

# I've Finally Found My Hero



**Phil Essam**

**The story of the Sydney to Melbourne  
Ultra Marathons (1983 to 1991)**

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# Phil Essam

**"I've finally found my hero..." is taken from Kevin Mansell's quote in 1987 when he crossed the Finishing Line for the first time. Kevin definitely typified the fighting spirit of every Westfield Runner that attempted the race between 1983 to 1991. Thanks Kev.**



**Phil Essam** is a 39 year old author and writer living in Melbourne. Phil has had a love for the sport since the Westfield Days of the 80's and finally released the only story of the Westfield Run in early 1999.

Phil has completed five 24hour events during his ultra career and is actively involved in the Australian Ultra Running scene - trying to promote the sport and helping younger runners starting out in the ultra world !

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## **Acknowledgments**

*I had always been fascinated by the exploits of the ultrarunners traipsing the road between Sydney and Melbourne in the now defunct Westfield Run. It wasn't until 1988 when I actually saw the ghostly apparitions run, jog and walk through Sale, Gippsland at 1, 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning that I fully appreciated and marveled at their efforts.*

*It was in the 1990 race when I crewed for Victorian runner and now lifelong friend, John Briet. There is a photo of John that paints a thousand words about the anguish and satisfaction that the race brought the runners. I ran in a couple of smaller Ultras in 1990, but my desire and heart was not quite there so it went in the too hard basket for a few years.*

*1991 was to see the last running of the Westfield and after that I became dismayed, angry and disappointed that no one had compiled a book on the greatest sporting event ever held in this country. When I was posted from Darwin to Wagga Wagga in late 1995 I made two vows. The first was to get back into Ultrarunning and the second promise was to complete the book on "The Westfield Run" I have completed the first vow and am hooked for life. I have also completed "I've finally found my Hero ..." and here it is for you to read.*

*There are many people that I must thank. My wife and daughter for their patience as I have tapped at the computer for many hours over the last three years. I love you both. I must also thank Tony Rafferty, John Briet, Kevin Mansell( now my coach), David Standeven, Bryan Smith, Cliff Young, Dot Browne, Yiannis Kouros and Ron Hill. Thanks for the information, guidance and time that you have all given me during the past three years. Thanks to all the other Ultrarunners, crew members and officials that have given information, photos tidbits and help. The list would be a page in itself. I am indebted to all of you as this story is your story.*

*Unfortunately, Westfield and people close to Westfield Management chose to ignore, deny or give little of my requests for help and information. In this story I have only wanted to tell the full version of events and I thought that Westfield would have been proud to have their race recorded in written history. Tis their loss!*

*Some nights of recounting the race stories on the computer left me exhausted. I would feel that I was actually running in the race with some of the competitors. I hope every reader enjoys the story and I hope it gives them something to help them with the race of life. Thank you for selecting my book.*

**Phil Essam**

## ***Introduction By Tony Rafferty***

During the 1970's a number of runners ran solo along the Hume and Princes Highways between Sydney and Melbourne. Gaining generous publicity breaking one another's best times attracted interest from marketing managers and advertising agencies.

At that time ultra-distance runners were regarded by some sections of the media and general public as eccentrics. Track and field athletes in general viewed the ultra-distance person and their endurance feats with a degree of curiosity and sometimes disbelief.

The advent of the Sydney to Melbourne race soon dispelled any doubts about the physical strength, mental focus and credibility of the competitors. The event demonstrated that the athletes were highly trained people of extraordinary endurance with powers of concentration unseen in most sports.

Sponsored in 1983 by the shopping centre group, Westfield, the first official Sydney to Melbourne race known as the Westfield Run stamped its place in ultramarathon history.

An estimated 20, 000 people in the early hours of the morning cheered potato farmer, vegetarian and bachelor, Cliff Young, when he shuffled into Doncaster Shopping Town car park from Sydney in 5 days 15 hours 4 minutes.

Searchlights lit up the night sky, weary children waved flags, people danced, car horns blared, television crews jostled for positions, journalists shouldered one another seeking exclusive interviews as the thin, bewildered, weather -beaten man from Colac finished the historic race.

"It was a beautiful enchanting run. Sometimes I ran with stray cattle. But I had an awful time from Wodonga to Wangaratta. A totally hellish run," said Joe Record who drove across the Nullarbor Plain from Perth and stayed at Young's home at Beech Forest a few weeks before the race. "I'd a big duel with (the late) George Perdon which lasted 40k. I couldn't let him go. Then I couldn't even walk the hills and said 'Stuff it'. I stopped. I had Granny's ankles."

"Siggy Bauer was the man to beat. He had all the records," said Perdon. "It didn't dawn on me that Cliffy would do what he did."

When George Perdon gained second place Siggy Bauer said: "I've never seen anyone go past me so fast."

The race conducted in the opposite direction the following year again received national news coverage. People lined three-deep about a kilometre leading to Westfield's centre in Parramatta. Former cycling champion Geoff Molloy earned first place trophy.

Inside the complex during the presentation ceremony one could be forgiven for thinking, seventh place, Cliff Young, won the race again. A deafening roar lasting many minutes when he walked on stage drowned his words on thanks. Meanwhile with his prize money banked and the trophy neatly packed away, Geoff Molloy mingled quietly at the back of the crowd seemingly captivated by Young's public support.

Yiannis Kouros, affectionately known as the "Golden Greek" and "Colossus of the Roads" lived up to his reputation as world's best when he blitzed the field in 1985. The winning margin between Kouros and second place Siggy Bauer was 24 hours 39 minutes - or 158 kilometres.

A few days before the 1986 race Kouros suffered a fractured toe. At the start he appeared on crutches as a spectator. Later he cycled up and down the highway, offered encouragement to competitors and helped support crews.

During the event a car collided with semi-trailer, skidded across the road and struck South Australian entrant, Dr Geoff Kirkman. Rushed by ambulance to Wagga Wagga Base Hospital in a critical condition he remained in intensive care for a week. The crash killed the car driver.

Flamboyant Yugoslav Dusan Mravlje, after a tough contest with Brian Bloomer and German-based runner Patrick Macke accepted first place award.

New Zealander Dick Tout and Macke demonstrated initiative and enterprise in their battle for second place in 1987 when Macke crossed the line only six hours ahead of Tout. However again Kouros showed his class winning the race with a 26 hour 34 minute margin. Four days later a hero's welcome greeted Cliff Young when he finished in sixteenth position.

Kevin Mansell experienced the anxiety of the highway and the ecstasy at the finish line when he finished in fourteenth place in his first Westfield Run. A friend said he looked like the Hunchback of Notre Dame: "I dragged one foot after the other. I fell all over the place," he said. "Coming up the hill (at Doncaster) was the most breath-taking experience of my life."

Fourty-three competitors contested the 1988 race declared by the Australian Bicentennial Authority as an official bicentennial event. Each runner received a medal to commemorate the occasion.

Unhappy at the decision by race organisers to start Kouros 12 hours behind the field, runners complained without success to compete on equal terms. Again Kouros beat the field home arriving at Doncaster 16 hours 4 minutes ahead of Dick Tout.

Rushed to hospital exhausted when he finished in front of Kouros, in 1989 South Australian David Standeven gained second position. The Greek champion won on lapsed time after another 12 hour delayed start.

Sporting sunken cheeks and bloodshot eyes Maurice Taylor crossed the line in 7 days 7 hours to claim fifth place. He believed his struggle over the last 150 metres was the greatest moment of his life. "Even now years later I still get a tingle from it's memory," he said. "The Westfield Run was ultrarunning's raison d'etre."

An eight and a half day cut off introduced the following year forced runners to maintain higher fitness levels in an effort to finish on time and ear a special gold medal.

Kouros after much discussion accepted an eight hour delayed start and captured the lead from Victorian Bryan Smith near Canberra. He arrived in Melbourne 9 hours 50 minutes ahead of the Australian six-day record holder amid cheers from thousands of spectators including a highly vocal Greek contingent.

Alleged demands for expenses and appearance fees totaling \$80, 000 which Westfield refused to meet resulted in the non-appearance of Yiannis Kouros at the starting line in 1991. In the first and only handicapped event on a course which included the Snowy Mountains, Bryan Smith after a tough challenge from NSW entrant Tony Collins, won the \$60, 000 first place prize.

English champion Eleanor Adams (Robinson) endured stifling heat in one part of the race and zero temperatures in another, won the women's section in the 1985 event in 8 days 30 minutes, and won again in 1986 and 1988. Victorian, Cynthia Cameron gained first place in 1987. New Zealander, Sandra Barwick stood top of the rostrum in 1990.

Yiannis Kouros holds the fastest time from Sydney to Melbourne: 5 days 2 hours 27 minutes. In each of the five races in which he competed he showed unique physical strength, awesome endurance and exceptional power of the mind. In nine races and a total of 240 competitors two runners were banned from the event: One tested positive to a performance enhancing drug, the other cheated when he accepted a lift in a car.

Race director, Charlie Lynn's dynamic energy provided runners and support crew personnel with confidence and encouragement, especially during stressful periods at night, often in inclement weather. A number of times he appeared in the fog from nowhere like a ghost in a red tracksuit. His flashing smile, heart laugh and spirited chatter boosted a runner's spirit. Lynn's leadership ability, social skills and charismatic personality demonstrated a professional manner seldom seen in ultramarathon.

Race Executive Director, Chris Bates in October 1991 announced the withdrawal of Westfield's sponsorship. Thanking the athletes and support crews for their participation in the nine races he said: "If anybody besides Cliff had won ( in 1983), the event would have died then." Westfield's General manager, Alan Briggs said in the economic climate his company would be better served directing it's support back to shopping centres.

Author, Phil Essam's fear that the Sydney to Melbourne classic would remain only in oral history spent more than two years researching the event. Readers are rewarded with a work which proudly takes its place among the literature of ultramarathon running.

TONY RAFFERTY



## Chapter One

### *Australian Ultra Running - Prior to 1983*

Ultra running is any distance over the traditional Marathon distance of 42.195kms. For that reason alone it has never been a mass participation sport and will never be a popular spectator sport. If you consider that less than one percent of the population has run a Marathon, it makes Ultra Marathoners quite special and elite. But are they special and elite? Westfield Marathon Race Director, Charlie Lynn once described the Westfield runners as "Ordinary people doing extraordinary things!"

Exactly! This book tells the story of the Westfield Ultra Marathons that were run between 1983 to 1991. The men and women who attempted the race were ordinary people. The bloke on the Assembly Line, the housewife taking her kids to school etc. Their Everest was the road between Sydney and Melbourne. The pinnacle was the Finish Line at Doncaster Shopping Centre. They all conquered their spirit and body and took something away that no one could ever take from them. This is their story and it has been recorded forever.

The best ultra performance of the nineteenth century recorded in Australia was by William King of Sydney in 1848. He covered 192 miles in a time of 46 hours and 30 minutes. This deed was done on a track just under a mile long. His splits were 66 1/2 miles in 12 hours, 104 miles in 24 hours and 157 miles in 36 hours. This was the earliest recorded Ultra distance set in Australia.

The first Ultra Distance race was held in Australia in 1880. It was a 6 day race conducted at the Melbourne Hippodrome and was completed on the 4 December. W.Baker, from Sydney, won the event and covered 307 miles and 1 lap. Second runner in the event was Swan from New Zealand who covered 306 miles and 10 laps. Third was Seymour from NSW who ran 286 miles 3 laps.

At the same time a 48 hour race was held at the Exhibition Buildings in Adelaide. Edwards ran 172 miles and 21 yards and won this. The year before he had walked 110 miles in just under one day at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Another notable performance in 1880 was W.Baker covering 113 1/2 miles in a day in NSW.

1881 and 82 was to see two remarkable performances by Clifford. In 1881 he ran 120 3/4 miles in a 24 hour period in Adelaide. The following year he covered a remarkable 506 1/2 miles in a six day period in Geelong. This would be 800 plus kilometres in the modern conversion and would have earned him the Winner's Trophy at the Colac 6 Day Race in 1997.

In 1882, JC Williams twice ran over 100 miles at Sayers Court within a month of each other. He was nearly fifty years old at the time.

1883 saw a 6 day race at the Exhibition buildings in Sydney. W Edwards ran 373 1/2 miles and was to beat his American rival Daniel O Leary by over 23 miles. In 1887 Edwards was to set another mark when he ran 111 miles in a 24 hour period at Bathurst in NSW.

