

# History of the NSW Cross Country Championship

The NSW Cross Country Championships has a long and rich history. The 2012 race will be the 115th men's race and 62nd women's championship. The event has the longest history of any NSW winter championship, while the inaugural track championship was held two years earlier. The first men's event was held on September 13, 1890, while the women's commenced 65 years later on September 17, 1955.

The men's race has been run annually since, except for two World War breaks, 1916 to 1918 and 1940 to 1943 and in 1900 when the clubs were being reformed on a district basis. In 1979, 1980 and 1981, both the NSW Women's Amateur Athletics Association and the Amateur Athletic Association of NSW (men's association) conducted a women's championship. In 1982 both organisations had amalgamated and only one title was on offer.

*The following is a brief history of this race. In the future this history document will be expanded to include many more details in individual years. Credits: Compiled by **David Tarbotton** (David.tarbotton@hotmail.com, david.tarbotton@nswis.com.au) with **Vilis Gravitis, Ron Bendall and SMH archives**.*



## **First Men's Championship**

On September 13, 1890 the first NSW Cross Country Championship was conducted in the neighbourhood of Botany on Saturday afternoon. Four club competed - the Sydney Harriers, Darlinghurst Harriers, Parramatta Harriers and Roslyn Garden Club. The course was from the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel to the tram sheds, around Walsh's wool-scouring works, through the scrub on La Perouse Rd. It was decided the first man home should be awarded the individual championship, and that the first six representatives of any one club reaching home should secure the club championship.

The first man home was Corner, of Sydney Harriers, followed by his club mates White, Morgan and Wachamann.

Sydney Harriers secured the team title with places first, second, third, fourth, ninth and tenth.

## **First Women's Championship**

The first NSW women's cross country championships was held on September 17, 1955. The annual report said:

"Following an increased interest in cross country running, both from the competitive angle and as a conditioning medium for track runners, it was decided to add a 1.5 mile cross country event to the championship programme. An offer was accepted from the Fairfield club to conduct the event at Fairfield Park on 17th September. Entries were particularly gratifying and indicated that the venture was a popular one. Results: 1st M Stenner (Fairfield) 9:13.6, 2nd L. Madgwick (Fairfield), 3rd J Sterry (Wollongong)."

