20.34, Dom Sykes 24.16 and Izaak Long 29.24 running to 4<sup>th</sup> place. Our under 20 men, Alex Sykes 19.46 (7<sup>th</sup> place) and Pat Matthews 22.47 ran fine times but were also one short for a team.

There were some fine performances once again from KSB women with Kate Abfalter running 23.41 and coming 6<sup>th</sup> in the under 20, 6.1k race. Not to be out done Maria Abfalter was the first KSB open woman to finish, running an outstanding 64.57 (6<sup>th</sup> in her age group) in the windy conditions, closely followed by Emma Brown in 65.16. Congratulations to all of the KSB women who toughed it out over the full 15k in terrible conditions ensuring good results for both our Div 2 and Div 4 teams.

A final reminder for those entering the Melbourne Marathon; 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. Things are unchanged, so we have John K, Laz, Russell, and Greg from last year with Gerry still in consideration if all goes well.