

1990 V.V.A.C.I. 24 HOUR TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP, COBURG, 10-11 MARCH

46 year old Bryan Smith had run 251.310 km 5 weeks previously in finishing 2nd in the 24 Hour World Championship at Milton Keynes, near London. He backed up brilliantly to win the Coburg 24 Hour Championship in March 1990 with an even paced run and a final distance of 249.881 km. Two months later, he would go on to finish second to Yiannis Kouros in the 1990 Westfield Sydney to Melbourne run (1006 km in 6 days 9 hours and 45 mins).

30 year old John Breit took second with 231.481 km and also featured in the 1990 Westfield classic, finishing 7th. He subsequently improved his 24 Hour total to 238.469km in the Toto's International 24 Hour Challenge in August 1990. Third place went to the ever consistent Peter Gray with 224.888 km. This was after his 220.279km 13th place in the Worlds at Milton Keynes. Aged only 25, Peter also contested the 1990 Westfield, becoming the youngest ever finisher (11th, 7 days, 18 hrs 2 mins). Sandra Kerr ran consistently right from the start to come through the women's field of Menilyn Tait and Kim Talbot to place first lady, with a PB of 165.009 km, in 15th place overall. The first 9 runners all ran in excess of 200km and the first 19 were all in excess of 100 miles. Another race of incredibly high standard.

24 Hours Run

1.	Bryan Smith	249.881 km
2.	John Breit	231.481 km
3.	Peter Gray	224.888 km
4.	Terry Cox (jnr)	217.373 km
5.	John Lewis	210.422 km
6.	Patrick Parsons	203.812 km
7.	Rudi Kinshofer	202.089 km
8.	Murray Cox	200.710 km
9.	Peter Armistead	200.612 km
10.	Colin Jerram	182.149 km
11.	Ron Hill	177.745 km
12.	Peter Quinn	176.900 km
13.	Geoff Hook	171.412 km
14.	Roger Weinstein	170.955 km
15.	Sandra Kerr (F)	165.009 km
16.	Tony Power	164.955 km
17.	Cliff Young	164.509 km
18.	Mike Thompson	163.293 km
19.	Jeff Viser	160.800 km
20.	John Champness	156.452 km
21.	Graham Stenner	156.271 km
22.	Frank Viviano	151.351 km
23.	Greg Wishart	151.214 km
24.	Kon Butko	145.412 km
25.	Terry Cox (snr)	144.681 km
26.	Norm Johnston	142.891 km
27.	Cliff Ryan	142.267 km
28.	Merrilyn Tait (F)	137.653 km
29.	Joe Record	136.800 km
30.	Godfrey Pollard	133.753 km
31.	Max Harrison	131.280 km
32.	Kevin Cassidy	128.209 km
33.	Safet Badic	126.800 km
34.	Roger Stuart	122.000 km
35.	Kim Talbot	120.009 km
36.	Jacques Gaillard	116.545 km
37.	Kaven Dedman	104.890 km
38.	John Bencze	100.000 km
39.	Robert Whelan	89.132 km
40.	Raymond carroll	86.059 km
41.	Gerard Fay	80.400 km
42.	Ron Smith	72.400 km
43.	Peter Milne	60.800 km
44.	John Moyle	59.500 km
45.	Philip Essam	50.000 km

Race Director's Report - Dot Browne

Have you ever cried watching an ultra race? Well I came close today. It was painful, I can tell you. Two of my best mates, Hookie and Peter Armistead were in my 24 Hour Race today. For months they'd both been talking about how they were going to crack that elusive 200km in my race, and they'd been training their butts off in preparation.

