

Queensland U16, U18 Schools Combined Events Championships & Invitational Combined Events

Gold Coast City Athletics Track 15th- 16th November 2008

by Peter Hannan

The Queensland U16 & U18 All Schools Combined Events Championships were held at the Gold Coast City Athletics Track on Saturday 15th November and Sunday 16th November.

The event had been advertised as an U20 Schools Combined Events Championships as well, but there were no entrants in this age group from any schools competitors. The entries for the female section of the competition were quite good considering the time of year, with eight girls entered in the U16 heptathlon, and five girls in the U18 heptathlon. This augured well for an intriguing competition. Some of the girls had experienced a combined events competition before, but for some it would be their first outing in a two-day heptathlon.

For the boys' competitions, there were only two starters in the U16 men – Kade Jennings and Lindsay Newton-Smith, while in the U18 octathlon, four boys put their names forward to contest the event – Robert Fenwick, Sam Hegarty, Cameron Lane and Sam Warrener.

Both boys' competitions promised much.

In 2007 in the Qld U16 heptathlon, Sam Hegarty had won from Robert Fenwick, while Lindsay Newton-Smith and Kade Jennings placed third and fourth respectively.

This year Hegarty and Fenwick had moved up an age group, while Newton-Smith and Jennings remained in the U16 age group.

Queensland turned on a pre-summer scorcher for the first day, with temperatures into the thirties. Winds tended to be swirling at times, but predominantly from the north-west which, given the alignment of the Gold Coast track, meant head winds (from the left front) for most track events during the day. In the first sprints of the day, winds varied from -3.7m/s to +2.4m/s!

U16 boys' heptathlon.

Day One

On Day One, the talented and strongly-built Kade Jennings dominated his opponent, Lindsay Newton-Smith, winning all four of the first day events. Having said that, Newton-Smith was never far behind Jennings in any event.

Jennings took the 100m hurdles (14.60 to 14.71 with a 2.3m/s head wind). This established a lead of 13 points, 759 to 746.

In the shot put Jennings pushed the steel ball out to 13.60m, more than a metre ahead of Newton-Smith's 12.29m. This gained Jennings a further 704 points, adding 80 more to his lead over Newton-Smith who earned 624 points for his effort.

In the high jump, Newton-Smith cleared 1.74m for 577 points, but Jennings went one height better, clearing 1.77m for 602 points. Jennings now led by 118 points heading into the final event of Day one, the 200m.

Once again Jennings turned back the challenge of Newton-Smith running 23.84 into a 2.5m/s head wind (707pts), with Newton-Smith hot on his heels running 24.53 (646pts).

After day one, Jennings held a commanding 179 point lead over Newton-Smith – 2772 points to 2593.

As an indication of the quality of the first day performance of Jennings, his score would have led last year's winner Sam Hegarty, by 133 points at the same stage in the 2007 event.

Newton-Smith showed in 2007 that he is a talented javelin thrower and middle distance runner, but would this be enough on Day Two to overhaul the commanding lead of Jennings, especially given Jennings' known talent in the long jump?

Day Two

On Day Two, Jennings continued in the same vein as on Saturday. He won the first event of the day - the long jump - with a leap of 6.39m (673), but the never-say-die Newton-Smith tried to stay as close as possible with a best leap of 6.02m for 371 points. Inexorably, Jennings (3445) was moving further ahead of Newton-Smith (2964). However, the next event – the javelin is one of Jennings' worst and one of Newton-Smith's best. Would this see the beginning of a serious fight-back from the Jimboomba-based athlete?

Such was indeed the case, with Jennings' PB throw of 39.11m well short of the huge 54.06m performance of Newton-Smith. Suddenly the game was on in earnest as Newton-Smith slashed his 481 point deficit to just 41 points with one event - the 1000m - to go. Both boys were on very respectable scores – Jennings on 3874 and Newton-Smith on 3833.

The last time Jennings had met Newton-Smith in a combined event, they had contested a 1500m race. Newton-Smith had been the victor by 11 seconds.

This time, the race was over 1000m and Newton-Smith would have to defeat Jennings by a little over four seconds to snatch the title at the death.