**LEFT: Jeff Hunt, winner of the 2009 NSW and Australian Cross Country Championships held a Nowra.**

## MEN'S Cross Country Champions

	Winner	Club	Time	Venue
				<b>5 mile</b>
13/9/1890	E.E.Corner	Sydney	24.54	Botany 1st Champ.
1891	E.E.Corner	Sydney	30.09	Manly
1892	C.D.Morpeth	Darlinghurst	28.09	Rosehill Racecourse
1893	R.C.Reid	Forest Lodge	29.07	Rosehill Racecourse
1894	J.Tizard	Sydney	29.43	Kensington Racecour
1895	H.W.Biggs	Sydney	28.29	Rosehill Racecourse
1896	F.J.Thomas	St George	30.12	Kensington
1897	R.M.Gibson	Forest Lodge	29.57	Kensington
1898	S.W.York	Sydney	29.25	Kensington
1899	R.M.Gibson	Forest Lodge	27.14	Kensington
1900	Not held due to 'reformation of clubs on district basis'.			
1901	S.W.York	South Sydney	29.35	Kensington
1902	S.W.York	South Sydney	28.53	Kensington
1903	S.W.York	South Sydney	30.14	Kensington
1904	H.C.Grindal	Sydney	29.46	Kensington
1905	R.B.Fitzhardinge	Sydney	34.35	Canterbury Racecourse
1906	J.O'Brien (A.N.McDonald)	Queensland St George was the 1st NSW runner)	29.50	Kensington
1907	A.Wood	East Sydney	35.05	Eastwood
1908	C.E.Suffren	Victoria (C.G.Weyman)	32.30	Victoria Park Botany was the 1st NSW runner)
1909	A.Wood	East Sydney	31.34	Victoria Park
1910	T.J.Wood	East Sydney	32.15	Victoria Park
1911	T.J.Wood	East Sydney	29.42	Randwick Racecourse
1912	T.J.Wood	East Sydney	28.54	Randwick Racecourse
1913	J.Dagleish	Botany	28.50	Randwick Racecourse
1914	Harold Hayden	Botany	28.47	Randwick Racecourse
1915	Harold Hayden	Botany	28.14	Randwick Racecourse
1916,1917,1918	Not held WW1			
1919	R.J.Fitzsimmons	South Sydney	30.10	Randwick Racecourse
1920	Harold Hayden	Botany	28.11	Randwick Racecourse
1921	H.R.Turner	Botany	28.35	Randwick Racecourse
1922	M.Jeff MacKenzie	South Sydney	27.53	Randwick Racecourse
1923	Frank Bailey	South Sydney	27.20	Randwick Racecourse
30/8/24	Frank Bailey	South Sydney	28.22	Randwick Racecourse
1/8/25	C.B.Weeks	St George	27.53	Randwick Racecourse
28/8/26	M.Jeff MacKenzie	Cumberland	28.27	Randwick Racecourse
				<b>10km</b>
23/7/27	M.Jeff MacKenzie	Western Suburbs	34.58	Randwick Racecourse
11/8/28	M.Jeff MacKenzie	Western Suburbs	35.27	Randwick Racecourse
17/8/29	M.Jeff MacKenzie	Western Suburbs	34.34	Randwick Racecourse
1930	M.Jeff MacKenzie	Western Suburbs	34.50	Randwick Racecourse
15/8/31	Jack Sheaves	Western Suburbs	34.57	Randwick Racecourse
20/8/32	Jack Sheaves	Western Suburbs	34.17	Randwick Racecourse
22/7/33	Jack Sheaves	Western Suburbs	33.43	Randwick Racecourse
4/8/34	Jim Patterson	Botany	35.05	Randwick Racecourse
3/8/35	Jack Sheaves	Western Suburbs	35.04	Randwick Racecourse
1/8/36	Jack Sheaves	Western Suburbs	33.15	Parramatta Park
31/7/37	Ray Mettam	St George	35.06	Randwick Racecourse
13/8/38	J.K.Stephens	Randwick-Kens.	34.39	Randwick Racecourse
29/7/39	H.H.Herganham	Botany	33.44	Botany
1940	Jim Patterson	Botany	35.19	Randwick(Non Champ)
9/8/41	Ray Mettam	Western Suburbs	35.13	Botany (Non Champ.)
8/8/42	B 'Silver' Doyle	South Sydney	37.05	Botany (Non Champ.)
1943	Ray Mettam	Western Suburbs	36.15	Botany (Non Champ.)
5/8/44	Harold.E.Duncan	Botany	35.58	Botany
4/8/45	Donald Campbell	Randwick-Kens.	36.27	Parramatta Park
3/8/46	George Campbell	Randwick-Kens.	33.47	Centennial Park
26/7/47	George Campbell	Randwick-Kens.	32.38	Centennial Park
7/8/48	John Plummer	Western Suburbs	33.53	Centennial Park
23/7/49	John Plummer	Western Suburbs	36.35	Campbelltown
5/8/50	Ken Miller	Randwick-Kens.	36.19	Campbelltown
28/7/51	George Campbell	Randwick-Kens	36.28	Campbelltown
26/7/52	Allan Lawrence	Botany	36.23	Campbelltown
18/7/53	Allan Lawrence	Botany	38.19	Carlingford
31/7/54	Graham Thomas	Western Suburbs	38.01	Carlingford

