

1984 VICTORIAN VETERANS' ATHLETIC CLUB 24 HOUR TRACK RACE, BOX HILL, 4-5 FEBRUARY

The Victorian Veterans 24 Hour Track run was initiated in 1984, in response to a request from Geoff Molloy. He wanted to test himself before he applied for a start to the Westfield Melbourne to Sydney run. The event was organised by Dot Browne and billed as the V.V.A.C. 24 Hour Track Championship and saw 8 other runners join in to give him support.

The start time may be of interest to modern readers – 6PM on the Saturday evening.

Thrown together in a hurry at the Box Hill track, the event saw Geoff set a new Australian record of 216.000 km, and then go on to win the Sydney to Melbourne race later that year.

The 24 hour event was so successful that it became an annual event and continued to be run under the auspices of the Victorian Veterans Athletics Club for many years before they eventually handed it over to Coburg Harriers to run.

24 Hour Run

1.	Molloy, Geoff	M	VIC	1942	M40	216.000 km
2.	Riley, Gerry	M	NSW	1930	M50	203.192 km
3.	Williams, Reg	M	VIC	1951	M33	165.642 km
4.	Lear, Phil	M	QLD	1944	M35	161.600 km
5.	Hook, Geoffrey	M	VIC	1944	M35	115.100 km
6.	Vaughan, Caroline	F		1950	W33	90.000 km
7.	Light, Graham	M	VIC	1948	M35	81.200 km
8.	Hart, Gerry	M	VIC	1938	M45	80.400 km
9.	Logan, Peter	M	VIC	1947	M35	80.400 km

The following article was published in the Winter 1984 edition of the Victorian Marathon Club newsletter.

A JOGGER'S ATTEMPT AT ULTRAMARATHONING by REG WILLIAMS

After having completed more than 20 marathons in fair to reasonable shape over the last 5 years, I decided that the sub 3 hour marathon was going to elude me forever. It was this fact that made me decide to attempt longer distances to explore the limits of my body.

During 1982, I attempted the Frankston to Portsea (34 mile) run, treating the event with great care only to find the distance relatively easy to cover if one slowed down from the start. To my surprise I completed this in 4 hours 52 minutes and then felt I was God's gift to Ultra-running. It was not until mid 1983 that I embarked on another ultra, the VMC 50 Miler at Melbourne University. My distant memories of that event were extreme nervousness, but an immense desire to try to pass the 34 mile mark and still feel comfortable. That event proved to be a true challenge to discipline oneself to maintain consistent lap times in spite of being lapped every third lap by the "BIG-LEAGUE11. My longest training runs, 4 weeks prior to that event, were one 33 mile run over about 6 hours and approximately eight 12 milers, fun run training of about 40 to 60 miles per week. After the stiffness faded following this event I felt more confident about attempting longer distances since I found it very easy to slow down and jog at 9 to 10 minute mile pace.

Following a very poor Big M attempt in 1983, I decided that the 1983 Sri Chimnoy 24 hour Ultra in Adelaide was not for me and forgot about Ultras until I was told by a Sri Chimnoy follower that the Vic, Veterans were staging a 24-hour for Geoff Molloy in a few days' time. Instantly the adrenalin was pumping and I was justifying to myself that I could do this event, with my limited training if I slowed down at the start.

A runner's friend of many, Dot Browne, told me that I would be welcome, hence the following Saturday at 6 pm I confronted the line with the Big League Ultra Runners as I saw them. Runners like Molloy, Riley, Hart, Logan and Lear were names I had heard of before and recognised their ability as well as respected their talent. I felt proud to be taking part in an event that included such names, so off we went only to find I was lapped in about 10 minutes. By 3 am on Sunday morning I was still last, but I felt great.

My objective to try and complete 100 miles in 24 hours seemed easy at that stage. Six o'clock in the morning saw me approximately 60 miles up and I felt some signs of tiredness creeping in, however, I felt with only 40 miles to go in 12 hours, I would scrape in. By eight o'clock I was looking for any excuse to stop but found the need to get a rubdown the best. Twenty minutes later I was back on the track and circling at my usual 2 minutes 30 seconds per lap. Running 4 laps and walking 1 lap seemed to be the idea for me, so I continued through to about 80 miles which was near 11 am. With 7 hours to go and 20 miles to cover I felt despondent. All I could think of was sleep, eat or drink but do anything

except jog/walk. At 83 miles I asked a friend, Stan Miskin, to accompany me. To my relief he and another supporting helper, Margaret Smith, helped me. Well, they did everything, they talked, encouraged, joked, put towels on my head, brought me icy poles, anything to keep me going, and to my honest and absolute surprise I was able to jog/walk/shuffle through the deepest emotional trough I have experienced in 6 years of fun running, only to encounter the warmth and friendliness of supporting people one meets in this type of event. At 94 miles I was finished, so I thought. I sat in the chair and fell asleep.

Stan changed my shoes, Margaret wet me all over and I remember Dot Browne putting my feet in a tub of ice water. Thirty minutes later I was on my feet circling ever so slowly, then a little quicker with 5 miles to go. The only way to keep going now was to jog half a lap, walk half and keep up this routine until the finish. At about 97 miles I knew I could make it. I remember very little until 100 miles. I expect the euphoria was the reason, however the feeling of crossing the line for 100 miles in 23 hours 11 minutes 20 seconds was instant relief. Ten steps later I found my 2 shadows, Smith and Miskin were still encouraging me to keep going. Could I let them down after all they had done for me? Sure, of course I could, I was buggered! I shouted myself a walked lap which became two, while Stan brought more icy poles. Then off we went walk/jogging every half lap, through the welcome hoses each end of the track to finish the event covering 103.3 miles.

I have enormous respect for Geoff Molloy and Gerry Riley who were between 20 and 30 miles ahead. My event was over thanks to the support from people such as Stan Miskin, Margaret Smith, the Brownes and the Callaghans, etc., who are truly very warm and loving people who care for you as a person first and a jogger second. The event is a week past and my legs feel good. I am considering if another Ultra is the thing.

One fact I have proved to myself and I hope other joggers find it helpful - the human body can cover what may seem enormous distances if you listen to it and respect the need to shuffle and walk at times when tired.