

LEONGATHA ATHLETES SHINE AT REGIONAL RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Teamwork and tenacity paid off for a squad of young athletes from Leongatha Little Athletics Club at the recent Gippsland Region Relay Championships in Newborough, with the club winning the overall award for combined team points.

With 193 points, Leongatha was in first place ahead of Casey (189), Sale (188), Cranbourne (185), Moe (139), Traralgon (136), Pakenham (87) and Bairnsdale (31).

Running on a slippery track, sometimes in heavy rain, athletes from under 8 through to under 16 age groups competed in a variety of relays, including boys, girls and mixed 4x100m, 4x200m and 800m sprint medley (2x100m, 1x200m and 1x400m).

Every athlete put in a great effort among some of Gippsland's finest young runners, including those from large outer-metropolitan clubs, and the Leongatha relay teams achieved a podium finish in no fewer than 21 races.

For the Leongatha girls, who placed third in the female overall rankings, these included the under 8s (4x100m, two teams: first and third, 4x200m first and third), under 9s (800m medley third), under 10s (800m medley third) and under 15s (4x100m first, 800m medley first).

The boys achieved fifth place in the overall rankings, with podium finishes for the under 8s (4x100m third), under 10s (800m medley third) and under 13s (4x100m third, 4x200m second, 800m medley second).

A big contingent of athletes also competed in the mixed-sex class, with strong finishes in the under 8s (4x100m third, 4x200m third), under 9s (4x100m second, 4x200m second), under 11s (4x100m second, 4x200m third), under 15s (4x100m third, 4x200m third) and under 16s (4x100m first, 4x200m first).

Thanks to Margie Matheson and Shelley Thomas for coaching the squad in the lead-up to the championships, plus team managers Paula O'Loughlin and Rod Cope, chief recorder Lyndall Green, starter Barry Standfield, juryman David Green and representatives from many other families who assisted in other roles including timekeeping, recording, change box judging and track umpiring.