

Record Running In the Capital

The 25th anniversary Shoe Clinic Wellington Marathon went off in style with record entries and record racing.

Four thousand eight hundred and twenty six participants from 12 countries braved cold, wet conditions in the Capital. This was a continuation of the rise of Wellington's only major marathon event.

Established in 1986 by the Wellington Marathon Clinic, the annual mid-winter event took off six years ago when it was shifted to the popular Westpac Stadium. From around 1000 entrants for the 20 years previous it has grown to almost 5000 in 2010. And despite the conditions, they turned out ready to run fast.

Surprise Marathon Champions

The full marathon distance was billed as a battle between five-time winner Grant McLean and fellow veteran Dave Parsons, who having recorded a faster marathon than McLean in the past 12 months was a worthy challenger.

And this is how it looked like panning out as the race around Wellington's harbour bays unfolded. The pair ran side by side, with former Half Marathon runner-up Joseph Bulbulia and 34 year old Daniel Clendon also close. But it was a younger legs that ended up strongest.

Bulbulia was the first to wilt, followed by McLean. This left Clendon and Parsons, who went at it all the way to the Westpac Stadium finish line where Clendon stopped the clock at 2hrs 35min 21secs. Parsons followed just 19secs later but seven minutes clear of McLean, who held on for third place and first veteran in 2hrs 42min 54secs.

Dan Clendon



The women's full marathon also saw a new winner. Two-time champion and course record holder, Lotty Turnidge, chose not to defend her title due to pregnancy. This left the race wide open, with

Wellington's Victoria Jackson clocking 3hrs 08min 33secs to win by nine minutes from Ingrid Cree and Olivia Faull, who were separated by just 37secs.

Record Racing



Steve O'Callaghan leading a fast half marathon

The men's and women's half marathons provided no such surprises. Pre-race favourites Steven O'Callaghan and Aine Hoban were too classy. Hoban, a former British representative now living in Canterbury, finished in 1hr 20min 21secs to beat Wellington super-vet Victoria Humphries by exactly one minute. Hoban's time was the third fastest ever recorded on the Wellington course, which in cold wind and rain was an impressive effort.

The men's race, however, saw a close battle between top runners from Rotorua, Wellington and Christchurch that ended in a new course record. In cold wind and rain a bunch formed through the opening 10k. Then in the second half Rotorua's Steve O'Callaghan upped the pace in a bid to avoid a sprint finish with Tim Hodge, Ryan Woolley and James List.

This sustained pressure saw O'Callaghan edge ahead in the final 5k to smash the race record by more than a minute with 1hr 08min 02secs.

Talented Wellington youngster Tim Hodge held on for second in 1:08.48, just narrowly holding out Christchurch's Kerry Faas and Ryan Woolley as the first four finishers all broke the previous course record set by Scotsman Andrew Douglas in 2009.

In other races, the 10k also produced course records. Wellington's Cameron Goldsmid won the men's for the second year in 31min 31secs, 21secs ahead of fellow Wellingtonian Daniel Nixon who also broke the record. Even more impressive was last year's women's half marathon winner, Maria Bentley. The Palmerston North runner finished 11th overall in a course record 35min 14secs.