

# **New Zealand Combined Events Championships**

**9-10<sup>th</sup> of February 2008**

**Porritt Stadium, Hamilton**

Text & Pictures by Brent Booker

The feature event of the championship was the **Senior Women's heptathlon**. Rebecca Wardell (Canterbury) and Sarah Cowley (Auckland) were both aiming for the NZ Olympic selection standard of 6000 points. Rebecca was the favourite on paper, with a recent score of 5714 points. Sarah was also in good form coming into the championships with a 5634 heptathlon from a couple of months earlier. Rounding out the field was Australian Theodora Spathis whose most recent heptathlon was 5035 points total.

## **100m Hurdles**

Conditions were fine with gentle tail winds as the women settled into their blocks. The gun fired and Sarah was able to gain a slight advantage as the race progressed, she came off the last hurdle only just in the lead. The finish line saw Sarah edging Rebecca by 0.13s, 14.11s to 14.24s (+0.7). Theodora finished third in 15.89s. The points were; Sarah 963, Rebecca 945 and Theodora 728.



Sarah Cowley (centre) leads off the last hurdle. Rebecca Wardell is second and Theodora Spathis is third

## **High Jump**

Rebecca had trouble on her opening height, eventually showing good composure to gain a clearance on her third attempt. She ended the competition with a 1.61m clearance and 747 points. Theodora continued onto the next height gaining 36 points on Rebecca with her 1.64m clearance. Sarah looked in great form at her lower heights and she did not disappoint at the higher heights either. Clearances at

1.79m then 1.82m saw Sarah extend her lead. She amassed 1003 points for the best scoring performance of the weekend.



Sarah Cowley clearing 1.82m

### **Shot Put**

Sarah had won the first two events but Rebecca is a stronger shot putter and she was expected to take out this event. The best put of 13.82m did indeed go to Rebecca. She gained back 118 points on Sarah, whose best effort was 12.04m. Theodora was third with an 11.40m throw.

### **200m**

The athletes had a favourable 2m/s tail wind in the 200m and the competition between the top two athletes was extremely close. The clock stopped with only 0.12s between the winner Rebecca (24.84s) and Sarah (24.96s).

This left the two of them with two wins apiece on day one. The biggest difference between them was in the high jump and this proved decisive with Sarah carrying a lead of 144 points going into day two. Sarah had 3520 points, Rebecca 3376 points and Theodora was on 2865 points after a 26.75s 200m

Rebecca Wardell edges Sarah Cowley in the 200m





Rebecca Wardell 5.45m



Theodora Spathis 5.39m

### Long Jump

The long jump did not go to plan for either Sarah or Rebecca. Both athletes fouled their first two jumps. Their final jumps would be all or nothing. Rebecca escaped the heptathlete's worst nightmare, securing a 5.45m jump with a zero wind reading. Sarah was not so fortunate; a red flag was raised to indicate a foul and her points total stayed where it was after the 200m. Theodora jumped 5.39m to move into second place overall, behind Rebecca who gained the lead for the first time.

### Javelin Throw

Rebecca extended her lead with the best throw of the competition of 46.00m. Sarah came back from the disappointment of the long jump to get the next best throw of 37.20m. Theodora was close behind at 36.10m.



Rebecca Wardell 46.00m



Sarah Cowley 37.20m

## 800m

The placings were not in doubt going into the 800m. Rebecca had a lead of 719 points over Theodora and Sarah was out of the picture due to her long jump not scoring any points. Sarah started the race but pulled out, leaving her overall total at 4134 from the five events that scored points. The other two athletes raced on with Rebecca gaining the final victory in 2:23.1s. Theodora trailed by just over two seconds to complete the run in 2:25.9s and finish with 4871 points.

Rebecca's total was 5626 points, claiming the New Zealand heptathlon title for 2007-'08.



Rebecca leads Theodora home in the 800m

## Mens Decathlon

Only one competitor lined up for the senior men's decathlon as both Brent Newdick and Scott McLaren were forced to pull out due to injuries. Kyle McCarthy from Australia had registered with a Hamilton club, as he was born in Hamilton. He competed for Waikato Bay of Plenty. His final score of 6233 points was well below his best, as he no heighted in the pole vault. When he vaulted it was raining so conditions were very difficult. He was unlucky in knocking the bar off with his hand on his final attempt at his opening height after getting his body over the bar.



Kyle McCarthy (SM) wins the 100m from Cameron Sinclair (M19) & Nathan Napier (M19)



Kyle McCarthy about to knock the bar off at 4.20m

## M19 Decathlon

Nathan Napier from Otago beat Cameron Sinclair of Athletics Carterton. The points were 4615 for first and 3745 for second. Cameron was the better athlete in all the running events except the hurdles. Nathan won all the field events, except the pole vault, where he gained no height in the wet conditions.

## M16 Octathlon



100m start from left to right, Mitchell Wood, James Doyle & Michael Cochrane

Three strong athletes fought out the octathlon; James Doyle (Auckland), Michael Cochrane and Mitchell Wood (both Waikato Bay of Plenty). Mitchell led through the first two events winning both the 100m and long jump, with performances of 11.66s and 6.19m. James dominated the shot put bagging the only score over 800 points for the weekend. His throw of 16.56m gave him 886 points and the lead. The last event of the day, the 400m, was won by Michael in 52.28s. At the end of day one the scores were; James 2828, Mitchell 2539 and Michael 2551.

On day two Michael was the most efficient hurdler, winning the 110m hurdles in 15.70s. He moved into second place for the first time, behind James, with Mitchell dropping back to third. The next three events were all won by James. His performances were 1.80m high jump, 46.87m javelin and 2:51.29s 1000m. His winning total was 5405, Michael held on for second, scoring 4938 and Mitchell was third with 4617 points.

## W16 Heptathlon

Georgina Allison of Canterbury was the best all-around athlete in this competition, winning the 100m hurdles, 200m, javelin and 800m events. Her best performance was a 15.36s 100m hurdles into a 0.5m/s headwind. Her winning score was 4173 points. Second place went to Kirsten Hurley from Auckland. Her final score was 3989 and her best effort was a 1.64m high jump, which won that event. Third place went to Katherine Camp of Waikato Bay of Plenty. She won the long jump at 4.90m and had a final points tally of 3597.



Georgina Allison 15.36s



Kirsten Hurley 1.64m

### W19 Heptathlon

Waikato Bay of Plenty athletes Sarah Yardley and Tracey Hale battled out a close competition right through to the 800m. Tracey proved to be the best runner in the field winning the 100m hurdles, 200m and 800m. Her most profitable event was the 100m hurdles where she gained 840 points for a 15.01s time. Sarah was the stronger thrower and she won the long jump with a 5.24m leap. Sarah led the competition going into the 800m where she worked hard to stay within a second of Tracey's winning time of 2:31.9s. The margin was small enough to guarantee Sarah the title, 4153 to 3925 points. Third place went to Louise Thayer representing Otago. Her best performance was a 1.64m winning effort in the high jump. Her overall total was 3377 points.



Tracey Hale leads Sarah Yardley in 100m hurdles  
Louise Thayer 1.64m



Tracey Hale followed by Sarah Yardley & Louise Thayer in the 800m