

1996 VICTORIAN 24 HOUR CHAMPIONSHIP, COBURG, 13-14 APRIL

The 1996 Victorian 24 Hour Championship was held once again at the Harold Stevens Athletics Track in Coburg on the weekend of 13-14 April, starting at noon on the Saturday and finishing at noon on the Sunday. Once again, the chief organiser was Gordon Burrowes and he was ably helped as usual by the usual throng of Coburg Harriers.

Weather conditions were atrocious. It rained for most of the 24 hours of the race and during the night, the rain was so heavy and continuous that competitors were forced to fight their way through water that was several inches in depth. Add to that the wind that blew furiously overnight and you had conditions that will be talked about for some time to come. A number of entrants ran/walked most of the second 12 hours out towards the second lane to avoid the water, thus adding considerable distance to each lap.

First to the results:

24 Hour Run

1.	Yiannis Kouros	736	294.504 km (World Record)
2.	Helen Stanger (F)	527	211.126 km
3.	Joe Skrobolak	504	201.856 km
4.	Peter Goonpan	446	178.731 km
5.	Bill Hick	410	164.211 km
6.	Carmela Carassi (F, walker)	406	162.541 km (Australian walk record)
7.	Peter Gray	277	111.010 km
8.	Michael Grayling	255	102.000 km
9.	Gerald St John	97	38.800 km

24 Hour Relay

1.	YAN YEAN	961	384.40 km
2.	TRARALGON VETS	881	352.40 km
3.	COBURG VETS	826	330.69 km
4.	TRARALGON OPEN	783	313.34 km
5.	ABERFELDIE VETS	782	313.18 km
6.	COBURG OPEN	770	308.00 km
7.	VETS COMBINE	758	303.24 km
8.	VIC. ROAD RUNNERS	684	273.79 km
9.	10 FAB FEMALES	644	257.68 km
10.	COBURG LITTLE ATHS	638	255.26 km

The great **Yiannis Kouros** was dominant and the race was worth seeing just to view his performance. He held the world 24 hour track running record at 286 km and was hoping to extend that to some 306 km. He made his intentions clear early on, powering through the marathon point in 3 hrs 3 mins. However the atrocious weather conditions slowed him and he had to be content with ONLY 294.50km. He had broken his record by some 8 km and become the first person to run in excess of 290km in 24 hours, in a performance that marked him as so far ahead of the rest of the world that he can be confidently called a 'superman'. Along the way, he set a number of new Australian records at intermediate marks as follows

- 12 Hours 158.00 km
- 150 km 11:19:01
- 100 Miles 12:12:51
- 200 km 15:28:30
- 150 Miles 19:12:10
- 250 km 20:09:14

Current Australian 24 Hour and 48 Hour record holder **Helen Stanger** came to Coburg with her sights set on the 100 mile world mark and she was on schedule early. However, eventually the atrocious weather caught up with her and she had to be content with 211.126km and second place overall. She did set a new Australian record for 150km (15:23:13) along the way so that was some compensation.

The records did not finish there as **Carmella Carassi** became the first lady in Australia to walk over 100 miles in 24 hours, covering 162.541 km. Whereas in 1994, she had problems with blisters and stomach upsets and a drastically slowing pace, this time she walked like an ultra veteran and always looked in control. She was an almost continuous presence on the track and only stopped to change shoes. She never slowed to slower to above 4 min laps and sped up over the last couple of hours to about 3:35 laps once again. Her style was impeccable and never in doubt from my point

of view.

It was certainly a marvellous race to watch with 8 relay teams matching it with the individuals over the 24 hour period. Thus there were always a lot of athletes on the track and a big crowd helping and spectating. Carmela was the only walker amongst the runners but she was well treated and certainly did walking a great service by her efforts.

Ten Relay teams competed with Yan Yean winning with 384.4 km, a distance that was also touted as a World Record. It was certainly an event record.

Tim Erickson