

2024 Interschools Australian Snowsports Championships

Last week from Tuesday September 3 to Sunday September 8, twenty-three boys from Year 2 to Year 12 travelled to Perisher to compete in the 2024 Interschools Australian Snowsports Championships. The recent warm conditions had depleted the snow cover considerably. However, the Interschools team and the Perisher Race Department did an amazing job providing safe and exciting courses for the 3,500+ event starts from 1,700 competitors from 335 schools who competed from around Australia.

On Day 1, our Nationals Trailblazers, Lachlan Barnes and Callum Saurajen enjoyed some great conditions and peak-level competition. In Division 6 Ski Cross, Lachlan placed 15th in Australia and in Division 5 Moguls, Callum placed 7th.

Day 2 saw Leroy Wang as the sole competitor for Shore in the Division 5 Ski Cross. Leroy placed 41st in his first Nationals event, even though he was battling illness. What commitment!

Day 3 saw the start of the Senior boys' campaign. In Division 2 Moguls, Charlie Kovacs placed 28th; in Division 1 Ski Slopestyle, Ari Ganassin placed 16th; in Division 1 Snowboard Slopestyle, Noah Shepherd soared for NATIONAL INDIVIDUAL SILVER; and in Division 1 Snowboard Cross, Noah, George Lane and Neo Pressley won NATIONAL TEAM SILVER.

Day 4 was a massive day, with all Cross Country (XC) events seasoned with a splash of snowboarding. The wind was shocking with some of the younger competitors seriously struggling to move depending on wind direction. In XC Classic Division 1, Alexander Yu improved his standing from State Championships to place 11th; in Division 2, Charlie Kovacs, Angus Motteram and Lachlan Boys placed 5th; in Division 3, Jackson Sprott, Lachlan Jansen and Jake Mears missed the podium by 0.8 of a second, placing a solid 4th!; and in Division 5, Leroy Wang, Callum Saurajen and William Sprott placed 7th. William charged through the course to claim NATIONAL INDIVIDUAL BRONZE.

In the XC Relay, in Division 2, Angus, Lachlan and Charlie placed 6th, in Division 3, Jackson, Jake and Lachlan placed 6th. In Division 5, Leroy had to give way to his illness so William completed two legs of the event. Several

schools had this set up for the relay. William was a machine, powering around the course for the third time as if it was his first. Hats off to Leroy, he really gave his all to compete at Nationals.

Later that afternoon in Division 1 Snowboard GS, Noah Shepherd, George Lane and Neo Pressley placed a strong 6th with Noah breaking the top ten to place 9th overall.

Day 5 was fast and action-packed. The racing was fierce, and all of our men put on a great effort against Australia's best. In Division 2 Ski Cross, Nicholas Yates, Charlie Kovacs and Taj Robertson smashed out NATIONAL TEAM BRONZE; In Division 1 Moguls, Harry Dubenec placed 11th; and in Division 1 Alpine, Duncan Cowan, Calvin Shortus, Lewis Kingdom and Ari Ganassin placed 5th overall, Duncan placing INDIVIDUAL 4th. Really quite remarkable when you think that Duncan, Calvin and Lewis have just come out of Trials and arrived at the snow a day before their event.

The final day of competition, Sunday September 8 2024, saw the last official engagement for Year 12 boys Duncan Cowan, Calvin Shortus and Lewis Kingdom. It has been a massive privilege for me to see these young men, as well as our other Year 12 competitors, Max Morton, Lorenzo Cozzi, Lachlan Defina and Tristan Sparkes, grow up through Snowsports.

In Division 3 Alpine in the morning, William Thompson, Benjamin Rose, Jake Mears and Lachlan Jansen battled the wind and the course to come a very respectable 6th.

In the afternoon, our outstanding Division 2 Alpine Team of Charlie Kovacs, Nick Yates, Taj Robertson and Angus Motteram, along with the other Division 2 racers, were denied a two-run race due to the severe wind and deteriorating course. The boys raced well, placing 5th in Australia.

So the final day had its share of frustration but we also enjoyed supreme victory. While watching the Div 3 Alpine race I looked over to see Duncan Cowan absolutely flying down the Ski Cross course. Notably faster than all other competitors to the naked eye, Duncan majestically skied the course like a man possessed. Soon after, Calvin Shortus flew down and then Lewis Kingdom as well. The boys ran the perfect race and ended up AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SKI CROSS CHAMPIONS for 2024; Duncan the AUSTRALIAN

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPION, over one second clear of the next fastest competitor. Blitzed the field. The most outstanding result in their final year of racing achieved despite their limited time on snow. Absolutely outstanding.

The Senior Team placed 4th Overall this year, behind Scots, King's and Melbourne Grammar. A superb achievement that has only happened once before, in 2022. This year we earned 84 points, 69 points in 2022.

Thank you, parents, for your relentless support of Shore Snowsports and of your children. Thank you, Messer's Massey, Inches and Weston for your friendship and support of the boys and families this year. The 2025 snow season cannot come fast enough, bring it on!!

Mr W J Payne
MIC Snowsports