The longest performance in the nineteenth century went to 54 year old C. Williams. He walked 1500 miles in a period of 1060 hours in Sydney in 1884. 'Flooded out of his tent three times and walking for days on a wet sloppy track, 42 laps to the mile. He sometimes took as much a 6 quarts of ale per day and latterly 1 bottle of rum per diem'.

The next recorded Australian Ultra achievement didn't occur for another forty-five years. Queensland runner, Mike McNamara came second in the now infamous, New York to Los Angeles Bunion Derby in 1929. This race was later immortalized in Tom McNab's book "The Longest Run". His time was 627 hours 35 minutes and 26 seconds. This took from 1/3 to 16/6 and was a remarkable achievement!

It was in 1965 when one the first recorded Inter City runs occurred. Tasmanian runner, Bill Emmerton took 10 days to run the 740km journey between Melbourne and Adelaide.

Tony Rafferty and George Perdon were to attempt this run five times between them prior to 1980. George Perdon had a best time of 5 days 23 hrs and 31 minutes. This was part of his Melbourne/ Adelaide/ Melbourne run in 1979. There have been other runners such as Terry Cox from Victoria who also attempted the run for charity and recorded a credible time. Terry was to hold a record of a different sort when he held the 24 hour record for distance traveled on a treadmill.

Tony Rafferty broke the 1000 mile world record in 1978 when he ran from Melbourne to Sydney and return in a time of 18 days 4 hrs and 30 minutes. He was greeted by thousands of people when he completed his run at Melbourne Post Office in Bourke Street.

George Perdon recorded the best time along the Princes Highway route between Melbourne and Sydney in 1978 when he took 9 days 4 hrs and 44 minute to complete the 1048km journey. Several other runners holding the record at one time or another for this route. Ex- Scottish paratrooper, Wal McCrorie was one of those runners and remembers the era as being "fiercely competitive".

The longest match race of all time in Australia occurred in 1973 when George Perdon and Tony Rafferty battled across the continent. George Perdon started a week after Rafferty and claimed all the records up to 2600 miles. Rafferty kept going past Sydney to Brisbane and claimed all the records up to 3000 miles. George Perdon arrived in Sydney 47 days 1 hour and 45 minutes after leaving Perth. He was to beat Rafferty by a day!

This race generated publicity all over Australia with headlines like "Puff Puff Perdon Gains Ground", "Rafferty rules the Road", "Perdon cracks the Pain Barrier" and "Grudge clash of the century" appearing daily in the newspapers. Journalists in helicopters followed them throughout the race and cameramen chased them down the hot highway trying to get the perfect shot.

Tony Rafferty was to be sponsored by Kellogs in 1973. He was the face that helped launch Nutra-Grain. This helped him to train unencumbered for a couple of years.

Perdon and Rafferty had many fierce battles over the years. The battles were fuelled by media speculation, but they became good friends towards the end of their careers.

Desert runs became popular amongst ultra runners. Tony Rafferty ran the Birdsville Track in 1974 in a time of 6 days and five hours. The journey was 574km. The Simpson

desert was tackled for the first time in 1980 by Bob Beer from NSW who took 6 days and five hours to cross. This route followed the French Line which was a survey line laid in the 60's. Ron Grant took almost 2 days of this record a year later when he took 4 days 11 hours and 45 minutes for the same journey.

Queensland in the 70's and 80's was to find a fair share of Ultra runners establishing records between towns and cities. Ron Grant was the predominant name. He came to national prominence in 1983 when he ran around Australia in 217 days. He developed his profession years previously when he ran between Queensland towns and holds records that still stand today.

Tony Rafferty holds the record for several Ultra distance records within NSW. In 1974, he ran for fifty hours and covered 325 kilometres. He covered a circuit of Sydney in that time and appeared on the David Frost Show as soon as he finished. In 1975 Tony ran from Bathurst to Bondi and Newcastle to Sydney and return.

Tony Rafferty and George Perdon were both from Victoria. In the late sixties and early seventies they were always trying to outdo each other. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1970, George Perdon carried out an amazing run at Olympic Park which was to set many records and the Ultra running benchmark for years to come. This was from the 70 miles to 12 hours mark. "That 100 mile time was my greatest achievement. Not long before that I ran a marathon in 2 hours 19 minutes and 56 seconds", said Perdon in an interview with Tony Rafferty many years later.

Perdon was the Champion Runner of the decade. The best description of his talents was said by his closest rival, Tony Rafferty. In an article written about Perdon years later, Rafferty said "As an Ultra-marathon athlete, George Perdon was years ahead of his time and for that, Yiannis Kouros and others should be thankful."

In July 1971, Tony Rafferty walked for 218 miles and 650 yards in 69 hours and 30 minutes. This was non stop and was a World Record. In 1972, Tony was the first to establish the Melbourne to Portsea and return record in a time of 29 hours and 30 minutes. Six months later, George Perdon came along and slashed six hours of the time. Four years earlier, George Perdon had ran an incredible 6 hrs and 35 minutes between Portsea to Melbourne, a distance of 60 miles.

In 1979, Tony Rafferty was to conquer the Death Valley in a time of 2 days 7 hours and 25 minutes. This was the first summer crossing and done in atrocious temperatures.

As you can see there were two runners who dominated Australian Ultra running achievement in the late 70's and early 80's. These runners were George Perdon and Tony Rafferty. Would Perdon of set as many records if the outgoing Rafferty wasn't there to push him. In the twilight of their careers they became friends, but in their heydays it was tough and very competitive.

"It didn't get really nasty between George and I, although I don't think George would have felt very close to me. We were good friends later, but there was certainly animosity with his support people, his sponsors and handlers" said Tony Rafferty, when reflecting many years later.

"I must have had this knack of drawing the media more than George did, cause our personalities are very opposite. I think that upset the people around him: that there was a great runner and I was getting a lot of publicity. George was a great athlete and certainly a

much better ultra-marathon runner than I'll ever be, and he wasn't getting the coverage that perhaps he deserved." Said Rafferty when further reminiscing on the time when Perdon and himself raced across Australia.

The Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathons were born out of this era and rivalry. John Toleman (sports store owner) put up \$10 000 for a match race between Perdon and Rafferty. It was to be a winner take all purse. The race took a few years to organise, but by 1983 it became reality. The concept grew and the Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon was born with eleven starters lined up at Westfield Parramatta in 1983.

## Chapter Two

### ***1983 - Cliff Young Shuffles Into History***

The first Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon commenced on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1983 at Parramatta Westfield Shopping Centre. The starter's gun was fired at 1030 am by the NSW Premier, Mr Neville Wran. The race received strong publicity before the start. There were thousands of people lining the course over the first few miles to see the eleven runners in the field.

1. **Tony Rafferty** – Rafferty was the best-known ultra marathoner in the field. He ran from Sydney to Melbourne in 1972. During the seventies he also ran across the Nullarbor and the Birdsville Track and across Australia from Fremantle to Surfers Paradise. Just a short 6000 km! In 1978, Rafferty ran from Sydney to Melbourne and return. He did the first leg in 8 days 17 hours and 15 minutes.

Rafferty was running a marathon a day with 20km in the morning and 20km in the afternoon. Rafferty held a chicken and champagne lunch to celebrate the announcement of his inclusion in the race. George Perdon said "Not a bad bloke, Tony, but it is probably best he does his celebrating before the race".

2. **George Perdon** - 58 yr old Victorian runner who held sixteen Australian ultra records from 30 miles up to 24 hours on track and road. There had been a rivalry between himself and Rafferty over the years. This was exposed later as media hype to help boost paper sales. George trained for the race with three sessions a day. He got up at 0445 hrs each day to train before starting his job at the local Sports Store. This would be followed by a lunch and evening training session. Perdon was completing at least 200 km a week which was quite an incredible achievement in those days. If the weather was really bad, he would train in the garage.

Perdon said "There is no difference between running around your garage for a couple of hours and being out in the road where you might get wet. One of the problems confronting runners in these long runners is monotony and boredom. If you can run around your garage you can run anywhere".

3. **Siggy Bauer**- Siggy from New Zealand was one of the Ultra running pioneers outside Australia. He held the World 1000mile record and was hot favourite to win .

4. **Cliff Young**- Cliff is a 63-year-old Potato farmer from Colac. He started the sport late in life. He lived on a farm during the depression years and in a different way had been training all his life for this grueling event.

Cliff won a 100-mile track race in Sydney in 1982 and ran 500km at Colac in a time of 3 days 16 hours and 40 minutes. Cliff's attempt for the race was organised by Mike Tonkin and Terry McCarthy. Tonkin obtained vehicles from the local Mazda dealer and McCarthy did the pub rounds in Colac collecting cash.

Cliff and Joe Record trained together three months prior to the race. They decided to split the \$ 10 000 first prize money if one of them was fortunate enough to cross the line

first.

Cliff's diet for the race was to include a high carbohydrate, high vegetable intake of potatoes, oatmeal, honey, beans, spaghetti, pears, ice-cream and pumpkin.

5. **Joe Record-** Joe was an expatriate Englishman, resident in West Australia. He won the Manly 100-mile race in 1981 and had covered 462 miles in a six-day race in France in 1982. Joe Record was asked a few years later by Tony Rafferty "What are your lasting thoughts of that famous race?" Joe's reply was "I drove across the Nullarbor in this really shonky car. I took my time. Cliff was a very easy bloke to live with. Just no hassle. I worked out a schedule for us. We did twenty miles the first week, thirty miles the next and then fifty miles a day." Joe had an eccentric outlook on life and was certainly a runner that left his influence on the race over the years.

6. **Bob Bruner-** Well-known fitness crusader. He is an ex – Canadian now living in Melbourne. Bruner had raced in thirty five Ultras and was also a lecturer, writer, author and consultant. He claimed to have represented Canada at soccer and boxing when he was a schoolboy. Bruner was sponsored by the banana industry in this attempt. It was unfortunate that Bruner was to leave his own mark on the history of the race!

7. **John Hughes-** Is the second Kiwi runner in the race. He is a policeman by profession. His media release said "Hard line detective with the criminal investigation branch who is constantly in the news". Hughes is the current holder of the Sydney to Melbourne record with seven days, nine hours and forty seven minutes. Hughes was one of the favourites to get a place in the event.

8. **John Connellan-** John is twenty eight years old and was an ex – Victorian Schoolboys Cross Country Champion. He ran three sub two hour and forty minute Marathons in his twenties and had a unique preparation for the race.

He had all of 1982 away from running. The commitment to compete was made at Falls Creek in January 83. Several weeks after that he was doing 150km a week. This schedule was maintained for the next three months. Connellan had two trials prior to the event. These included a 80km a day for three days in February and a 110km run in March.

Ex-Olympic runner, Chris Wardlaw was Connellan's Manager. His masseur was Jock Plunkett. Plunkett was the same masseur who massaged Bob Hayes (American 100m Gold winner) in the 64 Olympics. His crew had an average Marathon time of two hours and fifteen minutes. Connellan was the youngest and most inexperienced runner in the field. His motivational music for the race included an hour of the ABC Victory tune from the Brisbane Commonwealth Games. The same music was repeated for a whole hour! This should be enough to send people to sleep, not to motivate them!

Connellan also received fluid and dietary advice from Dr Dick Telford from the Australian Institute of Sport. Dr Peter Fuller provided the medical expertise for his race attempt. He suggested(as a joke) a few weeks prior to the start of the race that Connellan would be fed intravenously. Channel Ten got hold of the story and it was headlines on the evening News. Connellan was soon contacted by his Mum who was in a very worried state!

9. **Martin Thompson-** Victorian thirty seven year old Public servant. He had ran one hundred and ten Marathons in his life but wasn't expected to trouble the rest of the field as this was much further than the traditional 42.195km.

10. **Keith Swift-** Swift is a 43 year old runner who won the Victorian 50 mile title in 1980. He wasn't expected to have a bearing on the outcome of the race as 50 miles wasn't the same as the road between Sydney and Melbourne.

11. **Wal McCrorie -** Fifty two year old ex Scottish Paratrooper, now involved in the Insurance business and living in New South Wales. He had a complete health breakdown before running in his first City to Surf and has been addicted to running ever since. Wal is the holder of the Sydney to Melbourne (Princess Highway) record and isn't likely to be troubled by this shorter route. He could end up giving the more fancied runners in the race a fright.

Controversy erupted before the start of the race. Australian Athletic Union Executive Director, Rick Pannell warned the athletes who contested the Sydney to Melbourne Marathon that they would automatically lose their amateur status. "Win, Lose or draw, any registered amateur who races in the event will automatically forfeit their amateur status" Pannell said. None of the starters changed their mind and they all lined up for the epic journey. Australian Marathon legend, Rob De Castella (Deeks) was threatened with the same fate if he ran a couple of miles with the runners at the start of the race.

