

RUNNING COMMENTARY



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The club website is www.nbo.org.nz . Please send any photos, videos, results or items of interest / relevance to Tony Prisk at tony.prisk@outlook.com.

Articles

Do you have something interesting which could be included in our magazine?

If you feel that it is interesting we would love to share it with other members. Articles for the next issue should be sent in by the middle of May.

A big thank you to those members who have contributed to this issue.

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From the Editor:

At the moment I am spending a lot of time travelling to Wellington and Auckland. This gives me plenty of reading time.

John Hellemans has given me a copy of his book to read and review. It was a very interesting and absorbing read and I can relate to a lot in the book.



In the preface John quotes a saying often heard in sport 'No failure, just feedback'. This concept goes further than just sport and it is something that I apply in my job which involves the development of analytical products. When you are testing new approaches you do not always get it right and learn from any failures. The secret is to 'fail fast', learn and then move on.

In chapter 3 John describes the 1980's when Athletics was at a peak after the successes of John Walker, Rod Dixon and Dick Quax. During this period New Brighton was one of the strongest clubs in New Zealand winning the National Road Relay 7 times. I agree with John that the standard of these teams was exceptional with the club having 7 runners capable of running 10k in less than 30 minutes.

In this chapter John also describes his exploits as an uphill runner extraordinaire. I was also an uphill specialist running lap 6 of the Takahe-to-Akaroa relay several times. Although I never got anywhere near John's senior record of 25:19, I did run 27 minutes one year and recorded the fastest time for this lap. These days 28 minutes is broken on this lap very rarely and this year at the National Road Championships the fastest time was 27:54.

Before reading this book I was not aware of the level that John had reached as a professional triathlete. In his late thirties he was up with the top professional triathletes in the world. I am sure that if the sport of triathlon had taken off 10 years earlier when he was in his twenties he would have been completing for international championship medals. This ability was demonstrated in the numerous world age group titles that he won in later years.

I was also not aware of the number of world class New Triathletes that John has coached over the years. I was only aware of the New Brighton Athletes (Erin Baker, Andrea Hewitt and Debbie Nelson).

I thoroughly recommend this book.

Tony Prisk

Margaret's Update:

This summer season has been one of adjustment for many of us. Alongside the joy of finally having a replacement all-weather track back in Christchurch, we have had to get used to the time and distance it takes to get there. There have been the expected teething troubles and challenges with the new gear and systems. Working out how to put the high jump mats together was one of the challenges on one of my Duty Club days. However as the season has progressed, things have gotten smoother and I have even found the second water fountain. The one challenge that is not likely to go away is the wind. The track is quite exposed. I blame that on my PW 1500 the first time I stepped on the new track. A howling norwester made running the finishing straight like one of those nightmares where you try to run and your legs are in slow motion.

However, it is great to see what appears to me to be an increase in numbers overall. Our Juniors have been doing the singlet proud in the mornings. Thanks to Kara and Tony for putting all the photos on facebook so we can share in the fun and their achievements. We will celebrate these on Tuesday 26th at the Clubrooms.

In the afternoon you may spot our older athletes running, jumping and throwing. I have enjoyed the chance to watch young Quinn Anders at his various field disciplines while I have been warming up for my track event. It is good to see him stretching his athletic wings and aiming at the Decathlon. Many congratulations go to him for finishing 2nd in the under 18 Decathlon at the Nationals at Nga Puna Wai.

There is no question that the summer athletics season requires more input than the winter season in terms of training and support.

We have coaches and parents who give their time generously to help our young athletes participate and improve. It takes a whole morning on a Saturday, plus two trainings a week. And those of you who have helped when it is our turn to be Duty Club will know how much time and energy it takes to move the equipment where it is needed. Starting blocks to 3 different places on the track. Hurdles of different heights for the different ages, often in the same race. Putting the high jump mats back on the trolley. So thanks to all of you who helped with that.

Hard on the heels of the successful fundraising bake sale, we now look ahead to our other fundraiser, the 15k event now known as the Tai Tapu Running Festival.

Scheduled for Sunday 7th April, it now includes a 4k family fun run and even more onsite entertainment. You can combine taking part with helping. The Race Committee will be calling for volunteers in the near future.

Many of our members were also out on the road over the Summer, with good performances in the 5k series in the Park and the Buller Marathon events to name a few.

