

Dust Settles After Massive Merriwa Championship

After some much needed rain in the district in the weeks prior, the Merriwa showground was in great condition to host the 2019 Pony Club NSW State Sporting, Campdraft, Team Penning, Team Sporting and Mounted Games Championships on Saturday the 13th until Tuesday the 16th of April. The drought conditions made for a slightly dusty weekend, however with over 600 entries across the weekend, it brought a hive of activity to the small town. Hosted by Zone 7, which encompasses the Upper Hunter region, this is the first of two major State Championships that the Zone will host this year, with the second being the State Showjumping and One Day Event Championship in Denman in July.

Although most competitors were from New South Wales, a large contingent of 30 riders came down from across the border in Queensland. This certainly kept the New South Wales riders on their toes, as historically Queensland



Leilani Cotterill of Zone 24 on "Bellridge Samantha" in the Sporting Championship. Photo by Kristy Bullen.

The four-day competition opened with the 2019 State Sporting Championship with over 200 riders vying for the top spot, this was the biggest competition group of the championship. The under 11 Championship was taken out by Leilani Cotterill from Zone 24 on the Central Coast, with Alena Duncan from Zone 14 on the Far South Coast galloping into the reserve champion spot. Alena had the highest pointscore of the reserve champions across the age groups. Madison Shaw of Queensland gained the top spot in the under 13 age group, and Zali Duncan matched sister Alena's performance by coming into the Reserve Champion spot as well, making the 8 hour trip one to remember for the family. Georgia Osmond of Zone 25 gained the champion of the 13 and under 15 years group, with Regina Nicholls of

Zone 14 achieving reserve champion. Hannah Dunn of Zone 13 took the champion sash home in the 15 and under 17 group, and Charlie Parsons of Zone 5 came home with reserve champion. Kate Patch, a visitor from Queensland dominated the highly competitive Associate age group with three 1st places and three 2nd places, giving her the highest overall pointscore across all age groups, whilst Matthew Ireland of Zone 13 took the reserve champion position. The fitness check trophy went to the Host Zone, Zone 7, and the interzone championship was taken out by Zone 13, consisting of team mates Matthew Ireland, Hannah Dunn, Chloe Klingner, and Jessica Swanton.

Sunday morning hosted the Campdraft Championships, which attracted 123 entries from around the State and from Queensland. Host zone 7 had a successful morning, with David Caruana of Denman winning the overall 10 & under 13 years Championship and Thomas Cutler of Scone coming into the reserve spot. The 13 and under 15 years group saw Emily Mills of Zone 13 taking the top honours, and Dylan O'Hara of Zone 9 coming in as reserve champion. The 15 and under 17 group had Queenslander Kiara Bressington living up to her horses name of "Rockstar", with the pair taking home champion. Zone 4 rider Tayla Pennell achieved the reserve champion. The host zone again took both



Cameron Ninness of Zone 7 on "Cloverleaf Daddys Masterstroke" in the 17 & u26 Campdraft. Photo by Kristy Bullen.

top spots in the 17 and under 25 year old group, which was the largest group of the day. It came down to the wire between Cameron Ninness and Clancy Martin, both from Merriwa Pony Club. Instead of a count back, the pair competed in a run off, with Ninness coming away with the Champion's sash and rug, and Martin into the reserve position. It was certainly Zone 7's day, as they also won the Fitness Check Trophy. What a great end to the championship!