Deeks said before the race started "I think the prospect of getting to the stage of complete weariness and then knowing there are days and days to go is the ultimate test of endurance".

A press Conference was held before the start and lasted for ever. As Joe Record said to Tony Rafferty in the March 94 issue of UltraMag "A big drag at the start listening to the dignitaries speak. You remember. It was quite frustrating. I got guts ache"

The starter gun was fired and the runners were on their way. Wal McCrorie. and John Hughes were in the lead. They ran a sub three hour marathon for the first twenty kilometres. Half a dozen runners were at the front with only two hundred metres between them. They were McCrorie, Hughes, Thompson, Swift and Young. Wal McCrorie stated a few years later that his pace at the start of the race cost him any chance of finishing in the first year.

The second pack included Tony Rafferty, George Perdon and Siggy Bauer. They were bringing up the rear at a sensible rate. They were sitting back and waiting and showing why they were the champions of the sport. It was half an hour into the race when George Perdon and Siggy Bauer went after the lead pack.

John Hughes was in the lead at the twenty three km mark. It was at this stage that Hughes took a wrong turn and five runners followed. They were a kilometre off course when officials turned up and pointed them the right way. After that John Hughes picked up his pace again and went through the Marathon in a time of two hours and fifty minutes. George Perdon did Cliff Young a favour at this stage and yelled out "Come over here Cliffy. You're on the wrong road".

At the 60km mark near Picton, John Hughes and Martin Thompson were in the lead. They were averaging seven minute miles. This was a pace that would never be achieved again during the race.

Day soon turned into evening and the lead was still being fought between John Hughes and Martin Thompson. The difference between first and second was as close as thirty seconds as the race approached Mittagong.

John Connellan stopped at Mittagong about 7pm on the first day. He had run 93km in eight hours and twenty minutes. Connellan and crew dined at the Motel restaurant that night. They managed five or six hours sleep before rising at 5am the next day. This piece of amateurism was to disappear from the race over the next couple of years.

Hughes and Thompson had a six kilometre lead from a group of runners that included Cliff Young. The leading runners were averaging seven minute miles. George Perdon was in sixth place and was the only competitor to have had a proper feed. Tony Rafferty was twelve kilometres behind the leader and had not eaten or rested.

It was at two o'clock in the morning when Cliff Young fell and hurt his shoulder. The cold was his only problem and he wasn't in pain. It was shortly after that when Cliff came off and had a rest. Due to a crew member not wearing his contacts, Cliff was awake two hours later and running. This was a blessing in disguise and Cliff realized that he could go without sleep.

The second day of the race started and Cliff Young was the leader, as the field ran into Yass. Cliff said "I'm just an old tortoise, I have to keep going to stay in front". Joe Record's reply on hearing this was "I think I can catch the old Cliff. He says he is a tortoise but I think the old bastard is a hare in disguise"

At the start of the second day the news of the accident to one of Keith Swift's crew filtered through to the rest of the race. He was hit by a car and went to Hospital with a broken collar bone. Westfield claimed it's first injury!

Siggy Bauer was second and Joe Record was third. Joe was later to describe the run as "It was a beautiful enchanting run. Cattle strewn across the road. I ran with them. I felt like I was going back in time". George Perdon and John Hughes were fourth and fifth respectively.

Martin Thompson was the first withdrawal on Day Two. John Connellan's comment on being told that Martin had just gone by in a car was "Flag the car down I want to go with him". At this stage of the race Connellan's feet were covered in blisters. Vaseline was being applied every couple of hours to his feet.

Cliff got more confident as the second day progressed. At the three hundred kilometre mark he had a twenty nine kilometre lead over Joe Record with Siggy Bauer and George Perdon in third and fourth.

John Connellan totaled 116km during the second day of the race. This was in a thirteen hour period. Connellan took his overnight stop in Gunning.

By the start of the third day, Cliff Young had a thirty five kilometres lead. He was at Gundagai, which is only thirty six kilometres short of the half way mark. Cliff said "I'll show these jokers a thing or two before I reach Melbourne" Joe Record was in second spot, four hours behind Cliff and Siggy Bauer was holding onto third place. Bringing up the rear was Keith Swift, who was one hundred kilometres from the lead.

Connellan completed 111km during the third day of the race. His walks were getting longer and he ran an extra hour into the night.

It was at the half way mark, when the Race Director, John Toleman tried to get Cliff Young to take a pain killing injection for his shoulder. Cliff had a painful experience with needles in Colac years ago and politely told Toleman and the Doctor "Thanks , but no



thanks".

It was Day four when Connellan really started to suffer. He only managed to complete 53km and had a two hour massage stop outside Gundagai. This did not rejuvenate him though.

Honest mistakes made by crew members in calculating mileage's could cause friction between the crew and the runner. The crew for John Connellan were supplying him with drinks every two kilometres. Vaseline and assorted medication would also be given at these stops. From Day two onwards these stops became more frequent. These stops would provide psychological and physical sustenance for Connellan.

Connellan's crew soon worked out that the hardest thing for the support crew "Was knowing what to say, what not to say and when to keep your mouth totally shut". Chris Wardlaw was quoted as saying "If were feeling like this – How must Blue be feeling?"

In a race of this nature, the smallest incidents would become major catastrophes. Connellan's back up vehicle had a flat battery which caused an hour's wait for sustenance. A mile long bridge at Gundagai meant that runners would have to get over the bridge before being attended to.

It was six hours into Day four, when Connellan withdrew. He had been in a black hole the day before and got out of it. He ran 373km , his feet were swollen and the chafing near his groin was sheer agony. "How could anyone regard what he had done as a failure?"

John Connellan's comment on finishing the race was "I'm pulling out". One of Connellan's crew remembers this stage as "We were all close to that emotional edge – stressed and tired. I felt like crying. It's an awkward situation with a camera and sound recording right on top of you". Connellan pulled out of the race, 15km south of Gundagai at the Tumblong Tavern. This was good for John as he hadn't had a drink for two months.

Connellan was later to describe the race with an analogy. It was eleven people hitting their heads against a brick wall with the one that lasted the longest was the winner.

Mike Willesee made a documentary about the race. It starred four of the runners. They were Cliff Young, Joe Record, Bob Bruner and John Connellan.

It was at Albury when Joe Record caught up with Cliff. It was on Sunday morning and Cliff had been asleep for an hour and a half. Cliff was woken by a very familiar face saying "Hello Old Buddy. I've caught you. Sleep tight." Joe then left the caravan and kept running. Cliff was that startled that he got dressed and kept running at a terrific pace to overtake Joe. Cliff's last words to Joe were "Good luck Joe". It was a short time later that Joe Record needed his sleep and Cliff was left to get a good distance again between him and the rest of the field.

Joe Record remembers this part of the race when he said at a later stage "I got Cliffy in Albury. Then shin splints scotched it. I ran too hard down the hills. Later he got 18k in front. He was going like the clappers."

A funnier version of this part of the race was reported later and it goes like this: Cliff recalled "There were a few funny moments. Joe Record, who was running second, jumped into my caravan late one night while I was catching 40 winks. Joe asked me if I had any ice for his sore shins. I said 'No' sent him back up the road to a garage, jumped out of bed, took off and never saw him again".

Perdon, Bauer and Hughes were now third, fourth and fifth. The story of Cliff Young had sparked the imagination of the public. Hundreds of spectators were now lining the Highway to applaud Young and urge him towards victory. The crowd grew as Cliff shuffled towards Melbourne. The news people were now following twenty four hours a day. His crew tried to protect him, but Cliff realised that he was now a celebrity and he had obligations to fill!

Joe Record pulled out of the event with swollen ankles and a suspected kidney infection. He remembers the run as "I had an awful time from Wodonga to Wangaratta. A totally hellish run. Then I'd a big duel with George Perdon. I think it lasted 40k. I couldn't let him go. It gave me the shits. I'd come up and f\*\*\*\*\* sprint. He'd come up and I'd go again. Then I couldn't even walk down the hills and I said 'stuff it'. It was a shame to see Record pull out of the event. He had trained with Cliff Young and had definitely made the other runners 'Sing for their Supper'".

Cliff's Mum, Mary travelled from Beech Forest to meet her son at the finish. It was going to be a complete surprise for Cliff, even though Mary wasn't sure if she should go to Melbourne or stay at home and prepare a bed for him. Mary is very proud of her son, who took up running at 57, but said "I hope he forgets all about it when he gets home. It came up like that. Let's hope it goes away as quickly!" Cliff and his mother had not discussed prizemoney and she said "What he does with it is his prerogative".

When Cliff reached the outskirts of Melbourne, "Cliffy mania had reached fever pitch. It was raining and yet he was being cheered on by thousands of people lining the streets. "Children, people in pyjamas, people with their family pets, joggers, others on bicycles, cheered Cliff on towards the finish of his 875kms run from Sydney. He waved and smiled as he kept steadily plodding shuffling on. He had reached Melbourne – that's all anybody cared about."

City Busker, Bert "The Tubemaker" Nicolls, got the hopes of the crowd up, when he made a couple of fifty metre runs down Elizabeth St. It fooled a lot of people for a few seconds, but a cheer broke out each time.

Bert had a slightly stooped frame, wore thick rimmed glasses, a felt cap, baggy trousers and a mauve jacket with Anzac Day badges on his lapel. It was a passable imitation, but Bert didn't quite have the stamina of an Ultra Marathoner. Bert said "I'd think I'd collapse before I got to Richmond. I've got a double hernia, I'm deaf in one ear and I'm three quarters blind in my right eye".

Bert's furthest physical adventure in life was years ago when he walked from Melbourne to Woodend. He thought he was on the Hume Highway to Sydney, so he turned around back to the City.

Cliff reached the General Post office just before midnight. Police estimated that there were 5000 people lining the streets. All the police could do was stop the traffic and watch the amazing scenes in front of them. Cliff's comment on all the people lining the road and waving was "I'd hate to be royalty". His nearest rival, George Perdon was forty kilometres behind him. There was no way that Cliff was going to lose, as the crowds continued to grow and Cliff was urged to victory.

Cliff kept going towards Doncaster. He was joined by thirty young joggers for the last final stretch. One of the runners was very enthusiastic and tried a bit too hard to fire Cliff for the homeward stretch. Cliff was fired up ready to do something else to the young

fella! His comments were a bit much after Cliff had traveled all that way.

It was a long time since Australia had a real hero to cheer. This 61 year old potato farmer from Colac, Victoria had endeared himself to the hearts, minds and souls of the average Australian. They desperately needed good news instead of the endless violence that was usually fed to them by the Australian media.

One spectator said "Are they going to knight him or give him a medal?"

It was shortly after 130am in the morning when Cliff crossed the finishing Line. It was five days, fifteen hours and four minutes since he had left Sydney. He was greeted by his mother who said "Well done son!" He had run for over one hundred and thirty five hours and had averaged just over six kilometres per hour. Cliff Young had existed on only 12 hours sleep during the past six days and had used ten pairs of shoes during the race.

Tony Rafferty remembers the end of the 83 Westfield "I was out on the Highway in sixth place listening to his arrival on my headset radio as I trundled onto the finish. The night sky was lit up with searchlights and media light bulbs attracting people out of their homes. And Cliff shuffled in to be mobbed by well wishers".

After the presentation ceremony, Cliff was carried off the stage. His legs realised that they didn't have to move another inch and they buckled underneath him. He slept that night in a bed that was set up at the shopping centre.

Five more runners were to finish over the next day and a half. They were George Perdon, Siggie Bauer, John Hughes, Tony Rafferty and Bob Bruner. They had all beaten the previous race record held by John Hughes, but the whole of Australia only wanted to meet one man and that was, Cliff Young. "After five hours deep sleep, Cliff was up to face the press and TV Cameras, spending the rest of the day giving interviews."

The morning after Cliff finished his great run, he tucked into three plates of eggs on toast and said to the media "It won't alter me. It won't make any difference to me. I'm sure".

Cliff spent the next couple of days giving media interviews and meeting the public. All of Australia was impressed by his humility and gentle good humour. He even received a congratulatory telegram from the Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke that said "All Australians join me in congratulating you on a truly remarkable achievement".

Cliff was signed with Westfield to do 40 appearances in the next twelve months at various shopping centres through out Australia. This association became an ongoing one for the next ten years.

