

## NIFTY NEIL'S RACE

T'was Nifty Neil from Cordeaux Heights that caught the running craze.  
He threw away his Malvern star that had seen much better days.  
He dressed himself in running clothes, resplendant reds and blues  
And hurried off to town to buy the best in running shoes.  
And as he strode in through the door with a smirk as bright as the sun,  
The grinning salesman (Lloyd) said "Excuse me can you run?".

"See here young man," said our young Neil, from Dapto to the sea,  
From Stuart Park to the Scramble Track there's none can run like me.  
I'm good all round at all events, as everybody knows.  
Although I'm not the one to talk, I hate a man that blows.  
But running is my special gift, my chiefest sole delight,  
Just ask me dad or ask me mum, they'll tell you that alright.  
There's no event on road or track, no distance known to athlete  
That I can't run with my size 10's and inflict a blistering defeat!"

T'was Nifty Neil one Thursday night lined up to run his best.  
A 3k race was in his sights, his training he would test.  
The gun it fired, the racers shot around the tartan track  
And Neil hung in as was his wont, no courage did he lack.  
Round and round at PB pace he pounded his flat feet.  
Four laps, five laps and now on six, this victory would taste sweet.  
Up on his toes, his head held back, his legs they pumped and lifted  
Till in his sights the finish line; boy was he gifted!!  
Past Everton, Chin and Chris Stocker, Neil tore on without fear,  
Over the line and sank to his knees, a grin from ear to ear.

Then he heard Oi' Pete shout out the time so fast and unexpected.  
Of 8.36! then the doubts crept in as Brownie interjected:  
" You can't stay there, you'll block the track, can't you count you clown?  
You've run one short, get up you must and chase the leaders down."  
So up Neil struggled with pounding heart, his legs he urged to move.  
"I'll not stop yet, I'm a Kembla man, I've something here to prove."  
He fartleked here, he fartleked there, he fartleked east and west,  
But he crossed the line in 9.56 and achieved his personal best.

T'was Nifty Neil from Cordeaux Heights that happily left that night.  
His feet were sore, his legs felt dead, but he'd learned to count alright.  
It's 7 1/2 not 6 1/2 that make up a 3k.  
But what the heck, it's all good fun in a Kembla Jogger's day.

Hazel Brown  
with apologies to A.B Paterson

## Kembla Jogger's medal profile

NEIL BARNETT

1996

Neil Barnett first appeared on the KJ's scene in the early 80's trailing his father in a 10 mile handicap race at West Dapto on his Malvern Star bike, feeding back information on how much time was being gained on runners in front or lost to those behind. Perhaps the challenge and camaraderie of these early races enthused him sufficiently from his vantage point on a bicycle, to start competing in the winter series of 1982 and within two years had set his sights on a half marathon, just failing to break 90 minutes for the National Park Half in 1984.

In the following years, Neil has steadily improved his times in all events culminating in a 78.54 for the Sydney Half in 1994, an event which has become one of his favourites.

While not one of the elite runners of the club, Neil can always be relied on to do his best for Kembla Joggers, whether it be on or off the course. He has been an inspiration to all, leading from the front as president of Kembla Joggers for the past few years. Along the way he has collected two firsts in the Handicap series and has steadily beaten the PB's of his father over most distances, with only one remaining to go...2.49 for a marathon....that's a hard one Neil!

Although personal bests is not what running is about, it does give a certain amount of satisfaction when that all elusive time is beaten. PB's come easy at first but after many years of running are much more difficult to achieve. Some events have greater significance, for example over 5 or 10kms. For Neil, coming through the field strongly and recording a PB of 81.30 for the demanding KJ's Tom Miskelly Memorial Half Marathon was an effort that was highly commendable and worthy of consideration of a KJ medal. Even so, without doubt the performance that cemented his award of a **1996 KJ medal**, was not over his favourite distance, but one that has your innards tearing out after only the first 500 metres or so. Breaking 10 minutes for **3000 metres** is a difficult proposition for many of us and it is in acknowledgement of this performance in particular, when Neil did **9.56 In a track run**, that the KJ medal has been deservedly awarded.

( Actually this achievement also qualifies Neil for the Balls Up Award for 1996.!!

Neil managed to complete the 3000m in 6.5 laps(!!!!) and collapsed over the line, only to be told that he still had one lap to run! So, up he gets and guts it out for another 400 metres and collapsed a second time in the meritorious time of 9.56. Had he been able to count initially, his time would undoubtedly have been far quicker.)