

1991 VICTORIAN 24 HOUR TRACK RACE, HAROLD STEVENS TRACK, COBURG, 23-24 FEBRUARY

Race director Dot Browne summed up the 1991 Victorian 24 Hour Track Championship like this:

In this 8th year of operation, the field was the best quality I'd ever had. Two Westfield winners in Bryan Smith and David Standeven, ten Westfield finishers, the Australian 50 Mile champion, Carl Barker and Jeff Smith, the winner of the Vets 6 Hour Race held last October. These were in addition to 13 other experienced ultra runners and another 10 who had never run an ultra before, 37 starters in all. Six had travelled from interstate in order to compete.

The Saturday, although overcast, was very humid and seemed to take its toll on competitors during the night. Sunday's sun pushed the temperature up to 36C, not ideal conditions by any means but the performances were very strong.

Bryan Smith produced another brilliant performance with 250.729km. He then backed up with a win in the 1991 Westfield (Sydney to Melbourne, 1011 km, 6 days 12 hrs 50 mins). Brickley Hepburn put in a blinder with a 22km PB to finish second at Coburg with 239.32km and Rudi Kinshofer also made his trip from Adelaide worthwhile by doing a 30km PB to place third with 232.43 km. Peter Gray was next, with a 6km PB distance of 230.732km. He also backed up for another Westfield finish 2 months later.

Alas, I am still sourcing a full set of results. Brief snippets follow.

24 Hour Run (37 starters)

1.	Bryan Smith	250.729 km
2.	Brickley Hepburn	239.32 km
3.	Rudi Kinshofer	232.43 km
4.	Peter Gray	230.732 km
5.	David Standeven	218.864 km
6.	Jeff Smith	
7.	Geoff Hook	
8.	v	
9.	v	
10.	v	
11.	Ivan Davis	170.57 km
12.	v	
13.	Peter Risstrom	161.744 km
14.	v	
15.	v	
16.	Merrilyn Tail (F)	145.242 km
	Ken Marden	156.995 km
	Ken Matchett	133.737 km

Race Report by Dot Browne (Race Director)

In this 8th year of operation, the field was the best quality I'd ever had. Two Westfield winners in Bryan Smith and David Standeven, ten Westfield finishers, the Australian 50 Mile champion, Carl Barker and Jeff Smith, the winner of the Vets 6 Hour Race held last October. These were in addition to 13 other experienced ultra runners and another 10 who had never run an ultra before, 37 starters in all. Six had travelled from interstate in order to compete.

It was a fantastic event, although the weather was not all that kind to the runners. Saturday, although overcast, was very humid and seemed to take its toll on competitors during the night. Sunday's sun pushed the temperature up to 36 degrees, not ideal conditions by any means but the performances were fantastic. Bryan Smith showed his experience in pacing himself well, and hung back for the first few hours to come through and hit the front after the 7th hour. David Standeven and Carl Barker were ahead of him in the early stages. Brian produced another brilliant performance - 250.729km. Brickley Hepburn put in a blinder with a 22km personal best to finish in second place with 239.32km. Rudi Kinshofer also made his trip from Adelaide worthwhile by doing a 30km p.b. to place third with 232.43 km. What a performance! It's great to see these interstate boys do so well. Peter Gray was next, with his mum Norma giving him support again. A 6km p.b, for Peter to finish fourth and with a distance of 230.732km. What an amazing young athlete he is!

David Standeven was not in top shape for this one. He hadn't had the best of health for the last few months and it

showed. However, he still put in a good one and was well over the 200km with his 5th placing and 218.864km. Next in line was Jeff Smith, an ultrarunner with fantastic potential. Jeff is definitely an athlete to watch in the future. He's only run 3 shorter ultra events and has performed brilliantly in each one - a fourth and a second in the Ballarat 50 Miler, and a win in the East Burwood Six Hour last October. In seventh place was el Presidente of the Australian Ultra Runners Association, Geoff Hook, who thrilled both himself and the crowd by realizing a life-long goal - that of running over 200km in 24 hours. He had tremendous support from the crowd and his crew, but he really had to dig deep to achieve it. Great effort Geoffrey! Marilyn Tail, the only female entrant, came 16th overall and ran 145.242km. Another great effort!

Apart from Jeff Smith, some of our other first-time 24 Hour runners also performed extremely well. Ivan Davis ran 170.57km, Peter Rissstrom ran 161.744km, Ken Marden did 156.995km, and Ken Matchett, at the age of 69 years, put in an amazing 133.737km in his first. Well done!

But as I was surveying the scene as the race was in progress, one fact really hit home to me. The runners in a 24 hour race, only constitute about one-fifth of those involved, and this year was no exception. There were another 150 helpers on the sidelines, all there with the specific purpose of helping the runners achieve their personal goals. Some are the runners' crews who watch them every lap, assessing their needs in terms of food, drink, rest or change of clothing or a million other needs a runner might have - an extremely demanding job because they only get a two minute break before the runner is round again! Their lapscorers must be equally attentive, because nothing irritates a runner more than to think that a lap he has covered has not been recorded.

The masseurs from the Society of Clinical Masseurs, Alan Wilt, Anthony Ashley-Brown, Kalia Wheatley, Grame Davidson and Mike Browne, worked tirelessly, starting their therapy even before the race had begun. Robyn and Dianna Todd, David Sheahan and Jeff Briggs kept the lapscorers fed and were also on duty for the full 24 hours, serving hot drinks, snacks, porridge, SBQ and pancakes at regular intervals. Then there were Pauline and Kevin Nippard in the canteen, who kept the pies, pasties, soup, hot-dogs and icecreams up to the public and crews. Spiro Moraitis, the race doctor was invaluable. His calm friendly serenity inspired confidence in the runners when they developed problems with muscles, joints or stomach. His advice was sought for the full 24 hours. He also weighed each runner at regular intervals to check on dehydration. Other helpers manned the drink and sponge stations and regularly refilled the portable toilets. Col Browne and Bill Baxter updated the leader board every hour, which provided a great service to the runners but also meant they didn't get any sleep. Harold Stevens organised a lapscorers' tent and went to great trouble to erect it on the day.

What a community effort! I was again totally overwhelmed by the tremendous support that I received from my mates at the Croydon venue in fulfilling all these roles. They are such a solid group of positive people who were prepared to sacrifice 24 hours to help this event run smoothly. They receive no accolades, get no score on the board, no position on the ranking lists, but the event couldn't go on without them. They are the backbone of the event. I can't thank them enough. I just hope the runners appreciate them as much as they should.

The presentations went well, with Colin Browne producing a printout of the placings and distances within half an hour of the finish. George Perdon, one of the legends of ultra running, helped present trophies to the first three placegetters and special medals, certificates and commemorative pottery mugs to all finishers.