

METRO LEAGUE ROUND 5 REPORT

Ten-year-olds running MetrOLeague? Compulsory road-crossing controls? MetrOLeague 5 certainly broke new ground at Darks Common today.

Big Foot only had a smallish area to work with at Lapstone so some of the courses crossed the east-west road twice to help pad out the distance. And in a clever touch that was both safe and fair, all participants were given a 45-second split for each road crossing so no one was disadvantaged. The map change on the longer courses also allowed the northern section to be used twice, without cluttering a single map with too much pink.

Actual ML numbers were down due to many regulars being overseas or away with extended family matters, but with quite a few enter-on-day starters and Junior Leaguers we still pushed the 170-mark.

Among them has to be surely the youngest ever ML runner – Sophie Jones from Uringa. Sophie, 10, is the youngest in an orienteering-mad family and, while she has been excelling at easy (green) standard courses of late, today's tricky track network and bush represented quite a step up.

Her result? A seven-point run - the best in her Division 5 team!

"It was fun and easy but it took a long time," she said afterwards. Oh, the confidence of youth!

Similarly, 12-year-old Tom Kennedy from Garingal made his ML debut in the Legless team. He scored three points in a narrow loss to a Bennelong side loaded with experience.

"I enjoyed it a lot more than I thought I would, and I was really pleased with my result," Tom said.

We think it's awesome that Sophie and Tom both completed their first moderate courses under the pressure of the ML environment and on an unfamiliar map.

The tracks at Lapstone were sometimes indistinct and the constant wear and tear of mountain bikes is often creating new ones. The bush in the northern section was fairly open so runners were constantly faced with the decision: compass or track? A bit of both was probably the best formula. Only four runners finished in less than the predicted winning time of 35 minutes.

With this being the last round before the finals at Cataract Scout Camp on September 1, there was plenty at stake and the club that really produced the goods was Bennelong Northside. They won all four matches against Garingal to storm into the deciders for Divisions 2-5.

In Division 5 they edged out the Legless young guns 29-25. The final will be a rematch. The other four teams all finished on four points, reflecting the closeness of the competition.

In Division 4, only an upset could prevent a Bennelong-Big Foot final but the favourites were too good for the Geckos and UR-CC Falcons respectively.

SHOO finished first in Division 3, shrugging off an uncharacteristic mp from Doug Jay that ruined his run of 10-pointers and cost them the match against UR-CC Kites. SHOO had already qualified.

The very strong UR-CC Harriers outfit made it 5/5 by edging out a strong Big Foot team, and Bennelong's thrashing of the Frill Necks means this will probably be the most anticipated match of the finals.

Division 1 was badly hit by absentees: Huon Wilson was the only runner for the new Unis team whose opponent the Goannas could not field anyone. The easiest 10 points ever for Huon! In the other match the GO Monitors confirmed their place in the final against unbeaten four-time defending champion Big Foot by beating a gallant WHO side.

Results are on the ONSW website, all the stats from the day are on the Big Foot website, and there's a photo album on our Facebook page.

Thanks to the Feet for a lovely day out.