

November 2021

# LEITH LASSES



Issue no. 7

LEITH HARRIER AND ATHLETIC CLUB

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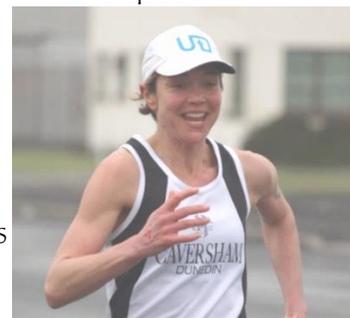


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## OCTOBER'S Roundup

As October's running events, like August and September's, too fell the wayside of Covid restrictions we find ourselves getting out the magnifying glass in order to find any performance within in our female running community to celebrate. Silverstream Spin and our Leith Harbour Free continuing to go ahead is a celebration in itself. Many thanks to these event organisers for getting these events off the ground for us. A pat on the back to Siobhan, Susan, Eva, Gaya and Claudia for their efforts in the Hurring Relays!

On a sadder note, we lost a beloved heroine of our female running community in Caversham runner Donna Young. Donna was closer with many of our master's women and we extend our thoughts to them on the loss of their comrade. On behalf of the Leith community, our Leith Committee have sent flowers and condolences to Donna's family. Rest in peace Donna, enjoy running through the stars up there!



## RUNNING GROUPS IN DUNEDIN

Not quite ready to take the leap into competitive running? Around Dunedin there are several low-key social running groups who will be more than happy for you to join. Below are a few of which that have no club affiliation and are very female-runner friendly:

- **Shoe Clinic** host a Women's Run Group every Monday 5:30pm from their store. All paces catered for, for a 45-60 mins run.
- **Bivouac Dunedin Trail Runners** have a weekly social trail run. Every Thursday 6pm, at varying locations. Keep up with their locations on their Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BivDunedinTrailRunners/>
- **Sunday Girls Run** is a Facebook group for female runners in Dunedin. Runs are organised on a whim by any member. The page is also great for any (judgement free) running questions, queries or recommendations  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/25789068437433>



# AN OVERLOOKED HEART OF GOLD

Throughout history females have been underrepresented, or not all represented, in Sport Science research. The vast majority of athletic studies have recruited males as subjects, coming to conclusions which may not actually be representative of a full population but rather one gender.

Enter an era of equity and suddenly we see research conclusions differing between the sexes, where previously overlooked physiological and biomechanical assumptions are tested.

One such study researching cardiovascular adaptation in marathon runners chose to compare the sexes and found that, indeed, a females cardiovascular system adaptations, the heart in particular, differs to a males where marathon training and participation is concerned. The findings actually concluded that a womens heart is superior to a mans in responding to marathon training.

For the "Sciency" stuff, researchers found women do not experience reduced left ventricle function or aortic stiffness compared to male marathoners. Moreover, females have better ventricular-vascular coupling, which means their hearts are more mechanically efficient after undergoing a marathon training cycle. In other words, a womens heart may respond better to marathon training than a mans.

The reason for this is unclear, but the researchers believe it could have something to do with the estrogen levels in female athletes. Studies show that estrogen positively modulates cardiac hypertrophy (the heart's tendency to get bigger with training), lowers blood pressure and decreases arterial stiffness, all of which make for a healthier, stronger heart.

The research acknowledged and shed light on the fact that future studies are needed to better understand the influence of sex hormones on athletic performance. This will create a greater understanding of how women adapt to modes of training and may lead to better training protocols for female athletes in the future.

<https://runningmagazine.ca/health-nutrition/study-womens-hearts-respond-differently-to-marathon-training-than-mens/>

# COME RUN TRACK

Fair to say Leith singlets are becoming a bit of an endangered species at the Caledonian ground on a Saturday afternoon. The odd male one can be spotted but the female version of the singlet is an even rarer sight.



Although track may seem a little intimidating compared to the winter schedule events, the range of abilities in the track events is varied from elite to recreational. In recent women's results this season we have the 800m ranging from 2min 33s to 4min 13s; the 1500m field finishing in times from 4min 48s to 8min 21s; and the 3000m resulted in times spread from 10min 21s to 14min 38s.

