



Results

Well done to all Club members who took part in the Road Champs in Tauranga. Club results were:

Eric Kemsley – 1st M60 – 55m 57s

Serena Coombes – 2nd W45 – 1:08:14

Anne Fraser – 1st W55 – 1:14:05

Sue Park – 1st W70 1:19:37

Serena also got bronze for 3rd Master overall.

Report from the 2014 National Road Championships

The weather seemed to be ideal for the walkers for the National 10km Road Champs, with no wind and cool, although it did shine for a while but also threatened rain which didn't occur. As I spent the whole race glued to the club's video opposite the drink stop, to capture all of our walkers progress plus the rest of the field, I don't know what the conditions were like on other parts of the track.

I must say the whole thing was highly organised with the road being closed off, tents for the different regions and a row of portaloos. There seemed to be officials everywhere. The road surface looked a smooth, fast, flat course to me.

First out of the blocks, you guessed it, Mad Mike, going like the wind, followed a few metres behind by Mike Parker and behind him Rozie, Courtney Ruske and Jonathan Lord a little way behind her. After a couple of laps Mike P led with Courtney & Jonathan side by side. Another few laps and Courtney led the way with Jonathon behind her. Mike P was way in front of Mad M but Rosie had slipped out of the front runners by then. Rodney wasn't looking at all good and didn't walk with his usual smooth style for the duration of the race and his finish time reflected that.

Eric looked comfortable the whole race and seems to have settled quite nicely with his new style. He was chased all the way by a lady from Whangarei Corrine Smith, who I was told was French, she had an unusual style but could shift and was only 15secs behind Eric at the finish. Serena who looked after a few laps as if she wasn't enjoying herself and even stopped at the drink station in front of me to take on water; she does tend to get uptight when walking under judges and doesn't flow like she normally does. Anne and Sue ground out the race and were more interested in getting through the judges than breaking records.

Towards the end, Courtney Ruske was on her own at the front, Jonathan Lord was next followed by the two Mikes who had slipped further and further behind her. Mike P was about 300m in front of Mad M who had Rozie coming up fast on him. As he turned the corner for the last 100m to the finish line, Rozie screamed passed him into fourth place, he was trying to catch her when they passed from view. I assumed she beat him and she did by 4secs

It is either a sad reflection of the dearth in Men's race walking in NZ or an example of just how good an ageing Mike Parker really is, because he was only 5secs behind the second finisher Jonathan Lord, with Mad Mike a minute and a half further back

It was good to see all four of our club members finish with not a DQ amongst them; Katie was the only one in the race who was DQd much to her disappointment. At the end, my two heroes or I should say heroines were Anne and Sue. Anne had left her dying father who was a great admirer of her walking, to go north to compete and although she ended up in tears at the end of the race, with the emotion of it all, she was able to take back a gold medal to show him before he died.

For Sue, this was her first big race under judges for many years, since she had the hip problems which resulted in her having to get both of them replaced. It's taken time but she got there in the end, a credit to her discipline and dedication, not to end up as a B Grade walker.

Frances and Marlene helped out at the drink stop as well as walking the course encouraging our members and the other Taranaki walkers.

Bystander