

Wangaratta 28/1/2012

Is there a better place to be on a balmy summer's evening than the Wangaratta football ground just before the running of the 'Wang' gift. There probably is but this writer has led a very sheltered life and for nearly 100 years the Wangaratta Athletic Club has been conducting athletics under superb conditions with a bowling green surface and now state of the art lighting. Graeme Taylor and Greg O'Keefe along with a great committee have kept this icon of a sports carnival going to maintain the tradition that it has earned over the years. The weather was between, very hot and extremely hot until a 'cool breeze' and possible thunderstorm snuck across the ground as the night wore on.

Reminder: This Saturday, Avondale Heights, TEA GARDENS Gift. Canning Reserve, Start 1.30—finish 7.30 As well as a very comprehensive VAL running program the Tea Gardens gift committee is providing plenty of entertainment with a free live outdoor concert under lights, featuring "BLACK MAGIC", commencing at the completion of the athletics. As well as the regular food and drink stalls the club is also providing a jumping castle for the kids.

On Sunday St Bernard's will be staging an excellent program with the Don Furness Memorial (\$5000), the richest 70 metres in Australia and the Bendigo Bank 800mts (\$4350). Also, for the under 14's there is the St Bernard's kids sprint with a sash for the winners of both divisions. Drinks and lollies for all the kids.

Distance athletes; don't forget the Noble Park 2000 metres Classic. Prize money is increasing as co-sponsor Bill Sutton digs up another Milo tin in his back yard. Trophy and prize pool currently \$1300, could get higher if Bill can borrow a bobcat for his front yard. If you haven't entered you know "Rexter" will be at you. Enter and avoid the pain. Email the office and let Mark or Noel know.

70 metres Open

After the heats of the 70 metres it looked a back markers final with Khan Marr (1.75m) and Sam Jamieson (2.25m) being the most impressive heat winners but that quickly changed with the running of the semi finals. The two semis were taken out by the Matthews family with Jesse (5.25m) running 7.74 and dad Kevin winning the second semi in 7.79. In the final Jesse won in a very close finish from Tenneille Trigwell (13m) and Kevin Matthews in third place. The Matthews family have been regular visitors to Victoria in recent years and Saturday's win was Jesse's first in the VAL. The time was 7.78 and the winner is trained by Matt Beckenham.

The ANZ Bank Wangaratta Gift.

At the completion of the eight heats of the Wangaratta gift, one athlete that shouldn't have come into serious final calculations was Cam Dunbar. In the final heat Sam Jamieson (3.25m) appeared to run down Cam (6.75m) with ease over the final few metres, although the time was a very commendable 12.58. The fastest heat winner was Paul Hughes (12.75m) in 12.50 with Katie Moore (17.75m) also clocking 12.58. At semi final time a fairly significant breeze appeared with the distinct possibility of a thunderstorm. The strong headwind certainly affected many of the runners with Cam Dunbar winning his semi from Matthew Hargreaves (5.25m) by a clear margin in a very blustery 12.77. Katie Moore, with a head wind struggled into fourth place in this semi. Sam Jamieson continued on with his good form to win the

second semi but could only record 12.94. In the final the conditions had settled and with no wind, Dunbar won impressively from Hargreaves and Jamieson in 12.58. Cam, in red hot form, won the Rye Gift a couple of weeks ago adding to an impressive sprinting record. Todd Ireland, last year's 'Wang' gift winner was still in the action, but this time as the coach of Cam. Sam Jamieson continues on his VAL comeback with another very competitive showing and last week's winner Matthew Mifsud (10.25m) handled his handicap adjustment well to finish fifth.

Novice 120 metres

With only two heats of the novice at Wangaratta the result was never in doubt with the fastest heat winner Tim Rosen (15m) defeating the first heat winner Aldis Jaunzems (15m) by nearly two metres in the time of 12.85. Harry Boutsalis (14.5m) was a close up third. Rosen, in his second year with the Victorian Athletic League, recently finished second in the Rye 70 metre novice final.

Women's and Veterans 120 metres handicap.

Tenneille Trigwell (18m) made up for her close second in the 70 metres final with a clear win over Angela Wilson (36m) and Kevin Matthews (17.25m) in the women's and veterans 120 metres final. After the heats Tenneille had recorded the fastest time clearly and the final result was to be expected. Although, Angela Wilson's run was her best effort for some time. Angela is showing the benefit of her very strict diet, her and Dave only eat at Melbourne's best restaurants. She highly recommends this week's choice, Bergeracs in King St, mention Ange's name to get the best table. The winner's time was 13.13 and Tenneille is coached in Western Australia by consistent sprinter Glenn Ross.

300 metres Veteran's handicap.

No doubt about Richard Dunbar, we all know he can talk the talk but at Wangaratta on Saturday night he walked the walk with a gutsy win in the veterans 300 metres. Overcoming a luckless run of minor placings of late he was a convincing winner of his heat before stepping out for what appeared a very even final. Julie Torrini (78m) cleared out early and looked to have a winning break on the home turn before Dunbar sprinted quickly to join her. Just as Dunbar (62m) hit the lead he was tackled strongly by NSW runner Dale Jones (59m). Jones looked like taking control but was held comfortably over the last few metres. Rick who has won many races, at more venues than he can remember may have to rethink his VAL race strategy for the rest of the season. Rick a keen student of the rules and regulations would be most aware of the VAL "double wammy" policy for dual wins over the same distance. This correspondent would imagine that a mile career may not be out of the question, following in the footsteps of Tony O'Shea. Rick is coached by Todd Ireland but do any of us really think Rick would listen. In all seriousness Rick, a valued VAL life member, has been one of the greatest driving forces for the advancement of professional athletes Victoria for many years. Well done Rick.

