

2010 Australian Combined Events Championships

Domain Athletics Centre, Hobart

February 13-14, 2010

OPEN & U23 WOMEN

The Open & U23 women's heptathlon was missing a few key players, but the competition still shaped up as a tough contest.

Australia's two highest ranked heptathletes - Lauren Foote (SA) and Megan Wheatley (WA) – opted not to compete in Hobart. NSW athlete Jessica Fisher has decided to concentrate on a couple of individual events as her work commitments do not allow sufficient time to train across seven disciplines. U23 Victorian Ashleigh Hamilton concentrated on her Year 12 studies in 2009, and has not done sufficient training to perform at National standard for this meet (but watch for her next season).

However all the rest of Australia's up and coming young heptathletes were present. Fresh from her win at the Queensland titles, University of Queensland athlete Rebecca Robinson, just out of the U23s, would be chasing her first National senior heptathlon title. She would be given stiff opposition by five of her fellow Queenslanders, plus one South Australian, Breanna Hargrave – the oldest in the field. Robinson knew her Queensland opponents well. Shayleigh Gould from the Sunshine Coast was quite capable of 5000 points plus. Griffith University (Gold Coast) student Sarah Wood had not completed a full heptathlon in some considerable time, but had been training under the watchful eye of 1984 Olympic gold medallist in the heptathlon, Glynis Nunn-Cearns. Larna Dieckmann had steadily improved over the last few seasons, and has recently moved to Melbourne where she trains with the EJ Athletics group. Emma Capell would be competing at her first Australian Open championships, and is also an athlete on the improve.

100m hurdles

Cool conditions, a damp track and a very light following breeze greeted the athletes for the start of the first event, the 100m hurdles. Robinson brought the best hurdles credentials into the competition, but Gould had also been known to put together some relatively slippery times.

From the gun Robinson, coached by recently-retired decathlete Ben Turner, put her stamp on the field. By halfway, she had put about a metre between herself and Gould, who in turn had raced away from the chasing pack. Robinson continued to press to the finish line, crossing in a solid 14.26s. Gould was a clear second in 14.80. The next three places were quite tight. Dieckmann (15.35) sneaked through ahead of Capell (15.43) and Wood (15.48), with Hargrave almost a second further back in 16.35.

Robinson had picked up 942 points for her performance, a 74 point lead over Gould (868). Dieckmann (796), Capell (786) and Wood (779) were all closely bunched, while Hargrave would have to do some catch up work in the following events.

Pictured right: *Robinson (lane 8) leads Gould (lane 4), Capell (lane 3), Wood (lane 5), Dieckmann (lane 6) and Hargrave (partially obscured – lane 4)*



High Jump

As the leaders Robinson and Gould moved on to the second event – high jump – they would be going from one of their best events to probably their worst. Here was an opportunity for the other girls to win back lost ground.

The high jump fan had had some patching done to the synthetic surface, but where the landing pit had been set up there was a spot where a thin film of water from the overnight showers had collected. Wood came a cropper in one of her warm up jumps, with her right foot sliding out from under her in the middle of the curve. She hit the ground reasonably heavily, with some resultant bruising on the top of her right thigh. To their credit the officials, upon an approach from the coaches, agreed to move the landing area so that athletes could take off from the newly patched area. The coaches assisted the officials to move the pits, and the competition proceeded in greater safety.

Both Robinson and Gould managed to negotiate 1.50m but could go no further. They then had to sit and watch as the bar continued to be raised higher and higher. All the others were still in the competition as the bar was raised from 1.62m to 1.65m. Capell was the only one to falter at this height while Hargrave, Dieckmann and Wood continued on. Hargrave and Dieckmann could not negotiate 1.68m, leaving just Wood. Unfortunately for Wood, 1.71m proved too much on the day.



Pictured above: [Left: Rebecca Robinson](#) [Centre: Breanna Hargrave](#) [Right: Larna Dieckmann](#)

The vertical jumping event had caused a rearrangement of positions on the points tally. Robinson had been shunted to third, and Gould dropped to second last position.

After two events, the placings were:

Wood 1609, Dieckmann 1591, Robinson 1563, Capell 1545, Gould 1489, Hargrave 1467

Shot Put

In the shot put Rebecca Robinson began her quest to gather in the field. Despite being one of the shortest in the field, Robinson demonstrated good technique and strength to punch the 4kg ball out beyond twelve metres. Her best of 12.04m was a new personal best, earning 664 points.

Pictured right: [Sarah Wood](#)



Gould was also looking to make up lost ground. However, her best of 10.56m (566pts), while the second best throw of the competition, made little inroads into the lead of Wood and Dieckmann, who threw 10.32m (550pts) and 10.30m (549pts) respectively.

Hargrave (8.87) and Capell (8.53) lost valuable ground as Gould moved almost 80 points ahead of Capell, and remained within 100 points of the leading three.



Pictured far left: *Breanna Hargrave*

Pictured immediate left: *Rebecca Robinson*

After three events:

Robinson 2227, Wood 2159,
Dieckmann 2140, Gould 2055,
Capell 1979, Hargrave 1923

200m

Conditions had improved at the track in Hobart by the time the 200m was scheduled to start. The temperature was warmer, the track was drier, and the breeze, though light, would be behind the athletes throughout the bend and into the straight. Robinson had only once run under 25 seconds for 200m, her best being a windy 24.97. She had her sights set on running sub-25 again, but this time without the 'w'. Her biggest challenge would once again come from Gould, who had fought out many close tussles with Robinson in the past. The latest has been at the Queensland Combined Events Championships when Gould had pipped Robinson by a mere one-hundredth of a second.