From the gun, Newton-Smith pushed hard, but Jennings stuck with him as though attached by a rope. 400m went by and then 800m – still the same gap. But with 200m to go, Newton-Smith decided it was ‘do or die’ time. He changed the gears into over-drive and charged for home. To his credit, Jennings did everything he could to stay with him, but gradually the gap increased. The small crowd left in the grandstand got behind both lads as they fought for supremacy. Newton-Smith hit the line with a comfortable gap, but was it far enough? Within a short space of time, the photo had been read and the result was confirmed. Newton-Smith had beaten Jennings by a tick under three seconds. Oh so close, but not enough to wrest the title.

Kade Jennings took the gold for the 2008 title, with a score of 4506, just 14 points ahead of the gutsy Lindsay Newton-Smith on 4492.

U18 boys’ octathlon.

Day One

The U18 event would pit two talented boys from the Darling Downs area – Sam Hegarty and Sam Warrener - against two Brisbane-based lads – Cameron Lane and Robert Fenwick. Two were novices – Lane and Warrener – and two – Hegarty and Fenwick – now had a few combined events competitions behind them.

From the outset, Fenwick showed he was bringing speed to the competition table, running strongly into a 0.2 m/s head wind to take out the 100m in 11.53 from Lane (12.15), Hegarty (12.29) and Warrener (12.59). Early bragging rights to Fenwick!

After one event:

Fenwick 746, Lane 622, Hegarty 606, Warrener 540.

In the long jump, Fenwick would have been hopeful of capitalizing on this superior speed to extend his lead, but his competition became a little unstuck when he could not nail his technique and recorded a below average 5.33m with a 1.1m/s tail wind, for a paltry 447 points.

Warrener (5.53m) and Lane (5.58m) both broke the sand in the mid-five metre range, but Hegarty made the most of Fenwick’s misfortune, sailing 6.24m for 639 points.

After two events:

Hegarty 1245, Fenwick 1193, Lane 1120, Warrener 1027.

In the shot put, Hegarty was expected to dominate. However, while Hegarty hurled the 5kg steel ball out to 13.35m and 689pts, Fenwick was not all that far behind, also surpassing 13 metres with his best effort of 13.06m garnering 671pts. Lane and Warrener both landed the shot in the 12m range, recording 12.54m and 12.31m respectively.

After three events:

Hegarty 1934, Fenwick 1864, Lane 1759, Warrener 1652.

In the 400m, Fenwick again would hope to use his speed to eat into Hegarty’s 70 point lead. While Fenwick did indeed cross the line first in 52.45 for 705 points, Hegarty stuck as close to him as possible, finishing within a second of his opponent (53.35) to score 667 points and retain his competition lead. Lane held firm to third place with a run of 55.13 (594pts) ahead of Warrener’s 56.58 (537pts).

At the end of a sweltering Day One, Hegarty was once again being hotly pursued by his long-time rival Fenwick.

Scores at the end of Day One:

Hegarty 2601, Fenwick 2569, Lane 2353, Warrener 2189.

Day Two

Day Two began with the 110m hurdles, and there was carnage on the track. Pushing into a 2.2m/s head wind, Fenwick got his stride pattern muddled from the first hurdle and eventually fell after hitting the fifth heavily. A barrel roll over the left shoulder and then Fenwick was back on his feet chasing the leaders. He eventually reached the finish line in 19.60 seconds. Lane and Hegarty had no major issues with the barriers and crossed the line in 16.17 and 16.73 respectively. Warrener had problems of his own with the hurdles, falling at the last and lying motionless on his back for a moment before realizing that he hadn’t yet crossed the finish line! Scrambling to his feet, Warrener stopped the clock in 23.19s, still earning some points.

Hegarty had extended his lead to over 200 points. It was looking more and more difficult for the other boys to have any chance of overhauling Hegarty. Lane moved into second place by virtue of Fenwick’s misfortune over the sticks.

After five events:

Hegarty 3275, Lane 3067, Fenwick 2950, Warrener 2330.

On to the high jump and the strange vagaries of the combined events once more were on display. The wheels fell off the Hegarty campaign when he no-heighted at his opening height of 1.50m. No points! This would have been doubly disappointing for Hegarty given that he had cleared 1.59m in the Octathlon in Townsville at the end of September.

Fenwick cleared 1.59m, Warrener managed 1.65m and Lane took over the outright lead clearing 1.74m.

