

Next stop nationals for Taradale

The Hawke's Bay secondary school rogaine championships could be expected to be dominated by the established orienteering schools.

Yes, the senior titles largely went to script at this year's champs at Kereru, but the feature of the day was the emergence of a new force in the shape of Taradale High School.

The winning senior male duo of Bruno McDonald and Will Tidswell were given all they could handle by Taradale pair Ben Wilson and Campbell Gray. Tidswell had represented New Zealand at the Junior World Orienteering Championships but he and McDonald were penalised 80 points for arriving back eight minutes past the three-hour cut-off and clung on to win by a mere 30 points.

Experienced Havelock seniors Lily Stephens and Rani Williams had a far from clean run but survived to win by 50 points, again from Taradale.

The senior mixed pairs oozed talent. Havelock's Amy Culham had won the Oceania Women's 18 long course title in Australia recently and paired up with Havelock schoolmate Blake Campbell. The opposition was no less illustrious in the shape of Braeden Kommeren (Lindisfarne) and Tessa Burns (Woodford House), two single sex schools being eligible to combine as a team. Burns had returned from last month's Southern Cross Challenge running for New Zealand against Australia and beating Australian women who had represented their country at Junior Worlds.

On Sunday it was she and Kommeren who took the title by a commanding 200 point margin from the Havelock North pair.

In the junior grades it was a different story. Taradale were the new kids on the block. They took first, second and third in the junior male grade and first and second in the junior female.

The answer to how or why Taradale did so well lies in the school's focus on adventure racing.

The Taradale High School junior adventure racers have qualified for the national Get2Go finals having won the Hawke's Bay final. The national final is a five-day long adventure challenge on Great Barrier Island in December.

The senior Taradale adventure racers have qualified for the five-day Torpedo7 Hillary Challenge. This is held each year at Hillary Outdoors Tongariro and is open to a total of twelve teams each consisting of eight students from year 12 and 13. The teams will be scored on their skill, speed and endurance during the five-day series of outdoor adventure challenges including a two-day rogaine-style wilderness expedition and a multisport race on the final day.

As part of the build-up for these events a 25-strong squad of students has been training three mornings a week before school and on simulated training weekends. The Kereru rogaive provided the perfect venue to hone team navigation skills in a competitive environment.

And speaking of perfect: Sunday's weather was just stunning, competitor numbers up on last year and the terrain on the Kay and Spall family farms both a beautiful backdrop and a challenge to match.

Steve Armon and Duncan Darroch

Results from the HBSS Rogaine Championships at Kereru on Sunday 20th October 2019:

Senior Male: B McDonald, W Tidswell (HAVE) 1580pts, 1; B Wilson, C Gray (TRDL) 1550, 2; C Broad, C Potts, J McGrath (HAVE) 1170, 3.

Senior Female: R Williams, L Stephens (HAVE) 1030, 1; T van Zyl, B Challis, L Valentine (TRDL) 980, 2; S Vassal, H Tellnes (HAVE) 770, 3.

Senior Mixed: T Burns, B Kommeren (WOOD/LIND) 1540, 1; A Culham, B Campbell (HAVE) 1340, 2.

Junior Male: C Evans, R Dooney (TRDL) 1200, 1; C Carlisle, L Geary (TRDL) 1150, 2; B Stephenson, H Robinson (TRDL) 670, 3.

Junior Female: G Dooney, H Findlay (TRDL) 1040, 1; G Dearing, E Findlay (TRDL) 1020, 2; H Tattersfield, G Tremain, L Kirk (NAPG) 980, 3.



On your marks . . . the Taradale boys ready to start are Caleb Carlisle (left), Logan Geary, Duncan Darroch (teacher), Campbell Gray, Reeve Dooney, Ben Wilson and Charlie Evans.



Up for the challenge . . . Taradale girls Lily Valentine (left), Hannah Findlay, Grace Dooney, Brooke Challis, Theane van Zyl.