



The men's team pursuit cycling team, fronted by Kelland O'Brien, take a selfie with their bronze medals.

Pictures: AUSCYCLING



All four riders prepare for the race ahead.

# Kelland riding high

By Mikayla van Loon

Lilydale boy Kelland O'Brien is coming home an Olympic medallist after winning bronze in the men's team pursuit.

Up against our trans-tasman friends from New Zealand, it was a seesawing battle between the two cycling teams.

It was an incredibly tight race with only 0.048 of a second separating them at the half-way mark in favour of the Kiwis.

But not long after, New Zealand rider Aaron Gate crashed into the velodrome, sending the New Zealand team into disarray and saw them fall well behind the Aussies.

"We've raced these boys (New Zealand) quite a lot and we always know it's going to be a dog fight and we were prepared for that," O'Brien told the Australian Olympic Committee.

"It was bouncing back and forth, us boys were here for the fight and I'm bloody proud we fought for the last three days to be here through some pretty tough moments.

"You never want to win a bike race that way, I'm sure these boys feel the same, you could see it in their reaction, but it's a part of bike racing and we got dealt a pretty rough hand on day one.

"It's been a crazy few days and even more hectic five years. We've been through a lot together and we wanted gold, that's what we came for, but in some respects we can hold our heads high."

After a tumultuous start to the Aussie's track cycling campaign, the boys in green and gold were in for a fight and put every bit of heart they had into winning bronze.

In the qualifying round, O'Brien's team mate Alex Porter was thrown from his bike at

65km per hour when the handlebars snapped on the bike he was riding.

Although a bit battered and bruised, Porter returned to the track to help his team set an Olympic Record of three minutes 44.90 seconds against Switzerland, landing them a spot in the bronze medal race against New Zealand.

"This is sport, this is bike racing, it's just the way it goes and even more so at the Olympics it throws curveballs at you that no other competition would and we wouldn't want it any other way," O'Brien said.

Porter could not race in the final and his spot was filled by Lucas Plapp but he still received a bronze medal.

This was the first Olympic Games for O'Brien, Porter, Plapp and Leigh Howard but the second for Sam Welsford who competed in Rio and won silver.



Kelland O'Brien, Leigh Howard, Lucas Plapp, Sam Welsford and Alex Porter celebrate after winning bronze at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

# Ranges stars get selected at AFLW Draft

By Jed Lanyon

It was a dream come true for three of the brightest young football talents from across the outer eastern suburbs after being selected at the AFLW Draft on Tuesday 27 July.

Eastern Ranges players Keeley Sherar, El Chaston and Georgia Campbell made their way on to AFLW lists after strong NAB League seasons.

Head coach Travis Cloke said he was proud to see three of his players selected.

"It was surreal. To hear Keels, El and Georgia announced as AFL Women's players. It was a proud moment. I was almost like a proud dad, I guess is the best way to put it," he said.

"They are three very different athletes but they are all getting the same result. It's a great message for the rest of our girls on how to push, how to dream for their future years."

Eastern Ranges co-runner-up best and fairest winner, Keeley Sherar, had her name called out at pick 11 by Carlton.

Carlton's newest recruit put out a video after donning the Navy Blue for the first time.

"I'm so excited to be a part of the club and extremely grateful for this opportunity. Keen to get stuck into it," she said.

At pick 32, Collingwood selected Eastern Ranges co-captain El Chaston. Chaston's strong leadership qualities were a highlight during her time with the Ranges, while she also featured in Hawthorn's VFLW side regularly.

Chaston said being drafted by Collingwood was 'surreal'.

"I actually didn't hear my name get called out, I think I saw it on the tv screen. As soon as I saw that, it was all a bit of a blur," she said.

"I was pretty emotional. There's been a lot



El Chaston was selected by Collingwood.

Pictures: JED LANYON

of work that went into the last 12 months. Especially with Covid and what that brought. It was a bit of a relief and showed that hard work does pay off.

Finally, as Star Mail reported in previous weeks, Georgia Campbell was taken by Melbourne at pick 41 as the club's first ever father-daughter recruit.

Campbell was regarded as the top Victorian ruck prospect from the 2021 AFLW Draft pool, having been named as the AFLW Under 19s All-Australian starting ruck.



Keeley Sherar was taken at pick 11 by Carlton.



Georgia Campbell was taken by the Demons as a father-daughter selection.

"I'm so excited I went to school today and everyone was super pumped for me. It's the most exciting day I've ever had," said Campbell, speaking on Yarra Valley FM's The Sport.

"To hear my name officially called out was the most exciting thing. I already knew where I was going, but to hear my name was just amazing."

She said the decision to choose Melbourne came down to location and that some of the club's players had mentored her throughout the past season.

# Medal for our Harry

From page 1

"And I suspect that might have been part of the attraction but I also know for a fact, Harry just really liked learning to dance."

Throughout Garside's Olympic campaign, Ms Harrison said she had moments where she felt like her heart was going to fall out of her chest from excitement and nervousness.

"The work that Harry has put in since he was nine years old has got him to where he is today. [I am] desperately proud but above all just privileged to know him," she said.

From day one, Garside's mantra for his boxing career, which was instilled upon him by his Lilydale Youth Club coach Brian Levier, was to have fun and enjoy the experience.

"The thing he taught me the most when I was younger was to love the sport and always have fun. I think that's the most important thing and that's something I've carried on my whole boxing career, no matter how serious it gets I always seem to have fun and love what I'm doing," Garside said.

"I know I wanted a gold but I'm proud of myself, I showed up and I had a great preparation and I really gave it everything but he [Cruz] was just a bit too good today unfortunately."