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**T**HE past two months have seen impressive distance running from both senior and junior athletes in NSW.

The success of the 2005 NSW 3000 Metres Championships encouraged a record 120 athletes from NSW and interstate to enter the 2006 event. Near perfect conditions greeted the high calibre field, led by Australian Commonwealth Games representatives Martin Dent, Jeremy Roff and Lisa Corrigan. The race also proved a success story for many of Australia's junior athletes.

The women's race became a two-person affair in the early stages, with Lisa Corrigan and Emily Brichacek clearing out virtually from the gun. Corrigan, a Commonwealth Games 1500m finalist, proved too strong over the final 400 metres and finished just outside 9 minutes (9.00.34). At just 16 years of age, Brichacek finished second and claimed the NSW title with a time of 9.06.41 – marginally outside the Australian record held by Eloise Wellings. Lexy Gilmour, 17, and Claire Doyle, 15, showed the depth of junior distance running in NSW by finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the NSW Championships.

After a moderate first 1500m (4.05), the men's race showed signs of life, with Martin Dent controlling an increasing pace with the ACT's Philo Saunders and the Randwick Botany trio of Jeremy Roff, Jeffrey Hunt and Brad Woods close on his heels. In an exciting last lap, 1500 metre specialist Roff surged to the front, only for Dent to draw away in the final 100m to claim victory in a respectable 8.04.59. Roff, just metres behind, claimed the NSW title, with teammates Jeff Hunt and Brad Woods sharing the minor placings.

A large contingent of NSW athletes made the trip south for the highlight of the distance calendar, the



Emily Brichacek leading eventual winner Lisa Corrigan at the NSW 3000m Championships. Image by Tim McGrath

Zatopek Classic in Melbourne. The NSW 3000m championships proved a perfect lead up for many of NSW's younger athletes in the U20 3000 metres. Impressive running by Lexy Gilmour saw her easily clinch the women's race, while James Matthews and Ryan Gregson closely shadowed home Victoria's Mitch Frey. However, the highlight of the night was the phenomenal run from Brad Woods, who slashed over 5 seconds off his personal best to win the 1500m against highly credentialed opponents. His time of 3.40.44 must add Woods to the list of favourites for the Australian 1500m title in 2007. Congratulations also to Eliza Stewart, who won the Australian U23 10,000m, and to Nick Bromley for his win in the 800m.

For the third year in a row, NSW played host to the Australian All Schools Track & Field Championships, with middle distance athletes again at the forefront of the NSW team's success. The NSW distance athlete of the meet would have to be



Medalists of the women's 2006 NSW 3000m Championships (from left to right), Lexy Gilmour, Emily Brichacek, Lisa Corrigan and Claire Doyle. Image by Tim McGrath

Sally Fitzgibbons, who won both the 1500m and 800m double. Sally, a talented surfer having recently won the Australian U18 surfing title, clocked a 4.26.90 to win the 1500m easily and achieve a World Youth qualifier. Ryan Gregson continued his impressive form, winning the U17 1500m and 3000m double in 3.58.51 and 8.29.01, respectively. Ryan dominated the 3000m, winning by almost the length of the straight, but had a tough battle in the 1500m, recording a 58 sec final lap to win over

ACT's Mitchell Lamb. James Kaan was fourth across the line, backing up after his gold medal in the U17 800m the previous day. Kaan finished in 1.52.10 to record a World Youth qualifying performance.

The 400 strong NSW team won 195 medals, with 74 gold. This equates to well over 1/3 of the medals on offer. Athletics NSW would like to congratulate all athletes that competed in the championships.

These events completed a highly successful year for athletics in NSW. Athletics NSW would like to thank all the athletes, clubs and officials who contributed to this success. A special mention should be made to our principal sponsor, The Australian Institute of Mathematics, and sponsors Resi Mortgage Corporation, SKINS and Kings Track & Field for their continued support through 2006.

NSW 3KM MEN	
1. Martin Dent	8.04.59
2. Jeremy Roff	8.05.15
3. Jeffrey Hunt	8.11.14
4. Philo Saunders	8.12.51
5. Bradley Woods	8.13.69
6. Russell Dessaix-Chin	8.15.57
7. Nick Bromley	8.16.48
8. James Matthews	8.18.75
9. Ben Guest	8.22.65
10. Ryan Gregson	8.23.91
NSW 3KM WOMEN	
1. Lisa Corrigan	9.00.34
2. Emily Brichacek	9.06.41
3. Lexy Gilmour	9.44.05
4. Claire Doyle	9.48.33
5. Chloe Tighe	9.48.48
6. Alexis McKillop	9.50.08
7. Jenny Truscott	9.53.50
8. Lauren McKillop	9.56.81
9. Celia Sullohern	9.58.99
10. Jennifer Conder	10.10.17



Written by  
**CATHERINE PHILLIPS**

**A**TLETICS Tasmania's focus in the lead up to Christmas was schools-based, with regional and state rounds of the School's Knock Out and the Tasmanian Students Track and Field Games, and culminating in the Australian All Schools Championships in Sydney.

The state's junior distance runners – with the exception of Launceston's Karinna Fyfe, who won bronze in the U18 3000m in 9.51 – were outside the medals at this season's nationals.

World Schools cross country representative Libby Clarke finished fourth in the U18 2000m steeplechase by the narrowest of margins, but her time of 7.00.33 was a state age record.