I hope you will take the opportunity to go to Nga Puna Wai on March 8-10 to watch the National Track and Field Champs and enjoy the fact that you don't have to drive to Timaru!

Margaret



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To see some of my work, check out the PDF versions of
Cant-A-Long, the Canterbury Master's magazine,
on the Canterbury Masters website.

My First Buller:

Despite having been a runner for almost 45 years and having travelled to many parts of New Zealand to run, until last week I had never taken part in any of the offerings of the Buller Marathon event. I had listened to many a story of both accomplishment and struggle and had managed to resist the temptation to offer myself as a food source to the famous West coast sandflies. (Apparently the way Coasters can tell if a new arrival is one of them or a foreigner from across the Alps is whether that person swats or swipes.)

So I have no real explanation of why this year when the question was asked about taking part in the Marathon Relay, I found myself saying yes. Suitably awed by the elevation profiles of the course, I took heed of all the advice about weather possibilities and packed for all of them plus some. As a result I travelled to Buller with more luggage than I took when backpacking for 18 months in the US and Europe back in the 80s. Including my pillow.

Fortunately, it began to rain while we were waiting for the start of the Marathon and I was able to put on my heavy-duty jacket accessorized with my new Blunt umbrella and demonstrate to Bruce the point of my packing both. The weather cleared for our first runner Dianne who took advantage of the comfortably cool conditions and set off at a solid pace on a hilly lap to get us off to a great start. Bruce would never admit it, but I suspect he would have borrowed my umbrella during Lap two as he got a decent soaking. I also suspect he paid the official photographer too as there were more photos of him than the rest of us.

I ran the 3rd lap and was happy to have just some light showers to cope with which petered out before halfway. I was also happy to discover that this part of the course was not as fearsome as it had seemed in the car. It was a beautiful course, especially the handover part. Richard took over for the final lap in sunshine, crossing the finish line at 12:08 according to my camera. Aside from the small issue of the chip on his shoe not registering, we were happy to discover we had achieved 5th place in the mixed team race and were 14th overall out of 100 teams.

Really though, this was just a small part of the fun of the whole weekend. The journey over was broken up by regular stops, coffee and icecreams. We kept meeting fellow runners. Cheering for everyone we knew during the race and then comparing notes at the finish in the party atmosphere was a great way to spend an afternoon. There was music, food and drink (yes there were whitebait patties) and stalls of all kinds. The results required a number of perusals and congratulations to friends who had run well. The prize giving itself lived up to its reputation and this will not be news to those of you who are regular runners there. It is a huge event which involves the whole community and celebrates the joy of movement.

The drive home on Sunday was another chance to admire the Lewis Pass, to sample the food on offer in Reefton (I can recommend the rhubarb loaf) and reflect on all the reasons I will return in 2020.

Oceania Polynesian Champs 2018 - Tahiti:

What an honor to be selected for another NZ team and it was even more memorable being the place where fellow NZ race walker Rep Lesley Cantwell had her last breath back in 2013. Lesley won the gold medal in the women's 5000 m road walk at the 2013 Oceania Athletics Championships in Tahiti. While waiting for the medal ceremony, she felt unwell and collapsed. She was taken to a local hospital where she died three days later.

I'm sure most people would agree that going to Tahiti would be an amazing get away. Hot climate, amazing beaches, new experiences and a new language to understand. It did not cease to amaze me, with all the above as well as amazing friendly locals.

We stayed at the **Institute of Jeunesse et Des Sports** in Fautau'a located at the heart of Papeete, where we had locals all around us and no resort in sight. We were on a Pacific Island amongst locals, so nothing was 5 star. But I can tell you that it was still an amazing experience, even with cockroaches living in your room, which meant that had to close everything up when your not using it, to keep them out.

The Track that we were using for the competition was a 30min bus drive away and during the transit to and from the accommodation we got to see more of the sights. It was a huge eye opener. There was Tiny Shacks and then nice looking houses next door. Dirt and rubbish was on the side of roads and some driving was questionable and we witnessed one crash while we were pulling up to the athletics track.

The atmosphere was amazing with all countries supporting each other. I have never felt so much support as I did during my 5000m Track Walk. Each lap I had people from all countries cheering and I can tell you that it was an honor to be there racing for NBOL (Myself & Lesley Cantwell in spirit). I came away with a gold medal, lots of memories I will treasure and some new mates around New Zealand.

I just want to thank everyone who helped support me with fundraising, cheering me during local races and just generally being friendly.



