

NELSON

New Zealand Secondary Schools Cross Country Championships, Saxton Field Sports Complex 18 June 2022

Zara Geddes of St Hilda's Collegiate Otago triumphed in the senior girls' 4km with a devastating kick over the final 300 metres. Amy McHardy of Whanganui Collegiate set the early pace before Catherine Lund of Otago Girls' High School took over the front running. Geddes was the only runner able to go with her and she stuck to her race plan to sit and wait for her chance over the closing stages. Geddes won in 14:21, four seconds ahead of Lund with McHardy third in 14:39.

Geddes, who was second in the national U18 cross country and 2000m steeplechase last season said that she thought she had a chance going into the race.

"But I knew there were lots of other really strong runners out there so I thought the race could have gone to anyone, but I knew if everything went right I was capable of taking the win," she said.

"I planned to try and stick with the leading bunch for as long as possible but as it turned out we broke away quite early and my plan was not to lead out too hard, but stick with the front.

"I had a good track season and I've always liked the cross country. I was pleased to come away with the win."

Geddes joined an athletic club when she was 12 and is coached by Dave Stinson.

"We have a great little group and running community at Hill City University Club, which I'm really grateful for as they are super supportive."

In year 12 Geddes (16) will be back next year to defend the title.

Wellington Girls' College won both the three and six person teams titles.

Christian De Vaal of Macleans College was a class above the rest in the senior boys' 6km winning as he liked to successfully make it two years in a row in 18:46. Elliott Pugh Bethlehem College was a clear second in 19:15, 15 seconds ahead of 2019 year 9 champion Cameron Maunder Westlake Boys' High School. De Vaal led Macleans to victory in the three person teams and Maunder headed Westlake to win the six person teams.

Boh Ritchie St Peter's School held on to win the junior girls 3km in 10:47. Amelia Clark of Waimea fought hard throughout but had to settle for second in 10:50, six seconds ahead of Brynne Gordon of Cashmere.

Alfie Steedman Westlake won the junior boys 4km in 12:28 from Caleb Wagener Auckland Grammar 12:38 and George Wyllie Tauranga Boys' High School.

Year nine girls 3km Imogen Barlow St Kentigern's College 10:55, Scarlett Robb St Cuthbert's 11:02, Lisa Hellyer Onehunga High School 11:12. In the boys 3km Desmond Reddy Rongotai College 10:12, George Gray Wellington College 10:17, Cooper Ferguson New Plymouth Boys' High School 10:25.

Para Athlete 6km Luis Douglas Havelock North High School 28:45. 2km Jasper Moss Christ's College 8:19. Junior 2km Toby Ireland Hutt Valley High School 9:39.

Teams:

3 person teams:

Boys Year 9 Wellington College, Junior Westlake Boys' High School, Senior Macleans College.

Girls Year 9 Wellington Girls' College, Junior St Peter's School, Senior Wellington Girls' College.

Para Athlete, Papanui High School.

6 person teams:

Boys Year 9 Westlake Boys' High School, Junior Westlake Boys' High School, Senior Westlake Boys' High School.

Girls Junior St Peter's School, Senior Wellington Girls' College.

**New Zealand Secondary Schools Regional Team 5 x 2km Cross Country Relay Championships
19 June 2022**

Boys Year 9 Wellington, Junior North Harbour, Senior Wellington.

Girls Year 9 Auckland, Junior Canterbury, Senior Southland.

Courtesy of Murray McKinnon
Athletics New Zealand Correspondent