

## 1995 VICTORIAN 24 HOUR CHAMPIONSHIP, COBURG, 8-9 APRIL

1995 saw an improvement numbers wise, with 11 ultra runners and 15 relay teams of 10 runners ensuring that the event remained viable. The weather was not ideal - a very cold, strong, persistent SW wind for the runners to contend with and a temperature range of 10C to 16C – but at least it was not hot!

All eyes were on the all conquering Yiannis Kouros who had recently become a naturalised Australian and who lived locally. He had been after his own world record (286.632km, set in France while a Greek citizen) but had to eventually settle for 282.981 km. To put this in perspective, the distance of 280 km in 24 hours had only been exceeded 3 times in running history and each time it had been this man who has done it. His Coburg achievement ranked as the second greatest distance in a solo 24 hour run for the entire world and was an Australian and Australasian record set by an Australian citizen.

The relay teams produced Australian record performances – Yan Yean Road Runners set a new Australian Open 24 Hour Relay distance of 380.89km while Traralgon Harriers set a new Australian Veterans 24 Hour Relay distance of 369.94 km. A Coburg Little Athletics team was amongst the relay entries (15 runners aged between 9 to 14), covering a distance of 647 laps.

### 24 Hour Run

1.	Yiannis Kouros	38	VIC	282.981 km (AR)
2.	Joe Strobalak	42	VIC	210.430 km
3.	Andrew Lucas	30	TAS	184.810 km
4.	Peter Hoskinson	32	TAS	176.960 km
5.	Mike Haddock	51	TAS	174.850 km
6.	Peter Gray	30	VIC	162.810 km
7.	Dawn Parris (F)	42	VIC	134.160 km
8.	Godfrey Pollard	54	VIC	125.200 km
	Mark Pritchard	47	VIC	112.400 km (15 hours)
	Greg Wilson	42	VIC	100.000 km (11 hours)
	Mike McEvoy	60	VIC	60.000 km ( 7 hours)

### 24 Hour Relay Teams Challenge

1.	Yan Yean Road Runners	952 laps	380.89 km (AR)
2.	RMC Duntroon	786 laps	314.45 km
3.	Coburg Harriers 1	769 laps	307.62 km
4.	Coburg Harriers 2	768 laps	307.23 km
5.	Coburg Little Athletics	647 laps	259.18 km
6.	Ten Fabulous Females	641 laps	256.49 km

### 24 Hour Veteran Relay Teams Challenge

All Runners over 30 years. Each team must include 2 females and 4 veteran age groups

1.	Traralgon Harriers 1	924 laps	369.94 km (AR)
2.	Yan Yean Road Runners	907 laps	362.80 km
3.	Coburg Veterans	860 laps	344.08 km
4.	Aberfeldie Veterans	841 laps	336.79 km
5.	Altona Veterans	789 laps	315.86 km
6.	Traralgon Harriers 2	777 laps	311.18 km
7.	Croydon Veterans	755 laps	302.07 km
8.	Keilor Walkers 1	490 laps	196.00 km
9.	Keilor Walkers 1	484 laps	193.60 km

### Race report by Race Director Gordon Burrowes

11 ultra runners and 15 relay teams of 10 runners each were sent on their way by the start gun fired by John Warburton, Chairman of Commissioners of the City of Moreland, at 12 noon Saturday and all came to a well earned rest when the finish gun was fired by AURA President Geoff Hooke at 12 noon Sunday.

The gods designed the weather on the Friday night before the race just to tease the race director and keep him tense. Deafening showers followed by periods of calm and silence to allow the director to get back to sleep, content that the weather was improving, only to be awakened again by another series of deafening showers, threatening to set in for the weekend. A final teasing time on Saturday morning as the rain cleared and the wind dried the track, allowing us to

sweep up the puddles just before the rain came again with a final burst about an hour before the start time. But then the gods relented and decided not to tease the race director any more. Except for a period of drizzle Sunday morning about 8am, there was no more rain until 12.30 Sunday afternoon. Just a very cold, strong persistent SW wind for the runners to contend with and a temperature range of 10C to 16C.

This was Yiannis Kouros' race and no runner (individual or relay team) begrudged the attention that was centred on him and his world record attempt. Many felt it a privilege to be on the track with him, those that weren't overawed by his unrelenting pace.