A Measure of Success - Olympic 1950s (Part 1 of 2):

As previously advised, Olympic was formed at the end of 1948 and unlike New Brighton their rise was rapid.

Getting underway in 1949 there was no placings in the Canterbury Cross-Country that year with the Open Men's race going to Jack Clarke of the Christchurch club, who later transferred to Olympic. Fred Mair was our sole representative at Nationals.

Lionel Fox who had also competed for the Christchurch Club, became a foundation member of Olympic and was the club's first major success when he was selected for the 1950 Empire Games marathon being held in Auckland. The following article, a lot of it plagiarised gives you an idea of the workings of Lionel Fox who was somewhat of an institution in Christchurch running circles.

MR OLYMPIC (THE LIONEL FOX STORY)

It was probably fitting that Lionel Fox passed away doing the sport he loved so much. During the opening day run of the Olympic club on the 1st April 1978, he collapsed, with his passing being described by friends and colleagues around the country, as the ending of an era. As one member of the Olympic club said, "Lionel was Mr Olympic".

Lionel was born on the 29th September 1912, the son of Charles Fox and Louisa Osborne and grew up in New Plymouth. In 1927 and 1928 he played football for his Boss's team. However, he felt this was not his sport so had a go at athletics. This was much more of a challenge, so he went through the programme and decided that distance events were to be his calling.

1930 was his first year of cross-country or harriers as it was known in those days, and he never missed a season until his untimely death, except when he was away with the army. He qualifies this by adding that he was still running even though he was only 4° from the equator. 1930 was also the year he won his first road race a 10 miler. In 1931 at age of 19 he competed in the New Zealand Cross-Country Champs in Auckland, equalling his age in 19th. The winner was Bill Savidan of Auckland who a few weeks later won the 6 miles at the first Empire Games in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. This was Lionel's first trip away and also the last time he was homesick. He felt with harriers you get broken into habits.

In 1933 the nationals were closer to home in Whanganui and competing for West Coast North Island he had the pleasure of being in the winning team. He said in those days it was true cross-country. No bagged fences or built up jumps and real water jumps. He recalled once landing in a boxthorn hedge, and there he was pants down as the boys precariously extracted the thorns.

On the 26th December 1935, he married Jean Bennoch at St Andrews' Presbyterian Church and the couple made their home in Christchurch. They divorced in 1953.

In 1934 he transferred to Christchurch, joining the University club, but transferred to the Christchurch club the following year. He also immediately made the Canterbury team in cross-country. He also made the team in 1935, 1936, 1938, 1939, 1945 and 1946. In those days it meant a lot to represent your province and this was recognised with a C and ribbon and bars to prove it. The Canterbury title alluded him but he filled the other major places, several times.

In 1934 he felt the urge for longer runs and races, but decided to wait until he was nearer thirty, as that was the thinking in those days. The only real book he had read on the subject was written by Arthur Newton, the first man to run across the USA. He taught consistency and common sense. He commented this is something a famous New Zealand coach repeated many years later, as being his finding. Lionel's main thinking in distance running, is that at steady pace, one is getting fitter every time you go out. No special work is needed as long as you are steady and consistent. Also, hill work is a must in any schedule. Another must according to Lionel is a record of your weight. This is a direct guide to the work you are doing or not doing. Another great help to him was George Austin who won the national marathon in 1940.

For a start he found the marathon training hard work and it was three months before he was able to increase his mileage from five miles daily. From then on he was able to run at distance day after day. As Arthur Newton had promoted it was the consistency that increased his fitness. No one trained against the clock as everyone has speed, but not everyone has the stamina to sustain that speed over distance. Certainly not without consistent training. Arthur Newton reckoned he whistled a lot in training. Lionel couldn't fathom this, but he found long runs good for thinking and composing letters and other thoughts. He also found the beach and sand hills terrific for leg power and stamina, running them barefoot, which he claimed, toughened the feet. He says not being able to ever remember a blister or a foot complaint.

His footwear over these years was sandshoes of which he had three pairs, two for alternate training and one for races. This way the shoes didn't lose their shape so quickly.

In those days everybody had to work to survive with sponsors being the work of science fiction. He found it much easier to train before work, especially in the winter. So he was up at 5:00am each morning and on the road by 5:30 or earlier depending on the distance he was doing. Training in the dark was not the best, so he had mapped out certain laps and knew every pebble on the road. He loved morning running in the summer and described it as the best time of the day.

