

TIM'S TOP TEN WOMEN FOR 2019

It's that time of the year again so off we go with my Top Ten Women for 2019. These are very much my own individual picks based on a combination of absolute quality, consistency across the year and improvement relative to past years. Of course, your picks might differ. Anyway, read on. As always, it was a very tough ask.

Overall, the head to heads between Jemima Montag (VIC) and Katie Hayward (QLD) saw the two girls locked together in 2019 with the count at 4 apiece, with so little separating the two girls that they share the Number 1 spot in my yearly Top Ten.



E1. Jemima Montag (VIC)

21 year old Jemima Montag started her year in fine style with two top 10,000m walk performances in January in Canberra (45:36.84 followed by a PB 43:59.46). A PB time of 1:30:51 the next month in Adelaide showed that she had a good mix of speed and stamina. She improved her 10,000m track PB to 43:51.47 in taking silver in the Australian T&F Champs in Sydney in early April. She also clocked another two good 20km walks, first in Nomi in Japan (1:31:53) and then in Lazaro Cardenas in Mexico (1:32:19). She took gold in the Oceania 10,000m Track walk in Townsville in June with another PB (43:50.84), followed 2 weeks later by silver in the World University Games in Naples (1:33:57). Her main racing season culminated with a top 10 finish in the World Championships in Doha in very tough conditions (1:36:54).



E1. Katie Hayward (QLD)

19 year old Katie Hayward started her year identically to Jemima, with strong walks in the two 10,000m track races in Canberra in January (45:49.95 and 44:29.27). She then turned the tables in Jemima in the Australian Summer 20km Championship in Adelaide in February, taking the title with her very first attempt over that distance - how about 1:29:31 for a first-up time! A week later, she won the Queensland Track Classic 3000m track walk in a huge PB of 12:10.17. She then won the 10,000m track walk at the Australian T&F Championships in Sydney in early April in a PB 43:20.65. She lowered her colours to Jemima in taking silver in the Oceania 10,000m walk in Townsville in June (45:35.81) but then bounced back for a wonderful win in the World University Games in Naples (1:33:30). The only blot on an otherwise wonderful year was her disqualification in the World University Games in Doha in October.



3. Alanna Peart (VIC)

16 year old Alanna Peart has been the dominant U18 walker this year, as well as challenging as one of the top U20 girls. She started her title tilt with silver in the U17 5000m walk at Australian T&F Championships in Sydney in early April (25:14.19) but improved to twin golds in the LBG Carnival in Canberra in June (1st U16 3km with 14:34 and 1st Open 5km with 25:58). She won the U18 5km road walk at the Australian Roadwalk Championships in Adelaide in September (24:44) and the U18 5000m track walk at the Australian All Schools in Perth in December (24:51). She also recorded lots of PBs during the year, including 3000m (13:44), 5km (23:12) and 10km (49:01).



4. Milly Boughton (NSW)

13 year old Milly Boughton was clearly our top U14 girl nationally. She won the U14 3000m track walk at the Australian T&F Championships in Sydney in April (PB 14:26.12), followed that same month by a win in the prestigious Australian Little Athletics National Championship 1500m (6:56.01). She also won golds in the U14 3km road walk at the Australian Winter Roadwalk Championships in Sydney in September (14:55) and in the U14 3000m track walk at the Australian All-Schools Championships in Perth in December (14:28.90). Also recorded a 5km road walk PB of 24:42 in Sydney in May. That's pretty good for a 13 year old!



5. Jayda Anderson (QLD)

14 year old Jayda Anderson was another young girl to stand out this year. She won the U15 3000m track walk at the Australian T&F Championships in Sydney in April (13:49.89) and won the U15 3000m walk at the Australian All Schools Championships in Perth in December (13:57.95). She bypassed any further championships, restricting herself to races on the local Queensland front. Her PBs are all from 2019 - 6:26.17 (1500m), 13:49.89 (3000m) and 25:49 (5km).



