

2003 Half Marathon Championship of Victoria at Burnley Huge Win for Box Hill

Box Hill AC had an extraordinary team result, somewhat unexpectedly on Sunday 14 September, in the teams' race in the Half Marathon. This result was our best for the year, and there were a number of fine individual performances which contributed to our success.

Magnus Michelsson made the early running, shadowed by Andrew White whose intention was to run a fast 10 k and then jog to the finish (bearing in mind that the half marathon distance is slightly in excess of 21.1 kilometres). Not far behind him was John Meagher who set out at a very solid clip. John held third and then fourth place in the early stages. Further back, but within striking distance was Hamish McElwee, who appeared to be moving very comfortably and indeed he worked his way through the field after the first 5000 metres. Also prominent in the first 25 were Paul Boxshall, who looked to be in good shape, with David Jimenez running strongly in the early section of the race. Further back, perhaps in 35th to 40th position was Chris O'Connor, with Tony Bird further back, running in the top half of the field. Megan Sloane was the only female Box Hill representative, and she was running with another former Australian World Championships Marathon representative, Jackie Cook. They were running within themselves.

As the race progressed, it was evident that with five athletes in the top 25, Box Hill was not only in with a chance for a place, but had a fair chance of defeating Glen Huntly. A rough calculation at the 10 km mark showed that we were a point or two ahead of Glen Huntly. The dynamics changed slightly after the 10 km point when first Andrew White slowly drifted back through the field after his 10 k. effort, and then Paul Boxshall withdrew. Box Hill's team slipped back to be about 10 points behind Glen Huntly (GH). Hamish McElwee moved past John Meagher to hold third position clearly, and John Meagher was involved in a battle for fourth place with a Glen Huntly rival. Shortly after, Linton Gloster, GH, started drifting back through the field. Both John and Hamish looked very strong.

David Jimenez passed through a bad patch after about 8 kilometres, losing a number of places, suffering from a cramp or stitch. However, crucially, he stuck at his task, gaining strong encouragement to do so from the small but vocal group of Box Hill supporters, including Julie Milner, Graeme Olden, ill and unable to run, Ian Sloane and others. Eventually he steadied and started overtaking others in the latter stages of the race. With Chris O'Connor starting to move through the field, and the decline in position of several GH athletes, the race started to open up again. Then Andrew White withdrew and this meant that the scoring team moved back in to a clear second spot. Tony Bird was running steadily further back. Megan Sloane accelerated and ran away from the group she had been with for 15 kilometres.

In the concluding stages, Gloster pulled out, which opened the door again for Box Hill. Coady, GH, was running well in 5th spot, but all Glen Huntly's other Section 1 athletes were losing positions, apart from David Ruschena, who was on a training run with Grant Schmidlechner from Doncaster. Julian Cook, GH, slipped back slightly to be in about 10th position, and Kuppler, their fourth team member was only marginally in front of Chris O'Connor.

In the last lap, Hamish McElwee, third, and John Meagher, fourth, held their positions, behind the winner, Magnus Michelsson, and second placegetter, Peter Eason, Ballarat Harriers. David Jimenez found something extra and passed several rivals in the final stretch to place 20th, and Chris O'Connor made a mighty effort to pass others as well, to place 31st.

The end result from our third and fourth athletes enabled Box Hill to defeat Glen Huntly by three points in a thrilling finish, our first victory in a Road Championship for a number of years. John Meagher was recorded in “The Age” as the first 40 plus finisher, with Chris O’Connor the winner of the Bronze medal in the same age group in the results on the Web site. Tony Bird put in a sound effort to place 112th, and Megan Sloane finished 34th in the Women’s section.

Our team result enabled Box Hill to ascend to fourth place overall for the Winter Season.

Men’s Results

1. Magnus Michelsson	COL	65:10
2. Peter Eason	BHA	68:36
3. Hamish McElwee	BOH	69:21
4. John Meagher	BOH	71:12
5. Tyler Coady	GHY	71:23
20. David Jimenez	BOH	74:36
30. Chris O’Connor	BOH	75:55
112. Tony Bird	BOH	83:34

Teams Race

1. Box Hill	53
2. Glen Huntly	57
3. Keilor St Bernards	98

Women’s Results

34. Megan Sloane	BOH	97:19
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Mens’ Division 1 Season Results		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1	Glen Huntly	13	13	13	13	9	11	13	13	11	109
2	Doncaster	11	10	11		11	13	11	11	3	81
3	Geelong	9	8	8	6	13	9	9	5	7	74
4	Box Hill	8	9	6		8	7	10	9	13	70
5	Ballarat YCW	10	11	10	9	10	10				60
6	Peninsula Road Runners	7	4	7	8	7	3	8	8	6	58