From having a commanding lead, Hegarty now sat in third, while the newcomer Lane was now the man to catch.

After six events:

Lane 3644, Fenwick 3407, Hegarty 3275, Warrener 2834.

Hegarty, a very good javelin thrower would be hoping to make inroads into the lead of the boys ahead of him, but the weather was also beginning to play a hand. An electrical storm blew through the Gold Coast in mid-afternoon, and while the lightning and imminent hail had disappeared, the rain persisted, and the runway was quite wet.

Hegarty did produce a big throw – 54.54m. Lane was next best with 47.63m, but Hegarty had chopped 102 points out of Lane's lead. Warrener (44.37m) and Fenwick (42.70m) both managed to pass the forty metre line, but Hegarty's big throw had now moved him ahead of Fenwick into second place.

With only the 1000m event to go, the scores were:

Lane 4198, Hegarty 3931, Fenwick 3888, Warrener 3340.

In the two and a half lap event, Hegarty went hard from the gun. He opened up a lead on the chasing group, who stuck together in a pack. While Hegarty slowly moved away from the group, it all happened very slowly, and it was apparent when there was only 400m remaining, that he would not be able to open a big enough gap between himself and Lane to overtake the QEII Track Club athlete. With 200m to go, Fenwick started to move away from Warrener and Lane, but again the gap opened only very slowly.

Hegarty crossed the line in 3:05.92, with Fenwick almost four and a half seconds further back (3:10.40). Warrener (3:11.06) and Lane (3:11.53) followed in quick succession.

The placings were now finalized:

Lane first with 4754 points, Hegarty second on 4538 points, Fenwick in third (4454) and Warrener placing fourth (3900).

It should be a very interesting affair in 2009, as all three medalists will still be in this age group, and they will be joined by the talented youngsters from the age group below, Jennings and Newton-Smith.

U16 girls' heptathlon.

Eight girls started the competition on Day One – seven from Queensland and one (Loughlyn Webb) all the way from WA. In a pleasing prospect for the future of the combined events (especially in Queensland), six of the eight girls – Simone Herbert, Jessica Pickles, Zoe Rowley, Tatum Shaw, Jasmine Sinclair and Loughlyn Webb) all have a 1994 birthday, and will still be eligible to contest this age group again next year! The other two girls – Heather Muir and Taylor-Shay Payne are 1993-born.

Day One

The competition began with a hit out over the 90m hurdles. As may have been expected, the little 'pocket rocket' hurdler from the Gold Coast, Tatum Shaw, flew over the barriers in 13.82s despite the 3.7m/s wind in her face.

Close on her hammer was Loughlyn Webb (14.16) with Taylor-Shay Payne (14.59) and Heather Muir (14.65) very close for third and fourth. There was then a gap back to the less-experienced hurdlers, with Jessica Pickles (667) and Zoe Rowley (657) close together, followed by Jasmine Sinclair (17.77) and Simone Herbert (18.24).

*Right: Tatum Shaw
Photo courtesy of Rebecca Herbert*

After one event:

Shaw 1004, Webb 956, Payne 897, Muir 888, Pickles 667, Rowley 657, Sinclair 512, Herbert 464.

The high jump proved to be a long event out in the heat. Muir jumped well through 1.51m, but then her technique wilted in the heat and she exited the competition with 632pts. Behind her, Payne cleared 1.48m (599pts) and Webb cleared 1.45m (566pts). Next followed Sinclair (1.39m), Shaw 1.33m (using the scissors technique), Pickles – also 1.33m, and Rowley and Herbert both on 1.21m.



There had now been a major re-shuffle of the top four placings. Shaw dropped to fourth. Webb moved up into first place, while Muir jumped past Payne into second. Only two points separated first (Webb) from second (Muir).

After two events:

Webb 1522, Muir 1520, Payne 1496, Shaw 1443, Pickles 1106, Rowley 978, Sinclair 1014, Herbert 785.

In the shot put, Payne took out her first event, throwing 8.64m, earning 441 points. All of Payne's throws were over eight metres. Webb again was right in the mix, throwing 8.36m for 423 points. Sinclair (7.71m), Pickles (7.64m) and Herbert (7.59m) all threw further than Muir (7.10m), who now dropped down into third behind Payne and Webb. Shaw could muster only 6.41m and Rowley spanned 6.07m with her best (and only legal) put.