Young's manager, Mike Tonkin was interviewed after the race and said "It was determination to last the distance that won the Sydney to Melbourne race". He was asked about Cliff's sleep patterns and had this to say "It was all his own idea not to sleep. We thought he was mad". "But he's really strongminded so I said let him go – he will either win or collapse".

Mike Tonkin was also interviewed by "The Age" about Cliff's money making potential and had several interesting quotes to say:

"He has got to get his body right and get himself back together. He has been high from the excitement – now he is starting to feel the pain".

"Cliffy is someone who could be used to make \$ 100 000 this year no doubt about that."

"The decision has got to be made whether to go for the money and I will do exactly what Cliffy wants. If he wants to make money it is possible to arrange it".

"I can't say how much is involved. But we haven't turned our backs on anything".

"I know people could manage him and make more money than me, but there is no one in the world who could help him to do what he wants more than me. You know, Cliffy lives on \$2 000 a year – he doesn't really need \$ 100 000".

John Toleman was also asked about managing Cliff Young and said "A lot of people spoke to me about handling him. Nobody could anticipate what has happened. Cliff is seeing more money now than he has ever seen in his life. Mike Tonkin has had so many calls he is running out of paper."

The Mayor of Colac, Cr Pat Gimble , said about Cliff's victory " You can bet it will be the biggest welcome home since our Diggers came home from the war. We don't know what we will be doing yet, but whatever it is everyone will be involved."

Colac Garage owner, Mike Ryan, whose staff were closely involved in Cliff's race said "No one outside Colac would have known the elation the community felt today. When I came back from the war, we were given a civic reception. But the feeling then was nothing to how we feel here today. That honest little bloke has through his own efforts done so much to unite the country. Watching him at the finish today was more thrilling to me than any Grand Final".

The Editor of the Colac Herald, Mr Gary Trotter, was busy preparing a four page wrap around supplement on Cliff and his achievement. Trotter said "It will be something our readers can put away and keep for their grandchildren. Down here everyone loves the little guy whose heart is as big as the trees in the rain forest where he trains."

The unofficial Mayor of Beechforest, Jim Pearce was ecstatic with the victory of Cliff Young. He was contacted at the only Pub in Beechforest, where 150 locals had packed the place to celebrate and said "He put us on the map, little Cliffy did". Mr. Pearce likened Cliffy's victory to the clean mountain air and made comparisons with the prolific breeding of Melbourne Cup winners in New Zealand. Jim talked about Cliffy's football days and described him as "Pretty slow on the ground and sour as a horse. But speaking of horses, our lad's got a heart like Phar Lap. If I could get a foal out of him, I'd keep it".

Cliff was disappointed that good friend and training partner, Joe Record had to pull out , but honoured his promise to Joe of splitting the \$ 10 000 prizemoney. How many other sportsmen and sportswomen in today's cash orientated society would be selfless? Cliff even planned to split his own \$ 5 000 amongst his crew and the other runners.

After the race there was talk of Cliff having the earning potential of \$100 000 a year. Cliff was quite happy after a couple of days to retire back to his home in Colac and keep living the simple life. Ultra- Distance running was now on the front page, Cliff was a hero to thousands of people around Australia and the "Westfield" had become an annual event.

Second placegetter, George Perdon was quoted as saying tongue in cheek "He planned to retire and leave Ultra running for the older blokes".

George Perdon was asked a few years later by Tony Rafferty about his recollections

were on the 83 Westfield. His reply was "I thought Siggy Bauer was the man to beat. He had all the records. It didn't dawn on me that Cliff would do what he did. I took seven hour breaks the first and second night. He just slipped away."

George Perdon was to catch Siggy Bauer 215km from the finish and ran straight to the finish at Doncaster. Siggy Bauer was later quoted as saying "I've never had anyone go past me so fast".

Cliff Young came out with a ton of quotes during the race:

**Prizemoney:** "I worked out I'd be left with about five dollars"

**Publicity:** "I think it will wear off in about a week. They'll find someone else to write about and I'll go back and relax in the bush among the birds".

**New status:** "I'd hate to be royalty. I don't think I am cut out to make such a public figure. I'm just a farmer really"

**Motivation:** "It was a personal thing. I wanted to have a go at, so I ran the distance and beat the other runners".

**Strategy:** To take the lead as soon as possible – which I managed to do on the first night. Then when ever I got word that this or that runner was coming from behind I would speed up".

The best quote of the whole race, must go to Cliff Young's mother: "I'm not too pleased about all this running. I don't think the body is made for it. I never thought he would take up running, but when he did at 57 it was the biggest surprise of my life"

Mrs Barbara Pack ran the publicity for the 83 race, from a little office in Heidelberg, Melbourne. She was more or less working the same hours as the Ultra Marathoners and her day would start with radio interviews from the radio Stations at 0530 hrs in the morning. Mrs Pack was 29 and had been involved in sports promotion, when she looked after the Great Otway Classic the previous year.

Mrs Pack was surprised in the interest that the race was generating all over the world. There had been calls from the USA and Europe, with several people wanting to compete next year. Mrs Pack was living in isolation for a week, which was interrupted by the constant ringing of the telephone. She said "I never believed when the race started it was going to be like this. The publicity it's had is unbelievable and it's all due to the fact that a 61 year old spud farmer is in the lead. Hollywood couldn't have invented a better story line"

A couple of days after the race, Cliff Young was rewarded with a lunchtime reception with 8000 people at the City Square in Melbourne. The Melbourne Lord Mayor, Cr Bill Gardner, gave Cliff the key to the City. The Victorian Premier, Mr John Cain presented Cliff with a Special Plaque, a Victorian atlas and a VicRail Pass for twelve months free travel.

Cliff told the eager crowd "It is really a wonderful thing to see you all here. It was a great experience to run along the road the other night and see the great crowd."

After the reception, Cliff and his mother, Mary were given a tour of the Victorian Parliament by the Premier, Mr Cain. Cliff was at his cheekiest best, sat back in the Premier's chair ( in his office) and said "Anybody want any problems solved?"

Cliff Young's performance was summed up by the Editor of the Age when his Editorial said "Sportsmen of Cliff Young's ilk are rare. For many of them, money is the chief attraction, the game itself is secondary. Cliff Young didn't run for the money. Hardly, when he had decided, if he won to split the prizemoney with fellow competitors. No he ran to prove something to himself. In the process he proved something to the nation. He says of himself that he is not cut out to be a public figure. But his amazing run has made him a folk hero nonetheless".

Sigfried Bauer from New Zealand finished third. All the crowds had disappeared when he ran through Melbourne as a very lonely figure. He said "All top athletes lose as many races than they win. That's the way it goes. If I was to worry about welcoming committees, I'd have given up by now".

Bauer was sure that he could win the race and said "Right up to the time I heard officially that Cliff Young had finished, I thought I could win. His was an amazing feat. All along I was working to a schedule thinking that he would have to finally fall back to the field. I had to change my tactics at the end but it was too late".

The 1983 Race established a new chapter in Australian sport. Cliff Young became an instant Australian icon with his success and the relatively unknown sport of Ultra Marathon Running became more widely known around the world. Eight more races were to be run over the next eight years and eight more stories were woven into the pages of Australian sport.

**GUMBOOTS TO GLORY**

***Cliff Young was a farmer  
A young man at 61,  
He toed the line with the best of them,  
For the Sydney to Melbourne run,  
The critics said he had no chance,  
'Cause the pros know all the tricks,  
But they didn't bank on the big heart,  
Of the shuffler from the sticks.***

***(Chorus) I am just a farmer,  
He told the cheering throng,  
As he ran the line in Melbourne,  
Proving we can all be strong,  
But it won't turn his head,  
I am just a farmer,  
That was all he said.***

This song was written by Allan Webster and John Hunter shortly after Cliff crossed the Finish line. It enjoyed great popularity and was Number One around the country for a couple of weeks.

1983 Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Results

<b>PLACE</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORIGIN</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>HRS RAN</b>	<b>AVERAGE SPEED</b>
1	Cliff Young	Victoria	5d:15h:04m	135	6.04
2	George Perdon	Victoria	6d:01h:00m	145	5.96
3	Siggy Bauer	NZ	6d:05h:00m	149	5.08
4	John Hughes	NZ	6d:05h:49m	150	5.76
5	Tony Rafferty	Victoria	7d:04h:27m	172	5.02
6	Bob Bruner	Victoria	7d:07h:03m	175	4.93



## Chapter Three

### *1984 - The Lawnmower Man*

A year passed and the second Westfield Sydney Ultra Marathon was scheduled to commence on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1984 from Doncaster Shopping Centre. This was the only year that the race was run from Melbourne to Sydney, but it certainly helped to build its status amongst Ultra races around the world.

The runners included last year's winner, Cliff Young. Cliff was the sentimental favourite and media attention was focused on him. Could he repeat last year's epic win and leave the opposition floundering?.

Also lining up were experienced Ultra Marathoners Tony Rafferty, Bob Bruner, John Connellan and Joe Record. Would Record attack with the same free spirit of last year, or would he run more conservatively and pounce in the last quarter!

Dick Cameron and John Hughes were coming from New Zealand. The run was also going to include American, Don Choi and Indian, Tirtha Phani. The event had gone international. There were some new local runners in the field as well. Geoff Molloy, ex Sun Tour bike rider had a very big heart and a ton of stamina to boot.

The Race Director, Mike Agostini said "The Westfield Melbourne to Sydney Ultra Marathon could turn into the longest sprint race ever held". He said "The 875km race boasted so many Long Distance runners it was anyone's event".

One of the dark horses of the race was Tirtha Phani from India, even though his opponents are sceptical about his past performances. He had a place in the Guinness book of Records for running 8816km across India in 58 days, 2 hours and 25 minutes. That was an average of 152km a day! Tirtha Phani has apparently told Race Director, Mike Agostini that he will run for 21 hours a day, averaging 8.5kph.

Tirtha Phani arrived in Australia without sponsorship but now has the backing of the Indian Tourist Bureau, Indian Tea Board and Air India. He has been staying with the Indian Consul-General Mr A.K. Bamerjee since arriving in Australia. Mr Bamerjee has stated that he will follow Phani for the first two days of the race.

Thirty one starters lined up for the 84 Westfield. They included thirty three year old Caroline Vaughan. She ran from Melbourne to Sydney as part of a relay team in 1979 to raise money for Aboriginal Medical services. For the last year, she has been training with Joe Record, which is bound to help her preparation.

The runners include:

**Bob Bruner** - Forty five year old Ultra Marathon Runner was lining up for his second crack at the event. His claims to fame include being a former Canadian boxing flyweight Champion and Canadian Schoolboy soccer star. This was to be his last major event in Australia!

**Sonny Bulleen** - Thirty seven year old Landscape Gardener from NSW was lining up for his first event. He has limited experience, but has been running sixty kilometres a day in preparation.

**Roy Butlin** - from Queensland was entering the Race for the first time. His major achievement was to run from Brisbane to Sydney in a time of five days and three hours in 1982. This was a distance over one thousand kilometres and if he was to repeat this performance during this race, he would create a major upset.

**John Carlton** - Forty one year old first time Westfield runner from South Australia. He mainly runs Marathons, but celebrated his fortieth birthday by running the Grand Canyon.

**John Champness** - 42 year old Melbourne Fireman. He was one of twenty firemen that completed a Relay run around Australia last year.

**John Connellan** - From Melbourne and one of the youngest in the field. He did run in the Westfield last year. Considering his age, he is one of the most experienced in the race. He withdrew from last year's event, but did put a scare amongst his rivals when he led the Colac 1000 mile race until injury forced him to withdraw at 220 miles. He could be a force to be reckoned with if he gets it together this week.

**Peter Drummond** - Another quality runner in the field. He claims to have run 128 000km during the last ten years. He has also run 21 marathons and several longer races.

**Toby Field** - ex South Sydney junior Rugby league player is another youngster in the field. He is unknown but has run from Canberra to Sydney in a reasonable time.

**Keith Gillies** - Another South Australian runner. He has run in thirteen Marathons in the past year. Are marathons enough preparation for Multi-day Ultras?

**Barry Kendall** - Thirty three year old former Schoolboy sports athletics Champion. He grabbed his place in the field by sheer persistence, which included phoning Mike Agostini's office on a regular basis.

**Wal McCrorie** - One of the older runners in the field. He raced in last year's race and completed over five hundred kilometres. Wal did have the record for running from Sydney to Melbourne the long way( via the Princess Highway). If he starts off at a regular pace he should be up with the front runners at the closing stages.

