

DALE BICKHAM GAINS BEST PLACING IN ATHLETICS VICTORIA EVENT AT ALBERT PARK 23 JUNE

For a second consecutive year, athletes competing in the flat 15 K road race around Albert Park experienced benign running conditions. There was no rain, cool conditions and an absence of strong wind, unlike the ordinary conditions which predominated at the old Fisherman's Bend course.

The Open Men's 15 K. attracted 9 athletes representing Box Hill with Chris Bunney making it to the start just in time. The top end of the field is usually strong and this year drew a number of accomplished athletes, who included Rod de Highden, Nick Harrison, Simon Field, Greg Lyons, Shane Nankervis, Julian Dwyer, now running for Old St Kevin's, Daniel Quinn, Mark Thompson, the ultimate winner, and Magnus Michelsson. These athletes held their leading positions at the end of the first lap. Later in the race, the number reduced to seven and then six, five and four as athletes who were unable to sustain the pace were dislodged.

Box Hill's leading contenders were Dale Bickham, Graeme Olden and John Meagher (in that order in the early stages) who were within 40 seconds of each other, with Luke Yeatman running a prudent race half a minute behind Graeme Olden, in advance of Adam Pepper and Tony Bird. Chris Bunney arrived on the start line at the same time as the starter gave his instructions, but then was not to be seen in the second lap, leading observers to the conclusion that he had thought it was a 5000 m road Championship. Dale looked set to run his best performance, provided he hadn't expended too many petrol tickets in the initial stages. Graeme Olden and John Meagher were having a nervous time with Susie Power lurking at the top end of the field and clearly increasing her tempo the further the race progressed. Luke Yeatman appeared to slip a little bit in the second and third laps but recovered to hold his relative position in the concluding stages. Adam had established a sizeable gap over Tony Bird, and ran in a determined fashion to hold and extend it. After a pedestrian start, Paul Boxshall and Matt Slater started moving a little quicker, with Paul putting the foot on the accelerator late in the second lap and lifting his position somewhat. Dale Bickham maintained his form in the concluding lap, whilst John Meagher passed Graeme Olden in the latter stages of the race, and opened up a small gap which he held to the end of the race.

Susie Power's effort in completing the course in 48 minutes 37 seconds was world class in the women's race. She looks ready to stun a few of the Kenyan and Ethiopian women, not to mention Paula Radcliffe in the Commonwealth Games. A huge distance in front of the women's field, she shocked a few highly competitive men with her run on the day.

In the team's race, Glen Huntly clearly won the Section 1. Box Hill's performance was solid, but capable of improvement, and we finished in 5th place, behind Glen Huntly, APS< Doncaster, and Collingwood.

We again enjoyed the support of a number of Box Hill people at the road side including Keith Routley, life member, Julie Milner, Wes Windsor, Chris O'Connor, and others, all offering strong encouragement to our athletes, plus parents of junior runners.

Ian Sloane

Results and Times of Senior Men's Race

Name	Club	Time	Final Place
M. Thompson	GH	44:57	1
N. Harrison	GH	44:58	2
S Nankervis	Ball YCW	45:07	3
S. Field	St Kevin's	45:21	4
J. Dwyer	St Kevin's	45:53	5
R. De Highden	Don	46:18	6
Dale Bickham	BH	48:24	16
John Meagher	BH	48:53	20
Graeme Olden	BH	49:02	22
Luke Yeatman	BH	50:29	36
Adam Pepper	BH	54:29	94
Tony Bird	BH	56:00	117
Paul Boxshall	BH	57:44	147
Matt Slater	BH	61:36	219