PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN THROUGH THE KIDS CROSS COUNTRY SERIES

CASE STUDY
The Arki Kids XC Series is about encouraging children to have a go at cross country running an exciting and non-competitive environment. This season, there weren’t any winter event opportunities for children, so the club decided to host a series of fun cross country events and open the events up to all Otago clubs as well as the general public.

There were 3 races in the series, each at a different location. There was no entry fee to each race – instead we asked participants to donate a tinned food item which we then donated to the Dunedin Food Bank. Also, every child received a ribbon when finishing the race. There were also no placings – every child received a ribbon for completing the race.

- Running in Dunedin in winter can be a barrier with cold temperatures.
- Keeping the event to a timeframe that would suit busy lifestyles of families in the present-day environment.
- Getting the information out to the general public, not just to running clubs.

ATHLETICS NZ supported us to source funding. We also tried to incorporate the series into major events such as the Otago Cross Country Champs and the New Zealand Cross Country Champs which were both held in Dunedin this year.

- We chose dates in which previous seasons had been favorable weather. This was also influenced by the COVID-19 and the delay to the winter season.
- The timeframe of the event on the day was able to be shortened by not having official results or timekeeping and not having any official race numbers. Instead, we provided blank template race bibs that children could decorate themselves to wear.
- We employed a graphic designer to create our marketing material. We put these on our website and created Facebook event pages, as well as gave them out to local businesses and schools.

Keeping the event to a short timeframe suited families and our target group.

We created fun obstacle challenges, such as crawling under netting, jumping over hay bails – seeing the children having fun, laughing and smiling and parents jogging along with them was great to see.

The XC Series gave the club some exposure and we were able to promote ourselves for the upcoming summer season.

**Keep the event simple so the club volunteers running the event are not overtaxed.**

The concept of this event makes it possible for just about any club of any size to organise their own event for children. The event was made simple and efficient to run by not having any time keeping, registration numbers and official results. Also, keeping the event to a short timeframe (30 minutes total) suited most parents and young families on a Sunday morning.

One of the most pleasing things was seeing the children drop off their can of food to the registration to donate to the local Food Bank. They were all very proud to do so. Also, seeing their faces light up as they received their finishers ribbon was a definite highlight.

Moving forward, we would look to hold the event in the slightly warmer months of the year. We would look to get our older children club members (ie. 14 to 20 year olds) to support as pack leaders and tail end charlies.
KIDS XC series 2020

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