## MEN'S Champions Continued

	Winner	Club	Time	Venue
30/7/55	Allan Lawrence	Botany	33.03	Centennial Park
9/6/56	Allan Lawrence	Botany	32.10	Centennial Park
27/7/57	Dave Power	Illawarra	33.14	Centennial Park
26/7/58	Allan Lawrence	Botany	33.17	Centennial Park
25/7/59	Albie Thomas	St. George	32.47	Centennial Park
20/8/60	Robert 'Bob' Vagg	Eastern Suburbs	31.50	Centennial Park
5/8/61	Robert 'Bob' Vagg	Eastern Suburbs	35.23	Centennial Park
29/7/62	Robert 'Bob' Vagg	Eastern Suburbs	34.23	Centennial Park
27/7/63	Dave Power	Eastern Suburbs	35.37	Centennial Park
1/8/64	Tony Manning+Peter Manning	Mid-West	35.21	Centennial Park
31/7/65	Albie Thomas	St. George	31.51	RAN Quakers Hill
20/8/66	Dave Power	Eastern Suburbs	32.03	RAN Quakers Hill
27/5/67	Laurie Toogood	Northern Suburbs	29.29	AN Quakers Hill
13/7/68	Alan Harrison	Western Suburbs	32.49	Centennial Park
28/6/69	Dave Lotty	Randwick Botany	31.25	Centennial Park
12/7/70	John Farrington	Northern Suburbs	33.33	Macquarie University
18/7/71	John Farrington	Northern Suburbs	32.08	Macquarie University
9/7/72	Bruce Adams	University of NSW	33.40	Macquarie University
17/6/73	John Farrington	Ryde Hornsby	33.05	Macquarie University
23/6/74	John Farrington	Ryde Hornsby	31.34	Macquarie University
24/8/75	Rob McDonald	Sydney University	31.43	Macquarie University
				<b>12km</b>
8/8/76	Dennis Nee	Ryde Hornsby	38.44	Macquarie University
24/7/77	Dennis Nee	Ryde Hornsby	38.28	Macquarie University
22/7/78	John Andrews	Ryde Hornsby	36.41	Hawkesbury
5/8/79	Jim Murphy	WV	38.19	Macquarie Uni
16/8/80	Rob McDonald	SU	37.11	Landsdowne
22/8/81	John Andrews	STG	37.56	Landsdowne
22/5/82	John Andrews	RH	37.07	Landsdowne
16/7/83	Quentin Morley	WS	38.05	Landsdowne
18/7/84	Steve Poulton	WS	39.52	Landsdowne
20/7/85	Lawrie Whitty	STG	38.22	Landsdowne
16/8/86	Jamie Harrison	NSU	37.54	Landsdowne
1/8/87	Quentin Morley	RBK	37.12	Landsdowne
21/5/88	Quentin Morley	RBK	38.18	Landsdowne
29/7/89	Jamie Harrison	NSU	37.43	Landsdowne
28/7/90	Glenn Ritchie	TGW	38.30	Crest
14/7/91	Clayton Clewes	SEC	39.02	Werrington
25/7/92	Paul Arthur	SEC	34.02 (11km)	Crest
3/7/93	Ian Leitch	MPN	38.56	Nowra
2/7/94	David Lightfoot	ASW	39.49	Nowra
29/7/95	Paul Arthur	EBB	39.37	Nowra
8/6/96	Paul Arthur	AEA	38.32	Nowra
7/6/97	David Evans	REE	37.15	Crest
25/7/98	Paul Arthur	RBH	38.23	Crest
5/6/99	Scott Westcott	HUN	38.02	Crest
3/6/00	David Evans	SGD	38.08	Crest
30/6/01	Daniel Green	NSU	38.17	Crest
15/6/02	Blair Martin	SGD	38.56	Nowra
28/6/03	David Byrne	SYU	39.45	Nowra
19/6/04	David Byrne	SYU	39.09	Nowra
18/6/05	Russell Dessaix Chin	SYU	38.36	Nowra
17/6/06	Russell Dessaix Chin	SYU	39.06	Nowra
23/6/07	Jeffrey Hunt	RBH	39.18	Nowra
21/6/08	Russell Dessaix Chin	SYU	39.23	Nowra
20/6/09	Jeffrey Hunt	RBH	38.33	Nowra
19/6/10	Ryan Gregson	KEJ	39.46	Nowra
25/6/11	Courtney Carter	RBH	38.26	Nowra
23/6/12	115th NSW Cross Country Championship			

## Race Distances

The inaugural men's race was over five mile, which was in place until 1926. From 1927 to 1975, it was conducted over 10km, and switched to the current distance of 12km in 1976, except for one year, 1992, when it was run over 11km.

The women's race was initially run over the very short distance of 1.5 miles. Over the next few years it increased to two mile and then the metric equivalent 3km (in 1967). Over the next five years it varied from three to five kilometres. Then in 1983 it was out to 8km. After a few years at 4, 5.5 and 6 km, it settled back to the current distance of 8 km.

# Brothers dead-heat

Two brothers stunned a field of the State's best distance runners yesterday by winning the N.S.W. cross-country title.

The brothers are Peter and Tony Manning from the small western town of Coolah.

To ensure they could not be separated by the judges at the finish they jugged in step to the line clapping hands.

The 10,000 metres race was run at Centennial Park.

Over almost the last 7,000 metres the brothers had the race to themselves.

In the group they left in their wake were Olympians Albert Thomas, Bob Vagg and Dave Power.

