

Warragul Wrap

It was back in 1952 that the last the Warragul Gift meeting was held and there has not been any enthusiasm lost since then, in the way the Warragul Football/Netball Clubs got behind this meeting with a great band of volunteers from the clubs and some great guidance from Colin Rollinson. The weather was a little on the “grey side” for the start of the meeting but after a couple of light showers, it turned out to be quite a warm day. The venue was presented exceptionally well with defined tracks, a great program with everything you needed to know about the days events in it and plenty of sponsors adds to look at.

Ideal Electrical 70 metre Open

Six well contested heats were run with some very close finishes. Recently arrived (Thursday morning) Graeme Armstrong (12.50) of Scotland and interstater from QLD, Paul Cracroft-Wilson (4.75), produced the fastest of the heats with a time of 7.84 sec with the other qualifiers hot on their heels. In the final, Graeme got off to a good start only to be headed by the consistent Melissa Howard (10.25) about 20 metres from the line, but there was no thought of “jet lag” and he produced a final spurt to narrowly defeat a fast finishing Cracroft-Wilson in second place and Howard finishing third. Graeme’s winning time was 7.80 sec.

Baw Baw Shire 550 metre Open

A small but dedicated group of athletes turned out for the two heats of this event and we were not disappointed. Robert Keenan (46) ran a good heat to win in 1.12:40 and not to be out done, his trainer Mark Hipworth (65) won the other in 1.12:19. In the final with Mark as the frontmarker, he was never headed and won comfortably in the time of 1.11:79. Daniel Lawlor (41) beat home the rest of the field and had Darren Naismith (45) finishing on strongly into third place.

Warragul & Drouin Gazette 120 metre Women’s/Vet’s

A good turnout of both Vet’s and women for the heats made for a well contested final. Less than ½ metre separated the heat winners times with young Katherine Clarke (14.25) recording the fastest heat time of 13.19 sec. In the final with Katherine as one of the backmarkers with only Stephanie Mollica (12.50) behind her, the job was still ahead of her. Richard Norris (15.75) and Eleni Gilden (18.75) made the field chase them but it was Katherine who prevailed in 13.12 sec, Richard finishing second in 13.42 and the backmarker, Stephanie in third place (13.44).

Drouin Community Bank 120 metre Gift

With Stawell Gift winners and Stawell finalists and plenty of other big race winners lining up for a crack at the \$5000 on offer, we waited with anticipation with what would or could transpire over the five heats. The Hargreaves brothers, Matthew & Chris, Matthew Wiltshire, Sam Jamieson & Paul Tancredi to name just a few, certainly entertained the crowd and Ed Sadler our race caller with their speed down the track. Heat winners,

Matthew Hargreaves, Kevin Brittain, Chris Hargreaves, Josh Tiu and Clinton Grey joined 11 other qualifiers in two exciting semi finals.

70 metre runner up, Paul Cracroft-Wilson (7.75) easily won the first semi from Matthew Wiltshire(6.50) and Kevin Brittain (5.50) third in a time of 12.68 sec.

The second semi final was won by Matthew Hargreaves (5.00) in a time of 12.74 sec with Doug Greenough and Corwin Pusch filling the minor placing's.

Interestingly, the first five place getters in the first semi final, all went through to the final with the winner of the second semi the only one to qualify. So with the added runners of Katie Moore and Chris Hargreaves, who had returned from winning the Queanbeyan Gift the previous day, all was set for a great final.

In the final it was the QLD runner of Paul Cracroft-Wilson who surged to the lead with 10 meters to go and held off Matthew Wiltshire and Katie Moore and the rest of the field. Paul ran 12.58 for the final.

Malady Electrical 300 metre Veterans

Again only two heats presented themselves and ten runners contested the first with John Mackay (29) winning in a time of 37.50, Steve Tilburn (30) and Andrew Wilcox (7) finishing behind in second and third places. The second heat was easily won by Darren Naismith (15) with Richard Norris (31) and Jeff Sargent (35) as minor placing's. Darren's winning time was 37.55 sec.

In the final, things were looking good for the frontmarkers halfway down the home straight but in the last 20 metres, the backmarkers of Naismith and Wilcox were charging home with Naismith prevailing over Andrew and the "evergreen" Rick Dunbar (60) running third. Time for the final was 36.97 sec.

Flavorite Hydroponic Tomatoes 300 metre Open

Backing up from his run in the final of the 550 metre's race earlier in the day, Robert Keenan (26) was certainly ready for the challenge of the 300 meters and he saluted the judge's in a time of 34.96 sec. Second was relative newcomer Seamus Hayes (10) and in third place, Rhys Parkinson (20).

Broo 400m Women's

Only 12 girls from two heats went around the 1 lap distance to decide the 10 athletes that would contest the final. The first being won by Rosamond Gilden (34) in 58.11 sec with Megan Mahon (54) & Olivia Cameron (36) filling the minors. The second was won by Katherine Clarke and Eleni Gilden (35) and Mandy Emmett (62) running second and third respectively. Katherine's time for the heat was 56.08 sec.

The final was won by Katherine with the twins of Eleni & Rosamond Gilden finishing in that order. The race was won in a time of 55.06 sec.

Viatek 1600 meter Open

With less than half of the nominated runners appearing at the start of the event, it gave us and Edward Sadler an easier race to call and watch. Not taking anything away from the winner, Mark Andrews (120) who caught the frontmarkers of Rebecca Cato and Claire Xian in the home straight, it was still an exciting race. Claire held on for second and David Spence (125) ran home strongly for the third placing.

During the course of the day, mixed in with the VAL races, there was also events from the local Little Athletics Club, the Corporate sponsors, Television celebrities from "The Block" and the entertaining Football/Netball 400 metre wheelbarrow race just to name a few highlights. Oh, did I mention Santa, well he was there too !

The board of the Victorian Athletic League and their officials would like to take this opportunity to thank the tireless workers from the clubs involved on the day, to make this a very successful meeting on our calendar.

Great sashes, good wine and unbelievable Jindi Cheeses for all the winners will no doubt be keenly sought after again next year.

I will be certainly booking this meet into next years "race to be at".

Ps

Thanks Chris & Vince.