After three events:

Webb 1945, Payne 1937, Muir 1861, Shaw 1740, Pickles 1482, Sinclair 1395, Rowley 1254, Herbert 1158.

The final event of the day was the 200. Shaw once again showed her speed to win the event in 26.03 for 795 points. Sinclair showed a good turn of speed to cross the line next in 26.51. As they had been all day, Webb (27.12) and Payne (27.19) crossed the line locked together.

Muir was next in 28.42, while Rowley (29.33) and Pickles (29.64) managed to sneak under 30 seconds. Herbert could not quite manage the same trick finishing in 31.08.

At the end of Day One Webb and Payne were only 14 points apart. Shaw had moved back into third – 98 points behind Payne. Muir sat a further 76 points adrift, with Sinclair the only other competitor beyond 2000 points after four events.

Scores at the end of Day One:

Webb 2647, Payne 2633, Shaw 2535, Muir 2459, Sinclair 2148, Pickles 1990, Rowley 1784, Herbert 1567.

Day Two

In the long jump, Webb and Payne were once again quite close, with Webb's 5.19m giving her a further 34 points over Payne who managed 5.07m. Muir also exceeded five metres with a 5.01m jump. Shaw dropped back into fourth place when she could manage only 4.61m, with Sinclair the only other jumper over four metres (4.30m).

After five events:

Webb 3259, Payne 3211, Muir 3021, Shaw 2991, Sinclair 2527, Pickles 2247, Rowley 2060, Herbert 1817.

The javelin saw Webb extend her lead even further, as she was the only girl to throw beyond thirty metres. Once again, Payne was her nearest challenger, throwing 28.63m, just ahead of Muir on 28.12m. Pickles (25.81m) and Herbert (22.03m) both threw beyond 20 metres, with Rowley close to that mark on 19.87m. Shaw demonstrated that she will need to do some more work on this event if she is to continue with combined events, throwing only 10.90m.

After six events:

Webb 3753, Payne 3662, Muir 3462, Shaw 3113, Sinclair 2789, Pickles 2645, Rowley 2346, Herbert 2144.

In the final event on the heptathlon program, the 800m, Tatum Shaw and Jessica Pickles moved away from the rest of the field within the first 150m. They ran beside each other, with Shaw in the lead, and Pickles on her shoulder until the last 100m, when Pickles made a move to come past Shaw. Shaw responded to the challenge and the girls battled for the length of the straight. Pickles couldn't overcome the gutsy Shaw, but both girls posted good times – Shaw 2:28.02 and Pickles 2:28.59. Behind the lead two had been a pack of four runners for most of the race, containing the two current leaders in the heptathlon, Webb and Payne. In the last 200m, first Sinclair, then Muir moved ahead. Payne tried to put a gap between herself and Webb in the last 150m, gaining several metres on Webb, but it would not be enough to snare first place.

Sinclair crossed in 2:38.07, then Muir (2:40.23), Payne (2:41.57) and Webb (2:43.62). Rowley (2:48.62) was not all that far behind, while Herbert struggled home at the tail of the field in 3:09.42.

Loughlyn Webb, the 14 year old visitor from Western Australia took the gold with a total of 4285 points. As first-placed Queenslander, Taylor-Shay Payne also was awarded a gold medal with a score of 4217 points. Muir was second Queenslander on 4032 points, while Shaw gained a bronze medal for her 3831 point effort.

U18 girls' heptathlon.

In almost every combined event competition there tends to be an age group where some athletes have to withdraw due to injury. At this year's competition it was the U18 girls' age group which was most affected.

Five girls commenced the event but, by the end of Day One, there were only three left in the competition.

Day One

In the 100m hurdles local girl Chloe Hirst shot over the first few hurdles building a commanding lead. She looked set for a great time, but clipped the second-last hurdle with the toe of her training foot. She then clobbered the last and teetered across the track on the verge of falling. Despite starting in lane 3, Hirst finished in lane 9! By some amazing stroke of luck, she neither impeded any other hurdler nor fell to the ground. However, her time was nowhere near what it could have been if she'd had a clean run.