After the conclusion of the Campdraft Championship, the floodlights were switched on, and it was time for the Team Penning Championship. With a lack of cattle being able to sourced due to the prolonged drought in the area, riders had one round to win the championship. With many campdraft and team penning competitions needing to be cancelled for similar reasons in recent times, we felt very lucky to be able to offer these disciplines to our riders. Another fantastic turn out saw 19 teams compete in the 10 and under 17 event, with the Zone 25 team of Abbey Lonsdale, Danielle Channon and Katrina Channon taking home the championship, holding 3 beasts in a time of 41 seconds. The team from Zone 24 were just behind in a time of 41.15 seconds, made up of Darcy Heffernan, Callum Bailey, and Annabelle Dunk. Zone 8 gained the top spot in the 17 & Under 26 group. The three siblings Ethan, Madison and Aiden Sargent from Bingara Pony Club in Zone 8 were able to hold 3 beasts in a time of 51.88 seconds. It was a momentous occasion for the family, with the riders mother Janelle explaining "it was the first time they have been able to ride together as a team at a pony club event, as Aidan turned 17 in February and Madison has been away at University. The 3 kids riding as a team is very special to us but winning the Championship on their late Grandads birthday made it that extra bit special. Lawrence Reece and his wife Ruth had been long time supporters of Bingara Pony Club over the years, having four children and nine grandchildren ride at Bingara at various times". The reserve champions from Zone 25 – Alana Buresti, Teagan Chester and Chloe Shultz held 3 beasts in a time of 55.88 seconds. Zone 25 were also the winners of the Fitness Check Trophy. After a very long day, riders were presented with their championship ribbons, rugs from Horseland, vouchers from HYGAIN and prizes from Ranvet.



Winners of the 17 & Under 26 Team Penning Championship, Zone 8. Photo supplied by Janelle Sargent.



The Woonona Warriors. Photo by Chris Miller

On Monday morning the State Mounted Games Championship were underway. There were twelve teams competing in the Under 17 year old group, nine of which were eligible for the championship. Mounted Games is a club competition, so eligible teams must have all five team members from the same club. The Woonona Warriors from Woonona Pony Club in Zone 22 were victorious, with their experienced team being made up of Breanna Geloven, Ella-Lin MacMillan, Taleha Urszulak, Jorja Dallacosta and Abbey James. The Woonona Warriors came home with an astonishing 8 wins, one second place, and one sixth place. The reserve champions were the Assassins from Londonderry Pony Club in Zone 19. The Assassin's are another very experienced team, made up of siblings Aaron and Brittany Newham, Connor and Cooper Richardson, and Tess Mison. Low numbers for the associate competition

meant that there were two teams vying for the top spot in the associate division – nevertheless, it was an excellent competition, with both team's neck and neck the whole way. The team from Tall Timbers Pony Club in Zone 24 came away with the championship with team mates Amy Dwyer, Alyssa Dryden, Ben Minness, Nathan Livingston and Madison Helsby. Isabella Chircop, Ellouise Fitzgerald, Melanie Johnstone, Emily Lambert and Jessica Watkins from Woodlands Park Pony Club in Zone 26 took home reserve champions.

The four day competition was rounded out with Team Sporting on Tuesday. Team Sporting is a fairly new discipline in the Pony Club State Championships, and involves sporting events being conducted in a relay style race. With teams being able to be made up of a composite club team, more entries were received, with 16 teams competing for the title in the junior division. The Woonona Warriors again claimed victory and had the advantage of having the same team members as the mounted games, ensuring the team worked like a well oiled machine. In a moment of déjà vu, the Assassins again came into the reserve champion position, with the same team as yesterday's event except for Kiara Radke riding in Cooper Richardson's position. The tables had turned in the associate competition, this time with Zone 26 claiming victory over Zone 24 with wins in 7 out of 10 of the races. Both teams had consistency with the same team mates in the Team Sporting and Mounted Games. Zone 24 had a successful competition, with fantastic team results, and they also took home the Fitness Check Trophy for both the Mounted Games and the Team Sporting Championship.



Zone 14 Rider Madeline Nickson at full speed. Photo by Chris Miller

The most successful riders in each Age group were awarded the 2019 Age Champion award and received a sash, trophy, HYGAIN feed voucher, Horseland wool rug, and gift bag from Ranvet. The most successful Zone will also receive awards with up to 4 of the highest point scoring riders from the same zone receiving a sash and trophy. Thank you to the generous sponsors of the Pony Club NSW State Championships: Horseland, HYGAIN and Ranvet and event photographers Chris Miller Photos https://geosnapshot.com/cmos_photography and Kristy Bullen www.misskayellebee.com who generously donated images to the association.

For more information, visit the Pony Club NSW Facebook page or website on www.pcansw.org.au

For more information about sponsorship packages:
The Pony Club Association of NSW
Contact: Rachel Ratini
Email: marketing@pcansw.org.au