**Bob McElwaine** - Second oldest runner at fifty nine. He did plan to run around Australia four years ago, but sponsors withdrew. His son, Philip won the middleweight Gold medal at the 78 Edmonton Commonwealth Games. Bob McElwaine's story was to be one of the sad stories of the 84 race.

**Keith Marshall** - Fifty eight and third oldest runner in the field. He is a cleaner from Kyabram and has completed many twenty four hour runs raising much needed dollars for charity.

**Geoff Molloy** - Former top Sun Tour cyclist, who was motivated by the deeds of Cliff Young and the lure of the twenty thousand dollar first prize money. .

Geoff Molloy's cycling career was full of great potential, but ended on October 22, 1965. It was Day Seven of the Sun Tour when he was involved in an accident with a car on the Princes Highway near Moe. At the time he was second to the great Barry Waddell, who

ended up winning his second of five Sun Tours.

Seven riders fell in that accident. Molloy suffered more than any other rider. His left thigh was a mass of abrasions and it was found later that he also had a fractured leg. He absolutely refused to go to hospital and was determined to ride the next day.

Geoff recounts that stage in his life when he said "When I look back, it's stupid. I couldn't walk, let alone ride. You just don't accept that something is fractured or broken. People wonder at the sanity of bike riders, but it was all part of the positive thinking for cyclists."

Geoff also had an accident in the 1964 Sun Tour. Molloy had won the Melbourne to Bendigo Wheelrace. Who knows what he would have achieved in cycling, if these accidents had not of happened.

After the two cycling accidents Molloy became a typical "Norm" for the next fifteen years. He then became intrigued with the prospect of running a Marathon. The Melbourne Big M was the one he aimed for and his goal was three hours. His completed time was four minutes longer.

This motivated him to keep going. Next year he smashed the three hour barrier and ran 2:42:00. In 1982 he reduced that time to 2:29:00. In 1983 he won the Australian Professional Veterans Marathon, 10km, 15km and 10 mile titles.

At this stage Molloy was ready to step into the background. Cliff Young's performance in the 83 Westfield and the prospect of paying \$20 000 of his mortgage prompted him to start training for the Westfield. He based his training on his training for a nine day Sun Tour and planned to sleep for four hours every day.

The proposed sleep pattern changed though after he broke Joe Record's Aust 24 hr record at Box Hill early in 83. Molloy slept for only 40 min of the race and felt relatively good afterwards. He decided after that to run until the body tells him to sleep. Molloy said "Unless I thought I could win, I would not be running. I'm not interested in running fifth".

**Trevor Newton** - Thirty four year old had run from Adelaide to Sydney averaging 95km a day. He would need to double that workload to stand any chance in this race.

**Peter Parcell** - from the Gold Coast. Has interrupted his round the World Run to compete. He ran from Sydney to Melbourne this week just to get to the starting line! It took a week and he considers it a good warmup. In the last year he has run 11 000km in seven countries around the world. It is all part of his aim to run around the world. Parcell believes that he can win the 84 Westfield by running the course in under four days!

**Barry Paterson** - Thirty five year old and another novice runner. He has run 187km in a twenty four hour race. He is convinced that he will be a force in this event.

**Niel Petersen** - Thirty six old and has been in Australia for two years. He rises at 2am each morning to go training before starting his job as a bricklayer.

**Robin Philips** - Is another of the mid thirties age group in the race. He is a Queensland architect who does 160km training runs every fortnight in preparation.

**Tony Rafferty** - Is a pioneer of Ultra racing in Australia. It was his acceptance of Perdon's challenge last year that initiated the Westfield race.

**Joe Record** - Is another ultra Distance Running champion. He was a force in last year's race until injury struck and will once again shape the results in this year's event.

**Allan Tweedie** - Is the youngest competitor at twenty three. He has been averaging 48km a day at the rate of four minutes per kilometre. Could be too fast for a race of this distance though!

**Cliff Young** - Back for a second crack at the race. A week ago he was in doubt when he injured his left knee and was told by a Specialist not to run. Cliff was determined to run and did not want to let the fans down.

**Dick Cameron** - Another of the three Kiwis runners. He is forty two. His backgrounds is in Marathons and not Ultras.

**Don Choi** - Is one of the pioneers of Ultra running. He is a thirty five year old Chinese American who initiated the modern era of Six Day racing.

**John Hughes** - Is fifty one years old and the third person from New Zealand to be competing. John is a former holder of the Sydney to Melbourne record and is keen to regain this title.

**John Radich** - 29 from USA and the second American runner. He is coached by former Aust legend, Bill Emerton and must be a better than average runner on that credence alone.

**Ross Parker** - Is thirty five years old and from WA. He has no background in ultra Distance Running, but convinced Mike Agostini to let him into the field. Parker went on in later years to become a regular Westfield competitor.

Thousands turned up to see the start of the 84 Westfield at the Doncaster Shopping centre. It was Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April and the race was due to start at 1030am. The Victorian Premier was the official starter. Some of the runners were having second thoughts and starting to doubt their sanity before the start. Queensland Architect, Robin Philips said "I must be mad", as he got changed.

The Race Director, Mike Agostini expressed concern for the safety of the runners. Tony Rafferty and Siggy Bauer told the runners prior to the start of the race the dangers of running along the Highway.

Rafferty is running for the second time, but Bauer has withdrawn in protest. The reason being is that John Toleman, the previous Race Director quit after a row with Westfield Executives. Bauer was quite happy though to inform the runners on the possible dangers that they faced.

"The dangers have been completely drummed into the runners, we've told them and the police have told them" Agostini said. "But it is a constant source of worry, the biggest headache I've got. I'm greatly concerned about a truck running into a runner. I will not relax until the last runner is off the roads". "The police are concerned, but do you stop people hang gliding or skin diving? This is a professional footrace."

The race got under way and the usual runners started at their reckless pace. The runners had twenty five steps of an escalator to run up first. Queensland, Peter Parcell led and after five kilometres he had a minute and twenty second break on Dick Cameron.

Last year's winner, Cliff Young was two minutes and ten seconds behind Parcell. Caroline Vaughan was ten minutes behind Parcell and in second last place. Tirtha Phani was already in last place! They were clocked at doing six minute miles.

The runners ran through City Mall at lunch time and were met by crowds that cheered them on like a winning Grand Final team. Traffic was a nightmare when they ran along Sydney Road through Brunswick, but the Police and Marshalls did an excellent job keeping everyone happy! The runners had to run solo through the city and they could not join with their support vehicles until they reached Royal Parade.

At the 30km mark, Parcell was still in the lead, but had been joined by Niel Petersen. They had a three and a half minute lead over John Connellan.

Young had dropped eleven minutes behind the leaders. He was enjoying himself and waving to the crowd. Thousands of spectators lined the route. It was reminiscent of last year's race when the crowds welcomed Cliff into Melbourne.

Cliff had trouble finding water at the start of the race. He also wanted a shoe change, but had lost his crew into the bargain. He even got the police looking for them as well. Young was thirty miles out of Melbourne when they turned up. They stayed behind when the race started and had the free feed that Westfield put on. Thoughts of Divorce were going on in Cliff's mind during this time. His wife, Mary was the crew Manager and Organiser of the team!

Peter Parcell was the first withdrawal from the race. He was suffering from a suspected hairline fracture of the pelvis. Probably wasn't helped by running from Sydney to Melbourne the week before!

It was midnight on the first night when Niel Petersen grabbed the lead. He was three miles in front of Joe Record and Geoff Molloy. It was his love of beer that got Petersen into the Westfield. He won a bet of a dozen bottles of beer by running from Indooroopilly to Mount Cootha and back twice in three hours. This gave him the motivation to follow Cliff Young's dream of twelve months earlier.

Petersen came to Australia from Denmark in November 82. He was excited by the prospect of living in the "Lucky Country". He had been taking English lessons four months ago, but gave them up so he could spend more time training for the race. He had been rising at 0200hrs and training. This would be followed by a day's work as a BrickLayer. He would then do another run in the evening.

At 10pm on the first night, Petersen was still in the lead. He was 5km ahead of Joe Record. This changed during the night when he had a sleep and Wal McCrorie slipped into the lead. Joe Record and Geoff Molloy passed him during that time. Sponsorship for Petersen had fallen through prior to the event and he was running in a plain white T-shirt. His wife was predicting that Niel would win when she said "I doubt he will be beaten. I don't think he will need sleep for two days."

Meanwhile the Tirtha Phani story was starting to unfold. It was at Euroa on the first day, that Phani wanted to retire. The Indian said he was suffering from tendon strain to the groin and hips. He was heartbroken and burst into tears. After a few words from the Indian Consul-General Mr A.K. Banershee, Phani was soon back on his feet and trotting along the Highway.

A TV Interviewer, spoke to Cliff Young during the first day. This is a transcript:

Q: What has been the worst part of the run?

A: The speed of those blokes ahead, trying to catch them.

Q: Any particular tactics?

A: I just pray now. I pray they get injuries. Slow them down a bit!

After this short interview, Cliff was again on the road and shuffling along in his very economical style.

At dawn on the second day, Wal McCrorie was in the lead. He was four kms ahead of Joe Record and had run 181kms since leaving Doncaster. He made tremendous ground during the night and kept running whilst others had a sleep. Definitely a runner who learnt from Young's 1983 victory!

A second runner had pulled out. Dick Cameron had withdrawn with a knee injury. He joined Parcell in the Casualty Bay. It makes you realise the foolishness of starting too fast in these events!

Caroline Vaughan had also fallen during the night. She suffered abrasions to her hands and fingers and had a slightly twisted ankle. She ran until daybreak and then went to Seymour for treatment. She was keen to resume at the 116km mark later that morning.

She was worried how the rest of the race was going to develop, when she was interviewed by Peter Stone during a rest stop. She said "I'm frightened of what lies ahead. It does hurt. When I'm running well, there is no way I am going to pull out, but it's different when you go through what I did back there. You must have immediate goals, to pass a runner just ahead, to reach a house you see in the distance. When there's no immediate goals, that's when you despair". Definitely the words of a brave but worried lady!

Cliff Young was battling knee problems, but continued plodding. Wal McCrorie was the real surprise packet in the field. Joe Record was four km's behind and had eaten breakfast on the run. Geoff Molloy was one hundred metres behind him in third place and Bob Bruner was in fourth.

Geoff Molloy introduced a new tactic into the sport. This was to eat on the run. It was a trick he had learnt from his Bike racing days. His crew were tasked with preparing drinks and food for him every three kilometres.

One of the early problems noted by Runners and crew was the absence of race reports. The Race Director was tackled about the problem and said "We never dreamed they'd spread so far apart so soon. It's causing us all sorts of problems"

As a result of this confusion, Geoff Molloy was in the lead and did not realise it! Thankfully, the race organisation improved over the years. It was ten kilometres out of Wangaratta on Saturday night when Geoff Molloy hit the lead ! .

Caroline Vaughan was doing well and got up to the middle of the pack. It was at this stage when she had a row with her Manager, Siggy Bauer and pushed him off his bike! Bauer was treated for abrasions! Bauer wasn't too worried though. He knew that she was going through her low period of the race. It was shortly after this when Siggy Bauer

transferred to Joe Record's crew!

Caroline's comment was "You get to a stage where you accuse your crew that they are lying about the distance you've gone, the distance still to go."

It was 0930 on a cool, sunny Sunday morning when Molloy passed through Albury. Frank McCafferty was dragged out of bed by the Race Organiser, Mike Agostini to keep an eye on things. It was at this stage that he wrote "Really began to appreciate the effort of these runners. Watching the escort vehicle approach in the chill of the early pre-dawn gloom and mist, and their man shuffling along guided by the headlights, was something I'll remember for a long time. How they do it beats me!"

Geoff Molloy now had a fifteen kilometre lead over his rivals. Cliff Young was 15km behind and in 13<sup>th</sup> place. Young was suffering from a knee stress fracture and shin splints. He was in high spirits and keen to finish the race. Second and third behind was Joe Record and Wal McCrorie.

Molloy's trainer, Dennis Moore said that Molloy was in great condition, mentally and physically and was not in any pain. The field is now stretched over a 200km range, with most of the runners 100 – 150km away from the leader.

Cliff Young passed Tirtha Phani on the other side of Wangaratta. Phani was lying on the ground. By then the other runners thought it was funny that Phani would get up and run whenever The Indian Consul was about. When the Indian Consul got on a plane at Albury and headed back to Sydney, Phani decided that he had enough and quit the race. It is not surprising that Tirtha Phani developed the nickname of Tirtha "Phoni". Perhaps the race was too short for him!

