



Mercantile Rowing Club takes out this year's Head of the Yarra.

Close to 2300 competitors in 255 rowing eights created a marvelous spectacle today on the Yarra as they raced their way from Birrarung Marr to Hawthorn Rowing Club in the annual Head of the Yarra.

Club crews representing every state as well as New Zealand made the annual pilgrimage to Melbourne. The annual classic saw crews of all ability test their skill against the country's best for fastest time over the grueling 8.6km Yarra course.

The Mercantile Men's eight stroked by Angus Widdicombe and superbly coxed by Annabelle Orr won the race in a very quick time of (27:03:80 min). They were pushed all the way along the course by the UTS/ Sydney University composite crew stroked by Tim Masters and coxed by Franc Gourlas who finished 18 seconds behind (27:21:48) after 8.6 km of very close racing.

In the elite Women's Eights, the Melbourne University Boat Club crew stroked by Lucy Stephen, coxed by Sarah Ben-David and with Olympic Gold medalist Kim Brennan in the middle of the boat took line honors in a time of (29:36:28) ahead of the UTS/Sydney/SUBC composite crew stroked Elizabeth Halsall (30:13:13:) and coxed by Kendall Brodie.

In the schools' section, the Scotch College 1st crew stroked by Lauchie Murchie won the schoolboy A section in a very quick time of (28:11:57), 57 seconds ahead of the St Joseph's (NSW) crew stroked by Will O'Shannessy (29:09:66).

The Schoolgirl first eights saw a very strong field of Victorian and NSW crews, however it was the Methodist Ladies College crew stroked by Phoebe Wolf (30:59:68) who won by less than a second ahead of the NSW Pymble Ladies College crew stroked Rachel Balcomb (31:00:27).

In the 70-year+ category, 8 crews of Septuagenarians and Octogenarians, saw the MUBC crew stroked by Mike Kerin (31:40:87) ahead of second placed (on age handicap) North Shore Composite stroked by James Hole – the oldest crew in the race - with 87-year-old 1956 Olympic medalist Neville Howell in the bow seat.

The race attracted thousands of spectators along the full length of the Yarra course. A crowd of about 8000 congregated amongst the crews and boats for the trophy presentations and the post race carnival at the finish in the Yarra Bank Reserve in Hawthorn.

Attached are race results by category. Full results are available on the Website www.headoftheyarra.com

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