He never went on a stiff diet and just ate and drank whatever agreed with his training. He soon found out what he got the most out of. For races he would have an underdone steak plastered with honey, followed with a plateful of plain rice and milk. Apparently, the latter filled in the spare holes left by the steak. However, when he moved into the fifty mile canterers, he changed to a feed of tripe, which he found most sustaining. He was a great believer in honey and believed it had terrific recovery action powers and he was getting through ten pounds a week.

I am told by an old stalwart of the Scottish Club in Wellington, that Lionel was a member of their club in the early 40s when stationed in Wellington with the Armed Forces. Most of the athletes were in the Air Force and a member of Scottish, Fred Silver formed the Air Force Harrier Club, but they were all registered with Scottish. Due to the war there was no National Cross-Country champs from 1940 to 1944, but in 1943 a 'Little National' was held in Miramar as an interprovincial between Auckland and Wellington. The Wellington team of all Scottish athletes won the team's race with Harold Nelson first and Lionel third. During World War II, he served as a private in the New Zealand Medical Corps.

On a side note, in 1980 New Brighton won the New Zealand Road Relay in the race from Wellington to Masterton. At the time I wondered about the origins of the impressive Air Force trophy for the winning team. It is made of a handsome aircraft propeller made of native timber, that contained a scroll of Harriers who had died in World War II. I now know it is this Air Force connection at the time.

By 1944 he finally felt he was ready to compete in a marathon. There had only been two National marathons and due to the war the last in 1940. Lionel had never run a marathon, but somehow impressed the selectors and found himself in Wellington in 1945 as part of the Canterbury team. The National marathon was an out and back course to Eastbourne from the Basin Reserve. Before the field reached Petone it was raining in bucketful's, which made it easier to run in the centre of the road to keep out of the water. There were eight starters and an old club mate Tom Bartlett who was experienced in marathons helped him by holding him back to halfway. By now Bill Young from Auckland was three minutes up the road. Tom then gave Lionel the nod adding "it's your race" and off he went. After the early race help, he had no problem catching the leader. The main problem was finding his way back to the Basin Reserve through the city. There were no stewards or road marks, so he had to ask pedestrians. The first man to greet him was Cliff Harburt a stickler for rules, who warned him to keep off the pole line. This was a common fault for him on the track but due to the muddy state of the track it was not an option on this occasion. What a thrill it was for him to finish in front of a full stadium. His time was 2:54:09.

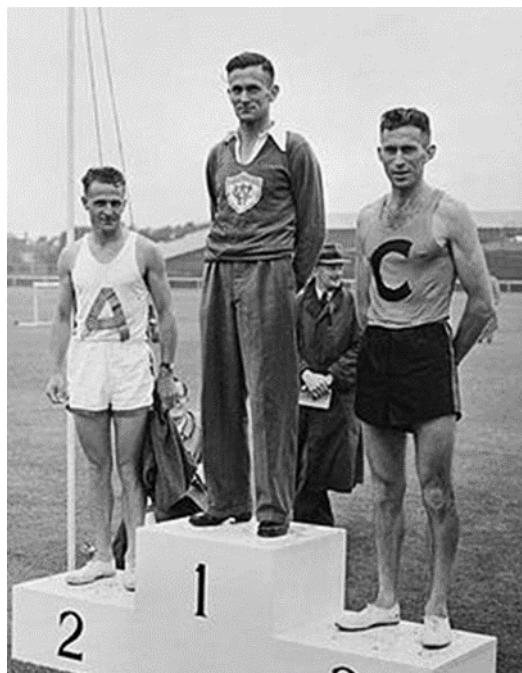
It was thought he had finally brought the marathon into the limelight, especially in Canterbury. But when Harry Saundercock of Waikari was all for it and staged a handicap marathon at the Waikari sports, he had to almost beg on his hands and knees to have it classed as the Canterbury Marathon Championship. A lot of officials at the time classed marathon runners as crazy. Lionel took out the Canterbury title in 2:45:17. In those days the Canterbury and New Zealand Championships were only a month apart, which did not make it easy.