Competitive Tasmanian distance athletes were predominantly steeplechasers, reflecting the unprecedented interest in this event within the state. Top 8 finishers were Clive Reekie (4<sup>th</sup> U14 800m), Josh Harris (5<sup>th</sup> U17 2000m steeplechase), Luke Geelan (5<sup>th</sup> U16 2000m steeplechase), Nathan Morey (6<sup>th</sup> U18 800m), Phillip McConnon (6<sup>th</sup> U15 1500m), Alex Spinks (6<sup>th</sup> U17 2000m steeplechase), Kenna Reid Clarke (6<sup>th</sup> U15 2000m steeplechase), Oscar Phillips (7<sup>th</sup> U16 2000m steeplechase), Jillian Lyall (7<sup>th</sup> U15 2000m steeplechase), and Karinna Fyfe (8<sup>th</sup> U18 1500m).

Of those listed, notable performances came from Lyall, who on race day was just 12 years of age and running only her fourth ever steeple race, and who in the space of a month improved from 8.33 to 7.45; and Spinks, a state triathlon development squad member who dabbles in athletics and who, in the words of his coach Max Cherry, has tremendous potential should he wish to focus on the track.

Cherry, coach of international steeplechaser Donna MacFarlane, was recently awarded a well-deserved AA Coach of Merit funding grant.

Husband and wife team Kim and Jenny Gillard took the double in the Point to Pinnacle 21.4km on Mt Wellington. Kim won in 1.27.31, nearly 4 min ahead of Mark Guy and Mark Jackson; but Jenny had a much closer battle, recording 1.44.09 and holding out world orienteering champion Hanny Allston by just over 30 seconds, with Emma Weitnauer third.

Several Tasmanian athletes traveled to Melbourne for the Zatopek meet, with the Gillards both performing strongly in the Australian 10,000m championship. Kim was 5<sup>th</sup> overall, finishing behind two young USA runners and 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian in 29.11.49, while Jenny also placed 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Australian with a personal best 35.29.39. Both will set themselves for the State 10,000m Championships in January, where Kim will chase Russell Foley's state record of 29.01. The women's record, 31.51, is held by Olympian Kylie Risk.

Northern Tasmanian records are well within reach of both athletes. The most enduring men's record of 29.53.4 has been held by Don Cox since 1968 and was set on a bumpy grass track and former rubbish tip site in Launceston.

Lifted by national standard competition at Olympic Park, Grant Page also showed a return to his form of old with a 3.44.78 in the 1500m for 5<sup>th</sup> place. Libby Clarke, 17, stepped up in the U20 age group, running a personal best of 10.01.17 in the 3000m to finish in 9<sup>th</sup> place; and Devonport's Nicole Perry, hampered by recurring injury in recent years, started the season in good form with a 2.11.50 800m for 6<sup>th</sup> place.

The Tasmanian Club Championships were held at Penguin, with North Launceston winning the Open men's and women's titles and earning the right to represent the state at the Australian Club Championships, to be held in Hobart in February.

Newstead Harrier Club easily won the Under-16 championship.

Coming up within the next month is the Cadbury Marathon, more TAL carnivals, and the State 10,000m Titles.

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**T**HE Athletics Victoria summer track and field season began early in Geelong due to work on the Landy Field track in mid November, while the remaining venues got under way in mid October after the senior All-Schools titles. There were also some "all-comers" meets prior to the commencement of the Shield program.

The Shield competition was spread around the suburban venues in Aberfeldie, Box Hill, Doncaster, Frankston, Glenhuntingly, Knox, and Meadow Glen, whilst Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo looked after the country Shield.

The Victorian Milers Club has had two meetings at Box Hill, and young Knox athlete Jeff Riseley ran a PB 1.49.0 for 800m to beat Joshua Schmidt's 1.51.0. Lee Troop beat Michael Chettle over 3000m at the second meet, 8.18.0 to 8.18.7, whilst Lisa-Jane Weightman improved her PB over 3,000m 9.13.9.

The Ron Clarke Classic, promoted by Olympian Lee Troop, was held at Corio with great support from athletes from the AIS and the Essendon football club. The meet had a great warm-up earlier in the day, when the Australian 50km walk championships were held in Geelong and Nathan Deakes broke the World Record with 3 hours 35 min 47 sec!

At the "Classic", Mark Tucker (3.46.38) and Anna Worland (4.32.86) took out the 1500m. Commonwealth rep Martin Dent won the 5000m in 13.55.81 ahead of young David McNeill's 14.08.72. Lisa-Jane Weightman won the 5000m in 16.07.18. Commonwealth hurdle rep Sally McLellan gave the local girls something to aspire

to in the sprints, whilst Lauren Hewitt made her first appearance on the track to win the 300m in 38.34.

The Victorian team that competed in the Australian All-Schools and Youth Championships in Sydney did extremely well in a very high-class competition. The team won 112 medals, of which 38 were gold. Distance runners who had more than one win included Mitch Frey (U18 1500m and 3000m) and Keana Tour-May (U14 800m and 1500m).



Oscar Phillips (Green bib) competing Reeves in the Open Mile PCCCT TAL carnival, Burnie. Image by Catherine Phillips

The Resi Club Premiership 1500m, featuring Jeremy Roff (834), Brad Woods (836) and Jeff Faralley (635). Image by Tim McGrath