Women's 400 metres Broo series

The Wangaratta division of the Broo series was taken out by Kim McDonough (44m) from Anna Pasquali (35m) and Tarin Nevin (34m) in the time of 56.43. Kim looked sure to add to her impressive racing history with recent placings at Rye and Maryborough and on Saturday night she defied all challengers as she held on to win by three metres. The backmarkers

Stephanie Mollica (8m) and Tabitha West (7m) struggled to make ground early and were never a winning chance in the home straight. McDonough and Pasquali have both been quality athletes with the VAL over a long period of time and are still very competitive. As the final of the Broo series approaches the field is taking shape in what will be a very tough race. Kim is trained by her husband Matthew and is of course the daughter of Long John Holloway, much valued VAL official.

George Underwood 400 metres handicap.

The race named in honour of one of the VAL 's and Cycling's staunchest supporters has historically been a keenly contested event which has boasted wins by some of the VAL best quarter milers. Dallas O'Brien won the race on three consecutive occasions in the 1980's, the last time near enough from the scratch mark. Dallas also won the 1982 Stawell Gift. George was honoured earlier in the night with a life membership of the Wangaratta Sports Club. George has spent nearly forty years travelling the country, calling and watching athletics and cycling. His knowledge and recall of both sports is second to anyone involved in either sport. George has also spent a good deal of time on the VAL board as well as different club committees. The Victorian Athletic League congratulates George on his dedication as he winds down his commentating duties.

The race was won by the extremely consistent Paul Hughes (28m) from Robert Keenan (32m) and Peter Spence (28m) in the time of 48.95. Keenan was touched off on the line in his heat by Matt Grant (26m) and so it happened in the final as Hughes grabbed the lead in the last few metres to win by 4/1000ths of a second. Coming to the home turn the outmarker, Jay Blake(45m), was right in contention but started to tire leaving Keenan in front before the late charge from Hughes. Peter Spence was only inches away in third place, cutting Blake out of the minor money. Hughes has already had a busy and successful season with a win at Maryborough and several other placings. Paul lives and trains in Wangaratta.

800 metres Handicap Final

Like last week at St Albans the 800 metres final was never in doubt as Mark Hipworth (76m) strode around the Wangaratta football ground to record an easy win from training partner Justin Rinaldi (36m) and Justin Murphy (28m) in 1.55.06. Mark handled his penalty for the St Albans win with ease as he clocked the fastest heat time by four seconds and shaved a further two seconds for his final. Although not much can be written about Mark that hasn't been said before he does seem to be able to maintain a high level of fitness and competitiveness as well as coaching his large training group. Justin Rinaldi, one of the country's best 800 metre athletes in his time, stuck to his task well and looms as a winning chance before the season closes. Justin Murphy as reliable as ever raced hard in both the heat and final, holding on well for third place.

Phil Noden 3200 metres

From one of the VAL's longest serving families, Phil Noden once again generously sponsored the '2 miler' at Wangaratta. The early speed was set by David Page (370m) who opened a handy lead over the first four laps and looked to still be travelling well with three laps to go. At this stage he led from Matthew Bateman (360m) and Phil Noden (300m) with Andrew Patten (140m) making up good ground but still eighty metres off the lead. Cody Williamson (120m) and Cameron Bishop (160m) were a further fifteen and thirty metres

behind Patten. Brady Threlfell from scratch tacked onto the field with three to go but still had a huge task on his hands. Within the space of the next lap Patten had collared a spent Page with Williamson moving to third just ahead of Noden . Even at this stage Patten looked a clear winner, with Williamson the only danger. Paul Munro (90m) and Matthew McDonough (90m) were still fifty metres off the lead and Brady Threlfell a further fifty astern. By now the front markers were “gawn”. As the bell was rung Patten had cleared out from Williamson chasing hard from Munro and McDonough. Pagey was hanging in there in fifth spot and Brady Threlfell was working away, passing one runner at a time. On the line Andrew Patten was a worthy and clear winner, with a terrific performance from Cody Williamson and Matthew McDonough. Paul Munro tired over the last 200 metres to finish fourth well clear of David Page and a promising run from young Cameron Bishop. The winner is trained by Mark Hipworth and the Wangaratta win comes hot on the heels of Andrew’s impressive St Albans victory last week. All competitors are to be congratulated on their efforts on such a warm evening and many thanks to Phil Noden for his support of the event.

Any club who wishes to advertise/mention any events for a coming carnival that are not covered by the normal VAL website, please email bmara2011@hotmail.com These events may be Little Athletics, kids races, tug of war, beauty contests, relays, most insane athlete competition etc. We will endeavour to mention your event a couple of weeks prior to your carnival.

Good to see “Coxy” back in action after his early exit from St Albans last week. Although he must still have been suffering from the side effects of his illness as he spent the entire weekend sitting in the colour tent, holding Joy’s hand. On Sunday “Coxy” said he married Joy for better or worse. **He couldn’t do any better and Joy couldn’t do any worse.** For any budding Journalist, author, graffitist or even a part time face painter who wishes to add to their CV, why not have a crack at writing the VAL wrap. You never know, Lachlan Murdoch may be researching the wrap one day in search of a new foreign correspondent. Recently Eric Sapac went undercover and did a terrific job with his Rye wrap. Contact Mark Howard or Brian Marantelli if interested.