

TIM'S TOP TEN WOMEN FOR 2013

This week I focus on our women and select my Top Ten Australians for the year. Like my selections for the men in last week's newsletter, it is very much my own individual picks based on a combination of absolute quality, consistency across the year and improvement relative to past years. Of course, your picks might differ. Anyway, read on. As usual, it was a very tough task.



1. Tanya Holliday

25 year old Tanya started off the year with some very fast track times in Adelaide (12:27 for 3000m and 21:37 for 5000m in January) before winning the Australian 20km championship in Hobart in February with 1:34:22. She showed her fitness again in June with a double win at the LBG Canberra - 10 Miles in 1:14:03 and 5km in 23:07 - before another strong walk to win the Victorian 20km championship (1:36:03). She finished as the top Australian at the IAAF World Champs in Moscow in August, coming 45th with 1:35:18 to round off a strong year.



2. Kelly Ruddick

40 year old Kelly had her finest year thus far in 2013, steadily improving her times over all distances race after race and setting a whole swag of new W40 Masters World Records. But it was her walking in the Open division which really showed out and her win in the Australian Open 20km championship in Launceston in September in 1:33:15 actually gave her the top national ranking for that distance for the year. Her PBs have all been set this year - 2000m in 8:22, 3000m in 13:02, 5000m in 21:50, 10km in 45:26 and 20km in 1:33:15.



3. Jemima Montag

15 year old Jemima had another great year, albeit interrupted by a winter away preparing for and competing as a runner at the Maccabi Games in Israel. Her early year form was excellent (6:31 for 1500m, 9:04 for 2000m and 23:57 for 5000m) in the January/February period. That marked the end of her competitive walking until September when she bounced back with times of 23:42 (5000m), 13:13 (3000m), 22:55 (5000m), 8:37 (2000m) and 49:22 (her inaugural 10km road at Fawkner Park in December). Along the way, she convincingly won the Australian All-Schools U16 3000m (13:20) in Townsville in warm conditions. All in all, untouchable in her age group and one of our best juniors at only 15 years of age.



4. Rachel Tallent

This year 20 year old Rachel faced up to the tough transition to senior ranks. She started off with a good 3rd place in the Australian 20km champs in Hobart in February (1:36:50) and then followed up with a further PB in China in March (1:34:53). She walked well in Canberra in June (2nd in the 10 Mile event in 1:16:45) but was an unfortunate DNF in the Summer Universiade in Russia in July. She bounced back in September with 2nd in the Australian 20km winter roadwalk championship in Launceston with 1:38:06 but was then a DNF in Fawkner Park in December. So a slightly inconsistent year but a great first senior year overall.



5. Tayla-Paige Billington

16 year old Tayla-Paige started her year well with third in the Australian Youth Olympics 5000m in Sydney in January (25:26). She then won the Australian U18 5000m walk at the annual T&F Champs in Perth in March in 24:40. It was then a long break from national competition until her second place in the Australian U18 5km road championship in Launceston in September in 25:02. Travelling to NZ in November, she walked her first 10km in an excellent 50:41, then won the Australian All-Schools T&F Champs U18 5000m in a PB 24:01 in December and finally to Fawkner Park that same month for a superb 49:08 for the 10km road to top our junior ranking list and achieve an all important 2014 World Junior ranking performance.



6. Jessica Pickles

19 year old Jess is another one of our young walkers who has had a good year. She won the AA Invitational U20 10km roadwalk in Hobart in February with 49:34 before winning the Australian Junior T&F U20 10,000m walk in Perth in March with 49:14. She was 2nd in the invitational 5000m walk at the Australian Open T&F Champs in Sydney in April with 38:18. We then had to wait for her next national outing when she won the Australian U20 10km roadwalk in Launceston in September in 49:55. She was then selected for the Hong Kong 10km in October and won in 51:29. The only blip in her year was a DQ in her first 20km at Fawkner Park in December. But overall, an excellent year in which she recorded Pbs for 1500m (6:17). 3000m (13:12) and 5000m (23:17).