Journalist, Frank McCafferty had the following comment on the run of Tirtha Phani. "Perhaps this completely raw and inexperienced youngster was just not able to handle the conditions of the run, with the pressure of racing and the interviews and TV etc. His claims may still be authentic, but the mileage was accomplished in solo runs with no pressure as far as I can see. The Melbourne-Sydney experience for Tirtha Phani must have been a shattering thing."

Meanwhile Cliff Young was getting stronger as the race progressed. Cliff had enough injuries to put the normal neurotic into hospital, but he was losing some injuries by gaining more injuries!

The weekend was spoilt when one of the runners was threatened by a couple of drunken Yobbos in Glenrowan. Police were informed in Wangaratta and the incident was quickly controlled

It was just over the border when the race became hazardous. There were extensive roadworks being carried out. The Highway was a single lane in each direction. As a result the runners did not exactly endear themselves to drivers. It was just out of Albury when a car and semi-trailer collided trying to avoid Bob Bruner's support vehicle. One person from the car was taken to hospital and the highway was blocked for thirty minutes. Bob Bruner who is forth , kept running without the lights of his support vehicle to guide him.

It was just before Wangaratta when Cliff thought about retiring. He had a nine hour sleep and did not feel too bad when he got back up. He ran into town and was greeted by a huge reception. He thought to himself "That is like winning the race all over again". One

lady was quoted as saying as he ran through Wangaratta "He is only running for us. He should stop. He'll kill himself".

Toby Fields withdrew on the early hours of Monday. He said earlier that he would "Run until I drop". When he did withdraw he was 150km from the leaders and his blisters had become too much for him. Fields said "It is not important for me to get to Sydney. I'm just proud that I have started in a race against the best".

Ross Parker from WA is in last place and 230km behind Molloy. He is still on the Victorian side of the border!

The race was described in the media as having every emotions, but it was bringing people together. Onlookers were extending the hand of friendship to runners. Motel owners would open their doors to runners to have a quick shower and sleep. There was no charge involved, they were just glad to have the runners pass.

The race continued up the Hume. By Gundagai, Geoff Molloy was still in the lead. He had a twenty one kilometre break on Joe Record. John Hughes from was in third place.

By Yass there were seventeen runners left in the race. Molloy had a fourteen kilometre break on Joe Record. John Hughes was nine kilometres behind Record. Bringing up forth spot was Wal McCrorie, twenty three kilometres behind Hughes.

It was 5pm Tuesday when Geoff Molloy ran through Yass. They had a half hour rest stop at a Truck stop on the outskirts. He ran through Yass and got a good reception from the locals who had gathered to see the race leader. One journalist described it as "The best show since we headed out of Melbourne through Coburg on Friday and the gallant Molloy deserves every bit of it."

Molloy held an 18km lead just outside Yass. Joe Record was second, but Molloy is racing well within himself and realises that the worst is still yet to come! Comment from Dot Browne who was crewing for Geoff Molloy. Dot assured Frank McCafferty that when Molloy entered for this run "We never dreamed we'd be winning it!"

Back in the field, the other runners were having their own little battles. A runner would pass another runner that was asleep. It would only take a few minutes for the sleeping runner to be woken by his crew and put back on the road. Cliff Young passed Bob McElwaine on the other side of Mittagong. McElwaine was now being coached by Siggy Bauer. Bauer originally started with Caroline Vaughan but changed crews when she withdrew near the border with acute gastroenteritis.

Keith Marshall was using an old bus as his support vehicle. He had a young lady on a motor bike as part of his crew. She had been heading for Melbourne when she saw the race. She turned back to share in the comradeship that was evident.

It was 270km from Sydney and Cliff Young had moved into tenth. He had run non stop for the past twenty four hours. This had helped him to pick up two positions. Cliff was getting better as the race progressed. There were sixteen runners left in the field.

Towards the end of the race, Mike Agostini told reporters that Cliff could not finish in the Top five of the event. Cliff was puzzled on why the leaders were not going faster "They're running in very good conditions, but aren't making a scratch on my record. It seems more downhill this way too – a much easier run!"



The leader, Geoff Molloy, was ninety kilometres away from the finish and was settling down for two hours sleep. An official car came along and informed his crew that John Hughes was only seven kilometres behind Geoff and closing the very fast. Molloy was soon back on the road and was pointed towards Sydney.

Molloy did well for the next fifty kilometres, but with forty to go the horrors set in. His energy had gone and was replaced with sheer agony! His crew kept him going by offering drinks, food and encouragement. With twenty five kilometres to go Molloy shed a few tears, such was the pain. His crew also cried, but were pulled together by Fred Hellyer their crew chief.

Molloy survived the next fifteen kilometres. With ten to go, he started to feel good, because he knew that the Finish was in sight. Race Organiser, Charlie Lynn had some soldiers lined up to run a Guard of Honour over the last few kilometres. It kept the spectators away from Molloy

Dot Browne described the last stage as "They didn't realise how weak he was at that stage. It would have taken nothing to knock him over. The relief on reaching the tape was enormous. Thousands of people lined the streets of Parramatta to welcome him in".

After finishing, Molloy was taken to the Westfield Mall where he received the winners sash and a cheque for \$ 20 000. It was also his birthday, which made for an excellent day all round! There were over 5 000 people at the finish. The winners cheque was presented by the NSW Premier, Mr. Neville Wran.

Molloy was asked how he felt after seventeen minutes sleep in the past twenty four hours. His reply was "Fantastic, but so bloody sore. What a crazy way to celebrate your birthday". He was also asked if he would compete next year. His reply was "I doubt it very much".

John Hughes finished in second place, two hours behind Molloy. He said "The hot conditions and his kamikaze tactics had taken their toll" Hughes received \$ 5 000 for his second place.

Towards the end of the race, allegations of cheating were made against Bob Bruner. Race Director, Mike Agostini said "Competitor, Bob Bruner was still running knowing that there were several reports about him contravening the rules". He said "Bruner also knew that disqualification was imminent if they proved true". Bruner was going to be presented with the allegations once he finished the race.

It was very hard for the author to substantiate the allegations of cheating that were made against Bob Bruner. I have been told many stories and rumours about the incident, but I can't verify them, so they are not going into print.

A runner reported his claims to Charlie Lynn. Lynn and his officials conducted a two day operation on Bruner before fronting him with the allegations on the outskirts of Sydney. Bruner emphatically denied them and kept running. He withdrew from the race seventeen kilometres from the finish. Here is a transcript of the radio interview that he had with a Melbourne radio Announcer shortly after the allegations were made to Bruner.

**Bruner:** I'm spaced out...I've been trying to cry for the last couple of years, I don't know how to cry. Oh, what's the use of talking. I don't know what to say, I'm in a daze."

**Makin:** What about these allegations?"

**Bruner:** Unequivocally, I'm not going to give you the bit about a stack of bible's, unequivocally I give you everything I have...Charlie had the guts to say to me, 'Bob, If you don't get out your case is going to be ruined, you know'. I could not believe this tactics were going on.

Twice I rode by Rafferty like he couldn't stand still. I said to myself as he tried to race me, on the second or third day, 'This is a DeCastella – Ikanga match, I'm going to kill the guy and off I went boom.

The second time I had to get a shower and dunny. I don't want to run through the heat, so we stopped, and I happen to see 'Six miles to Gunning.' Dave says 'Six miles by car is a mile a minute'. So I say, look we're going to stop here'. We have a green bucket with Bruner no 20. I say 'Put it over here, we're going back to there'. That's my honour, not anybody else's.

We drove down, I got the women's name, gave me a free shower in the back, came back, I even slept, we measured at 10.10. Tony came up and he wanted to rest, but I was here so I obviously had to take off..."

**Makin:** "But Bob, can you capsule it. There are alleg..."

**Bruner:** "But he said to officials as they came through 'Check Bruner he looks to fresh"

**Makin:** "Hang on, there are allegations. You're going to be running to Sydney under a cloud. You may be disqualified. I just want your comment to that".

**Bruner:** "But how can I run with my goddam head in this situation now? How'm I gonna run?"

**Makin:** "Bob can I just get it on record, you response to the allegations is what?"

**Bruner:** "I'm spaced out and confused, I..."

**Makin:** "Well are they correct or not?"

**Bruner:** "Absolutely incorrect Incorrect, absolutely"

There were three complaints against Bruner all up. The three complaints were investigated thoroughly by the Race Committee. Bruner and the other runners were watched very carefully as a result of the allegations. The race committee would not have put the allegations to him if there wasn't some substance.

Unfortunately the author could only gather rumour, suggestion and hearsay about the incident. If there are any friends of Bruner or crew members from this race, or Bruner himself reads this book I will gladly print a second edition at a later date and tell all sides of the story! It was an unfortunate blackmark on the history of Ultra running.. He never tried to compete in another Westfield. He did compete in a couple of smaller Ultra races around Australia for the next couple of years, but with no success. Bruner is now believed to be living in Israel. The Canadian soccer Player and boxer had moved on once again.

The surprise packets of the 84 Westfield was New South Wales runner, Bob Telfer. He finished forth in the race with an excellent time of six days and thirteen hours.

Telfer had a sporting pedigree all his life. He won various club, state and national surfing championships when he was a boy at the Cronulla Surf club. He then moved into

Rugby Union. He played 170 games with the Port Hacking Rugby Union Club Too many injuries caused him to give up Union and he progressed into running. This eventually led to Ultras.

His main success in Ultras was a placing in the annual Sydney to Wollongong between 1980 and 1984. Quite a remarkable achievement in itself. Since the 84 Westfield he has turned his attention to Triathlons and has excelled remarkably in that sport as well. His achievements have included numerous Australian and World Triathlon wins for his Age group. He won the World championships for his age group in Mexico last year and looks like repeating his success again this year in Perth.

Bob Telfer admits now that his crew and himself went into the Race blind. They did not know what was in store. He believes that he overtrained and had a sore foot going into the race. As a result he was not sure if he would last past the first day. His drinks during the race consisted of coke and coke and water. Diet has definitely improved during the years.

Telfer was happy with his crew selection. Barry Bulmer did most of the organising and fundraising, Barry Coates was driver, Bernie Key was cook, Neil Robinson looked after psychology, Dennis Milan was Masseur, Terry Watson was driver/medical advice and Bruce Connely was a driver.

He was lucky in being able to secure excellent sponsorship for the race. He had the help of Toyota, Advance Bank, Robertson Potatoes and Talay's running Shop.

Telfer says that in eleven weeks training prior to the event he ran a total of 1386 miles. This included a weekly high of 255 miles and a low of 58 miles. He admits that he could not run for three weeks after the Westfield.

One funny story that Telfer remembers was having foot trouble late one night. Neil Robinson suggested to try different innersoles and shoes. Telfer tried this idea and immediately decided that it felt "shithouse" and told him so. Robinson replied to this "Just perseve for a while". Telfer did for an hour and then decided that he needed different shoes. Surprise, surprise - he had put the innersoles in the wrong side of the foot!

Another funny story was on the forth day of the race when he ended up running with Bob Bruner for quite a while. This is how Bob Telfer tells the story "*He was driving me mad, (yak yak), whilst running through a small town at about 9 in the morning. In the end I said I was going to stop for breakfast - When I stopped so did he. After breakfast we started to run again I asked him what he had. - carrot juice - Rhubarb, sultanas, all healthy things. He then enquired what I had eaten - I told him a handful of jelly beans and a mars bar, which nearly made him choke. He dropped off the pace and I never saw him again the whole race.*"

Telfer was pleased with the race organisation. He stated that Lynn and Agostini both did a good job. One of the highlights of the race for Telfer was running to the top of Razorback mountain and being greeted by friends and family with big signs and messages. One sign said "Get a haircut you bum". Telfer has never been a fellow with much in the hair department!

Neil Robinson recorded after the run that they should have carried more medicine and first aid supplies. He stated that Telfer was lucky that he did not suffer from more blisters. The medicine he had on board included Kao Magna, Yeast, Vitamin C, multi B anti Inflammatory - bufferin and digesics.

Food for the race included the typical race foods and a very high amount of carbohydrate. This included potato, rice and honey. His main passion was icecream. His food intake dropped during the race, but that is only natural for someone that is getting so exhausted. His main drink during the race was coke, but this was switched with water, tea and coffee.

