

Brigitte Rice wins Ballarat XCR 6km race in under - 18s



By [Greg Gliddon](#)

August 7 2023 - 2:00pm

A NEW star might have been born on the tarmac of Lake Wendouree with Yarra Rangers' Brigitte Rice dominating to win the 6km junior event, becoming just the third athlete ever to run the race under 21 minutes at under - 18 level.

The 16- year - old joins Olympians Sonia O'Sullivan and Georgie Clark as the only three women ever to run the quick time, finishing in 20 minutes and 50 seconds, almost one full minute ahead of her nearest competitor.

What makes the feat even more remarkable is that Rice only really started competing seriously this year.

"It's a privilege, it's kind of a shock because it's my first year racing and really sets me up for the future and bigger races to come including nationals," she said.

Rice said running had given her solace after a difficult time last year.

"I suffered from a mental health issue last year and I found some strength in my faith and found that God was calling me to run, and when i'm running I feel like I'm invincible, nothing can stop me, it's an amazing feeling and I encourage everyone to give it a go."



Brigitte Rice from Yarra Valley won the women's under 18 run at her first attempt. Picture by Adam Trafford

Rice said she had run with her parents a lot since she was 10 years old, but had enjoyed getting into more competitive endeavours recently.

"I just wanted to wait until I was at a proper age before I really committed to it," she said. "I felt that now at this age, I felt it right for me to start running.

"I got close to a national time at a road race at the start, I felt like I was waiting to have a good race like today. It's been beautiful here today, it's great for athletes to come to the country areas and this is a great area to utilise.

"I've got nationals in three weeks and my goal is to enjoy my running in the future."

Ballarat pair Rose Ashman and Lucy Jones took out the quinella in the Women's under-16 event, Ashman finishing the course in 21.10, just six seconds ahead of Jones

Ballarat's other top runners on the day included Aria Violini and Archie Grant, who each finished second at under-14 level, while Vincent Duffy was just pipped on the line by Diamond Valley's Peter Ramsay in the over 60s, finishing on the same time as the winner at 25.45.

JUNIOR AND MASTERS WINNERS

Women's U14: Heidi Kuppler (Diamond Valley) 22.08

Men's U14: Tyler Finch (Bendigo) 20.04

Women's U16: Rose Ashman (Ballarat) 21.10

Men's U16: Alex Franxke (North East Region) 18.33

Women's U18: Brigitte Rice (Yarra Rangers) 20.50

Men's U18: Logan Tickell (Bendigo) 18.18

Women's U20: Madeline Laven (Yarra Rangers) 22.51

Men's U20: Nicholas Martin (Knox) 18.08

Women's 50+: Carolyn Huell (Western Athletics) 26.13

Men's 60+ Peter Ramsay (Diamond Valley) 25.45