

## Sean Greenhill (Mister G) Competitive Edge Interview

### Competitive Edge Biographical Information

**Your full name?**

Sean Greenhill

**Date of Birth?**

14/7/78

**Place of Birth?**

Sydney

**Sponsors?**

I wish!

**Currently Living?**

Sydney

**Marital Status (name of your partner if you have one)?**

Single

**Occupation (if you are unlucky enough to have one)?**

I push buttons.

**Height?**

190cm

**Weight?**

86kg

**Shoe Size?**

15, 4E width

**Hair colour?**

Dark brown

**Favourite shoe colour?**

Dirty

**Most loved pair of runners you have ever had (brand and style)?**

NB 1220. Still haven't found a decent replacement for those. The Asics 1090 isn't bad, but I find the heel cup of Asics runners, as a trend, are too narrow for my funny-shaped feet and cause blistering after 6+ hours of running, depending on the terrain.

**Favourite Race?**

Six Foot Track, Bogong-Hotham, Glasshouse 100, Western States 100, Twelve Foot Track. If I could only do one race a year, it'd be the Six Foot Track. Like the ad says, "dirt is good".

### **Your top 3 running experiences/performances?**

Bogong-Hotham 2003, at that stage it was very marginal based on my times to date that I could make the cutoff. However, I made the cutoff by 17 minutes (equivalent to about a 4.45 Six Foot Track) and shuffled it in from there. Tremendously tough run but a sensory feast. A good one for you to do, Greeny.

Katoomba- Mittagong Fat Ass Run 2002, at that stage I'd had a lot of trouble moving beyond the 100K distance, with two DNFs at 100 miles at Glasshouse. We came up with this almost completely self supported 137km course through some pretty isolated backcountry and ran it in 24 hours and 11 minutes lugging all our gear in backpacks, and Herrmannator, Lawrence and I managed to catch Kieron Thompson, Martin Fryer and Ian Wright whilst doing so. I'll never finish ahead of those gents in a run ever again. I then completed Glasshouse a month later on my third attempt. I'm sure that if I hadn't done Katoomba-Mittagong I'd never have made that breakthrough at 100 miles.

And third? Probably Western States or Coast-Kosciuszko. In terms of performances neither one was good at all (in fact my C2K run was complete bollocks) but there was a bit of pioneering involved at both. I had the feeling I was part of something big.

### **Personal Bests for your favourite distances?**

41.40 10K, 4.50 Six Foot Track, 27.11 100 miles.



Mister G – Competing in the 2004 Six Foot Track Marathon (left) and the 2003 Glass House Mountains (Right).

### Competitive Edge Interview

**CE – Mister G, you are a very well known presence on CoolRunning Australia, firstly we must ask how long have you been a member of the site? How much time do you spend on the site each day? Are there any other sites that you check regularly?**

MG – I think I signed onto the forum in June 2002, although I'd been reading it for a while before then. I've been reading Coolrunning in general since 1998 or so. When I'm at work I usually keep CR minimised in the background a fair bit and pull it up every now and then, hit refresh and have a quick squiz. Same at home.

Other sites I visit regularly, hmm. [www.weatherzone.com.au](http://www.weatherzone.com.au), [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org), [forum.axishistory.com](http://forum.axishistory.com), [www.slowlitch.com](http://www.slowlitch.com), [topoweb.lpi.nsw.gov.au/viewer.htm](http://topoweb.lpi.nsw.gov.au/viewer.htm), [www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au), [webdiary.smh.com.au](http://webdiary.smh.com.au), [www.crikey.com.au](http://www.crikey.com.au), [www.mumble.com.au](http://www.mumble.com.au), [www.IMDB.com](http://www.IMDB.com), a few others.....

**CE – The competitive edge has read your reports from adventures various and most recently from the Coast to Kosi, your 236km pilgrimage from the sea level to the top of Australia's highest peak? Have you been gradually losing your sense of reality over several years, or did it just happen all at once?**

MG – I've always had that obsessive personality, could never just be mildly interested in a subject, I had to be a master of the subject. So you could say I lost my sense of reality when I was about 3 years old. I reckon cruising mountain trails on foot is a much better way to pass time than shopping malls and office cubicles with fluorescent lighting! It's like Brad Pitt's speech in Fight Club...

*Man, I see in fight club the strongest and smartest men who've ever lived. I see all this potential, and I see squandering. God damn it, an entire generation pumping gas, waiting tables; slaves with white collars. Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don't need. We're the middle children of history, man. No purpose or place. We have no Great War. No Great Depression. Our Great War's a spiritual war... our Great Depression is our lives. We've all been raised on television to believe that one day we'd all be millionaires, and movie gods, and rock stars. But we won't. And we're slowly learning that fact. And we're very, very pissed off.*

Every time I come back to Sydney after a big one, my first couple of trips to the supermarket are genuinely disorienting as they are such a contrast to my mindset. I'll just stare at the crowd and think "what are you all doing here?"

**CE – No seriously, this type of run is an amazing effort and the dedication required to complete a race of this length is hard to imagine. Do you have pleasant memories of this event or is the pain still fresh in your mind? How long was it before the sense of achievement out-weighted the fatigue?**

MG – When I finished typing my report on C2K and sent it off, I cried. Reliving the bad parts (the last 36 hours or so!) was pretty tough. During the run itself, I took a call from Paul when he reached the summit and he was pretty emotional, which is unlike him- Paul is usually fairly taciturn, speaks economically. By contrast, when I got there, I just felt a sense of relief, which I was disappointed about. I suppose I expected to feel elated but things were too far gone by then. I suspect this was at least partly because I spent so much time trying to rationalise away the remaining distance so it didn't present such a mental barrier. When we got to Dalgety I was saying "145km down, only 90km left, I can get my head around 90K, I've done that plenty of times..."

