

The Australian Orienteering season for 2006 has now drawn to a close. The final major races for the year were the Australian Sprint Championships and the Australian Long Distance Championships, both held east of Perth in the middle of October.

Australian Sprint Distance Championships

According to the start list, the men's sprint distance race promised to be the strongest field in Australia all year. Unfortunately Sweden-based Canberra Rob Walter couldn't make it to the start line because of a bike accident he suffered on Rotness Island a few days earlier. Though the competitiveness of the field was weakened slightly with Walter's absence, nothing could be taken away from Julian Dent's performance, as he finished convincingly 19 seconds ahead of David Shepherd. It marked an impressive return for Dent, who was in great shape early in the season, but then suffered a stress fracture and had to pull out of the World Championships team.

The women's race was poised to be a showdown between two members of Australia's 4th place-getting relay team from the World Championships, Jo Allison and Grace Elson, and reigning champion Anna Quayle. It turned out to be a tough battle between Quayle and Elson, with Elson coming out ahead by 5 seconds. This meant Elson could add the title of Australian Sprint champion to that of Middle-distance Champion, which she collected earlier in the year.

Australian Long Distance Championships

The premier event on the Australian calendar is the Australian Long Distance Championships. Held two days after the Sprint Championships, all the good money was on victories for the two



Grace Elson on her way to Australian Sprint Distance Gold



A superb return to form saw Julian Dent capture the Australian Sprint Distance championship

form runners, Dent and Elson.

Fifteen minutes into the 100-minute race Dent had established a comfortable lead. Then the wheels started to fall off for

Dent, as his lack of running training over the last 6 months began to show. As Dent tired, he slipped back through the field, eventually coming home in 7th place a full 12 minutes behind the winner, David Shepherd. Shepherd's race was one of discipline; he started off conservatively and worked his way through the field, coming home stronger than everyone else and finishing nearly 3 minutes ahead of the rest of the field.

Like Dent, Elson also did not live up to pre-race expectations. She had an uncharacteristically poor race that included some significant navigational errors, and she finished in 4th position. The winner of the race was Queensland Anna Sheldon, who ran the perfectly judged race.

Sheldon set a steady pace and was posting times just off the leaders for the first 60 minutes. After the hour mark, Sheldon hit the lead and was never threatened from there on in to win almost 3 minutes clear of Jo Allison.

National Orienteering League

The Australian Long Distance Championships was also the final race for the 2006 National Orienteering League. The National League is based on the overall performance in major Australian races throughout the year. The deserved winners were Elson and Shepherd, who both showed impressive consistency throughout the year.



Australian Long Distance Champions - Anna Sheldon and David Sheppard

RESULTS

AUSTRALIAN LONG DISTANCE ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS

WOMEN'S OPEN ELITE - 9.5KM

1. Anna Sheldon	1.16.55
2. Jo Allison	1.19.39
3. Kathryn Ewels	1.25.54
4. Grace Elson	1.27.53
5. Briohny Davey	1.29.03
6. Allison Jones	1.29.47
7. Susanne Casanova	1.30.32
8. Karen Staudte	1.34.44
9. Cath Chalmers	1.38.00
10. Shannon Jones	1.40.28

MEN'S OPEN ELITE 15.8KM

1. David Shepherd	1.41.47
2. Grant Bluett	1.44.30
3. Robbie Preston	1.46.08
4. Blair Trewin	1.50.29
5. Anthony Scott	1.51.53
6. Bruce Arthuer	1.52.22
7. Julian Dent	1.53.51
8. Mark Lawson	1.53.52
9. Gareth Candy	1.54.07
10. Andy Hogg	1.57.50

AUSTRALIAN SPRINT DISTANCE ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS

WOMEN'S OPEN ELITE 2.8KM

1. Grace Elson	12.38
2. Anna Quayle	12.43
3. Allison Jones	13.42
4. Shannon Jones	13.49
5. Jo Allison	13.51
6. Susanne Casanova	13.54
7. Anna Sheldon	14.01
8. Briohny Davey	14.08
9. Wendy Read	14.37
10. Cath Chalmers	15.04

MEN'S OPEN ELITE 3.4KM

1. Julian Dent	13.21
2. David Shepherd	13.40
3. Grant Bluett	13.52
4. Gareth Candy	14.08
4. Kerrin Rattray	14.08
6. Bruce Arthur	14.16
7. Adam Scammell	14.51
8. Ben Rattray	14.53
9. Jim Russell	15.05
10. Andy Hogg	15.14

NATIONAL ORIENTEERING LEAGUE, FINAL STANDINGS

OPEN WOMEN'S

1. Grace Elson	
2. Jo Allison	
3. Anna Quayle	
4. Anna Sheldon	
5. Hanny Allston	
6. Susanne Casanova	
7. Briohny Davey	
8. Danielle Winslow	
9. Shannon Jones	
10. Orla Murray	

OPEN MEN'S

1. David Shepherd	
2. Julian Dent	
3. Grant Bluett	
4. Eric Morris	
5. Rob Preston	
6. Kerrin Rattray	
7. Gareth Candy	
8. Bruce Arthur	
9. Blair Trewin	
10. David Meyer	

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