In 1946 the Nationals were in Whanganui. In those days the marathons always started around 10:30am to enable the public to see the finish, and allow the competitors to take part in the ground parade. On two occasions Lionel carried Canterbury's flag in the parade, after completing the marathon. Before this race he spent a couple of hours relaxing in a swimming pool. In the race itself he did not really know the other competitors and became concerned with Browne of Auckland. They ran together for 23 miles before Browne suddenly stopped; so Lionel went for his life and won in 2hrs 40 min, which was the tenth best time in the Empire at the time.

In 1947 Lionel retained his Canterbury title in 2:52:00. At the Nationals which were back in Auckland, the thing he remembered most was the strict and acid ways officials controlled the race. They had to keep to the left of the centre of the road which was badly scarred with tram lines. He was warned twice and threatened with disqualification. In a very exciting race he ran with Gordon Bromley of WCNI for 26 miles before being outsprinted in the last quarter mile. Gordon won in 2:58:54.

In 1948 the nationals were in Dunedin, in perfect conditions. The title-holder Bromley, along with Wells also of WCNI lead out from Jack Clarke of Canterbury and Fox. At half-way Wells and Bromley were still leading with Clarke and Fox on their heels. At 19 miles Wells collapsed, with Clarke opening up a 100-yard lead. With 3 miles to go, Lionel was third 300-yards back, but he had slowed to walking pace. This enabled Littler of Auckland to get past with Lionel struggling to the finish in fourth. Jack Clarke who was to later join our club, won convincingly in 2:44:06, with the consistent Bromley second.

In 1949 the Nationals were in Christchurch and he bounced back to medal once again. Gordon Bromley and Arthur Lydiard filled the first two places. Whilst I don't know a lot about the race I did find a picture.



With the Empire Games to be held in Auckland, there was added incentive to do well in the Nationals, as in those days you were allowed four athletes from each country. Due to the Games being held in February the New Zealand Champs were held early with the marathon in Napier on January the 2nd. The race was again convincingly won by Gordon Bromley, 8 minutes over Arthur Lydiard with Lionel third. In his proudest moment Lionel was selected along with Gordon Bromley, Arthur Lydiard and Jack Clarke. Clarke had not finished the course, so his selection turned out to be an inspired choice. Unfortunately, Lionel's boss was not quite as excited nor sympathetic and the three weeks he spent at the Games camp went unpaid. I haven't found out what this job was, but I am told he was a taxi driver for many years.

This was the first Games that men and women and all the nations stayed in one camp. Twelve nations competed in the Games with the Opening Ceremony on the 4th February 1950 at Eden Park. Auckland turned out one of its most pleasant summer days. Lionel proudly marched behind the New Zealand Flag Bearer Harold Nelson, who was to set the Games alight with his 6-mile victory on the first day. Teammate Stan Lay took the oath of Amateurism on behalf of the athletes. This was remarkable as Stan was competing 20 years after winning the javelin at the first Empire Games. The Governor General Bernard Fryberg then declared the Games open, followed by a gun salute and the release of many pigeons.

The Marathoners had to wait until the final day for their competition, with 16 competitors lining up and began under a very threatening sky. Buoyed on by the local crowd the four New Zealanders lead the one and a half laps around the stadium and into the streets for the ordeal that lay ahead. Last to depart from the stadium was the eventual winner Jack Holden of England. Could be a moral there somewhere.



At 5-miles the New Zealanders were still in the main bunch, with things looking good. After only a third of the race, the sky opened pouring torrential rain on the athletes. Jack Holden then took off with Syd Luyt of South Africa also drawing away from the rest of the field. New Zealanders Clarke and Bromley hung tough, but Lydiard and Fox dropped off. Holden built up a huge lead, but with 7 -miles to go he discarded his soggy shoes and ran to the finish in bare feet. With blistered and bleeding feet, he bravely breasted the tape four minutes ahead of Luyt. Jack Clarke rallied for a brilliant third. With four miles to go Lionel was in 8th, but unfortunately came undone on the last hill and dropped to 13th, the last of the competitors who completed the course. His time was 2:57:42. Please find below a link to some tremendous footage of the race.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DhjylqJok4

According to the caption in the newspaper this is Lionel competing in the Empire Games. Singlet?



For some reason the Closing Ceremony was at Western Springs which was also the cycling venue, with few spectators or athletes attending because it was not possible to get from Eden Park in time. The Games ended with the mass singing of 'Auld Lang Syne,' but none of the informal mingling of teams that were to become the hallmark of later Games.