6. Claire Woods (SA)

38 year old Claire Woods continues to amaze us with her ongoing form. She finished as third Australian behind Katie and Jemima in the Australian 20km Summer Championship in Adelaide in February (1:33:24), walked a further three good 20km walks in various IAAF events over the next few months (Lazaro Kardenas in Mexico 1:35:38, Taicang in China 1:33:15 and La Coruna in Spain 1:39:22). She finished third (behind Jemima and Katie once again) in the Oceania 10,000m walk in Townsville in June (47:16.28) and won the 20km at the Australian Winter Roadwalk Championships in Adelaide in September (1:44:56). Unfortunately, her year ended there due to injury. She was forced to withdraw from the World Championship team for Doha and also chose to bypass the Australian 50km at Fawkner Park in December. Her injury was a shame as the first half of her year was impressive and she looked set for further good races at the pointy end of the year.



7. Darcey Roberts (VIC)

12 year old Darcey Roberts had a slow start to the year, the result of a running injury incurred in September 2018. Her first championship appearance was not until the LBG Carnival in June, where she won the U12 2km (9:58) and was second in the U14 2km (10:00). She next fronted for the Australian Winter Roadwalk Championships in September in Adelaide. Restricted to only 1 race due to A.A. rules governing U12 walkers, she chose to contest the U18 5km to aid the Victorian Team. Finishing 4th in a huge PB of 26:46, she helped the Vic girls to gold in the Teams Event, a generous contribution. Her only other walk on the national stage was at Fawkner Park in December, where she won the U18 5km with a huge time of 24:58. Apart from that, her parents chose to keep her away from the major titles, a sensible move for one so young. Her races on the local Victorian front saw some super PBs, most done before her 12th birthday in October - 6:58.24 (1500m), 14:51 (3km), 24:58 (5km) and 56:42 (10km).



8. Tracy Feiner (VIC)

42 year old Tracy Feiner (nee Rosengrave) was a talented young Victorian walker who, like so many, retired in her early twenties. Having dipped her toes back into the sport with a couple of walks in 2018, she hit the ground at speed in March this year and has been making up for lost time since then. Racing in the 2019 winter season, she took Victorian silver (15km 1:21:39) and gold (30km 2:49:12) medals, with a further silver in the Australian 20km Roadwalk Championship in September in Adelaide (1:51:22). She finished her winter season with a win in the VRWC 35km Club Championship, with a time of 3:22:44. She then indicated her intention of trying her hand in the Australian 50km Championship in December and she did this in fine style, winning the Women's title with 4:59:44 and setting a new W40 Australian Masters record. A great comeback story.



9. Heather Carr (VIC)

70 year old Heather Carr has made 2019 the year of the comeback to end all comebacks. Following a hip replacement operation in May 2018, followed by a serious achilles tendon injury, she has forced her way back to the top after what should have been career ending issues. In her first serious hitout post-op, she won gold in the W65 3000m track walk at the World Masters Indoor Championships in Turin in April (18:30.9). After a full winter season of racing with VRWC, she turned 70 in early August and embarked on a W70 record spree. Over the last 4 months, she has bettered VRWC W70 records on 11 occasions, with a number of the performances also getting guernseys as Australian and/or World records. Consider her W70 performances: 11:42 (2km road), 11:49.5 (2000m track), 17:50 (3km road), 17:57.3 (3000m track), 30:42 (5km road), 30:46 (5000m track) and 1:04:55 (10km).



10. Ela Uzun (VIC)

Never before have I included such a young walker in my Top Ten but there is no way I can leave out 8 year old Ela Uzun. Consider her PBs: 5:14(1km), 8:11 (1500m), 11:13 (2km) and 16:50 (3km). Racing exclusively with VRWC, as befits one so young, she has rewritten our record books in 2019 with 9 new club records, ranging from U9 right up to U11. Her one venture outside Melbourne was in June when she travelled to Canberra for the annual LBG Carnival. On that occasion, she was second in the U10 1km with a time of 5:14, beaten only by a walker two years her senior.

The following walkers were also considered but missed the final cut. It is never easy to get down to the final 10 (or 11)!

Rebecca Henderson (VIC), Camryn Novinetz (QLD), Caitlin Hannigan (QLD), Alanna Pitcher (NSW), Kiera Ross (SA), India Duguid (NSW), Christina Papadopoulos (QLD), Kelly Ruddick (VIC), Jemma Peart (VIC) and Jayda Stanley (NSW)

You can check out this year's and all past year's Top Ten's at <http://www.vrwc.org.au/TopTen.shtml>.