

Cross Country and Road Committee – Chairman’s Report 2011-2012

Welcome to and thank you for coming to the 2012 AGM of the Cross Country & Road Committee.

Your committee has again worked hard to organise and oversee the running of out of stadia events within Canterbury during the last year. We have welcomed Annette Campbell and Peter King to the Committee this year. While both are involved in the running of their own clubs, they have displayed a keenness to contribute, a willingness to work as part of the team and most importantly an ability to laugh with the rest of us, which has made our work all the more enjoyable.

I wish to thank all the members of the Committee; Kevin, Bernadette, Anne, Pat, Vic, Sandie, Daniel, Don, Annette and Peter for all the work they have put in during the last year on your behalf. As you will be aware, this is not just writing the minutes, keeping the books, sorting the entries, updating the website or turning up to meetings, but actually organising events as well. John McBrearty, Shona & Craig Brown, Dave Thomas and Andrew Reese come to mind as people who have also contributed much time outside the committee during the last year. I wish to thank all the many officials and marshals who have turned out on a regular basis to make the events happen.

At last year’s AGM, I challenged you all to concentrate your efforts on developing and retaining the 12 to 23 year old athletes who are the future of our sport. These are the athletes who we lose so easily as they move out of the children’s structure into the adult section of the sport. I am pleased to report the Committee adopted this as their focus for the year and initiated a number of initiatives that while not solving the problem, will have hopefully moved us in the right direction. These initiatives include:

- Introducing a Grade 22 (20, 21 and 22 year olds) section at both Canterbury Cross Country and Canterbury Road. The athletes commented they appreciated it as it motivated them to compete and race hard. Athletes were able to win or place in both the senior and G22 events.
- Offering to assist with accommodation or transport, any Grade 15 to 23 athletes who didn’t qualify for the Canterbury team to either National’s.
- Awarding medals to all grades at Canterbury Cross Country and Road, including G16, G19 and G22 (previously medals had only been awarded up to Grade 14 in two year age groups).
- Introducing a monthly Sunday morning training run that gathered the athletes from all clubs together for a training run and brunch at a different venue around the city. Our thanks to the clubs that hosted one of these events. A couple of runs had 30 athletes attend. They were well received by the athletes who made contacts with a new group of potential training partners.

As well as organising ten interclub events, the committee assisted with two secondary school races and monitored 25 events organised by the clubs of the Centre. We introduce three new 5k events on the Tuesdays following the Shoe Clinic 5k series to provide events for distance runners who may have raced on QE2 in the past, but didn’t want to travel to Timaru or race on the grass of Rawhiti Domain. While these didn’t have the support of the very professionally run and well promoted Shoe Clinic 5k races they followed, they did provide a good lead into the Cashmere Downs Twilight 10k road race that the committee put on to replace the Rovers 10k. The introduction of the Over 60’s grade in conjunction with the 6 lap junior section of Takahe to Akaroa met the needs of a number of our older athletes. We also encouraged sanctioned teams to compete in this slightly easier event. The introduction of the restart rule for slower teams in Takahe Akaroa discussed at this meeting last year, was also very successful.

The Committee managed the available funds with care, spending wisely to improve the sport for its members. Two new areas we invested money in need mention. The purchase of the red three metre furniture trailer to store and carry equipment such as finish area items that are needed at most events, proved to be a great success and complements the course marking gear stored in the white trailer nicely. I encourage clubs organising events to arrange with me the pickup and use of it. I am concerned that clubs still want to come and borrow bits and pieces instead of the whole package, as this leads to gear being spread all over the city and doesn't allow for the raising of an events profile with the use of all gear. The Committee had a new medal minted and laser engraved that was adapted from the Athletics New Zealand medal. We presented these at the Cross Country, Road and Half Marathon Championships. These now replace the printing of certificates and proved very popular with all who received them. Embarrassingly, we overlooked the awarding of medals to the Road Walk place getters at Canterbury Road, but these medals have now been sourced and I will endeavour to present them over the summer. We received Gaming Machine funding of \$6000 towards the \$9500 cost of the trailer and plan to apply soon for funding to purchase the 2013 medals in bulk.

I was disappointed with the number of Canterbury athletes who chose to represent us at national competitions over the last year. While we did have a number of winners and place getters, our teams didn't do as well as we would have hoped and certainly not as well as when we host a championship here. It has come to our attention that a number of athletes are not aware of the travel subsidies a good number of clubs offer to their club members attending a national championship. I would ask that you make it a priority to encourage and support your members wanting to compete at national level.

Recently we mourned the sudden death of Frank Nolan, a friend and fellow competitor too many of us here. Frank served within the Athletics Canterbury and Athletics New Zealand structures during the 70's, 80's and 90's before moving to London with his family.

A number of you wrote well thought out letters to the Committee during the past year. Mike Riley and Dave King are two members of the sport who readily spring to mind. They willingly contribute their thoughts and ideas. These letters are thought provoking and challenging and we discuss them at length. It's good to see that people care enough to take the time to write.

The next year brings many challenges and events to look forward to. We have been asked to assist with the running of the New Zealand Secondary Schools Cross Country Championships and these will be held at Halswell Quarry on the 15th of June. In October we will again host the New Zealand Road Relay Championships in conjunction with Takahe to Akaroa.

Thanks you again for attending tonight and I wish your club and athletes every success over the coming year.

John Gamblin
Chairman
Cross Country & Road Committee
Athletics Canterbury
13th November 2012