Thomas is to run in the Tokyo Olympics in the 1500 and 5000 metres and Vagg in the marathon.

Thomas led yesterday to the 3000-metre mark and when he attempted to shake off Peter Manning, Peter instead shook him off.

He was immediately joined in the lead by his brother.

At the finish they were 120 yards ahead of Alan Harrison.

For Harrison, 22, the race marked the first occasion he had been able to unseat the Olympic trio.

Thomas finished fourth, a further 120 yards behind Harrison, with Vagg fifth and Power sixth.



Step by step, Tony and Peter Manning.

LEFT: 1964 NSW Cross Country Championships was a famous dead heat between brothers Peter and Tony Manning. They defeated a qualify field including Olympians Albie Thomas, Robert Vagg and Dave Power.

## Most Men's titles

### Most titles

- 6 – M Jeff MacKenzie (Western Suburbs)
- 5 – Jack Sheaves (Western Suburbs)
- 4 – S York (South Sydney)
- 4 – John Farrington (Norths and Ryde-Hornsby)
- 4 – Paul Arthur (Randwick Botany & Easts)
- 3 – Russell Dessaix-Chin (Sydney Uni)
- 3 – John Andrews (St George and Ryde-Hornsby)
- 3 – T J Wood (East Sydney)
- 3 – Harold Hayden (Botany)
- 3 – Ray Mettam (Western Suburbs)
- 3 – Robert Vagg (Eastern Suburbs)
- 3 – Dave Power (Eastern Suburbs)
- 3 – George Campbell (Randwick Botany)

### Most Consecutive titles

- 5 – M Jeff MacKenzie (Western Suburbs)
- 3 – S York (South Sydney)
- 3 – T J Wood (East Sydney)
- 3 – Jack Sheaves (Western Suburbs)
- 3 – Robert Vagg (Eastern Suburbs)



MIDDLE IMAGE: John Plummer – two time NSW XC champion; George Campbell – four time NSW XC champion.



BOTTOM LEFT: 1955 NSW XC team for the Australian Championships. L to R - Bert Edmonds (manager), Dave Power, Pat Clohessy, Keith Ollerenshaw and Graham Thomas.

1000 METRES CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP OF N.S.W. AT RANDWICK RACECOURSE.



WAS THE BRILLIANT LEADER THE WINNER R. J. MACKENZIE, IN SECOND PLACE WRIGHT, IN THIRD PLACE WRIGHT, IN FOURTH PLACE WRIGHT, IN FIFTH PLACE WRIGHT, IN SIXTH PLACE WRIGHT, IN SEVENTH PLACE WRIGHT, IN EIGHTH PLACE WRIGHT, IN NINTH PLACE WRIGHT, IN TENTH PLACE WRIGHT.

TEN THOUSAND METRES CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP OF N.S.W. AT RANDWICK RACECOURSE.



WAS THE BRILLIANT LEADER IN THE FIRST LAP OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE WINNER IN A SUCCESSFUL LEADING THE FIRST.

CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP AT RANDWICK.



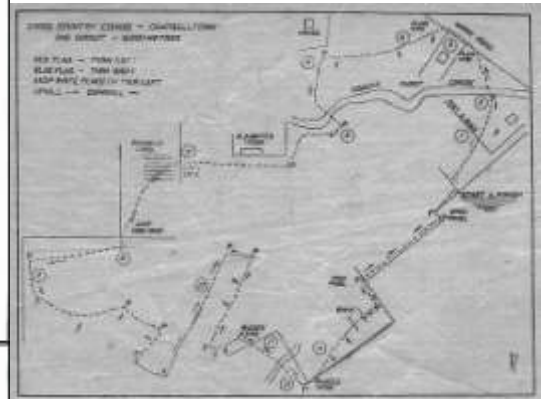
The second turn over the jumps in the 10,000 metres championship of N.S.W. on Saturday. Left to right M. J. Mackenzie (the winner), R. Wright, A. Elythe, and J. Patterson (second).

## Cross Country Venues

**MEN:** There were many venues used, but very popular in the fifty years were race-course. The event was held at Rosehill, Canterbury, Ascot and Randwick. Non NSW titles were also held at other racecourses: Kensington, Warwick Farm, Rosebery, Moorefield and Victoria Park. In later years venues included: Centennial Park, Carlingford, Macquarie University, Quakers Hill, Hawkesbury, Lansdowne, Campbelltown, The Crest, Werriington and Nowra.