Right: Chloe Hirst

Photo courtesy of Rebecca Herbert

As it turned out, first girl across the line was Shelley Tuicakau in 15.40s, just ahead of Harriet Lawrence (15.68) who had been a late entry into the event. Hirst still managed to snag third place in 16.21 ahead of Racine Heenan (16.56) and Kirsty Muir (18.31).

In the high jump, Tuicakau could manage only 1.27m for a meager 379 points. Hirst stopped jumping at 1.39m after clearing 1.36m, as her ankle was rather sore after her near-disaster in the hurdles. Heenan cleared 1.51m, but took a total of fifteen jumps in the competition. This would have sapped valuable energy from her on a day when the shade temperatures were into the thirties. The long shape of Muir bowed out after clearing 1.54m, while Lawrence, jumping with a heavily strapped take-off knee, cleared 1.57m to take the lead in the competition.



Tuicakau was the best of the shot putters, pushing the steel ball out over nine metres (9.19m). Lawrence continued her strong performance for the day, being next-best on 8.94m. Muir hit 8.68m. Heenan was also past the eight metre line with 8.12m, but Hirst could manage only 7.87m.

Lawrence now had a comfortable lead, sitting on 1915 points. Heenan was in second on 1686, just ahead of Tuicakau (1634), with Muir (1566) only 16 points ahead of Hirst (1550).

However, it's amazing how things can change in a combined event competition. At the start line for the 200m, only three girls fronted. Lawrence and Hirst had withdrawn, leaving Heenan, Tuicakau and Muir to battle for the colour of the medals.

Tuicakau was quickest around the half lap, running 27.63. However, Heenan was not far behind in 27.93. Muir was a further 0.4 second further back in 28.33.

After an intriguing Day One, Heenan led on 2322 from Tuicakau (2294) and Muir (2171).

Day Two

Muir began her move in the first event on Day Two, the long jump. She posted the best distance of 4.65m into a 2.2m/s head wind. Tuicakau was close, with a 4.61m leap, while Heenan dropped a few points spanning only 4.39m.

Tuicakau had snatched the lead with 2750 points. Heenan was now in second, 27 points behind on 2723, but Muir had crept a little closer on 2637 points.

The javelin saw a big turnabout (don't you just love combined events!).

Muir threw 32.59m, six metres ahead of Heenan (26.00m), with Tuicakau a further five metres plus change further back on 20.78m. Muir grabbed 526 points for her effort with the spear, while Heenan gained only 401 points, and Tuicakau a mere 303.

Muir had now leap-frogged the other girls to claim the lead, sitting pretty on 3163 points. Heenan was still in second on 3124, but Tuicakau had dropped to third on 3053.

It was expected that Tuicakau, a nationally ranked schoolgirl 400m hurdler, would account for herself well in the 800m. The two lap form of the other girls was somewhat of a mystery.

As expected, Tuicakau did post a solid time, going sub-2:30 with her time of 2:29.76. However, Muir had obviously realized that she had a 110 point buffer over Tuicakau going into the final event. She would have to finish ahead of Heenan and within nine seconds of Tuicakau to claim the overall victory. Muir pulled out all stops to keep as close

to Tuicakau as she could. Heenan dropped behind. One step of the equation was in place. Now to hang onto Tuicakau! Muir crossed the line showing the strain of her efforts, but it was worth it as she clocked 2:35.95. Victory was hers!

Heenan struggled home in 3:11.93 to earn the bronze.

Final scores showed Muir on 3783, ahead of Tuicakau on 3749 and Heenan on 3386. All three girls will be eligible to contest the same age group again in 2009, as they were all born in 1992.

Invitational Events

As well as the Queensland U16 and U18 Schools Championships, there were Invitational Combined Events on offer – an U18 Invitational Decathlon for the men, an U20 and Open Invitational heptathlon for the women, and an Invitational heptathlon for the Open men (using the Indoor specifications). There was only one starter in each of the Invitational events for the men, but five women in total entered the Invitational heptathlons.

Strangely enough, this was exactly the same number and ratio of entrants as in 2007.

U18 Invitational Decathlon

The U18 invitational decathlon had only one entrant – 17 year old Patrick Taylor from Brisbane Boys College.

Taylor was able to compete at the same time as the U18 schools athletes in some events, but in others he had to compete by himself. Taylor had contested the decathlon in Townsville in August, posting a score of 5294. With no other direct competitors, Taylor was effectively competing against himself.

