

## **2010 Australian Combined Events Championships**

Domain Athletics Centre, Hobart

February 13-14, 2010

### **U17 WOMEN**

A reasonably sized field of six athletes arrived in Hobart to contest the girls' under 17 championships.

Queensland had two representatives, Jasmine Standring and Katherine Stevens. Victoria also had Grace Cotton and Tanya Higgs. Western Australia was represented by Loughlyn Webb. The final competitor was Amie Blanden from South Australia.

Four of the participants had competed at the previous year's Australian Championships in the U16 division – Blanden, Cotton, Standring and Webb.

At those 2009 U16 championships, Webb had placed first, Cotton second, Standring fourth and Blanden fifth. Higgs had not contested the Australian titles, which were held in late January, but had captured the Victorian U16 title in late February. Stevens was a newcomer, having contested her first heptathlon at the 2010 Queensland Championships in late January.

The only change from 2009 to the disciplines in which the girls would compete was the change from 90m hurdles to 100m hurdles. The height remained the same at 76cm.

It would be of great interest to see which girls had improved in the twelve months since their previous year's performances.

### **DAY ONE**

#### **100m hurdles**

Last year's gold medallist, Loughlyn Webb had been the quickest over the 90 hurdles (14.02) in 2009. She was once again the quickest over the barriers in 2010, this time over the 100m distance. Predictably, given the extra ten metres to run, her time (15.17) was about one second slower than in 2009.

The surprise packet in the first event was Amie Blanden from South Australia. Third last year in this discipline behind Webb and Grace Cotton, Blanden moved up a place in 2010 to finish second. Her time of 15.71s was only about 0.6 second slower than her 2009 effort. Cotton was third in 16.03 (about 1.5s slower than in 2009), followed by Stevens (16.19), Higgs (16.20 – about 2s slower) and Standring (16.85 – about 0.7s slower).

After one event:

Webb 819, Blanden 750, Cotton 711, Stevens 691, Higgs 690, Standring 614

#### **High Jump**

Loughlyn Webb struck some trouble in the high jump. Her run up marker either got caught on another athlete's spikes or blew away from its position. Webb panicked a little and did not re-locate the marker correctly. The consequence was a run up which was way too wide. This didn't allow Webb to get adequate lean-away, and she tended to travel too far along, and spend too much time on top of, the bar. As a consequence, Webb only cleared 1.54m, six centimetres lower than in 2009. Tanya Higgs, who also cleared 1.54m, was up 12cm on her 2009 Victorian U16 Championships form. Grace Cotton was up by one increment (3cm) on her 2009 form, clearing 1.51m. Blanden continued her improved form, clearing 1.57m in comparison with 2009's 1.51m. Standring was one increment down on her 2009 performance clearing only 1.42m. Stevens, who had cleared 1.43m at the Queensland Championships, could only manage 1.39m in Hobart.

Webb retained the lead, but Blanden in second had closed the gap to only 34 points. Higgs jumped up two places into third position just under 100 points behind Blanden. Higgs was followed closely by Grace Cotton a further 13 points back. Stevens was now 150 points behind Cotton, but still 45 points ahead of Standring.

After two events:

Webb 1485, Blanden 1451, Higgs 1356, Cotton 1343, Stevens 1193, Standring 1148

## **Shot Put**

Loughlyn Webb made it three wins from three starts in the shot put with a best throw of 9.76m. She had improved from 2009, but by only 9cm. Once again Blanden was right on Webb's hammer. Her throw of 9.62m was not only just 14cm behind Webb, but was a huge 3.15m better than her throw from 2009!

Higgs (8.99), Cotton (8.81) and Standring (8.34) all threw in the eight metre range, and were 40cm, 59cm and 50cm better respectively than their 2009 Championships form. Stevens (7.02m) was down by 24cm from her 2010 Queensland Championships performance.

Webb was now just one point short of reaching 2000 points. Blanden was still within striking distance 43 points further back. Higgs had started to lose a bit of contact with the lead two, lying over 130 points further behind. While Cotton had lost a few more points to Higgs, she was still only 25 points behind her fellow Victorian. Queenslanders Standring and Stevens swapped places at the rear of the field, but were now in serious danger of losing contact with the field ahead of them.

