

Winter time in Australia is when the international orienteering circuit really heats up. Over the next few months the majority of our top runners will head to Europe to try their luck on the world stage.

Jukola and Venola

The first stop for many Australians in their European campaign is the Jukola and Venola relays. Held in Finland, this competition really attracts the masses.

The men's race 'Jukola' has 1362 teams of seven. Competitors start racing at 11pm and run through the night to finish at sunrise. The women's race 'Venola' has 4 legs and attracts 870 teams and is held on the Saturday afternoon before Jukola gets underway. This race is an institution in Finland and attracts huge public and media interest, including live television and radio telecasts of the men's race.

One Australian team competed in this year's race, the 'Victorian Nuggets', who placed a respectable 184th. Our best runners are contracted to run for their European clubs so unfortunately Australia will always have a hard time fielding a competitive team at the event.

In 2001 Australia had its only ever winner, when Troy de Hass ran a heroic leg for Finnish club Turun Suunnistajat. This year our best runner was Rob Walter, who ran first leg for Malungs OK who finished in 9th position.

Visit www.jukola2006.net for more information.

Junior World Championships

Next stop for the junior contingent of Aussies in Europe will be the Junior World Championships in Lithuania. For the first time in orienteering history, Australia will be the favourites going into a World Championships. Other competing nations will be looking at Tasmanian Hanny Allston as the girl to beat. Allston finished a personally-disappointing third in the middle distance event last year and sixth in the senior world championships over the longer distance. She has made major physical gains since the last world champs and the extra year's experience should be the icing on the cake.

A dozen young runners will be representing Australia at the Junior World Championships, with other major hopes lying with South Australia's Simon Uphill and the girls relay team.

For more information visit www.losf.lt/jwoc2006/

World Masters Orienteering Championships

While the juniors are competing in Lithuania, 74

Venola, back in the pack.



Rob Walter, Jukola 2006.

of Australia's veterans will be competing in the World Masters Championships in Austria. The Masters Championships is becoming increasingly popular amongst our veteran athletes, with a large contingent of Australia's top athletes in the age group.

For more information visit www.wmoc06.com

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O-ringen

The Mecca for orienteering competitors is O-ringen, also known as the 'Five days'. Held in Sweden in the last week of July, O-ringen is the world's biggest orienteering event, attracting more than 25,000 competitors over the five days of racing.

Unfortunately, Australia will have no strong competitors at the event this year, with most preparing for the World Championships. However, we will still be represented at the races, with athletes eager to soak up the atmosphere and partake in one of the ultimate orienteering experiences.

For more information visit www.oringen.com

World Championships

The 2006 World Championships will be staged in Denmark, with the Australian team being led by Troy De Haas and Allston. Coming off seventh and sixth places respectively at last year's championships, the men's and women's teams are looking the goods to improve on those results this time around.

Both Australian teams represent a good mixture of experience and developing talent, with three runners getting their first taste of World Championship competition. Other hopes for the Aussies rest with the relay teams, with both the men's and women's team having placed sixth on a few occasions.

Unfortunately, one of Australia's brightest young stars, Julian Dent, had to pull out of the team with a stress fracture in the tibia.

For more information visit www.woc2006.dk **R4YL**

OTHER RESULTS

Australian Middle Distance Championships (22/4/06)

Men	
1 David Shepherd	39.16
2 Grant Bluett	40.28
3 Eric Morris	40.31
4 Adrian Jackson	41.09
5 Rune Olson	41.29
6 Ben Rattray	42.01
7 Simon Uphill	42.45
8 Jukka Oikarinen	43.16
9 Kerrin Rattray	43.40
10 Bruce Arthur	43.51
Women	
1 Grace Elson	36.58
2 Hanny Allston	38.15
3 Susanne Casanova	39.56
4 Danielle Winslow	40.38
5 Felicity Brown	42.33
6 Orla Murry	44.09
7 Anna Sheldon	44.36
8 Cathy Chalmers	44.41
9 Anna Quayle	44.50
10 Jasmine Neve	44.53