

## JUNE 2008 - WALKER OF THE WEEK – DANIEL PAYNE



Years ago, the Heel and Toe used to have a 'Walker of the Week' to recognise the top performance over the last 7 days. While I have not followed that lead, I thought I might bring it back for this edition and for the occasional newsletter when I see a really outstanding performance.

This week, I am awarding my informal 'Walker of the Week' award to Geelong walker Daniel Payne. Daniel took over 90 seconds off his best 10 km time to record a wonderful **47:38**.

Daniel joined the Victorian Race Walking Club in May 2003 as a 13 year old. Even in that first year, he showed his potential with the following excellent results

- 1<sup>st</sup> VRWC U14 3000m Walk Club Championship
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Victorian U14 3000m Walk Championship
- 4<sup>th</sup> Australian U14 3000m Walk Championship

His yearly progression since then has been continuous and in 2004, 2005, 2006 he amassed a bucket load of VRWC, Victorian and National medals with his consistent and high quality speed walking. Even last year, while juggling the priorities and workload inherent in Year 12 studies, he still found time to train and race with the following results

- 1<sup>st</sup> Victorian Country U18 5000m Walk Championship
- 5<sup>th</sup> Australian U20 10,000m Walk Championship
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Racewalking Australia U18 5000m Walk Championship
- 1<sup>st</sup> Victorian Schools U18 5000m Walk Championship
- 1<sup>st</sup> Victorian U18 5000m Walk Championship
- 5<sup>th</sup> Australian U18 8000m Championship

This year, freed from the burdens of study, his walking has really kicked down to a new level and his 47:38 on Saturday is the result of a training program that is now starting to produce the goods. His main strengths are

- a) a very sound technical walking action
- b) a very sensible approach to racing and training
- c) the ability to produce big performances when required, often under pressure.

Racewalking, like marathon running, is a long distance road based event and walkers traditionally peak in their late twenties or early thirties. Daniel is only 18 at the moment and thus has many years of improvement ahead of him in his chosen sport – provided he receives the support and encouragement that is necessary for all aspiring young athletes. By way of comparison, Nathan Deakes finally won his first World Championship gold medal at 30 years of age and he is still improving.

Well done Daniel and keep up the good work.