After three events:

Webb 1999, Blanden 1956, Higgs 1820, Cotton 1795, Standring 1569, Stevens 1529

## **200m**

In 2009, Loughlyn Webb had continually run in the 27 second range for her 200s in heptathlons. At the 2009 Australian titles, she had run 27.20. Would she be able to improve on this in 2010, given that the winds had been favourable during the day for the 200m runners?

Webb could indeed run faster – much faster! Webb's run of 26.33 was almost a second quicker than in 2009. She clobbered the opposition, with the next best being Higgs (27.39) and Cotton (27.86). While Higgs' time was comparable to what she had run at the Victorian titles in 2009, it was inherently an inferior performance as her Victorian titles run was into a 1.7m/s head wind, while in Hobart the girls had the benefit of a 0.9m/s following breeze. Cotton however, was about half a second up on where she had been in 2009 (28.30). Standring (28.54) had improved by 0.35s, and Blanden (29.23) by 0.98s. Stevens (28.21) was once again down (by 0.14s) on her Qld Championships form.

Webb had taken all four events on Day One. Higgs' 200m effort had seen her jump up into second place, 278 points behind Webb, and a mere 7 points ahead of Blanden. Cotton remained in fourth, but was now 58 points behind third place. Standring held onto fifth, but only 26 points ahead of fellow Queenslanders Stevens.

Final Day One scores:

Webb 2768, Higgs 2500, Blanden 2493, Cotton 2437, Standring 2158, Stevens 2143

## **DAY TWO**

### **Long Jump**

When Day Two began it appeared that Loughlyn Webb was still reading from the same script as Day One. Webb won the first event, the long jump, with a performance (5.42m) slightly better than in 2009 (5.31m). Amie Blanden once again surprised to finish second, this time with a new PB (5.28m), and 26cm better than she had jumped at the same venue in early 2009.

Cotton's performance in placing third (5.04m) was slightly behind her 2009 effort (5.09m), but given that last year she had a 3.0m/s tail wind, and this year the wind was only +1.1m/s, the performance was probably slightly better.

Higg's 4.91m was a few centimetres better than the 4.83m she had jumped in 2009, while Standring's 4.51m exactly matched her jump from 2009! Even though she caught the biggest breeze of the competition (3.5m/s) Stevens once again could not repeat her Queensland Championships form, dropping 6cm short with a best of 4.70m in Hobart.

*Pictured on following page, a gallery of photos from the Girls' U17 long jump competition:*



*South Australian Amie Blanden*



*Grace Cotton (Victoria) strikes some unintentionally dramatic poses during the long jump*



*Tanya Higgs (Victoria)*

*Higgs*

*Jasmine Standing (Qld)*



*Western Australian Loughlyn Webb*

In 2010, Webb had won the overall competition by over 500 points. Would she be able to repeat that performance in 2010? With two events remaining, Webb's lead was now 315 points. Blanden was still in the silver medal position, with Higgs 95 points further back. Cotton was still stalking Higgs, and had reduced the gap separating them from 63 points to 28 points. It was becoming apparent that, even if they could produce outstanding performances in the last two events, Standing and Stevens had left their runs too late, lying 361 and 418 points respectively behind Cotton.

After five events:

Webb 3445, Blanden 3130, Higgs 3035, Cotton 3007, Stevens 2646, Standing 2589

### **Javelin**

The best javelin performances in the older age groups at these 2010 Championships were Sarah Wood's 33.40m and Shayleigh Gould's 33.22m in the Open/U23 age division.

The U17 girls demonstrated some good potential talent in this discipline, with three of them producing throws better than the older girls' bests. Loughlyn Webb, who had thrown 35.59m in 2009, produced a best in 2010 beyond thirty-six metres (36.64). Amie Blanden was another U17 girl to upstage her older heptathlon counterparts. In 2010 Blanden superseded her 2009 best (32.01) with a 34.09m effort. While Jasmine Standing (33.86) was yet a third U17 competitor to put out a throw better than the Open girls, she was the best part of a metre down from last year (34.58m). Higgs was another to throw beyond thirty metres (32.58m) but like Standing, she was not up to her 2009 form (33.23m).