Everybody present knew the schedule that YK had to maintain and they were all keen to get reports of his progress. To break his own record YK needed 288K which translates as 12K/hour (30 laps/hour, 2mine/lap). This doesn't sound much to those who don't appreciate the effort of ultra running and the draining effects on the body of persistent effort without rest.

The table shows how he steadily put laps in the bank during the early hours by exceeding the 30 laps/hour schedule. By the end of the 9th hour he was a full hour ahead of schedule, with an extra 30 laps in the bank. As race director I started to dream, to fantasise ... was it possible for a solo runner to achieve 300 km in 24 hours .. if he could keep up his schedule.

From the table, it can be seen how YK steadily used up his laps in the bank from midnight on as he started to drop below the 30 laps/hour. He still managed to average 26 laps/hour with a low point of 23 in the 23<sup>rd</sup> hour.

At 12 noon on Sunday we witnessed a great event in athletics history when YK completed his 24 hour ultra track race with a distance of 282.981 km. The distance of 280 km in 24 hours has only been exceeded 3 times in running history and each time it has been this man who has done it. His Coburg achievement now ranks as the second greatest distance in a solo 24 hour run for the entire world and is an Australian and Australasian record set by an Australian citizen. His own world record of 286.632 km (set in France) was set as a Greek citizen. Yiannis and his family are now naturalised Australians and he is proud to run for his new country.

Yiannis was in the hands of the medical staff after the race but was a cheerful and gracious speaker soon after at the presentations. He commented that despite what others expected of him, he privately thought that 250 km might be enough in the conditions but he had not reckoned with the stimulus of the relay teams participating on the track with him. He gives them full credit for raising his sights to 280 km.

Like other ultra runners, competing on the same track as 24 hour relay teams is a new experience and, like them, he found it a stimulating experience. The Little Aths relay team all lined up for autographs from YK after the presentations and he was obviously pleased to oblige.

Yes, there were others in the race beside YK and they turned out the usual class performance we have come to expect of fields at the Coburg 24 hour. Sure they were overshadowed by YK but, even without him, the race had some strong performances.

Joe Skrobalak soon established a mortgage on second place while the strong Tasmanian contingent of Mike Haddocks, Andrew Lucas and Peter Hoskinson did battle for the next 3 places. Mark Pritchard of WA was an early contender but had to drop out because of the cold. Mark's family has not seen rain since October in Bunbury WA and temperatures below the high 20s have not been known there for many months.

The final finishing order was established very early, only 2 factors confused it - the early placings of those who were to later drop out and the fact that Dawn Parris and Peter Gray both took rest periods off the track to have a sleep.

Mike McAvoy as a newcomer to ultra racing learned all about it the hard way. From 4th in the first hour he went to 3rd and then 2nd. Succeeding hours saw him 4th, 6th and 11th until he pulled out at the 7th hour with 150 laps. Greg Wilson was the next to go, finding once again that he just did not have the training to cope with the longer distances although he does so well up to about 12 hours. Greg worked his way from 7th in the 1st hour to 3rd for the 6th to 9th hours but then he dropped to 4th and 5th to finally give it away just before midnight with 174 laps.

Mark Pritchard held on longest, fluctuating between 4th and 5th place. By midnight the cold was causing him pain in the back and although he persisted for another couple of hours he actually gave it away at the end of the 13th hour. His 281 laps took another 7 hours to work its way out of the system as he did not officially give up until the end of the 20th hour although he had not done more than 3 laps since the 13th hour.

Joe Skrobalak doggedly maintained his hold on 2nd place although Andrew Lucas threatened once or twice. Andrew did it hard like he always does but his 3rd place was never really under threat. Mike Haddock was resplendent in blue with

a fluorescent cap and cheeky repartee with his crew and anybody else he could malign with safety. As an ex race walker, Mike used this technique to good effect, mixing his walking and running to maintain his average laps per hour. Peter Hoskinson headed Mike at nearly every hour but he had to keep working at it. Peter Gray and Dawn Parris separated the pair at some hourly progress reports but their threat was removed when they both took rest stops to have some sleep. Dawn'S comeback looks well on track, Peter just had a bad race because of lack of training.

Godfrey Pollard was his usual consistent self with a well planned routine of laps' rests which enables him to give a good account of himself always.