

1989 VICTORIAN 24 HOUR TRACK RACE, COBURG

The 1989 Coburg 24 Hour run saw an astonishing 70 entries, with the final start list eventually culled to 50 (Bryan Smith was amongst the many later entries and he was culled – priority was given to those who entered first). **40 of those runners finished the race, 10 athletes ran more than 200km, 24 athletes ran better than 100 miles.** These results all created new performance records as far as 24 hour events go in Australia. **Of the 19 first-timers, 16 performed brilliantly and ran the full 24 hours.** In fact, ultra historian Phil Essam argues that 1989 was our Australian Ultra Golden Year (see <http://www.coolrunning.com.au/ultra/2004010.shtml>).

The start time was set for midday on the Saturday. Luck was with the runners as the weekend was sandwiched between two heat waves with 40C either side of the race whereas Saturday was cooler, even threatening rain with a top of 23C, and Sunday was much the same.

The outcome of the race was spectacular with 44 year old Tasmanian Mike Marsh smashing the Australasian 24 Hour Track Record by 7km when he ran 260.099km (over 6 marathons in 24 hours). Second placed David Standeven also ran very strongly for 242.605 km while 20 year old Kim Talbot ran a sensational race to cover well over 100 miles in her first 24 hours (168.493km) and in doing so pushed herself into 8th best in the all-time Australian female 24 hour rankings.

24 Hour Run (50 starters)

1.	Mike Marsh	45	TAS	260.099 km	New Australian Record
2.	David Standeven	36	SA	242.605 km	
3.	John Breit	30	VIC	238.182 km	First 24H
4.	Keith Fisher	23	VIC	232.207 km	
5.	John Lewis	50	NSW	224.226 km	First 24H
6.	Greg Wishart	50	VIC	216.784 km	
7.	James Wolstencroft	34		205.848 km	First 24H
8.	Peter Gray	24	VIC	204.223 km	
9.	Graham Stenner	44	SA	203.526 km	
10.	Brickley Hepburn	37		201.949 km	First 24H
11.	Bill Beauchamp	43	VIC	196.505 km	
12.	Murray Cox	42	SA	187.605 km	
13.	Bruce Dirk	25		184.391 km	
14.	Terry Cox (Jnr)	23	VIC	182.817 km	First 24H
15.	John Kaparelis	21		179.268 km	First 24H
16.	Ken Hough	44	VIC	176.061 km	
17.	John Bencze	55		175.087 km	
18.	John Tripp	40	WA	169.224 km	
19.	Kim Talbot (F)	20	VIC	168.493 km	First 24H
20.	Col Jerram	44	VIC	164.769 km	First 24H
21.	Michael Grayling	32	VIC	164.719 km	First 24H
22.	Reg Williams	37	VIC	164.243 km	
23.	John Champness	47	VIC	162.819 km	
24.	Sandra Kerr	43		161.604 km	
25.	Max Harrison	49		158.040 km	First 24H
26.	Cliff Young	67	VIC	157.875 km	
27.	Robert Nash	36		156.220 km	
28.	Merrilyn Tait (F)	39		154.708 km	First 24H
29.	George Yanna	32		147.653 km	First 24H
30.	Peter Vernon	34		146.800 km	
31.	Chris Stephenson	32		146.218 km	
32.	Trevor Harris	42		140.419 km	
33.	Godfrey Pollard	57		139.893 km	First 24H
34.	Stephen Dunn	22		132.338 km	
35.	David Yeaman	52		127.771 km	
36.	Graeme Kerruish	49		127.601 km	
37.	Ron Campbell	45		123.620 km	
38.	Shaun Scanlon	44		121.354 km	First 24H
39.	Geoff Hook	44	VIC	113.018 km	
40.	Jacques Gaillard	41		112.457 km	First 24H
	Barry Brooks	48	VIC	132.400 km	
	Joe Record	47		132.400 km	

Jean-Claude Morre	32		115.600 km	
Kevin Cassidy	28	VIC	93.600 km	
Peter Richardson	24		90.800 km	
Ken Walters	56	VIC	72.000 km	First 24H
John Kostopolous	27		68.000 km	First 24H
Peter Milne	33		56.000 km	
Tony Dietachmayer	25		42.400 km	
Kurt Binder	43		29.200 km	First 24H

Graveyard Award

(Laps covered between 12 midnight and 6AM)

1. Ken March 160 laps
2. John Breit 144 laps
3. Keith Fisher 142 laps
4. Greg Wishart 131 laps
5. David Standeven 129 laps
6. John Lewis 128 laps

The actual trophy went to Keith Fisher because Mike March and John Breit were major trophy winners and were therefore ineligible for this award.

Race Director's Report: Dot Browne

As Race Director I was totally overwhelmed: 70 entries arrived, but there was no way one could fit 70 on the track for 24 hours. I decided to accept 50 which worked out fine. The reason for this popularity is because it is the Victorian trial for the 1989 Westfield Run, the great event many ultra-runners see themselves as winning.