**WOMEN:** The first 10 years were held at and around Makepeace Oval at Fairfield, before it moved to Centennial Park for the next decade the race was amalgamated with the men's championships by 1982, where Lansdowne was the venue.

Images: anti-clockwise from the top: NSW Cross Country Championships at Randwick Racecourse in 1928, 1929 and 1930; 1939 NSW XC at Botany, 1995 NSW XC the middle-hill at Nowra, NSW XC course map Campbelltown 1949 to 1952.



FANCY 10,000 OF THIS! Athletes doing a little fencing in the N.S.W. cross-country 10,000 metres championship. One man seems to be taking part in the high jump, but really it's only his way of getting over the obstacles.





IMAGES:

Nowra venue NSW  
Cross Country  
Championships:

Left—Ian Leitch;

Bottom left -

Michael O’Mara;

Below - Scott

Westcott.





The great 1928 undefeated cross country team which won three State individual titles out of four.

Three images left – Jack Sheaves, 5 time NSW XC champ & 1935 Australian XC champion



Albert Thomas, Triple Olympian, on his way to win N.S.W. 10,000 Metres Cross Country Championship on 27.7.63

## NSW and Australian Cross Country Champions in the same year

MEN (8): 1923 Frank Bailey, 1935 Jack Sheaves, 1946 George Campbell, 1957 Dave Power, 1961 Robert Vagg, 1967 Laurie Toogood, 1971 John Farrington and 2007 Jeff Hunt.

WOMEN (3): 1971 & 1972 Beth Stanford and 1992 Kerryn McCann.

