



# SOUTHLAND

# Running Times

## ATHLETICS NEWS

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**Clubs, please print this and pass on to your members or send their email address to [lance.debbie@xtra.co.nz](mailto:lance.debbie@xtra.co.nz) so more in our sport can be added to the circulation list**

## Saturday's Run at Riverton.

Come and run somewhere different – with beach, bush and road all mixed in.

Various packs (running groups) going different distances – you choose the pack to run in. (idea of pack runs is you run fast enough to be a good training effort but slow enough that everyone has enough breath to carry on a conversation – or many conversations.)

Start and finish at the Mennell's house - as soon as you get to the 50 km sign in Riverton, turn left onto Albany Street, go round the bend and it takes you onto Pitt Street, Mennell's are the new house about half way down on the left.

Please bring gumboots as they have just had a digger in on the new section and it is very muddy.

Start running at approx 2pm.

Everybody bring a plate for afternoon tea.

## Good Day and Not so Good at Christchurch

Christchurch was a half good and half not so good for Southland's two best distance runners, with Hannah Miller thrilled with her half marathon and Jack Beaumont having one of his rare bad days.

Hannah justified her favourite tag with a convincing win in the U20 grade (by 13 minutes), fifth placed woman overall and a big PB, finishing in 1:18:54, achieving her goal of sub 80 for the 21.1km. She also ran a PB 10k on the way, going through the 10 kilometre point in 36.40.

When she saw the 10k time she panicked a little, knowing the second half was going to be tough, but as she told herself, "don't let it go out the window now".

She didn't. The pace was kept up although the twentieth kilometre dropped a bit but she rallied to put in a fast final kilometre to easily make the target time.

Jack didn't have such a happy day. It started well, and at 10km he was right on target (bit over 32 mins) but 1 kilometre later the race took a wrong turn, figuratively speaking, but it might as well have been literally – technique went to pieces including overstriding as evident from excessive heel strike. He said he just lost all his rhythm although didn't feel tired. The consequence was a slowing down, losing many places and finishing 13<sup>th</sup> overall and 6<sup>th</sup> U20 in 1:11.54. While creditable, it was not the placing or time he wanted.

But that's the nature of competitive distance running – there are good days and bad. The two Southlanders had one of each.

Alison and Graham Neilson also ran at Christchurch with Alison completing the half in 2:35.43 and Graham the full marathon in 4:05.15.



Hannah



*Ivon Wilson Park – pretty as a picture*

## **Fun and Run Weekend at Fiordland**

Te Anau's Ivon Wilson Park was at its pristine best on Saturday for a gathering of Southland and Caversham (Dunedin) runners who turned Queens Birthday weekend into a fun and run weekend.

While the weekend was socially inclined a serious competitive element was also there, particularly from the young Southland runners needing a hard hit out for the NZSS crosscountry two weeks later, hence some fast times around the 2k loop track that took in the "small rise" as Fiordland's Shaun Cantwell described it but "a bloody great big hill" as others called it.

Teams of three were self or randomly selected with each team having to run 5 laps (10k). Fastest lap went to Buddy Small, but only just from local Dwight Grieve. However, over two laps Dwight had the edge. Debbie Telfer ran the fastest (and second fastest) laps of the women with successive 9.15 and 9.17, but local Gail Kirkman was so close with 9.18.

Winning teams didn't really matter but for the record the team of Grant Baker (1 lap), Finn Rogers and Buddy Small (2 laps each) prevailed over the team of Gail Kirkman (1 lap), Albie Small and Jack McNaughton (2 laps each).

Fastest laps – Sth women:

Debbie Telfer 9.15

Gail Kirkman 9.18

Tylah Rose Wilson Woodford 9.30

Buddy Small 6.52

Dwight Grieve 6.56

Alan Wilson Woodford and Jack McNaughton 7.12

Finn Rogers 7.25.

Two laps – Dwight 13.56, Buddy 13.57. Alan 14.35, Debbie 18.32, Tylah Rose 19.42.

The weekend continued for those who stayed with a superb buffet at the Kingsgate Saturday night and a run over the parts of the Kepler track. Thanks Fiordland for a great weekend



*Grant handing over to Finn*



*Albie taking over from Gail*

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## Running Ahead.

**Sat 11<sup>th</sup>. Combined Club Run, Riverton (see page 1)**

**Sat 18<sup>th</sup>. Handicap 3 – Fosbender**

**Sat 25<sup>th</sup>. Gore Crosscountry, Hamilton Park, East Gore.**

**July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Tour de McNaughtons. More details later but this will be a run (or runs) with a difference at Dean and Jodi McNaughton's farm, Wyndham, with BBQ to follow. Not to be missed.**

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**Coaching**

## Trust your instincts.

**Various views on developing “thinking athletes”**

As explained by Terry Lomax, Athletic New Zealand’s High Performance Planning Manager, the over-riding objective of Athletics New Zealand coaching and performance plan is to move the athlete-coach relationship from:-



C and A

to

C and A

You guessed it, **c = coach and A = athlete.** The objective is to have the athlete progressively become more prominent in the coaching process. This should start from the beginning of the athlete-coach relationship. The way I see it is coach and athlete is a team with the athlete team captain and over time the captain assumes more and more responsibility.



This is a philosophy I have long held and stems from over 35 years of coaching and a bit longer as a runner/athlete of totally mediocre note.

This viewpoint is the basis of a coaching philosophy that aims to make myself redundant. To explain, my belief is to have athletes progressively have more input in their training until as a coach I am redundant – the athlete has more control than I do. I become a mentor.

This is because I reckon the athlete knows him or herself better than I do. And with time and experience, knows their needs better than I do. Sometimes it's instinct, but athletes need to trust their instincts.