By the time the race was started by the Mayor of Coburg at the Harold Steven Athletic Track at 12 noon on Saturday, the 50 runners had checked in, collected chest numbers, organised their lap-scorers and support crews and had their weight, pulse and blood-pressure checked by Dr. Spiro Moraitis, our Race Doctor. The venue looked a tent city: tents, campervans or caravans at the edge of the track for helpers, crews and lap-scorers, runners and officials, a complete community. By the end of the event a tremendous rapport had developed between neighbouring crews, lap-scorers and runners on the track, many of whom had never met previously. Teams had come from every state in Australia except Queensland - we even had John Lewis from New Zealand.

Harold Stevens and the Coburg Harriers had been incredible co-operative. Harold had had a special shelter built for the lap-scorers to protect them from the sun, wind and possible rain. The Nippards ran the canteen and did a roaring trade for the full 24 hours. Luck was with us as the weekend was sandwiched between two heat waves, 40oC either side of the race; Saturday was cooler, even threatening rain and a top of 23C, Sunday much the same. Great!

Just before the start, runners lined up under the VVACI banner for a group photograph. But where was David Standeven? He was still tying up his shoe-laces in the tent, wondering what all the fuss was about when the gun went. He still had his watch on South Australian time. His disconcerting start did not stop him from running well though.

He and John Breit had an incredible battle for the first half of the race. There was still only two laps separating them after 100 miles! John's handler, Raymond Carrol was a merciless motivator for the entire race and David Standeven had his ultra-running wife Cheryl to assist him. But by 6am in the morning the ultimate winner, Mike March from Tasmania, had passed them both and went through the 200km just 11 mins ahead of John Breit. Analysing Mike's lap-score sheets, we found that he had run this 24 hour race like a machine, consistent 2m 10s laps non-stop and hardly stopping to eat or drink at all! Mike has totally stuffed up theories about running a good ultra race. We all thought that it was necessary to eat and drink consistently in such an endurance event, but Mike ate nothing for the final 12 hours! Just drank water.

We had a special award for the runner who could cover the most laps in the bleak hours from midnight to 6am. We called it the "graveyard Award". Well, Mike March annihilated Tony Dietachmayer's 127 laps record by running 160 laps, but as he was one of the major trophy winners, the coveted granite trophy in the shape of a tombstone went to Keith Fisher instead, who had covered 142 laps. While Mike was amassing these laps, many in the field were slinking away from the track to the warmth and comfort of the massage table, provided by two dedicated masseurs from the Society of Clinical Masseurs inside the clubrooms. These two were like a magnet to exhausted runners looking for a place to lie down. Many athletes who achieved PB distances in this race attributed their success to the efforts of these masseurs. They massaged and treated injuries tirelessly for the whole 24 hours. Our Race Doctor Spiro Moraitis was

keeping a constant eye on the athletes too.

He stood track-side and every two hours pulled them off for "weighing in". He advised when a weight-loss was too great and told some runners they needed to eat and drink more. He was great value. He even stood smiling when we hauled him out of bed at 4am at a nearby motel to advise a suffering athlete. Amazing!

We had a minor panic at some ungodly hour before dawn when the light in the lap-scorers' tent suddenly went out and left them in total darkness. A fuse had blown due someone in a nearby caravan overloading the system. Fortunately, the digital clock switched over to automatic pilot (or batteries) and didn't miss a beat, so we were lucky. We hooked up the light to another source and were in business again. We had great support from the Victorian Veteran athletes for this event. They turned up in droves to assist when we needed them most, mainly in the middle of the night. At one stage, Robin Anderson was holding the fort and was scoring 7 athletes at the one time.

The outcome of the race was spectacular. Mike March went on to smash the Australasian 24 Hour Track Record by 7km when he ran 260.099km (over 6 marathons in 24 hours), 10 athletes ran more than 200km, 24 athletes ran better than 100 miles. These results all created new performance records as far as 24 hour events go in Australia. Of the 19 first-timers, 16 performed brilliantly and ran the full 24 hours. Twenty-year-old Kim Talbot ran a sensational race to cover well over 100 miles in her first 24 hours (168.493km) and in doing so pushed herself into 8th best in the all-time Australian female 24 hour rankings.

Geoff Molloy presented awards and commemorative pottery coffee mugs to all finishers. Young Westfield hopefuls were pleased to meet two Westfield winners, Geoff Molloy and Cliff Young, two stars who had 'been there done that' handing out advice.

Thank you to so many people for helping to make this event such a success. The Coburg Harriers, my many Vet friends who crewed and lap-scored, my husband Colin who kept the leader-board updated every hour and to Ray Callaghan who was trouble-shooter throughout the race.