Day One

In the 100m Taylor ran 11.90 into a 0.2m/s wind. In Townsville he had run 11.81. 18 points down.

In the long jump, Patrick leapt 5.50m with a 1.0m/s following breeze. However in Townsville he had spanned 5.71m – another 44 points down. In the shot in Townsville, he had hurled the 5kg ball 13.63m. Here on the Gold Coast he hit a huge 14.59m, for an extra 59 points. Taylor was now only three points behind where he had been in the September decathlon. The high jump helped his cause further. Even though he managed only 1.53m, this was still much better than the 1.45m he had cleared up north. He was now 56 points ahead of his target.

However, in the 400m, he lost 32 points, running 56.87 in comparison with the 56.02 he had run on the 'red track' in September.

At the end of Day One on the Gold Coast, Patrick had scored 2854 points, 24 points ahead of what he had scored at his previous outing.

Day Two

Taylor's Day Two got off to a great start. Despite smacking a hurdle a gashing his knee, Patrick managed to finish in 16.86s. This was an improvement of 140 points on his Townsville effort. Things were looking up.

However, the weather began to turn sour. Rain affected the remaining events. Patrick's throw of 40.66m in the discus was more than one and a half metres poorer than he had thrown in the heat up north. His 164 point 'lead' over himself was whittled down to 132 points.

The pole vault was held in a brief respite from the showers. Patrick cleared his first attempt at 2.80m easily. He passed 2.90m but then had three failures at 3.00m. In Townsville he had gone 40cm higher. Another 97 points off his 'lead'. The margin was now down to 35 points.

In the javelin, the slick runway again did not help. Patrick managed to throw 44.38m, but again this was 12 points worse than his Townsville Sports Reserve throw. The buffer was reduced to 23 points.

One good thing about the wet weather was that it had reduced the temperatures markedly; so, even though the track was a little 'dead', it would make for much better conditions for running the 1500m.

In Townsville Patrick had toddled around in a very pedestrian 5:44.45. Would he be able to improve on that running by himself on the Gold Coast? While it could be stated that 'the pace was on', it became apparent with a couple of hundred metres to go that Patrick would better his Townsville time – not by a huge amount, but definitely a few seconds. When he crossed the line, the photo finish caught him at 5:39.54.

Patrick had won his battle against himself, and isn't that what the combined events is largely about. He had set a new PB (of 5340) by 46 points.

U20 and Open Invitational Heptathlon

One competitor in the U20 age group and four in the Open age all competed against each other over the two days of competition.

Jay Affleck from Gold Coast Victory was the only entrant in the U20 division, while Ashleigh Reid of Maroochy Club, Rosanna Doolan of Gold Coast Victory and University of Queensland club mates Larna Dieckmann and Emma Capell made up the field in the open age division.

Day One

Reid set an early mark on the competition, winning the 100m hurdles in 15.16, running into a 1.4m/s head wind. Capell and Dieckmann were very close, crossing in 16.46 and 16.49s respectively. Affleck and Doolan had their own competition within a competition at the back of the field, with Affleck getting the nod, crossing first in 19.27 to Doolan's 19.54.

Reid, the best high jumper in the field lived up to her credentials by clearing 1.69m, but not before giving herself a scare when she took three attempts to clear 1.66m. Capell jumped well to clear 1.63m, while Dieckmann and Affleck both scaled 1.51m. Affleck, returning from a patellar tendinopathy problem in her take off knee, retired after clearing 1.51m on her first attempt. Doolan, who has had a long lay off this season, and is only just returning to training and competition, dropped further off the pace, clearing only 1.39m.

After two events, Reid had skipped away to an impressive lead. Her 1663 points saw her more than 230 points ahead of Capell's 1430 with Dieckmann on 1287 and Doolan on 843. U20 athlete Affleck sat between Dieckmann and Doolan on 998.

In the shot, Reid just surpassed Dieckmann by a whisker, 9.72m to 9.70m. Affleck was next best on 8.47m, ahead of Capell (8.20m) and Doolan (7.79m).

Reid moved further ahead of the field to 2174, while Dieckmann picked up almost 100 points on Capell. Capell held on to second with 1842, but Dieckmann had moved within 50 points to 1797. Affleck (1428) sat firmly in the middle of the gap between Dieckmann and Doolan (1384).