Lionel went on to win the Canterbury Marathon twice more in 1953 and 1954. He placed once more in the New Zealand Marathon with a bronze in 1953. The race was in Dunedin, with Arthur Lydiard prevailing from D Munro of Southland.

Always a team runner, he was in the Takahe to Akaroa Relay winning team on eight occasions. Six times for Christchurch and in 1954 and 1956 for Olympic.

Lionel was much more than a runner, in teams, as an administrator and as a member of the Canterbury Centre executive, he served both his club and his sport. Elected a life member of the Olympic Harrier Club in 1959, he was Club Captain in 1950, Secretary from 1953 to 1959, President in 1960, 1961 and 1965 and Secretary again in 1966, a position he did not relinquish until his death. "One never says die," he maintained. "You have just got to keep going and keep those muscles working. I can't understand anyone giving up running unless it's a broken leg." I am also told he was also a keen bowler.

As previously mentioned, his long road ended the way he would have wanted it, when at the season's opening club run in 1978, he had gone only a short distance when he complained of feeling unwell and died shortly afterwards. Lionel Fox is remembered by the Canterbury Cross-Country Committee's Lionel Fox Memorial Relay.

1950

The Canterbury Cross-Country Champs were in Timaru, with the young club unplaced in all events. However, a group of youngsters were being nurtured with success not too far off. However, Noel Smith made the Canterbury team in the Senior grade. As previously mentioned Lionel Fox was third in the New Zealand Marathon Champs and competed in the Empire Games in Auckland.

1951

New Zealand Champs Napier 2 January 1950
Lionel Fox: Marathon: 3rd

Empire Games Auckland 4 February 1950
Lionel Fox: Marathon: 13th 2:57:42

The Canterbury Cross-Country Champs were held on a new course in Cashmere. The conditions were shocking with nearly all the second half of the course under water. In the Junior Grade Olympic had its first success in cross-country at Canterbury level, with John MacDonald finishing second. Kerry Williams of the Christchurch Club who went onto win four New Zealand Senior titles, was a convincing winner. Olympic also won its first team title in the same grade. Canterbury Cross-Country representatives were Melvyn Munro in the Senior grade and John MacDonald and Clarrie Reece in the Juniors.

2018/19 Children's Track Report up to Xmas:

We have had a great start to the 2018/19 track season at our new track at Nga Puna Wai.

There has been a total of 44 awesome NBO children competing to date with many amazing performances. Armani Lemalu has been the most successful with 8 first overall places. Many have won their heats and the following won overall on the day :-

- 8 First overall – Armani Lemalu – 60m (3), 100m (1), Shot (2), Discus (1).
- 5 First overall – Holly Gray - 200m (1), 400 (3), Long Jump (1).
- 3 First overall - Tayla Cox - 60m (1), 100m (1), Long Jump (1).
- 3 First overall - Keira Richardson-Miller - 60m (3).
- 3 First overall - Nikau Kingi-McCarthy - High Jump (2), Long Jump (1).
- 2 First overall - Kavangh Lene - Penathalon (1), High Jump (1).
- 2 First overall - Perez Lene - Discus (2)

There were several who competed at all 8 Competition days. This is a great achievement. Well done to :- Annabel Magrath, Georgie Magrath, Keira Richardson-Miller, Helena McLaughlin, Marlena Taurima, Mason McLaughlin, Nikau Kingi-McCarthy, Thomas Coggan, Jordan Angow, Izia Scott.

There was fierce competition between many NBO Club members. A few examples were :-

- Annabel and Amanika were 1/100th of a second apart in the 60m on 8 December.
- In the 60m on 15 December Sienna and Tayla were separated by 8/100th of a second.
- On 1 December Lola and Sienna were 2/100th of a second apart.
- On 15 December Samara and Piper 3/100th of a second apart.
- On 1 December Keira and Brooke were 1st and 2nd in 60m overall.
- On 1 December there was amazing competition between Marshall and Hamish. In the 60m Marshall won by 0.26 sec and in the 100m Hamish won by 3/100th of a second.
- Mason and Aiden have been competitive with each other in the 100m. On 10 November Mason won by 0.20 sec and Aiden reversed this on ! December to win by 1/100th of a second.
- In the Boys 10 Nikau and Amasio have had some battles. On 10 November in the 100m 8/100th of a second separated them.

