

Burnaby Spring Racewalk 2008 – March 16, 2008

Event Commentary

There is nothing like the quest for international standards to bring out the walkers for an early spring event. While we weren't overwhelmed with quantity we certainly saw some of the finest quality performances in North America. The Vancouver weather co-operated by allowing a dry day for the race sandwiched between several cold and wet ones. The cool 4°C temperatures guaranteed that the track would be hard and fast.

To match the quality of the athletes, BC Athletics, through its Officials Committee, provided a high powered team of officials equal to the task. A few of the walks judges and most of the other officials have international experience that allowed the event to be comfortably informal yet professionally administered from start to finish line.

The woman's 5k event saw the entire UBC women's racewalk team taking on seasoned Junior Heather Warwick. Only the accomplished Meagan Huzzey was up to the task, taking the honors with a very precisely paced sub 25 minute romp. Heather was next followed closely by Nicola Evangelista who, while closing fast on Warwick, simply ran out of room. Bev Larssen and Jennifer Olynyk, both in their second event ever, had the most closely fought battle of the day trading the lead numerous times over the distance with Larssen lucking out that her turn to lead came at the end of the race.

The men's 10k event saw a couple of breakthroughs. Evan Dunfee came out strong setting a determined but even pace that he would hold for the entire distance. Finishing with a new BC Junior record time of 43:09, an over 2 minute PB and a likely spot at the World Junior Championships Evan set the tone for what was later to come. Creighton Connelly had a very respectable 50 minute time which was 4 minutes faster than he had previously been able to achieve. Connelly had a shot at the landmark sub 50 minute 10k but got into foul trouble with 2 warnings by 7k and opted for a clean finish.

In only his second 20k attempt of his career Inaki Gomez set a consistent and confident pace from the start. With lap splits never varying by more than 3 seconds Inaki covered the first 16k in nearly identical 2k incremental times putting him on a pace of 1:30 for the 20k distance. Taking a bit off the pace over the next 2k Gomez was not able to hold the level of effort through to the end and had to summon a formidable effort to cross the line in a personal best time of 1:33:51, good enough to qualify for the standard for the World Cup held in May of this year in Russia.

In the feature event of the day Tim Barrett showed everyone why he holds the world longevity record for the IAAF World Championships. 50k is a formidable distance, 50k on the track is unthinkable for most. For Barrett it's his bread and butter. Tim went out at a controlled and easy pace for 10k gradually picking up the effort until he settled in for a very even paced next 35k and then ground it out over the last 5k for a very respectable 3:52:40 finish very close to his all time personal best.