## WOMEN'S NSW Cross Country Champions

Date	Winner	Club	Time	Distance	Venue
17/9/55	M Stenner	Fairfield	9:13.6	1.5mile	Fairfield Park
8/9/56	M Stenner	Fairfield	9:55.6	1.5mile	Bosley Bush
21/9/57	M Stenner	Fairfield	?	1.5mile	Bosley Bush
20/9/58	Barbara Clift	Randwick Botany	9:59.7	1.5mile	Bosley Bush
26/9/59	?			1.5mile	Makepeace Oval, Fairfield
10/9/60	Barbara Clift	Randwick Botany	9:03.2	1.5mile	Makepeace Oval, Fairfield
1961	Beth Stanford	Fairfield	9:04.0	1.5mile	Makepeace Oval, Fairfield
15/9/62	Beth Stanford	Fairfield	9:07.0	1.5mile	Makepeace Oval, Fairfield
14/9/63	Beth Stanford	Fairfield	9:02.6	1.5mile	Makepeace Oval, Fairfield
12/9/64	Beth Stanford	Fairfield	8:38.2	1.5mile	Makepeace Oval, Fairfield
21/8/65	Beth Stanford	Fairfield	11:41.7	2mile	Makepeace Oval, Fairfield
6/8/66	Beth Stanford	Western Suburbs	12:11.8	2mile	Makepeace Oval, Fairfield
6/8/67	Margaret Edwards	Western Suburbs	11:38.7	3km	Centennial Park
3/8/68	Shirley Cooper	Cumberland	12:07.7	3km	Centennial Park
9/8/69	Beth Stanford	Cumberland	11:27.8	3km	Centennial Park
8/8/70	Beth Stanford	Cumberland	19:23.8	5km	Centennial Park
7/8/71	Beth Stanford	Cumberland	19:50.8	5km	Centennial Park
29/7/72	Beth Stanford	Cumberland	19:32.2	5km	Seaforth
28/7/73	Beth Stanford	Cumberland	19:26.6	5km	Centennial Park
27/7/74	Beth Stanford	Cumberland	19:52.0	5km	Centennial Park
19/7/75	Liz Richards	Northern Suburbs	19:46.0	5km	Centennial Park
24/7/76	Tess Bell	South Canberra	19:36.8	5km	Centennial Park
30/7/77	Tess Bell	South Canberra	16:51.2	5km	Centennial Park
5/8/78	Tess Bell	South Canberra	17:58.4	5km	Centennial Park
5/8/79	Sue Muir	Sutherland	18.27	5km	Macquarie Uni (ANSW)
18/8/79	Maxine Jollye	Ryde	14:56.3	4km	Macquarie University (WAAA)
16/8/80	Therese Walsh	Bankstown Sports	18.20	5km	Landsdowne (ANSW)
2/8/80	Jenny Ganzevoort	Wollongong S Flame	14:57.5	4km	Rozelle (WAAA)
22/8/81	Therese Walsh	Bankstown Sports	14.56	4km	Landsdowne (ANSW)
15/8/81	Jenny Ganzevoort	Wollongong S Flame	14:59.3	4km	Rozelle (WAAA)
22/5/82	Jenny Ganzevoort	Bankstown Sports	14:18	4km	Lansdowne
16/7/83	Mora Main	Eastern Suburbs	30.24	8km	Landsdowne
18/7/84	Sharon Dalton	Manly Warringah	31.11	8km	Landsdowne
20/7/85	Jenny Walker	Manly Warringah	29.36	8km	Landsdowne
16/8/86	Penny Just	Bankstown	29.51	8km	Landsdowne
1/8/87	Kerith Duncanson	Bega	29.16	8km	Landsdowne
21/5/88	Annette Dwyer	Eastern Suburbs	30.14	8km	Landsdowne
29/7/89	Annette Dwyer	Eastern Suburbs	29.23	8km	Landsdowne
28/7/90	Annette Dwyer	Seiko Easts	28.55	8km	Crest
14/7/91	Wendy Ticehurst	Yass	14.21	4km	Werrington
25/7/92	Kerryn McCann	Seiko Easts	19.23	5.5k	Crest
3/7/93	Kerryn McCann	Eastern Suburbs	22.07	6km	Nowra
2/7/94	Liz Miller	Easts Bays	22.06	6km	Nowra
29/7/95	Lorraine Davis	Bankstown	22.13	6km	Nowra
8/6/96	Liz Miller	Athletics East	20.36	6km	Nowra
7/6/97	Liz Miller	Athletics East	28.41	8km	Crest
25/7/98	Lyndal Wood	Sutherland	30.12	8km	Crest
5/6/99	Liz Miller	Athletics East	28.46	8km	Crest
3/6/00	Angela Sheean	Hunter	29.05	8km	Crest
30/6/01	Emily Morris	Sydney University	30.01	8km	Crest
15/6/02	Liz Miller	Athletics East	30.04	8km	Nowra
28/6/03	Eloise Poppett	Sutherland	29.24	8km	Nowra
19/6/04	Elizabeth Miller	Randwick Botany	31.13	8km	Nowra
18/6/05	Belinda Wilsher	Sutherland	30.17	8km	Nowra
17/6/06	Eliza Stewart	Bankstown	29.48	8km	Nowra
23/6/07	Eliza Stewart	UTN Norths	29.16	8km	Nowra
21/6/08	Marnie Ponton	Sydney Striders	29.26	8km	Nowra
20/6/09	Melinda Vernon	Sydney Striders	29.51	8km	Nowra
19/6/10	Eliza Stewart	UTN Norths	30.47	8km	Nowra
25/6/11	Milly Clark	Bankstown	30.20	8km	Nowra
23/6/12	62nd NSW Cross Country Championship				



Liz Miller – six time NSW Cross Country champion



### **Most Women's titles**

Stenner would go on to take the first three titles. In 1959, Fairfield used the event to open their new athletics track, Makepeace Oval, the venue for the next eight years. In 1961 Beth Stanford, running for the Fairfield club, started an amazing run of six consecutive titles ending in 1966. In 1967 the venue moved to Centennial Park and Stanford placed second, the next year, 1968, she was third. However in 1969 she returned to the top of the dais and won the next six consecutive titles. In 1979, 1980 and 1981, both the NSW Women's Amateur Athletics Association and the Amateur Athletic Association of NSW (men's association) conducted a women's championship. In 1982 both organisations had amalgamated and only one title was on offer. Over the next thirty years a couple of athletes won three consecutive titles. In 1980 to 1982 Jenny Ganzevoort won three titles, from 1988 Annette Dwyer won three consecutive titles. Between 2006 and 2010, Eliza Stewart won three titles and between 1994 and 2004, Liz Miller won six titles.