**CE – How many ultra events do you have under your belt now and how many do you complete on average each year? Have these ultra events been getting easier to complete as you have become more experienced? Is it now harder for you to dream up new challenges to really punish yourself?**

MG – 38 ultras plus 9 marathons since 1998.

No, I still DNF and I still run bad times. I've been doing ultras for long enough now that I'm not really that interested in "just finishing" the big ones any more, which is what I was originally out there to do. That is why I was dissatisfied with my final times at Western States and Coast-Kosciuszko. I still haven't broken 24 hours in a trail 100 miler. As it says in my blog ( <http://mister-g.blogspot.com> ) my burning desire in ultrarunning is to go back to Western States and break 24 hours. Only ten Australians have finished WS, and only three of those (Max Bogenhuber, Greg Barton and Geoff Hook) have broken 24 there. Silver buckle fever. It'll be a long term project, which is why at the moment I've moved down in distances and am working away at my 10K and marathon times.

Over the longer term, I'd like to break the record for most Six Foot Tracks run, and perhaps the Glasshouse thousand-mile award (ten 100 mile finishes). I don't see myself doing running races on a regular basis forever. Eventually I think I'll find some other sport and from that point the running I do will be for general fitness, cross training, socialising, and be ramped up before the Six Foot Track every year. My competitive nature- and I am a very competitive individual (remember the obsessive bit)- has a great deal of trouble reconciling itself with my lack of talent for running, so I suspect I'll eventually get too frustrated and move on to something I do have some natural skill for. When someone goes under 40 minutes for 10K after only running for six months, or similar- you know the sort of athlete I describe- I'm happy for them but it also narks me a bit, I can get down somewhat. Should I break 24 at Western States, I'll have a lot of thinking to do about where I want to go from there. Might take up chess again (Editors note: The editor now wants to challenge Mister G to an exhibition chess match at the Six Foot Track Registration Evening).

**CE – What is your mindset at the beginning of a ultra event. Does it differ for the long races and the extremely long races?**

MG - Usually far more relaxed at the start of an ultra than at the start of a 10K. My outlook is that I cannot influence the conditions I'll encounter out there, there is no more training to do, my equipment is too late to change. Unless I do something stupid, the outcome of my race is almost predetermined before it even begins. With that sort of approach, I'm fairly calm most of the time. That doesn't mean I don't get intimidated by the task (read my writings that I produced before C2K!), but it's not the same anxiety I can get at a 10K, where the difference between a good and bad result might be 60 seconds.

**CE – To touch a little on your training, what sort of mileage do you get through in a typical week? Do you include speed work or session into your weekly routine? What pace do you run at during most of your training? Do you supplement your running training with other forms of exercise?**

MG – When I was training for a 100 miler I'd be somewhere between 120-170k/week. At least one long run (50Kish) a week plus a couple of interval sessions. Sometimes I'd do back to back long runs for a total of 80- 110k in two days. I loved that sort of weekend. There aren't many finer experiences than running a frosty Blue Mountains or Watagans trail in winter. At the moment I'm not really training for ultra so I'm down around 80km/week with more speedwork.

I've tried a few different types of cross-training- cycling, swimming, rowing, weightlifting etc. I find swimming intimidating- too much technique involved and I don't have the patience required for the work that involves. People often tell me to get into triathlon, and the idea of something like an Ironman intrigues me, but the main thing preventing me from taking it up is the knowledge that I'd have to do a lot of swim work, and it's not as simple as just doing a lot of swimming volume in the expectation that I'd get good....

**CE – You were instrumental in starting the FATASS runs. Have these been growing over the years? Are there any upcoming events that people should know about?**

MG – Probably not as popular as they were a few years ago, when you could pretty much do one a month or more. The benchmark runs include the Poor Mans Comrades between Gosford and Sydney in June, and the Twelve Foot Track (out'n'back on the Six Foot Track course) which is held the day before the City to Surf. But anyone can come up with a course and tell us about it. I think a lot of people used the Fat Ass runs as a means of getting experience in running long ultras, and have now moved on a bit and started picking and choosing other races to target, instead of just doing it for fun, which is what the Fat Ass runs were. We'd turn up every few weekends and see the same old faces. It was like returning to your platoon in the front lines.

**CE - Besides potentially missing your brothers wedding, what other events would you happily consider missing for an important run. What type of an event would it take for you to miss an important race?**

MG -Good question! I want to hold the record for most Six Foot Tracks. That will take about 20 more races probably. As someone who has a similar streak at a similar race going pointed out to me, "if they don't understand the importance of the race and invite you on that date, they obviously don't know you well enough anyway".

**CE – You have to be open with us now, do you have aspirations to soon be the most prolific CoolRunning poster in history?**

MG – No! I've been about 600- 700 posts behind Kevin since I started, and Plu will overtake us both eventually. I think to overtake Kevin or keep ahead of Plu, I've be writing so many posts that the quality would suffer. Enough of my writing is crap as it is. I don't want to have an even higher incidence of crap. Not much point in churning out all these posts if people don't read your stuff because the content is useless.

**Thanks from The Competitive Edge**

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