To give a couple of personal examples. Years ago when I started running I trained as I felt. I knew very little, had no coach and did what I felt was right. A little later I attended some coaching courses, went to some Lydiard lectures and did a bit of reading. With my new found knowledge I went back over my training diary of a year or two before: lo and behold, the training I did in ignorance was almost exactly what I would have set and programmed with my new found knowledge.

Prior to taking up running I played basketball. One of the exercises I gave myself was 20 x rapid jumps to touch the ring, quickly as I could. I knew nothing about stretch reflex, amortization, concentric and eccentric muscle contractions, but now that I do know a little about it from coaching jumpers I know it was an ideal exercise to improve my vertical jump for basketball.

How did I know it was appropriate? Instinct. So when an athlete gives an opinion on the training being done, I think back my situations many years ago when I knew little but did things instinctively.



So when an athlete questions or debates or even argues with a coach, maybe their instincts are right. Same goes for the coach – trust your instincts, but base that trust on a sound background of knowledge.

- Lance Smith.

#### **From Lorne Singer**

I've really enjoyed the input from athletes that I've coached for up to 5 years now (6-7 years being about their maximum lifespan in Southland before they venture out) and have learnt to trust their instinct because 99.9% of the time they are right.

I love it when they question what they are doing and propose alternatives. I often go with it. I don't like it when some ask "why am I not improving at the moment" and I ask them to give me their reasons first and they give me a blank stare. If it comes from them then the issue is about to be resolved!

While the science of coaching is vitally important (hence why we never stop reading, attending courses, picking the brains of other coaches etc) so too to me is the art of coaching and trusting your instinct, just as the athlete does. I'm massively into planning, but on any given day plans need to change based on what is in front of you. I'm a "teachable moment" teacher too, often abandoning plans that I feel were awesome, but I guess not losing sight of the goal at the end (unless the goal changes along the way, which can often be the case with so much to discover when young and what makes them tick with their learning).

-Lorne Singer.

**From Ed Fern**



I guess my road was a bit different. I was in the first group of kids to try flopping after Dick Fosbury won the Olympics with it in 1968. One coach in the states refers to us as the Dogtown Boys of high jump. Just like those guys moved the world of skateboarding forward, we exploded the high jump, inspired by the Fos's success. Just about every coach had no idea what he was doing, and to be honest, even though the straddle was the prevalent style at the time, most coaches didn't teach that very well. I recently learned that by watching some Russian training videos from the late 60s. Wow, they were miles ahead. And you know why? They had coaches who had nothing else to think about other than jumping! But I digress a bit.

I learned to high jump by copying what I saw the guys on TV doing and when I went to watch meets in Madison Square Garden in New York City. I went back to school and tried to jump just like them which gave me some success. I read that Fosbury developed the flop out of the scissor so I did exactly what he did, eventually learning it wasn't a semi-circle approach, but a "J" pattern and figuring out how to rotate around the bar etc.. When my high school coach, who was a middle distance specialist was asked by a magazine how he helped me get so good he said, "I left him alone. He knows more about this than I do. He's a real student of what he's doing. I just open the gym in morning so he can practice."

You see I never had a high jump coach. I learned by copying, reading and asking questions of people who were better than I was. When I got good enough to go to the big meets and compete against world record holders and top European guys I really started to figure out how to train properly, but even with that knowledge I know I over-trained oh so badly. I had no clue as what it took to really peak for a big competition. Through high school I jumped EVERY day! I thought that was how you got good. Then I went home and played football, or softball or basketball depending on the season!

So how does that all affect how I coach? Well, I try to instil those same instincts in my athletes, no matter what event they do. When they are young (year 9 in high school) I demand they look at videos of people doing what they are trying to learn. I show them videos of themselves so they can compare their technique against that of people who are further along. I ask them to find someone they would like to copy, and we decide together if that person is a worthwhile technical model that matches with their own basic technique. I really push them to become students of their events. Just like I was. Learning about what you are doing and not just blindly trusting a coach is the only way to go, in my opinion. My main job is to schedule smart training and get them in a position to do their best in the biggest competitions. That's the stuff they won't learn at a young age.

We have a running joke in our training squad. In year nine we don't want to know what your voice sounds like, just do what you're told. In year ten you get to ask some questions and you need to be learning about your events. By year 12 and 13 we should be working together to decide what you need to do and how we are going to accomplish your goals. Now of course that's just an amusing anecdote. Last year our year 9 athletes were vocal and questioned everything! And it was a lot of fun working with them.

I think there is a point when the athlete gets to have a lot of say in the process, but the coach has the vital role of being the conscience of the athlete. What I mean there is often there will be things an athlete knows they need to do in training, but hates doing it. If left to their own devices, they might fluff through some of the hard stuff or just leave it out. The coach needs to be there to go, "oy, hold up there. Let's get this done and done well." Also, at the age when an athlete is starting to get really good, how many of them are researching training methods and drills, and diet and plyometrics and weight training and flexibility and blah blah blah. Not many! So I feel the role of the coach is to stay on top of those things and steer the ship. Coordinate the physio, the nutritionist, the massage therapist, the sport science person, the doctor. And the athlete needs to be involved at every step along the way. Yes they can make the calls on a lot of that stuff, but the coach needs to be there with their knowledge, their experience and their caring for the athlete to make sure smart decisions are made. Two brains are better than one.

I recall a quote I have seen a number of times. When asked when he is going to run the 400 seriously, Usain Bolt often replies, "When my coach tells me to." And yes, I am sure the ultimate decision is Usain's, but it's still a great quote.

- Ed fern

**More to come on this topic soon.**