The race itself lived up to expectations. Gould and Robinson went hammer and tongs throughout the half-lapper, and were locked together at the finish. When the results came through from the photo finish, it was Rebecca Robinson who got the nod. Even more pleasing for Robinson was the time - a huge new legal PB of 24.88, AND one-hundredth of a second ahead of Shayleigh Gould. The tables had been turned.

Larna Dieckmann (25.21) was not far behind and earned enough points to move into second place overall. However, Wood lost her place in the top three when she could manage only 27.17. Emma Capell (28.00) and Breanna Hargrave (28.34) looked destined to be fighting out the final two placings as they lost further ground to the field.

At the end of Day One, Rebecca Robinson had set two individual PBs in the shot and 200m, and would now add a Day One points score PB as well.

Final Day One scores:

Robinson 3125, Dieckmann 3008, Gould 2952, Wood 2857, Capell 2610, Hargrave 2527

DAY TWO

Long Jump

Rebecca Robinson's Day Two started the same way she had finished Day One – with a new PB. On her third attempt in the long jump, she powered down the runway, and despite getting just her

toes on the board, she flew out to 5.70m. At the Queensland Championships in late January, Robinson had jumped 5.56m with the benefit of a 3.7m/s tail wind. In Hobart the breeze was a legal 1.2m/s.

Shayleigh Gould was also demonstrating better form than she had at the Queensland Titles. In Brisbane she had only managed a 5.07m performance. Here in Hobart she got the second best jump of the competition – 5.30m. Dieckmann rode a 3.3m/s breeze to her best jump - 5.23m.

Hargrave (5.02) just scraped past the five metre mark, while Wood (4.88) and Capell (4.80) had an unhappy day at the office.

With two events remaining, Robinson had skipped away to a 253 point lead over Dieckmann, while Dieckmann in turn was looking over her shoulder at a fast-approaching Gould. Wood was dropping into “no-man’s land”, 111 points behind the leading three and 268 points ahead of the final duo.

After five events:

Robinson 3884, Dieckmann 3631, Gould 3595, Wood 3384, Capell 3116, Hargrave 3092

Javelin

While the other four women all throw over thirty metres in the javelin, Larna Dieckmann faltered in this discipline, managing a best throw of only 26.92m. Wood (33.40), Gould (33.22) and Robinson (32.96) were all very close with a points spread of only 12 points. Capell (31.69) was not far off the pace, with Hargrave (30.09) just a little further adrift. Dieckmann’s error had opened the door to Gould, and she was happy to walk right through – into second position on the ladder. Sarah Wood had gained ground on Dieckmann, but lost ground to Gould. In one of those strange vagaries of the Combined Events, Wood had actually lost ground to the top three, sitting 124 points outside the medal positions.

With one event remaining:

Robinson 4413, Gould 4133, Dieckmann 4049, Wood 3925, Capell 3625, Hargrave 3570

800m

The 800m was now going to be a cracker! Unless Sarah Wood could show some totally unexpected form over the two-lap distance, the medals in the Open women’s event would be fought out between the three current leaders. Favourite would have to be Shayleigh Gould. She was known to consistently run around 2:15 (2:15.95 at the Queensland Championships). Dieckmann also had great two lap credentials, and could be expected to run sub-2:20. However, Robinson was also no slouch over this distance and would be hoping to give 2:20 a serious nudge.

From the gun Gould went to the lead. She was taking her destiny into her own hands. Whatever the girls did behind her, she was going to leave no questions asked about her own commitment. Behind her Dieckmann and Robinson took up the challenge. Gould ran a magnificent 600m, but began to flag in the last 200m. Robinson, on coach’s instructions, began a little more conservatively than she had in Brisbane, and the plan paid dividends when she found she still had energy left at the closing stages of the race.

Despite struggling in the last 100m, Gould held on to finish with the fine time of 2:14.96. Robinson was next to finish in yet another PB – 2:20.15. Dieckmann was not far behind in the palindromic time of 2:22.22. The medal positions had been decided. Hargrave was next to finish in yet another sub-2:30 time - 2:28.50. Wood managed 2:37.54, which would only prove good enough for fourth place in the Open competition. Emma Capell ran almost six seconds faster than she had at the Qld Championships, but her time of 2:52.84 allowed Hargrave to jump ahead of her in the overall standings.

When the final tally was announced, Robinson emerged as the 2010 Australian champion. Both she (5234) and Shayleigh Gould (5026) had exceeded the 5000 point barrier. Dieckmann (4843) was less than 200 points behind, with Wood (4526) just over 300 points further adrift. Hargrave (4282) had saved her best until last to push Capell (4060) down into the final placing.

Final standings (Open Women):
Robinson 5234 (PB), Gould 5026, Dieckmann 4843, Wood 4526, Hargrave 4282, Capell 4060



Women's Open Heptathlon

Left to right: Emma Capell (7th), Breanna Hargrave (6th), Shayleigh Gould (2nd), Rebecca Robinson (1st), Larna Dieckmann (3rd), Sarah Wood (4th)

U23:

All competitors in the U23 were from Queensland, so Gould, Dieckmann, Wood and Capell took out the quadrella



Women's U23 Heptathlon

Left to right: Emma Capell (4th), Larna Dieckmann (2nd), Shayleigh Gould (1st), Sarah Wood (3rd)

Peter Hannan

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