Telfer's mood cycles changed during the race. He went through a couple of ups and downs, but generally was easy to handle. For a run of such a long distance he kept his injuries to a minimum. Bob Telfer did his family and friends proud. When he returned to his home after the race, the whole street turned out to greet him and there was a big banner in his garden to welcome him home.

Over the next two days, seven more runners were to finish the Race. They were Wal McCrorie, Bob Telfer, Keith Marshall, Tony Rafferty, Cliff Young, Bob MacElwaine and Don Choi.

Cliff Young had suffered from a stress fracture, but it was a good performance to finish in seventh place. Tony Rafferty put in another solid performance to finish two Runs in a row.

One of the sad stories to come out of the 84 Westfield was the story about 59 year old Bob McElwaine. He had been bankrupt twice. The most recent was in 83 when his hotel in Piermont suffered due to the introduction of the Random breath Test. He said "It's not nice to finish up at 59 and have nothing is it. I'm running for the money not the pleasure."

It was shortly after the start of the race, when it became obvious that McElwaine was not going to win. He only had two and a half months training prior to the race. He was accompanied on the race by two of his sons, Philip and Mark. Their sister, Joanne and Philip's wife Wendy were also on the crew. Philip had won a boxing gold medal at the Edmonton Commonwealth Games and had represented Australia in the 76 Olympics.

They ended up telling McElwaine lies about the amount of sleep he was having and would try and get him to eat. Consequently, he lost 9.5kg and had folds of skin hanging off his body.

His son, Philip almost died a year earlier. He had brought a Harley Davidson and joined the Bandidos bike group. He had crashed his bike and lay in a coma for three weeks. As a result, he was hospitalised for six months. The head of the Bandidos made sure that Philip got the best attention and care from Hospital staff.

Bob McElwaine did finish the Race. On the outskirts of Sydney he was given a full escort from the Bandidos. A few tears were certainly shed from people watching at the Finish. Cliff Young had been awarded a new car for the "Best Achievement Award", but gave it to Bob as soon as he finished.

After the race, Bob was admitted to hospital to recover. A few days later he was released and went for a drive in his new car. At the first intersection he had an accident and the car was a written off

### **Quotes from Different Runners:**

"The event really makes you appreciate life's simple things, like taking a shower. Right now I'd give the world just to clean my teeth."

"It's three days since I've shaved. Normally I never go that long. I suppose I could shave, but I just don't have the energy."

"What will I do when this is finished? I'm going to play with my kids, touch them, pick them up. Just seeing them will nearly make me weep with joy."

"The highs and lows are hard to believe. Like running through Yass at twilight with everybody clapping and cheering - and then realising that there's still three days to go!"

"When I finish this, I promise I'm never ever going to complain about anything again. I'll just be real pleasant to everybody about everything. Nothing in life can be as hard as this."

"I'm getting cravings. Yesterday I yearned for rice pudding; the day before I craved peaches and icecream. And I never eat either of them!"

"When this is all over I'm going to sit in a bath up to my neck ... and lie down on my bed."

"In running, in life I've done everything that calls for endurance. But nothing has been as tough as this. It's the hardest thing I've ever done."

"I loved it - but no, I'll never do it again."

### **1984 Westfield Results**

<b>PLACE</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>STATE/ COUNTRY</b>	<b>OFFICIAL TIME</b>	<b>HRS RAN</b>	<b>AVERAGE SPEED</b>
1	<i>Geoff Molloy</i>	Vic	6:04:02	148	5.91
2	<i>John Hughes</i>	NZ	6:06:00	150	5.83
3	<i>Wal McCrorie</i>	NSW	6:16:21	160	5.47
4	<i>Bob Telfer</i>	NSW	6:16:59	161	5.43
5	<i>Keith Marshall</i>	Vic	7:02:36	170	5.15
6	<i>Tony Rafferty</i>	Vic	7:07:09	175	5.00
7	<i>Cliff Young</i>	Vic	7:11:02	179	4.89
8	<i>Bob MacElwaine</i>	NSW	7:19:21	187	4.63
9	<i>Don Choi</i>	USA	8:05:28	193	4.53

The 1984 Westfield had been run and won by Geoff Molloy. The race was now a permanent fixture on the Australian and International Calendar. The Australian public were fascinated by the Ultra Runners who pounded the pavement between Melbourne and Sydney and pushed their minds and bodies to the Ultimate.

## Chapter Four

### *1985 - Birth of a Legend*

The third Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon commenced at Westfield Parramatta on Friday April 12<sup>th</sup> at 1030am. There was a distinguished field of 29 runners lined up for the start. This included three females, eight overseas runners and the two previous champions Geoff Molloy and Cliff Young.

The runners included:

**Sonny Bulleen** - 38 yr old Landscape gardener from NSW. He has run in the last two Westfield's and is yet to finish one! He should be getting more experienced by now!

**Siggy Bauer** - 43 yr old Gardener from New Zealand. He has an impeccable Ultra breeding. He didn't run last year because of a dispute with organisers. He is back in the race this year after obtaining last minute sponsorship with the help of Westfield. This figure is somewhere between \$5000 and \$10 000.

His sponsors are launching a new brand of Tasmanian Mineral Water and had poured \$ 75 000 into the Campaign. Jeannie Little, Jon Michael Howson and Joe Bugner joined Bauer at the Media conference. This put off other runners and managers, "Since this promotion was indeed extraordinary and certainly against the conditions laid down for all others"

Siggy Bauer had the services of a couple of soldiers for the duration of the event. Soldiers were supposed to be available for all overseas runners, but Bauer was the only one to get an allocation.

**Cliff Young** - 63 yr old ex farmer from Colac who won the event in 83 and stopped the nation. Has he had too many diversions in the last year to make him a threat?

**Geoff Molloy** - 42 yr old Gardener from Victoria. Won the event in 84. He is a genuine runner and is trying to win this year in front of his home town crowd!

**Daryl Brown** - 24 yr old Hotel Manager from Adelaide. Youngest in the Race and is not expected to threaten the placings.

**Eleanor Adams** - 37 yr old housewife from England. She is the Champion female Ultra Runner in the world. She holds the women's six day world record with 806 km in last year's Colac Race.

**Brian Bloomer** - 44 yr old Marine Steward from Victoria. Works on the Abel Tasman between Melbourne and Devonport. Has done his training on board the deck of his ship and goes for a run when he steps ashore in Tasmania!

**Dallas Earsman** - 57 yr old Motor sales Rep from Tamworth and is a complete unknown! Could he be another Cliff Young?

**Gerry Hart** - 46 yr old Oil industry Storeman from Victoria. Has run 56 marathons, three

100 miler races and three 24 hr races.

**Donna Hudson** - 37 yr old American Waitress. Holds the women's 100 mile record and will challenge Eleanor Adams to be first female across the line.

**John Hughes** - 52 yr old New Zealand Police Officer. He is the ex record holder of the route prior to 83. Slept too much last year which cost him the race!

**Yiannis Kouros** - 28 yr old Sports stadium Supervisor from Greece. He is the favourite and should leave the field in the first day. The battle will be for second place. He won the Colac Six day Race last year. He only has a crew of three for his attempt whilst Molloy and Young have a crew of nine!

Crew Manager, Takis Skoulis said little to the Press before the Race, but what he said was to become very prophetic in years to come " There are no secrets - he doesn't do yoga or anything. He just prepares by himself. He's in his room now checking his shoes, his t-Shirt. Yiannis also gives much attention to his mental preparation. When he concentrates , he likes to be on his own. And he is very particular - everything is done according to plan. They run so much over here for training. Yiannis wants quality not quantity."

**Wal McCrorie** - 54 yr old Insurance Clerk from New South Wales. This is his third Westfieldl.. He finished third last year and should be a force again this year!.

**Bob McElwaine** - 60 yr old Hotel Manager from New South Wales. He is another Westfield Veteran. He is the sentimental favourite due to the extreme courage that he showed last year.

**Ken Murray** - 48 yr old Cab driver from NSW. He finished third with 185km in a NSW 24 hr time trial.

**Ashley Parcell** - 29 yr old business Executive from Queensland . Ashley is the brother of Peter Parcell who holds the current Australian 24 hr record.

**Ross Parker** - 36 yr old Clerk from WA. He ran 532km last year and is sure to improve. Ex- champion footballer and cricket player with a great sporting pedigree.

**Frank Pearson** - 65 yr old Pensioner from NSW. He is older than Cliff Young and has ran 181km in a NSW 24 hr time trial.

**Neil Petersen** - 37 yr old Bricklayer from Queensland. He was in the lead for the first night last year.

**Peter Pfister** - 45 yr old Managing Director from Victoria. He has twenty marathons to his credit and has spent ten days on skiing Army manoeuvrers in Switzerland.

**John Radich** - 30 yr old Painter from America. He ran last year, but is no threat to the outcome of the race.

**Tony Rafferty** - 46 yr old Motivational Lecturer from Victoria. One of the great pioneers of the sport and will finish the Race comfortably.

**Joe Record** - 43 yr old painter from WA. Has had to quit within sight of the finish line on the last two occasions. Always a force to be reckoned with and has won the Classic Six Day event in France.



**Margaret Smith** - 49 yr old housewife from Melbourne. She holds four Aust Womens Ultra Records. Smith has only been running for the past ten years and has competed in twelve marathons. She could surprise Adams and Hudson for female honours.

When asked her motivation for entering the Westfield her reply was "I'm running in it because it's a challenge - I believe Australian women are among the most courageous in the world. My real aim is just to finish. I'm competing against myself, to find my extension. You're only as old as you feel you are. Man's greatest limitation is himself."

**Keith Swift** - 43 yr old Printer from NSW. He has won four shorter ultras !

**Dick Tout** - 36 yr old Sports Store owner from NZ. He holds the Australasian 24 hr Record with 237km.

**Eddie Westburgh** - 54 yr old driver from Tasmania. He ran 54 miles on his 54<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Ramon Zabalo** - 36 yr old policeman from France. He ran second to Kouros in last year's Colac race and is currently second to Kouros in World Ranking's. He will push Kouros to the limit. He doesn't speak English and the night before the race found the organisers busy looking for a Translator and a crew from the pool of volunteers behind the scenes. Not a nice way for a Champion Sportsman to be treated!

The makeup of the field was varied and came from around Australia and the Globe. The race had become international since its inception in 1983.

This year the journey is going via Canberra. This will add another 85km to the Course, which will take the distance up to a 960km. "As always the crowds will flock to the finish line with ghoulish glee to watch waking nightmares become the stuff dreams are made of", is how Journalist, Penny Crisp described it in an article.

The crowds will only be on the road to see the little Aussie battler, Cliff Young. He won the event in 83 and battled for seventh in 84. Cliff's record is safe due to the increase in distance.

One of the unfortunate sidelines of the Westfield was that some Journalists would do what they could to denigrate the race. One such journalist was Terry Vines who wrote an article entitled "Ultra Marathon an exercise in ultra nonsense".

Here are some quotes from his trivial piece of journalistic nonsense " and gave this event prestige it doesn't deserve...in fact it's an ultra nonsense...". Vines did finish the article in a positive fashion by saying "It is still an example of human endeavour"

Another of the journalists following the event was Michael Pirrie. He spoke to Cliff Young on the morning of the race. Cliff was mindful of the job in front of him and was preparing himself in a manner similar to a soldier about to go in to battle. Cliff left Michael with this quote "For me the race is about personal pride and courage. It's a last ditch stand to show them that I've still got what it takes. I feel I let the people down in the run last year and I just want to show the critics what I can do if I'm fit"

The Race started at Parramatta Shopping centre . It was pure showbiz hype. Radio DJ, Grant Goldman called out the countdown and Premier, Neville Wran fired the starters pistol. The runners were soon into the streets of Parramatta and heading towards Melbourne!

"All the runners were special people who made the Race what it was, but marathon performances are not limited to the runners in an event of such magnitude. Team managers support crews have to work beyond the call of duty to monitor their runners performance plus satisfy their every demand."

One such runner and team was Victorian, Brian Bloomer and his crew. There were some people in the Race that had large entourages and several show biz people in their crew(Siggy Bauer and Joe Bugner) but Bloomer had to treat the Race, as Europe on \$10 a day.

Bloomer was determined to get to Sydney with a crew and this determination was only met with the same determination once the Race started.

"A mate of mine from work was an ex-interstate truck driver and he could drive for a week at a time. At a pinch him and I were going to do it on our own. He could go six days without a sleep and I reckoned I could run for six days. So I said 'We'll go in one car on our own mate'. We'd have done it. We said if we have to we'll do it on our own."