7. Stephanie Stigwood

23 year old Steph had a very good year which started with a PB time of 48:35 to win the Tasmanian 10,000m Track Championship. She then PB'd again in Hobart in the Australian 20km championship (1:38:33) in February before walking another PB (23:24) in the 5000m invitational walk at the Australian T&F Champs in Sydney in April. She was selected for the Summer Universiade Games in Russia in July and came 16th in 1:45:05. She won the RWA 10km championship in Launceston in September in another good time of 48:36. Her only blip was a DNF at Fawkner Park in December but overall a breakthrough year.



8. Lauren Bourke

23 year old Lauren was another to show big improvement during 2013. She started the year with a PB in the Hobart 20km (1:46:52) in February before good 5000m track walks in the Sydney track classic (23:42) and the Australian T&F Champs (24:10). She did the double in Canberra in June – 3rd in the 10 Mile with 1:23:08 and 2nd in the 5km with 24:52. She improved her 20km PB in Launceston in September for 3rd with 1:43:40 and improved again at Fawkner Park in December for 2nd with 1:42:25. Lots of PBs for the year – 3000m (14:10), 5000m (23:42), 10km (48:09) and 20km (1:42:25).



9. Clara Smith

15 year old Clara is in my yearly list as usual but a quieter year for her with a lot less racing than in past years. She won the U16 3000m at the Australian T&F Champs in Perth in March (13:55), won the Australian U16 5km at the Australian roadwalk champs in Launceston in September (25:21) and was 2nd in the U16 3000m walk at the Australian All-Schools T&F Champs in December (14:03). And a couple of very good PBs to report – 1500m in 6:36 and 5000m in 23:08.



E10. Heather Carr

64 year old Heather Carr had another wonderful year, not only dominating her W60 age group world wide but also competing successfully against her many younger rivals on the local Australian scene. She won 3 golds at the Australian Masters T&F Championships in Canberra in March (1500m 7:39, 5000m 27:35 and 10km 57:13), she was 10th in the Open 10 Mile in Canberra in June (1:37:39), she won 3 golds in the Australian Masters Games in Geelong in October (1500m 7:46, 3000m 16:05, 5000m 27:31) and she won 3 golds in the World Masters Championships in Brazil a couple of weeks later (5000m 28:26, 10km 1:00:19 and 20km 2:08:01). She also recorded a very good 20km time of 2:02:36 in Melbourne in August.



E10. Michelle Thompson

45 year old Michelle continues to dominate the ultra walking scene in Australia. She was the first walker to finish in the Injini 12 Hour Endurance event in Canberra in February (100.986km), she won the Coburg 6 Hour Track Championship in March in Melbourne with a new Australian best of 55.865km, she won the Coburg 24 Hour Track Championship with 184.724km, breaking a whole swathe of Australian records along the way, and finally she walked a wonderful time of 11:58:54 in the Ned Kelly Chase 100km in Wangaratta in October. She also recorded a couple of pretty impressive 20km times in local VRWC competitions - 1:56:41 in June and 1:59:50 in December.



E10. Regan Lamble

22 year old Regan would be the first to admit that she had a patchy year but when she did walk well, it was worth watching. She was a DNF in the 20km in Hobart in February but bounced back with a fine 1:34:03 in China in March and then 3rd in the Sydney Track Classic 5000m with 22:32. She failed to finish the LBG 20 miler in June but again bounced back with 4th in the Dublin RW Grand Prix with 1:35:33. Unfortunately she became sick and was not able to compete in the World Championship 20km in August in Russia and has not made any walk appearances since. She has now relocated from Canberra back to Melbourne to live and hopefully this will provide the necessary boost to ensure that 2014 sees her back to her best.



E10. Jess Rothwell

We were excited to see 24 year old Jess came back after a few years out with injury issues. She started the year well with some great 5000m track walks – 21:28 in the Sydney Track Classic and 21:37 in the Australian T&F invitational walk. She produced a good 20km time of 1:34:13 in the Sesto San Giovanni meet in Italy in May but did not pull up well and consequently fell back a little in the World Champs in Moscow where she finished with 1:38:03. We hope to see her continue her comeback in 2014.