Dieckmann snared her first individual win of the competition in the 200m, running 26.76 to turn back the challenge of Reid (27.49). Affleck and Capell got out reasonably well and waged their own battle down the straight. Affleck held on to finish in 28.54 ahead of Capell's 28.75. Doolan trailed the field in 29.23.

Dieckmann's effort had moved her to 2529, 114 points ahead of Capell (2415). However, Reid retained a commanding lead with 2846 points. Affleck has surpassed 2000 points for her Day One score of 2017, and Doolan finished the first day on 1766 points.

Day Two

Reid continued to make every post a winner on Day Two.

She took out the long jump with a leap of 5.19m. Conditions became difficult for the girls as the competition progressed. The girls warmed up with a tail wind from the north-west, but as the competition proper began, the predicted change in the weather acme through, and the wind swung around to the south-east into the girls' faces.

Reid's best jump was into a 1.2m/s head wind, and of all the jumpers, only Dieckmann's best did not have a head wind (but was 0.0m/s!). Once again Dieckmann was the closest to Reid, jumping 4.90m, and once again Affleck and Capell were very close, Capell jumping 4.75m to Affleck's 4.72m. Doolan found the lack of background work telling, as her best measured only 3.91m.

Reid now extended her lead to 3458 points, while Dieckmann (3061) continued to move further away from Capell (2907). Affleck squeezed past 2500 points to 2502, while Doolan edged past 2000 points to 2053.

In the javelin, Reid demonstrated her ever-improving throwing ability to claim the event with a best of 30.89m for almost 500 more points. Affleck was next best with 29.00m even. Doolan showed some promise in the javelin, throwing 21.21m with a very raw technique. Capell made the battle for the silver interesting when she threw 25.65m, picking up 124 points on Dieckmann, who could manage only 19.02m. Capell (3302) was now only 30 points behind Dieckmann.

With only the 800m to go, Reid was just shy of 4000 points on 3951. Dieckmann had claimed only 271 points with the javelin to move to 3332, and would need to score close to 700 points in the 800m if she were to achieve the National Qualifying standard of 4000 points.

In the past, Reid, Capell and Affleck have often been found wanting in the 800m, struggling to break the 3 minute mark. However, Dieckmann had spent a few years specializing in 400m hurdles, so it would be expected to see her post a relatively quick time. Doolan always manages to make a good account of herself in the 800m, and even given her lack of recent specific training, she would probably run sub 2:40.

The event panned out much as predicted. Dieckmann moved to the front early on and only Doolan could keep close to her. Reid and Affleck both showed some improved fitness for this distance, while Capell looked as though she would struggle to go under three minutes.

Dieckmann finished very strongly in the main straight, aiming to gain valuable points in her quest to represent Queensland at the National titles. She crossed the line in the good time of 2:28.23. This was good for 715 points, taking Dieckmann over 4000 points to 4047, and gaining for her the score she sought.

Doolan finished less than five seconds behind Dieckmann in 2:33.09, to earn her best points of the competition – 655. This was sufficient to push her past 3000 points, to 3021.

Quite some distance back, Reid pushed on, looking far more capable over this distance than in the past. While there is still obvious work that needs to be done in this event, Reid now is relatively consistent around the 2:50 mark, and achieved that sort of performance here crossing in 2:52.34. This gained 440 points and helped her to the solid early-season score of 4391 points.

Affleck also showed improved confidence over this distance, and despite missing a lot of work through the winter with her knee problem, once again snuck under the 3-minute mark in a heptathlon with her 2:59.65 effort.

Capell had a best 800m heptathlon PB of 3:07.42, set at this same track back in January. Today she improved on that to record 3:06.50.

Final scores and placings:

Open women:

1 Ashleigh Reid	Maroochy	4391
2 Larna Dieckmann	University of Qld	4047
3 Emma Capell	University of Qld	3609
4 Rosanna Doolan	Gold Coast Victory	3021

U20 women:

1 Jay Affleck	Gold Coast Victory	3328
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From left: Ashleigh Reid, Emma Capell, Larna Dieckmann, Jay Affleck, Rosanna Doolan
Photo: Peter Hannan