

McLean Takes Five

Wellington's Grant McLean held off a record field to win his fifth consecutive Shoe Clinic harbour Capital Marathon.

Almost 5000 runners and walkers from 11 countries turned out in the Capital City for the 24th annual Shoe Clinic Harbour Capital Marathon event. And with entries ranging from five year olds to 83 year olds, there was something for everyone.

Certainly there has always been something in this race for Grant McLean. This year he led from start to finish, doing the hard work in the first half to open up a six minute lead by halfway and then holding on win nine minutes ahead of fellow Wellingtonian Rohan Biggs and Palmerston North's Blair van Stipriaan.

Grant McLean



"I'm pretty pleased with that," said McLean moments after crossing the line in 2hrs 36min 55secs. "I wasn't sure how I'd go, but it felt ok so I pushed it along. Halfway was about 1:16, so I was really pleased with hanging on for a good result."

Indeed, the 41 year old's overall win also netted him the veteran men's category ahead of Adrian Cann and David Hartshorn. And while McLean was short of his

overall race record from 2004 of 2hrs 31min 38secs, his performance this year did clip 21sec from the veteran's record he set when winning last year.

Women's winner Lotty Turnidge was also pleased to defend her full marathon title. The 2008 winner also led from start to finish, winning almost 15minutes ahead of Porirua's Jean Beaumont and Wellington's Lucy Cant. In conditions she described as ideal for marathon running, Turnidge lopped almost seven minutes off her own course record to clock 3hrs and 57secs.

Together McLean and Turnidge made it a grand day for their Wellington Scottish Athletic Club, with their victories also earning them and their club dual Wellington Marathon championships.

Surprise Half Marathon Wins

While the local favourites dominated the Full Marathon distance, the half marathon race went to surprise out-of-town entrants.

Palmerston North's Maria Bentley was a total surprise even to the women she beat. The Massey University exercise physiologist doesn't run for a club and doesn't do many major running events. But it didn't seem to matter as she ran away from the best runners that Wellington could muster.

Bentley started cautiously, with Wellington's Vicki Humphries, Nelson-based German Britta Martin, and Christchurch's Julia Grant keeping tabs on her through the first few kilometres. But once warmed up Bentley cleared out, eventually winning by three minutes in a fast 1hr 18min 11secs.

Behind her Vicki Humphries filled second place and claimed the veterans title in 1hr 21min 18secs. German Britta Martin, a former pro cyclist who recently shifted to New Zealand and has taken up triathlons, claimed third ahead of Grant.

The men's Shoe Clinic Half Marathon wasn't quite as surprising. There was rumour of a sharp Scotsman having entered, and when 22 year old Andrew Douglas won with a furious final few kilometres that rumour was confirmed.

Duncan has been one of Scotland's rising young talents and is travelling New Zealand on a working and running holiday. At the Shoe Clinic Harbour Capital Half Marathon he faced New Zealand reps Rees Buck and Matt Dravitzki, who tried valiantly to give Douglas a run for his money. But in the end it

was standout Christchurch veteran Kerry Faas who put up the best fight.

More than two decades ago Faas was one of the country's best teenage talents, but he drifted away from the sport not to be seen until a year or so ago when he returned to the sport and started dominating veteran races. But in the Capital he took the race to the young bucks and only the Scotsman could respond. And respond he did, putting the hammer down in the final few kilometres to set a new course record 1hr 09min 15secs.

Winning 20secs ahead of Faas, with Buck and Dravitzki close behind in a shade over 1hr 10min, Douglas was pleased to rack up is first Kiwi win. "It was hard race," he commented. "But I felt ok and the conditions were perfect for running and it all came together ok."

Andrew Douglas



Close Racing All Round

In other events, the 10k race was a close race between Wellingtonians Cameron Goldsmid and Daniel Nixon, with Goldsmid taking line honours by just 10secs in 32min 50secs. The women's 10k was something of a field day for noted coach Kevin Ross when his protégées filled the first four placing, with Gabrielle O'Rourke claiming first in 38min 26secs.

The 10K walk also threw up impressive results, especially among women. Wellington's Amelia De Lorenzo filled second overall, 1min 47secs behind winner Peter Hague from Nelson, who clocked in at 59min 09secs.

Walking events make up a big part of marathon events today. In this year's Shoe Clinic Harbour Capital event 878 walkers toed the start line and produced some close racing.

In the men's full marathon Napier's Joff Hulbert and New Plymouth's Wayne Loveridge went toe to toe. Only two minutes separated the two veterans at the finish, with Hulbert taking the honours in 4hrs 31min 45secs. Third place went to Auckland's Malcolm Gray, while in an impressive fourth place overall New Plymouth's Tanya Campbell claimed the women's full marathon walk ahead of Lower Hutt's Chris Leahy and Wellington's Shirley Dixon in 5hrs 07min 47secs.

The Half Marathon walks were a huge success for Palmerston North's Lei family. Michelle Lei is New Zealand's fastest improving walker right now. In the Harbour Capital event she claimed third overall in 2hrs 04min 46secs, with New Plymouth's Vanessa Lowl and Wellington's Terri Grimmatt claiming second and third, and fourth and sixth overall. But at the front of the race Andrus Lei claimed the overall win in a fast 1hr 59min 12secs. In second place 60 year old Peter Ballie also illustrated that age isn't any barrier to top performance.

Magic Winners In Kids' Mile

In just two years the new Kids' Magic Mile has more than doubled in size. Three hundred and seventy four kids aged five to 12 lined up this year, but one thing that remained the same as last year's inaugural Kids' Magic Mile were the winners.

Jonathan Beresford and Kelsey Forman confirmed themselves as the fastest kids in the capital by being the first girl and boy across the finish for the second year in a row. Jonathan broke his course record from last year by more than 10secs, clocking 5min 44secs for the one-mile distance. But right behind came Kelsey, finishing second overall and breaking her own girls record with 5min 53secs.

Record Entries

With 4701 starters 2009 was the biggest ever entry in the 24 years of the Shoe Clinic Harbour Capital Marathon. Indeed, 2009 was a massive 20 increase over 2008, which race director Sally Anderson from the Wellington Marathon Clinic said, "shows how much New Zealanders value their health and fitness even in tough financial times."

"The event has really come of age," said Anderson. "We had entries from Australia, Canada, Germany, China, Singapore, Spain, USA, Scotland and England, so the Show Clinic Harbour Capital Marathon is becoming very much an international event."

In 2010 the Shoe Clinic-sponsored event will celebrate its 25th anniversary, which Anderson says promises to be the best yet.