

TIMARU

46th New Zealand Secondary Schools Cross Country Championships, Ashbury Park – 15 June 2019

Liam Back's decisive finishing kick paid dividends as he stormed to victory in the senior boys 6km ahead of race leader Will Anthony of Scots College. Back, from Wanganui Collegiate, who was second last year was content to let Anthony dictate the pace throughout before seizing his moment to sprint home. He finished in 19:55, Anthony who was fifth in the junior boys last year was second in 20:00, five seconds ahead of Murdoch McIntyre.

Back was happy to settle back and let Anthony do the work. "I had Will Anthony up at the front pushing it along so I had someone to sit in behind, but he made it so hard pushing it from the start. But I came through right at the end with a good sprint so I was pretty happy with the outcome. "I came into the race wanting to come in the top five, but Mr McNab (his coach) prepped me pretty well for the race," said Back. Back hopes to head to the States next year and is on the lookout for a University scholarship.

Anthony was satisfied with his result. "It's my first year in senior boys. I started wide and fast with Liam Back and Murdoch McIntyre right behind me the whole way. It was pretty tough and I didn't think I was going to hold out against Liam Back because he's got a really fast kick," said Anthony

McIntyre who was third last year behind Sam Tanner and Back, said he found it tough. "It was a bit of a tough race, the boys went off hard and I thought I'd just sit back and try working my way through. The boys kept pushing it so kudos to Will, he was really hammering those hills.

"I thought if I hang in there I might have a chance so I came back a couple of times but in the end I fell off the back. It was my last schools cross country race, I came in five years ago in year nine where I got third and I come to year 13 to get third, so not much has changed."

McIntyre led Westlake Boys' High School to victory in both the three and six person teams. Wanganui Collegiate was second in both with Palmerston North Boys HS third in the three person and Auckland Grammar School third in the six person.

Kirstie Rae, who was 17th in the under 20 championship at the recent world cross country championship in Denmark had no trouble in winning the senior girls 4km. Rae, second last year, finished in 14:35. Charli Miller was second in 15:14 with Olivia Cummings, Otumoetai College, with a strong finish taking third in 15:21. Rae gave Wellington East Girls the edge to win both the three and six person teams. Baradene College was second and St Peter's School third in the three team and Diocesan School second and St Cuthbert's third in the six team.

"It was really tough, Charli took it out really hard on the first lap, so it was just a matter of hanging on for the second lap and getting over the hurdles unscathed," said Rae.

Miller from St Peter's School Cambridge was pleased to have held on for second. "The past year and a half for me has been a bit off and on so coming into this I've been training really hard and just working out towards it, so for this race I didn't know what to expect so I just went out hard and tried to control the race and see what I have," she said.

Cummings who specialises in the triathlon and was sixth in the junior women's Oceania Championships in March was pleased with her run. "Running is the main aspect in triathlons so having a strong run is definitely a key, so I've been doing track races and cross country to improve that. "My coach Craig Kirkwood said to attack it on the hills which I tried to do. I was boxed in at the start which I found quite difficult, so I just worked my way back on the hills which was a help," said Cummings.

Sam Idiens of Christ's College, improved dramatically from his 22nd placing last year to win the junior boys 4km in 13:42. Mathijs Wetzels of Hamilton BHS who was second in the year nine last year, was second in 13:50 with Luke Clements of MAGS improving on his ninth last year for third

in 13:53. Hamilton BHS won the three person team and Wellington College the six person.

Cameron Maunder WBHS won the year nine boys 3km in 10:27 from Jack Hunter Wairarapa College 10:32 and Daniel Prescott St Thomas Canterbury third in 10:41. WBHS won the three and six person teams.

Hannah Prosser of Timaru Girls High School who had the benefit of training on the course leading up to the race won the junior girls 3km in 11:12. Prosser was seventh in year nine last year. Last year's year nine winner Maia Wilkinson of Wellington East Girls was second in 11:17 with Ana Brabyn of Wanganui Collegiate third in 11:46. Wanganui Collegiate won the three and six person teams.

Bella Earl of Whangarei HS won the year nine girls 3km in 11:23, from Kennedy Taylor of Southland GHS 11:28 and Samantha Fookes of Wakatipu HS 11:37. Wellington Girls' College won the three and six person teams.

A total of 808 runners from 136 schools took part.

4th New Zealand Regional Cross Country Relay Championships, Ashbury Park – 16 June 2019

5 x 2000m:

Senior, Boys: Wellington 1, Canterbury 2, Wanganui 3. Fastest lap Will Anthony (Wgtn) 6:02.

Girls: Wellington 1, Auckland 2, Waikato Bay of Plenty 3. Fastest lap Kirstie Rae (Wgtn) 6:51.

Junior, Boys: Wellington 1, Waikato Bay of Plenty 2, Canterbury 3. Fastest lap Mathijs Wetzels (WaikBoP) 6:20. Girls: Wellington 1, East Coast North Island 2, Wanganui 3. Fastest lap Maia Wilkinson (Wgtn) 7:15.

Year 9, Boys: Canterbury 1, Wellington 2, North Harbour 3. Fastest lap Cameron Maunder (Nth Harbour) 6:27. Girls: Wellington 1, Canterbury 2, Auckland 3. Fastest lap Eliza Squire (Wgtn) 7:26.