

## Great Volcanic Mountain Challenge

March 26, 2006

by Richard Carter

**T**HE RACE commenced on a cool morning with clear mountain skies, ideal for the 213 starters congregated for the inaugural Great Volcanic Mountain Challenge.

The Challenge assembly area was adjacent the Towac Pinnacle, a volcanic spire rising abruptly to the north. In the pre-race excitement local runner Rob Whitmill's amplified voice announced that the compulsory safety briefing would be at the start line, 300m along the appropriately named Walkers Lane.

At registration the organisers, the Goldseekers Orienteering Club, gave every entrant a detailed map with contours and the route marked on it. It showed an 11km course that included 6km of forest road followed by a steep 400m ascent up the 1350m Mount Towac, the first of three volcanic domes. Further along was another short but steep ascent up Young Man Canobolas at 1330m and finally up Mt Canobolas to the finish at 1395m. The climb for the whole route was 520m, twice the height of the Sydney Tower, with most of the climbing in the second half.

At the pre-race briefing runners were shown an

orange and white orienteering control by veteran orienteer, Basil Baldwin. Runners were reassured when Basil said that the course was well marked, did not involve navigation and that they only needed to touch the control point on the summit of Mt Towac and Young Man Canobolas before climbing to the top.

From the start at 1120m altitude, the road runners lead the pack through the first three drink stations. The first two kilometres were not so gently uphill, but on a gravel road to a saddle at 1250m. The route then followed the rim of an ancient volcanic crater. At the first drink station, Scott Macdonald and Neil Williams lead the field, followed closely by Lincoln Barton and Peter Hodges.

At the foot of Mt Towac the route changed to a narrow, shady, rough walking track. The National Parks Service cleared it to

600mm wide,

but in parts the overhanging branches, loose rock and sloping ground made it a strict Indian file ascent, favouring the mountain runners and orienteers that are used to watching the ground.

From the summit of Mt Towac, the field of slower runners and walkers could be seen strung out for several kilometres, but at this stage places were being determined.

The descent of Mt Towac gave the leading runners a chance to see



### RESULTS

#### Men

1. Neil Williams	57.19
2. Scott Macdonald	59.22
3. Franz Zikesch	60.09
4. Chris Davies	60.18
5. Lincoln Barton	60.39
6. Barton Simmons	62.08
7. Michael Adams	62.41
8. Christopher Walsh	63.26
9. Scott Wolfson	64.16
10. Daniel Bruton	64.31

#### Women

1. Melanie Macdonald	59.20
2. Christine Wolfson	60.52
3. Amber Rich	68.37
4. Megan Woltring	73.13
5. Erika Bunker	75.58
6. Laura Wolfson	76.58
7. Karen Stewart	81.12
8. Gillian Davenport	81.14
9. Sarah Trifogli	82.18
10. Rhianna Fitzpatrick	84.54

where their rivals were placed, before the push up to the Walls Picnic Area and another section of narrow walking trail to the saddle between Mt Canobolas and Young Man Canobolas. By this stage Peter Hodges was well in front, with Neil Williams almost a minute behind.

The finish however was controversial. Bathurst runner Peter Hodges was first to the top. But Neil William was awarded the heavy stone Basalt Boulder Trophy. Official entries closed on 20 March; however organisers had allowed Peter Hodges as an un-official entrant on the day. Race rules prevented entries on the day from being included in competition classes. Organiser awarded Peter a special enter on the day "First to the Top" medal. Peter set the record of 56 minutes and 21 seconds. Organiser, Richard Carter said "With 26 age classes it was not possible to accept competition entries on the day. The enter-on-the-day was available for non-competitive runners and walkers to be part of the event". Richard went on to congratulate Peter, confirming that no-one would dispute that he was first to the summit. **RAYL**

## Adidas International Women's Day Fun Run, Brisbane

Sunday 5th March

by Matt Phillips

**I**N SLIPPERY conditions on a technical course of footpaths and promenades, it was no surprise to see talented Gold Coast 14 year old, Jessica Gilfillan streak to an early lead. Currently ranked 13th in Australia for the 3000m steeplechase and making a rare Brisbane fun run appearance, Gilfillan went through 1km in 3.23 with a small pack of males, before breaking away with two kilometres remaining. Maintaining her pace as the rain got heavier, Gilfillan

hit the line victorious in 17.15 only just holding off a big finish from 19 year old Clare Geraghty who finished five seconds in arrears after being slightly adrift earlier in the race. High schooler, Genevieve Lacaze, rounded out the teenage trifecta by snaring third. After the race, Gilfillan spoke of the enjoyment of contesting a fun run and flagged an intention to do more of them as part of her quest to obtain sponsorship.

The City News Corporate Cup for teams was won by Laura Russell, Natalie Taylor, Lauren White and Amanda Plushen of the Cardiac Investigations Unit. Runner up was the Department of Defence team followed by Ipswich State High in third. **RAYL**

### RESULTS

1. Jessica Gilfillan	17.15
2. Clare Geraghty	17.20
3. Genevieve Lacaze	18.01



Second place getter Clare Geraghty (Left) with winner Jessica Gilfillan (Right) cooling down in the rain after the race. Photo: John Smith