There has been some significant improvements this season including :-

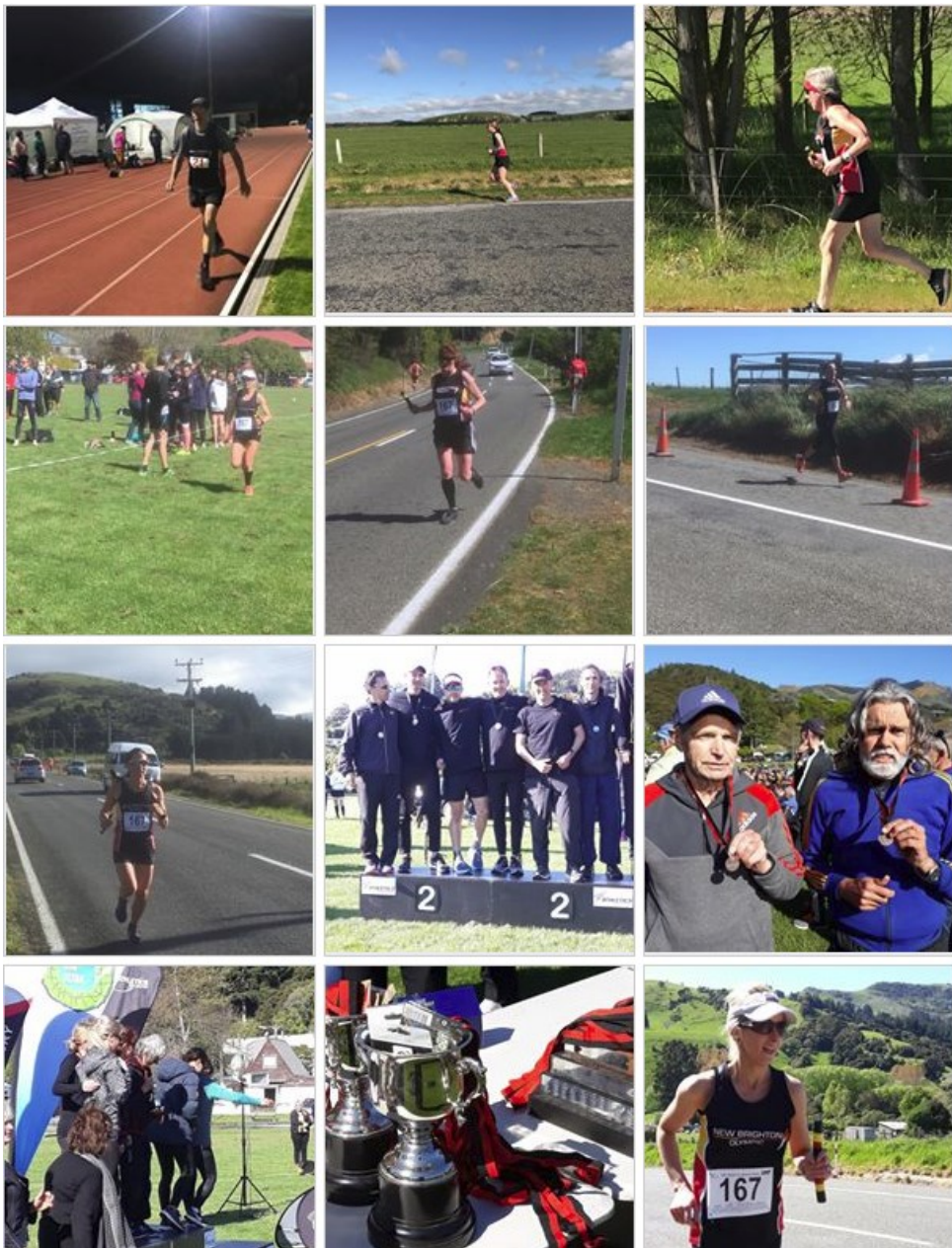
- Annabel Magrath - 6 seconds in 200m
- Neave McLachlan - 5 seconds in 200m
- Kendall Smith - 7 seconds in 100m
- Sienna Kiesanowski - 5 seconds in 200m
- Seth Vincent - 9 seconds in 400m
- Thomas Coggan - 5 seconds in 400m

It is noticeable that some significant personal bests have been attained by the children attending the extra training provided at 4.30pm by Meredith & Tony. Meredith competed for the Club through the Children's section and attributes her success to a similar programme of additional training provided in her time. Well done all. Lets carry on training through the holidays and your times will continue to come down.

Tony

Facebook Photo Gallery:





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