

Alphington middle distance runner has national record in his

grasp

JULIA IRWIN, NORTHCOTE LEADER, APRIL 05, 2014



MIDDLE distance runner Ace Buck is taking his status as the country's fastest 13-year-old over 800m in his stride.

"There was a time when the success did start going to my head but the other kids got annoyed so now I try to lie low and let my actions speak for themselves," the young Alphington resident said.

"Running and athletics teaches you humility."

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Last month Ace competed in the 2014 Australian Junior Athletics Championships at Olympic Park in Sydney, easily winning the 800m and coming a close second in the 1500m and the 400m in the under-14 age group.

"I was really psyched up to win the 800m because I had the best time in the heats," Ace said.

"Mental attitude plays a bigger part than you'd think."

Ace said despite feeling confident, it was a tough race between he and second-place getter Luke Young from New South Wales.

"We had 200m to go and we were both gunning it — it turned into a sprint," he said.

"With 75m to go I found another gear and ended up winning the race by two seconds."

Ace's time was 2min 6 secs, just one second off the national record.

He was pipped for gold in the 1500m with a time of 4min 27.99 secs, compared with the winning time of 4min 27.51 secs.

Ace had qualified for the nationals after winning three gold medals in the Victorian State Track and Field Championships.

His achievements were all the more remarkable considering he didn't start running until two years ago when one of the parents at Clifton Hill Primary School, Mark Buttifant, started training Ace and other interested students for cross country.

He identified the then 11 year old's potential as a middle distance runner.

Ace subsequently joined the Collingwood Harriers Athletics Club in Clifton Hill, where he trains at least two nights a week under coach Steve Griffiths.

But although running plays an important part in his life, his is far from a one-track mind.

Ace has earned a black belt in karate, enjoys dancing and has illustrated a children's book titled *Big Fat Porkies and Little White Lies*, written by his grandmother, former Australian Children's Television Federation director Patricia Edgar.

Ace's next challenge is the Australian Little Athletics Championships in Abert Park in May.

"I'm looking forward to that — it's my first nationals at home."