



2010 Country Short Course Championships

Aquamoves, Shepparton, 14-15 August

With the larger numbers of swimmers putting in long hours at training over the cold and wet winter months, the performances over the short course season had seen many showing terrific improvement. Compared to the small squad of 5 who competed at last year's event in Wangaratta, a much larger team of 14 travelled to Shepparton for the Victorian Country Short Course championships. The feedback from the swimmers at the Shepparton Short Course event earlier in the

season had raised concern about the size of the venue, but on arrival the team were pleasantly surprised to find a highly organised event with temporary stands helping to significantly increase the seating. The disastrous warm up chaos of last year was avoided by new warm up arrangements, which did mean an early start for the swimmers but did allow a proper warm up routine to be followed. The organisation for the warm ups had been driven by the Traralgon club coach, and is yet more evidence of Traralgon's success. Other clubs may envy, or even resent, their domination, but it is clear why they are so consistent in producing top quality swimmers. The Waller family arrived looking harassed, having had a challenging evening. Their accommodation had turned out to be reminiscent of 1970s housing commission emergency housing, in a caravan park not used to modern amenities, like mattresses! Their comments that the seats in the temporary stands had more padding than the beds they had tried to sleep in let the rest of the team understand and sympathise. They did manage to arrange more comfortable accommodation for the Saturday night.



Aquamoves packed for the opening ceremony



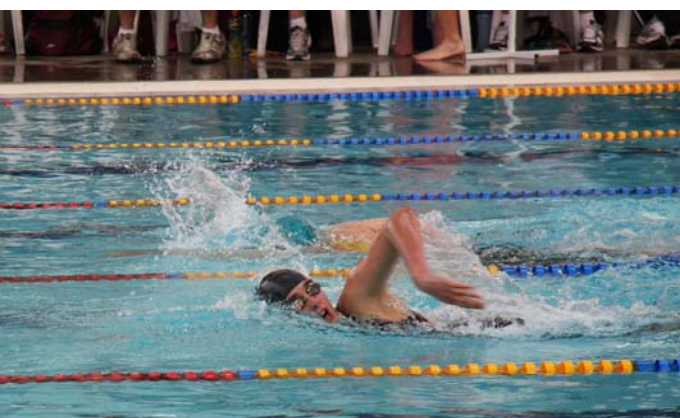
Eleanor pushes hard in the backstroke



Jayde and her classical fly

Racing started after a somewhat odd opening ceremony (which seemed to be more an infomercial for Shepparton). Matthew Slot and Ethan Waller were first up in the boys 11/U 50m fly event, and both ripped off 1-2 second PBs, to set the tone for the team. It is amazing that at the major meets how a good first performance of the day gets the team up. The PBs kept coming, with Callum King setting a new Club age and District record in his 200m freestyle. Rebecca Holmes then provided the first medal of the meet with a sensational swim in her 100m fly, to take silver, with Jayde Robinson also swimming very strongly for 5th, just 0.2 seconds outside the medals. Callum followed

with a great effort in his 100m backstroke, finishing 3rd to take the bronze medal. The excellent performances continued throughout the first session, and Rebecca then backed up with another brilliant swim in her 200m freestyle, leading throughout to win in a new Club open and Central Victorian District record time.



Rebecca races for home in the last lap of the 200 free

The afternoon session continued the pattern of fast swims and PBs. Highlights included Callum (6th) and Jacob Waller (11th) both swimming strong PBs in the 200m IM, and Rebecca finishing 6th in her 100m IM, but the outstanding effort of the afternoon was Isabella Symons' superb backstroke swim in the 3rd slowest heat, where she steeled her opposition and produced a near 5 second PB to finish 5th overall, less than 0.2 seconds from the medals.

Following the swimming those of the team staying overnight met up at the Shepparton Club for an early dinner. This was a very pleasant venue, close to town with good food, and the parents had a very relaxing evening while the swimmers entertained themselves. The older team



Harrison Howell flies at his first Country meet

members then went on an almost traditional wander to the nearby shops for 'dessert' (copious amounts of chocolate featuring prominently), taking some of the younger swimmers with them before moving back to the Cantwell's accommodation - which remained surprisingly neat! It was a relatively early night for the swimmers (and parents) before the challenges of day 2.

Sunday started again with an early warm up, not quite as smooth given the inability of another team's coach to correctly read the warm up timetable and refusal to concede her error. Eventually all was smoothed out and racing continued in the same style as Saturday. The PBs continued with the morning capped by Rebecca taking her 3rd medal of the meet with bronze in the 100 freestyle. After lunch the numbers thinned as swimmers



The team and supporters (with earplugs in, drowning out the raucous GT Aquatic coach)

completed their programs, but the interest was maintained with Jacob

again swimming superbly to grab the bronze medal in the 100m IM, with Callum setting his 2nd club and District record of the meet in finishing 7th. Jacob then backed up with another PB in the 100m fly, a particularly good effort after a gruelling program. The meet ended as it began, with Matthew swimming a near 4 sec PB in his 100m freestyle.



Kate Jordan swims a PB in her breaststroke

As a team, it was a terrific weekend. The swimmers bonded well and supported each other, the parents ended the weekend relaxed (and tired). The performances of the whole team were extremely encouraging for the up coming season. From 55

swims, there were 42 PBs, and the team finished with 5 medals and 3 District records. In particular, some of the younger swimmers showed the benefits of

an increased training program over winter. The other club swimmers can all see the results, which will encourage them that, if they persist at training, the rewards will come. The depth of swimmers in the club bodes very well for a successful summer ahead. It was very encouraging to see some of the new swimmers to the club do so well. All swimmers should be aiming for representation at Countries in Geelong in January, and to be part of the great team experience!



Sophie Cantwell giving her all in the IM



The medallists – Callum, Rebecca and Jacob