Unfortunately Cotton had improved little in spear-throwing in the past 12 months, and this was still her poorest event points-wise. Her best throw measured only 22.88m, better than 2009's 21.53m, but still over 210 points behind the nearest girl she was chasing, Tanya Higgs.

Queenslander Katherine Stevens had thrown 25.06m at the Qld Championships, but lost over a metre in Hobart, throwing only 23.85m, and relinquishing fifth place to Jasmine Standing to the tune of 132 points.

With one event remaining:  
Webb 4048, Blanden 3684, Higgs 3561, Cotton 3350, Standing 3139, Stevens 3007



*Pictured above: Grace Cotton in action in the javelin*



*Pictured above: Amie Blanden (SA)*



*Pictured above: Jasmine Standing (Queensland)*

## 800m

Six events completed. Loughlyn Webb had won all six, and was 364 points ahead of South Australian Amie Blanden. Blanden in turn was 123 points ahead of Victorian Tanya Higgs, with Grace Cotton another 211 points further back. In one of those strange coincidences Standring was also exactly 211 points behind Grace Cotton. 132 points behind Standring was Katherine Stevens.

Would any of the athletes be able to use their 800m performances to affect their relative positions on the overall points table?

Of those competing in 2010 in Hobart, and using the 2009 performances as a guide Grace Cotton should be the one to set the standard in 2010. She had run sub-2:30 at the 2009 Championships (2:29.64). Could she repeat or better that in 2010?

In 2009, both Blanden (2:43.99) and Webb (2:46.21) had run around 2:45. Could they improve on that this year?

Based on her Qld Championships time (2:42.09), Stevens might be expected to run around 2:40. At their 2009 Championships Higgs had run around 2:35 and Standring about 2:33. How would they shape up in 2010?

In order of finishing:

Cotton?	An improvement by 0.39 seconds – 2:29.25.
Higgs?	An improvement by 3.8 seconds – 2:31.83.
Standring?	Slower by 2.23 seconds – 2:35.37
Webb?	Big improvement by <u>almost 10 seconds</u> – 2:36.59!!
Stevens?	Quicker by 2.36 seconds – 2:39.73
Blanden?	Quicker by more than 3.5 seconds - 2:40.39.

Loughlyn Webb had won six of the seven disciplines. Amie Blanden's improvement in 2010 ensured that Webb would not be able to repeat her 500 point-plus winning margin, but she still had a 409 point buffer at the finish. Blanden managed to hold off the late challenge from Tanya Higgs, and took the silver by a narrow 21 point margin. Higgs finished almost 180 points clear of Grace Cotton. She, in turn, was almost 290 points ahead of Jasmine Standring, while Katherine Stevens was about 180 points further back.

Despite the change from 90m hurdles in 2009 to 100m hurdles in 2010, the first two placegetters Loughlyn Webb and Amie Blanden had actually improved on their 2009 scores. All the others were down by varying amounts.

Webb improved her overall score by 14 points from 4647 in 2009 to 4661 in 2010.

Blanden was the "big improver", adding a massive 417 points to her 2009 score of 3835 to reach 4252 in 2010.

Tanya Higgs dropped by 43 points from 4274 to 4231.

Cotton dropped by 82 points from 4134 to 4052.

Standring was 100 points down - 3866 points fell to 3766.

Stevens' Qld score of 3645 was 62 points better than her Australian score of 3583.

Final scores:

Webb 4661, Blanden 4252, Higgs 4231, Cotton 4052, Standring 3766, Stevens 3583

As per combined events tradition, when the competitors were called to the medal presentation area, all competitors were invited down. Unfortunately, only five of the six girls reported. Grace Cotton must have had to leave early (plane flight?), as she was the only one not to join the others in the celebration of having completed the "seven struggles".



*Pictured (from left to right):* Katherine Stevens (6<sup>th</sup>), Jasmine Standring (5<sup>th</sup>), Amie Blanden (2<sup>nd</sup>), Loughlyn Webb (1<sup>st</sup>), Tanya Higgs (3<sup>rd</sup>). *Missing:* Grace Cotton (4<sup>th</sup>)

**Peter Hannan**  
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Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2010