

Cunning skiing on top of the snow in Perisher

In rather harsh conditions 24 bold skiers went out to find checkpoints hidden (or not so hidden) around Perisher Trails. It was Sunday 10 August, a day that offered something highly unusual as a ski orienteering event in Australia. There haven't been ski-o event for a long time in Australia, but this winter has been exceptionally good in terms of snow and cold weather. Perisher Trails contains loops of various length such as 2.5km, 5.0km, 7.5 km and 10km. All tracks starts and ends at the Nordic Shelter opposite the ski slopes.

After a week of excellent weather with a lot of snow and sunshine during the Perisher cross-country ski week, the weather on the competition day for the ski-o was grim with new snow pouring down and strong winds coming from the west. This didn't stop the keen competitors from eagerly awaiting the first start at 10am. In rough and tough weather conditions the group took on the challenge, with skis on their feet and map in hand, to find the checkpoints spread out among the snow-covered hills.

Three different courses: long, middle and short were offered, and the most popular was the long course, which took the competitors around the ridge adjacent to Nordic Shelter and far out on the 10km track. With the support of the Perisher XC and a powerful snowmobile a lot of work was put into creating new tracks the day before. Unfortunately some of the tracks vanished due to the drifting snow on the day of competition. However the particularly good winter has ensured that there was plenty of snow in the area which even allowed the competitors to take shortcuts where they found it suitable.

The long category men/women was won by two young and talented XC skiers, Alasdair Tutt and Tess Noble. In the middle and the short categories there were faces more familiar to orienteering: winners were Toni Brown in middle category and Phoebe Dent and Noah Poland in short category.

Judging by the comments after the race and that no legs were broken, it seems the event was very successful. A few voices would even like to see more events this season. As the organiser I would like to thank all competitors with their positive attitudes and encouraging words and Perisher XC for all support with the event.