Pete had been doing incredibly long training runs down the Peninsula with Ron Smith - 80km in one day on one occasion! He'd told me how they'd driven the course along the back roads the day before and had planted deposits of fruit cake, drinks and munchies in plastic bags under bushes and in grassy hollows along the edges of dusty roads, so they'd cope on the training run the next day. They'd survived the training runs, although Ron seemed pretty stuffed towards the end, Pete said. He'd also been doing one kilometre reps, of the beautiful Frankston Park every Tuesday after work, with Robin Anderson, just to sharpen up his speed, he reckoned. He told us that the gates were locked at 5 o'clock, so they'd jump the fence and have the park to themselves for an hour or so. It was fantastic. One kilometre bursts at 90% effort on undulating grass fairways. Rob told me Pete never slacked off. It was always a gut-buster effort every lap.

Hookie had been doing different sort of training, but just as tough. His training included repetition hill sessions up at Ferny Creek, where the hills are toughest. He'd choose the steepest hill he could find, a couple of km. in length, and do half a dozen solid uphill climbs with flat-out down hills, throwing caution to the winds. And then he'd meet us for a 15 mile training run through Sherbrook forest to finish off. I admired their dedication.

Robin, Pete's repetition training partner, was there crewing for him and urging him on at the 24 Hour. I've never seen a support person so involved. It was almost like he was running the race with him, he was so attentive., a total commitment for 24 hours. "No, I can't eat. Pete's in the horrors. I gotta get him going." "No, I can't sleep. Pete's going well and I want to keep him moving" As the race progressed, the vagaries of fate began to show. Peter went from one extreme to the other.

He'd started off really well, pacing himself conservatively in the first half and looking really good and fluid. It was after 3am, however, that he started to hit the skids. He would run flat out for 4 laps, passing every competitor in the field at 100 miles an hour and then slow to a shuffle for another half dozen laps, agony written all over his face. That 200km was like a shining beacon, spurring him on and keeping him going when every muscle in his body was telling him to stop and walk. His tense face told a story of grim determination. No rubbishing, no wise-cracks like the Peter we knew, just solid concentration. Robin was inspirational. He's a master of positive encouragement, and absolutely refused to accept any negative attitudes from the man himself. Around 5am when Pete had been going through a particularly bad patch and had admitted to Rob that he'd given up hope of achieving that 200km, Rob went through him like a ton of bricks, blasting away the negative state of mind and inspiring him with renewed hope just with his words. I found it a most emotional experience watching him suffer, yet work determinedly towards his goal.

Other runners in the field also gave him tremendous support. When he was in the horrors, Kon Butko as he passed him, would yell, "Come on now, Pete! Hang on to me! Don't you bloody walk!" Patrick Parsons would run behind him, urging him on every time his pace dropped. It was all too much. He came through and reached his goal with 14 minutes to spare. You should have heard the crowd when he crossed the line to run 200k. They went berserk. I could have cried. Pete did. He just made it through the presentations, collected his pewter medallion, certificate and pottery mug and when he'd got back to his spot in the hall, said to Robin, "Hold this stuff for me, mate" and then quietly folded and went fast asleep on the floor.

I guess there are tales of agony and ecstasy in every race, but the 24 hour races seem to accentuate the extremes. It's such a bloody long time to run, and even if a runner achieves his goal, he goes through hell to do it. Of course the ecstasy of achievement produces the short memory syndrome, and they forget the agony pretty quick. But the disappointment of a failure tends to linger on for ages. It can stuff up their motivation for months after. All those months of wasted training out on the road, of wasted time that you could have spent with the family or doing something else you value. It's not easy to be positive when you've bombed out. Hookie. Kevin Cassidy, Ron Smith, John Moyle, and Greg Wishart were a few of those who had been in there with a chance of cracking the 200, but went home disappointed.

But it wasn't all gloom. Peter Gray, Terry Cox(Jnr), Patrick Parsons, Murray Cox, Rudi Kinshofer, Peter Armistead, Sandra Kerr, Col Jerram, Peter Quinn, Roger Weinstein, Tony Power, Jeff Visser, Norm Johnston, Jacques Gaillard and Cliff Ryan all pulled out performances that were the best of their lives.

