

JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge

Sydney, 9 November

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It was like Flemington in Spring, more suits flying than Derby Day with barristers, legal companies, financial services and a host of other sectors participating in what has grown into probably the biggest corporate sports event in the country, the JP Morgan Challenge!

Set in the spectacular Centennial Park in the heart of Sydney the annual Challenge has captured the imagination of the corporate sector with over 6,921 entrants in this year's event.

Both the setting and the participant base set this event apart from others with young executives keen to adopt the corporate spirit and fly their flag for the good of the team! Of course couple this with a generous supply of alcohol, a tree lined park and a healthy supply of fit young bodies and you have the JP Morgan Challenge.

The race, from my observation was in two stages, first being the bolt to get to the start line from the office. This saw a steady stream of suits clocking their finest km's in an effort to drop their bag at their corporate marquee, check out the scenery and get to the line.

The second stage, of course, was the actual Challenge of approximately 5.6km around the park. The event does manage each year to attract a few 'pot hunters' with the chance for a trip to the Big Apple on offer

in the "World JP Morgan Challenge" – don't quote me on the official title of the New York event. But a fantastic prize all the same.

What's even more impressive is the winning team prizes also include trips to New York. Some might say in the past these could have been 'stacked' somewhat, although I do know they now go through quite a thorough vetting process to ensure no ring-ins tip the scales. So the days of the 'alleged' Randwick Botany Harriers freight forwarding company are no more!

I was surprised by the quality of the field this year with Sydney favourite, Suzy Walsham, lining up in the women's event to take on last years winner Lucy Chapman. Chapman a newcomer to the sport having just been named in her first Australian Team to compete in the Ekiden Relay in Japan a fortnight later was keen to defend that title but having to contend with the pedigree of Walsham, a seasoned racer, was always going to be a challenge. Suzie took out the event in style and I have to say looking smoother than ever to book her ticket to New York with a record time of 18.39, nearly 40 seconds clear of second place getter Anna Thwaites from Chapman a further seven seconds back in 20.25.

In the men's event two of Sydney's most prolific road racers, Jeremy Horne and Charlie Low locked horns in a battle that

went all the way to the line. It was a sprint finish that separated them and both looked, how should I say it – stuffed!

Charlie held on for the win just ahead of Jeremy with another Sydney regular Robin Whiteley taking out third.

This really is all about the teams though and a well known Sydney runner (recently adopted by Melbourne) by the name of Tony Russo led his Telstra team to victory in the men's category. Russo's team were a picture of consistency with all four finishing within 30 seconds of each other. Law firm Mallesons Stephan Jaques who had the narrowest of victories, a difference of just 1 second from a four-person team, over ING, took out the Female teams category. Caroline Sweeny, who put in a tremendous effort to finish 16th overall, spearheaded the Mallesosn Stephan Jaques team. Allens Arthur Robinson took out the mixed team category.



Results

Men

1. Charlie Low	17.21
2. Jeremy Horne	17.24
3. Robin Whiteley	17.38
4. Peter Beacroft	18.08
5. Martin Considine	18.14

Women

1. Suzy Walsham	18.39
2. Anna Thwaites	20.18
3. Lucinda Chapman	20.25
4. Prue Davison	20.49
5. Samantha Brown	21.30

Men's Teams

1. Telstra	1.18.13
2. Westpac	1.20.39
3. Colliers International	1.21.05

Women's Teams

1. Mallesons Stephan Jaques	1.39.30
2. ING	1.39.31
3. Colonial First State	1.46.09

Mixed Teams

1. Allens Arthur Robinson	1.18.10
2. Calvary Health Care	1.23.33
3. AMP	1.23.50