Maybe track's not really your thing, however if you're wanting to boost your winter results, track is a great place to start. With no hills, trails, bumps or turns it's just you against the clock and is based more on speed, whereas our winter events encompass more of a strength aspect across the varied terrain. As we train and compete in a more speed orientated way our bodies adapt to a faster leg turnover pattern which will complement all the strength gained in winter. Those hills will be looking a little less daunting in 2022 with a track season under the belt!

**'FINISHED LAST'  
WILL ALWAYS  
BE BETTER THAN  
'DID NOT FINISH',  
WHICH ALWAYS TRUMPS  
'DID NOT START'.**

EVERYDAY LIFE LESSONS

# A Weighty Issue

Approximately 91% of women are unhappy with their bodies and resort to dieting or other means to achieve their ideal shape. In a sport where weight can be directly proportional to performance, it's no wonder the relevance of issues such as REDs (which we touched on in earlier Leith Lassies bulletins) are rife in the female running community. After all we are taught from a young age in running that lighter is faster; less weight to move means less oxygen needed and less energy used for the same amount of work result in faster performances.

Although the very elite female runner bodies tend to remain similar throughout history, in the lesser ranks, the trend is changing, and the start lines see a healthier physique, as research on power to weight ratios and injury incidence & recovery are beginning to highlight lighter is not always better. A more understanding societal approach to female bodies and a healthier portrayal of female bodies by the media and advertisement also stand to be applauded.

*So, is a few seconds faster worth the turmoil?*

In 2014, Michigan State University runner Rachele Schulist (pictured below) ran 19:54.30 in the women's 6km National Collegiate Athletics Association Cross-Country Championships. In 2016 she finished 12th in 20:07. A social media post which was widely shared, tells the story of what happened in-between and why the second performance, only 12 seconds off the first, signalled a far larger victory.

The image of Rachele on the left depicts her in 2014 while the image on the right is a 10kg and much healthier 5 foot 10" runner in 2016. As a younger runner, Rachele never had issue with her weight until her first year at college where the runners leading the pack "were so tiny". She didn't set out to shrink herself dramatically, but as the numbers on the scale fell, so too did her race times. "It does work - for a little while," she said. "That's the worst part about it."

As an eating disorder ensued, she lost her love for the sport and eventually succumbed to an injury which her body had no stores or energy to repair. A two-year journey to recovery and comeback was ahead of Rachele. She needed to convince herself success would not come from deprivation. "Your talent isn't going to go away. You aren't racing well because you're thin. You're running well because you're a good runner. You're going to run better when you're healthy and have energy and consistent training."

That Rachele continued to race as well in her new, sturdier body belies the notion that only rail-thin athletes succeed in distance running, which in her own words is "bullshit."

<https://www.runnersworld.com/news/a20837236/college-runner-explains-why-she-went-public-with-her-weight-gain/>



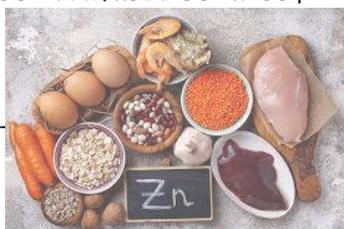
## Zinc

Long touted as a miracle mineral for men, Zinc cannot be overlooked for the female population too, particularly so for runners.

Zinc forms part of the enzymes that play a role in energy release - very important for running! It is also needed for a healthy immune system and to enhance recovery from injuries. However, as zinc is lost in sweat, training hard increases our risk of a deficiency.

The body cannot store zinc so it must be sourced from the diet each day.

Meat and fish are the best options, but pulses, whole-grains and nuts offer a helpful source too.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

11 November: Leith Harbour Free

19 - 21 November: South Island Masters  
Track & Field Champs

20 - 21 November: 24-hour Dunedin Peak-bagging

27 November: Clyde to Alexandra 10km

28 November: Leith end of year BBQ picnic

Every Tuesday: Chris Sole's training group, approx. 5:20pm from Caledonian and fields

Every Thursday: Group run from Tomahawk, approx. 5:20pm.

Every Saturday: Track and Field meet at Caledonian

