

The 2006 Orienteering season starts with a bang in the coming months. The first races in the National League will be held in Cowra, NSW on the 11th and 12th of March, and the second round will be held in Castlemaine, VIC over the Easter weekend. These two weekends of races will be the basis for selection of the Australian team to compete at the World Championships in Denmark later in the year. This makes them the most competitive races of the domestic season. Over summer there is generally not a lot of orienteering racing going on, which makes it very hard to know who will be competitive in the fight for team places.

HANNY Allston is one name that we are bound to see on the top of the results lists in 2006. The Tasmanian junior was 6th in the senior World Championships Long Race last year. Allston went straight under the knife for some major ankle surgery at the end of the 2005 season. She spent a couple of months away from running, and the question was how would she recover from the surgery? I was there when she ran her first speed session, a 3000m time trial on a grass track in early January. Her ankle was obviously still bothering

Mountain Run and Danielle Winslow is, at the time of writing, competing in the XPD adventure race which will take between 5 and 10 days to complete. Both girls have shown good form over summer and if they manage to recover well from their efforts they will be very competitive in the fight for World Championship team spots.

On the men's side one of the people of interest will be Troy de Haas. Troy was 7th in the sprint distance at last year's World Championships. He has spent the past 5 years living, training and

competing in Finland, but this year he has decided he needs to try something new. He has based himself fulltime in Melbourne and has radically changed his training. Instead of doing one run and two "jogs" each day, he is doing one run and one ride. He is also cutting down on the racing and won't compete in the first round of National League races, saving his first Orienteering race since August last year until the Easter weekend. It will be interesting to see how de Haas adapts to his changes. I get the feeling he will be on fire once he starts racing.

The other person who is expected to be at the top of the results list in the men's field is first year senior Julian

Dent. Unlike the others mentioned earlier, Dent has had a very conventional preparation for 2006. He has had no injuries and has simply trained as he has in the past, but a bit harder and with a bit more volume. Over summer Dent has been tearing up the mid week races in Canberra, and seems to be improving week by week. The challenge for Dent will be to hold his form through to the National League races, and then to improve again for the World Championships in early August.

For information on Orienteering go to www.orienteering.asn.au



Above: Julian Dent – expected to be at the top of the results list this year.



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her, and she ran gingerly around the track to record a time of 11.25. Last week I got the report for her time for the same distance, 10.26. The ankle is obviously on the mend and things are looking up for 2006. Allston has also spent the last month in Lithuania and Denmark, training for the Junior and Senior World Championships, a clear indication of her focus for 2006.

There are another couple of Tasmanian girls who will be fighting for positions in the Australian Team, if putting in the miles has anything to do with it. Grace Elson recently won the 82km Cradle



Grace Elson