### **Most titles**

- 12 – Beth Stanford (Fairfield and Cumberland)
- 6 – Liz Miller (Athletics Easts and Randwick Botany)
- 3 – Eliza Stewart (UTS Norths and Bankstown)
- 3 – M Stenner (Fairfield)
- 3 – Jenny Ganzevoort (WSF and Bankstown)
- 3 – Annette Dwyer (Athletics Easts)
- 3 – Tess Bell (South Canberra)

### **Most Consecutive titles**

- 6 - Beth Stanford (twice)
- 3 – M Stenner, Jenny Ganzevoort, Annette Dwyer, Tess Bell

### **Women's Clubs - Winners**

The most successful club has been Athletics Easts who have won 11 titles. Between 1983 and 2002 they dominated the championship running under various club names including Easts Bays, Seiko Easts, Eastern Suburbs and Athletics Easts.



**ABOVE Eliza Stewart – NSW and Australian Cross Country champion**



- 11 – Athletics Easts
- 8 – Fairfield
- 7 – Cumberland, Bankstown
- 4 - Bankstown
- 3 – Randwick Botany, UTS Norths
- 2 – Western Suburbs, South Canberra, Manly Warringah, Wollongong Southern Flame, Sydney Striders
- 1 – Ryde, Bega, Yass, Sydney University, Hunter

**LEFT: Melinda Vernon**

# Former NSW Cross Country Champion, Rob McDonald

## NSW Cross Country Champion 1975 and 1980

Now living and coaching on the NSW South Coast, **Rob McDonald**, a former high school languages teacher, was a leading NSW distance runner in the '70s and '80s. During his career he won Australian medals on the track, over cross country and on the road. He also represented Australia at three World Cross Country Championships which he regards as his career highlights. In 1975 and 1980, the Sydney University athlete claimed the NSW Cross Country titles.

His first win was at Macquarie University. McDonald recalled the race.

“Four of us trailed **Bruce Adams** through the first lap while we all had a look at the course. Then Bruce and I picked up the pace and broke away from the field. I got away from Bruce on the last lap and won by nearly a minute.”

Over the next few years **Dennis Nee**, **John Andrews** and **Jim Murphy** all won titles. In 1980 running over 12km at Lansdowne in Bankstown, McDonald claimed his second title beating a particularly good field.

“**Lawrie Whitty** and I swapped the lead throughout the first lap (4km in 12:29). He was flying downhill and I was going past him uphill. Halfway into the second lap I widened the gap up a hill and kept going. **John Andrews** was third.”

McDonald's last major race was in Catania (Italy) in 1985.

“I was invited back to an 11km road race which I'd won previously in 1982. Jose Joao da Silva (Brazil) and I were the invited foreigners. It was a strong field but with da Silva setting the pace, the lead pack gradually decreased in number. I made a move with 3.5km to go but couldn't get a break on da Silva who eventually got away with 2km to go. I ran 32m27, a minute faster than in 1982, but seven seconds behind da Silva.”

McDonald recently reflected on his fine career.

“I had a great career, but not in the sense that I was a star of the sport or anything like that. I didn't find running until I was in Year 11. Before that I had displayed no ability in any sport whatsoever, which was disappointing at an all-boys school where the rugby league first 13 and cricket first 11 were gods.

“But running is a sport that rewards consistent work and my lack of ability didn't stop me from getting out there each day and running. Then I got lucky and met up with a coach **Peter Waters** who understood that distance runners take time to develop and so I learnt how to train smart rather than just doing big mileage.

“As a result I had a career that lasted 17 years. Thanks to athletics, I got to travel the world and I met world record holders and Olympic medallists and national champions and I discovered that, even though I certainly didn't have their ability, I had a couple of things in common with them: a love of running and a desire to find out how good I could be.”

Unfortunately McDonald struggles to run these days

“My right knee won't let me so I have to make do with riding my bikes,” he said.

McDonald offered this advice to young athletes.

“Be patient. It takes time to become a champion and there's a lot to learn.

“Don't be put off if you're not selected in talent squads or supported by sports institutes. If you've got the hunger, you can still achieve great things in our sport doing it on your own. Here's an example. Back in 1980 the first four place-getters in the Parramatta 10 (miles) road race were: **Rob McDonald** 47m49, **Brian Morgan** 48m01, **Lawrie Whitty** 48m09 and **Steve Poulton** 48m40. Talent squads didn't exist back then and all of us fitted our training around full-time jobs. But 30 years later, those times are still quality times.

“So, stick at it, ask questions and learn as much as you can so that you always know why you're doing what you're doing.”



L to R: Alan Robinson, Rob McDonald and Dennis Nee