Young Terry Cox (Junior) particularly, ran a blinder. Remember we'd seen him suffer in the Westfield last year when he and his old man ran together as a team and the young bloke had to pull out with foot and blister problems. Today it was young Terry's turn to be brilliant. He ran the race of his life to place 4th with a distance of 217.373km. Not bad for a 24 year old kid! His Dad had been incredible in his support. Although he was in the race too, he'd say things like,

"Don't you worry about me Dot. The young fella needs bananas, he needs some flat coke. Do you think you could get that for him?" Young Terry Cox came of age in this race. I reckon he'll be waiting for his Dad from now on.

There was a tale of heroism in the race too. Only two days before race day, entrant John Breit, currently seeded 6th on Australian all time 24 Hour Rankings, was involved in a serious bicycle accident, which not only grazed his legs badly, but also broke his arm. There was no way a mere broken arm was going to keep him out of this race. He came through, running consistently throughout, to place second. The arm went back in a sling after the race at the presentations. Lord knows what agony that boy must have gone through.

Cliffy was in this race, too. He looked absolutely stunning in dazzling white gear, long pants as usual, with the holes in them that have become his trademark. He ran 164K. Not real bad for a bloke that's getting close to 70!

The first three hours of the race passed by for the runners without them noticing. They were too busy watching Chief Timekeeper, Ray Callaghan and a couple of other blokes, trying to erect one of these new-fangled Swedish tents on the grassy verge. They were absolutely hopeless. Ray just kept standing there scratching his head. I used to think Ray was bright.

Harold Stevens, the Ground Manager at Coburg was just great. He erected a special lap-scorers' shelter near the Finish line and we issued the scorers with aqua blue lap-scorers' vests so they would be easily seen. We continually fed them sandwiches, fruit, barbecued snags, toast and tea and kept everybody happy. They were great. I reckon Anne Callaghan must have had a numb backside. She stayed and lapscored for Sandy Kerr for the full 24 hours and refused to take a break. Safet Badic was an interesting entrant. He's a mate of Joe Record, comes from Yugoslavia, and had a 2.16 marathon to his credit. He'd won the Ballarat 50 Miler last November in dazzling style in 5hrs.50min. and we wondered how he would go. He certainly started off fast, churning out 7 minute mile pace for the first few hours and running neck and neck with the early leaders. However, he stopped dead after 10 hours, complaining of a leg injury and was forced to withdraw.

The value of careful pacing was demonstrated by those who finished in the top 9, that elite group who were able to achieve over 200km. Bryan Smith and Peter Gray ran amazingly well when one considers that they had both performed brilliantly in a 24 Hour World Championship at Milton Keynes, near London only 5 weeks ago.

Sandy Kerr ran consistently right from the start to come through the women's field of Menilyn Tait and Kim Talbot to place first lady, with a p.b. of 165.009km, in 15th place overall. I was delighted that so many visitors had entered the race. We had six from South Australia, Mike Thompson from Western Australia, John Lewis from New Zealand, and Safet Badic from Yugoslavia.

All in all, the event went extremely smoothly. I am extremely grateful to have developed a fantastic band of reliable helpers over the 7 years of this race's operation. They have helped to make this event successful year after year, and this year was no exception. I value their assistance tremendously. My grateful thanks go to the following people: the crews and lapscorers who assisted the runners, my special friends Dave Sheehan and Robyn Todd who helped me with the catering, my husband Colin, who updated the leader board every hour, computerised the results and designed my new medal, the Coburg Harriers who were so obliging, Ray Callaghan who kept our times exact, Dr. Spiro Moraitis, my race doctor who kept a close eye on runners throughout, the four masseurs from the Vic. Society of Clinical Masseurs who massaged tirelessly throughout the event, Pauline Bradshaw, who made the commemorative pottery mugs, and of course to Westfield, without whose sponsorship, the event would not have been possible.

Thank you to all those interested spectators who turned up and hollered, and my heartiest congratulations to the runners who made the race.