Looking after Bloomer was Andy Salter. Salter was a friend of Bloomer's from when he started with the Veteran's five years ago. Salter was a former Professional Runner, trainer and masseur. He had 30yrs experience and cunning behind him.

One could portray Brian Bloomer as being the tough, tattooed Ex-Boxer , nicknamed "Punchy" as the hard nut of the race. He was more than that! He had little experience, but a lot of faith to compete with men and women who made running their livelihood. Before this Run he had done 13 Marathons and three Ultra Marathons. He wasn't concerned about his inexperience and saw it as a plus because his legs had not been abused as much as other runners.

His first Ultra was the Victorian Marathon Club 50 mile Track Run in 1984. "At 38 miles I fell in a hole because I'd had nothing to eat for about ten hours. I knew nothing about it whatsoever. The funny thing with the long distance runs is that it is very hard to find information. I couldn't find anything up to that stage because I didn't know anybody really. It took me nearly two hours to run the last twelve miles. Lucky I had such a big lead that I hung on for second."

Brian Bloomer wanted to run the Westfield in the past two years, but put it off for a couple of reasons. "This year I definitely planned on doing it, and all my training through the year had been geared towards it. With that in mind I went down to help at the Colac 1000 and to observe the other runners." It did not put him off and he was able to see exactly what was required to compete with the other runners!

Even so, Bloomer's preparation was not ideal. He lost several months of training towards the end of 84 and the three weeks before the race was completely lost. He had to concentrate on putting a crew together and finding money for the day to day expenses. "At the end of January I started training for it again."

Apart from the crew and money problems there was still no certainty of Bloomer getting a start in the 85 Race. It wasn't till his victory in the VMC 150km track run in March and the insistence of 84 winner Geoff Molloy that Bloomer got accepted. That is when the training went out of the window. He had to run around and organise crew and

sponsors. He was lucky enough that the Veterans at Springvale helped him with \$450, the people at East Devonport raised \$2000, the Publican at "The Laurel" hotel in Flemington kicked in \$200 and Laser Shoes helped him out.

Kouros led the field in the first few metres. He was never challenged for the rest of the race. The distance between himself and the other competitors widened by every step. "There was an initial feeling of doubt that this great Greek runner could And would maintain the fast early pace with which he began. I could remember only too well the fiasco of the supposedly great Indian Tirtha Kumar Phani who came to Australia last year with an unbelievable string of long distance achievements accredited to by the Indian Government. Phani fell by the wayside within less than 48 hours, and has ever since been irreverently if humorously referred to as "Phoney" by many of the ultramarathoning fraternity".

At the 70km mark on the first day, Yiannis Kouros had a 7km lead over second place, Siggy Bauer. Geoff Molloy was third and Ashley Parcell fourth. The crowds had only come to see one person though and it was Cliff Young, who was in fifth place.

Leading the women' race was Margaret Smith. She was 1km ahead of Eleanor Adams.

The only casualty by the end of the first day was Niel Petersen. The 37 year old had to withdraw at 4pm with suspected internal bleeding in his legs. He neglected to say that he had fallen from a 12 metre building a couple of days before the start of the race.

The next casualty looked like being Keith Swift from NSW. He has a sciatica problem which was improving after treatment.

Two people failed to start the race. They were George Perdon and Dick Tout. Tout was refused permission from the New Zealand Amateur Athletic Association and Perdon had a stress fracture.

From the start of the race, communication was a real problem. Mike Agostini described the problem in an article written after the event as "With communication essentially non-existent and recording of times, places and progress thus all but impossible with any degree of veracity, there was a measure of chaos as Kouros moved further and further ahead."

At the start of the second day, Yiannis Kouros had a 45km lead over his nearest rival. At the same time though his back up crew were fighting and arguing. Relatives from Sydney and Melbourne are on the crew and the traditional inter city rivalries are surfacing. Kouros was averaging 13kph which was five kph more an hour than last year's winner, Geoff Molloy.

The overall places at 8am:

Yiannis Kouros	(Greece)	215km.
Siggy Bauer	(New Zealand)	170.2km.
Brian Bloomer	(Victoria)	165.3km
Geoff Molloy	(Victoria)	159.4km.
Joe Record	(WA)	158.5km.

Eddie Westburgh	(Tas)	157.6km.
Ramon Zabalo	(France)	156.7km.
Ross Parker	(WA)	153.8km.
Margaret Smith	(Victoria)	152.5km.
Cliff Young	(Victoria)	151.1km.
Peter Pfister	(Victoria)	150.0km
Tony Rafferty	(Vic)	137km
John Radich	(USA)	137km
Eleanor Adams	(Eng)	135km
Wal McCrorie	(NSW)	134.15km
Ken Murray	(NSW)	132km
Daryl Brown	(SA)	127km
Donna Hudson	(USA)	121km
Howard Ross	(Vic)	120km
Keith Swift	(vic)	115.2km
Sonny Bulleen	(NSW)	109.21km

Kouros kept going for the first twenty four hours without any sleep and covered 260km. This was incredible when you consider that his own 24-hr track record was 284km covered in New York five months previously. "It was obvious that unless something went drastically wrong, and suddenly, this would be two races in one; the first , Kouros versus himself, seeing just what he could do on these roads which were something quite novel for him, most of his best running having been done on tracks away from traffic and other hazards; the second between the rest of the runners, who would soon discover that no matter what they may have felt about their own talents and capabilities, there is only really one outstanding ultramarathoner in the world at present".

Brian Bloomer was convinced prior to the run that he could give Kouros a run for his money if he got the required time to train on the mountains and the road. Bloomer also lost a lot of time due to shoe problems during the race. His Laser Shoes were good during the day, but during the night he was getting gravel in them and it was causing him to stop. As he said though "I had to stick with the sponsor"

Bloomer's crew chief, Andy Salter put down a lot of the problems on the road to inexperience "An inexperienced crew also cost us plenty. What we learnt on this trip will stand Brian in good stead for the next one. No way known will I stand back and see the same mistakes made again."

The plans that Bloomer had made for the race, only took Kouros into account. "I

believed I could run 30 hours non stop but I didn't know how it would effect me at the start of the race, whether I would fall in a hole or not. So I said to Andy that it would be better if we could run for five or six hours at a pretty fair pace then take an hours break. The first two days were insurance running. I expected Yiannis to run about 260km or so and we could run around 210 to 220km."

The first night saw things start to go wrong. One of the vehicles broke down. Bloomer and the crew were all cramped in the car trying to rest. Bloomer picked up a wog and by the next day it was the flu. He was running a temperature and it took a while for him to pick things up again.

Andy Salter also learnt a lot about psychology during the run. He found out that Bloomer responded to abuse. So for the whole journey, Salter and Bloomer abused hell out of each other. It worked though and Bloomer ran on guts and determination. Brian Bloomer was to be on the ultra scene for the next couple of years and definitely left his mark by the end of it.

It was two days into the race and Yiannis Kouros beat his existing 48 hr world record. He had covered 463 km. His lead was 90km over Siggy Bauer and Ramon Zabalo was 60km behind Bauer. The field was spread out over three hundred kilometres. The amount of Kouros's lead means that he could sleep for eight hours and still have a comfortable lead. He only had three hours sleep since the race begun and did not look any worse for wear.

Yiannis Kouros had a two hour break at Albury and was 70km ahead of Siggy Bauer. This meant that Kouros only had five hours break in the last seventy eight. His manager, Takis Skoulis said "I thank God for the rest. He is running much better now."

Brian Bloomer was now in third place, whilst Joe Record and Ramon Zabalo were fighting out forth place. If Kouros keeps up the same horrendous pace of 13kph he is expected to reach Melbourne on the 17<sup>th</sup> April .

Margaret Smith held a slender lead over Eleanor Adams in the women's race. This was expected to change when Smith had her next sleep.

One of the unfortunate sidelines of the 85 Westfield was the drama that was unfolding behind the scenes between Officials having their own personal battles. Mike Agostini resigned before the race, but continued on until the end. It was obvious that he had a personality conflict with other Officials and this effected the race.

A member of Donna Hudson's crew, who did not want to be named said it was an insult that international runners had to organise their own crews. "It's like bringing out a thoroughbred racehorse and not giving them any feed".

The list of complaints grew during the day. The crew looking after Kouros complained about the lack of computer printouts that were promised before the start of the race.

It was a day of drama in Canberra, when Siggy Bauer got lost for a couple of hours and took the wrong turn. Once the officials found him he had to go back to the right point. It didn't cost him the race, but it would not have been good for his morale.

Ramon Zabalo was without his interpreter for the day. She had gone missing which did not help communication between himself and crew. The list of problems grew. Eleanor

Adams had to wait 10 hours for a physio! Ken Murray who dropped out at Yass did not have a CB Radio in his Van.

Race Manager, Charlie Lynn was quick to defend the communications problem saying Soldiers were checking every runner on the hour.

The previous promoter, John Toleman summed it up when he said "The concept is right and it is a great race - if it's handled properly."

The 84 winner, Geoff Molloy withdrew from the race at Canberra after covering 240km. He was distraught at having to withdraw, but two hours later he decided that he wanted to help one of the other runners. The runner was Ramon Zabalo who was having language and crew problems.

Molloy was confident that he was going to do well in 85. Due to Kouros being in the field, the pressure was off him. He had tried hard for the previous nine months. His energy was gone by Canberra though. He was ordered to hospital, discharged himself and tried for another seven hours before saying enough was enough and having his first sleep in three days. The personal problems and the problems with Westfield before the race had finally taken their toll. Maybe Balmain boys don't cry, but real men with real hearts do.

The race was at the half way mark and the three placegetters from last year had withdrawn - Geoff Molloy, John Hughes and Wal McCrorie. Kouros still faces very tough competition though. Cliff Young was hanging onto sixth place, but looking tired. He still may find the form which got him first in 83. He was complaining of sore feet, but as his wife, Mary put it. "He's a big sook".

Meanwhile, Kouros seemed as fresh as when he left Parramatta. He had a two hour break yesterday to bring his total to nine hours sleep in five days. "He is on a high" said Takis Skolis.

Yiannis Kouros has vegemite and retsina as part of his diet. Kouros's diet also includes baklava, fruit flans, cheesecake and chicken.

When Kouros was at the 610km mark of the race, officials believed that there were 17 runners still in the field. It was difficult to monitor though as the field was spread out. The placing's at this stage were:

Y.Kouros	610km
S.Bauer	540km
B.Bloomer	465km
R.Zabalo	380km
J.Record	376km
C.Young	350km.

As you can see there was 260km difference between first and sixth position.

Yiannis Kouros was on schedule to finish the race in under five days. He was at

Benalla when he had a brief rest before continuing. Siggie Bauer was second and almost one hundred kilometres behind Kouros. Brian Bloomer was third, whilst Joe Record had a slight lead over Ramon Zabalo for fourth. Cliff Young was doing well in sixth.

The only person not to concede defeat to Kouros was Bauer. Bauer was quoted as saying "The race is not over until someone crosses the finish line. Until that happens, there is hope. I still think he is human. He is flesh and blood, not a machine, not a God". Runner over confidence maybe, but Kouros was very quickly marking himself as the Don Bradman of the Ultra world.

It was half way through the 85 race, when Margaret Smith was given the nickname "Granny Smith". She was on the road near Benalla where the local Constabulary informed her that she and her husband, Neville had just become Grandparents for the first time.

Their daughter, Andrea had just given birth to Kelli-Ann Marie in Bowen, Queensland a couple of hours earlier. Margaret and Neville were both rapt and Margaret could not wait to see her. Margaret had suffered a two day attack of dysentery but her husband was confident that she would finish. He said "She'll make it no question. It's her personal goal and she's confident of finishing."

Margaret had already established herself as the top Female Ultra Runner in Australia. She holds the women's record for 24hrs when she ran 177.6km and then a month later she came second in the Victorian Marathon Club's 150km event. Her husband, Neville summed up her reason for doing the race when he said ""Margaret's not after a hero's welcome, all she desires is personal satisfaction. Our ambition is to finish and finish with dignity."

Yiannis Kouros had a 120km lead when he got to Euroa. He was asked what his thoughts were when he was running and replied "I look at my life and what has passed since I was a young boy. Any problems in my life I work out when I'm on the road. And I write songs, I sing".

Yiannis listens to tapes of his favourite singers whilst he is running. He has made a few tapes of his own, which he listens to. Yiannis was feeling very good at this stage of the run and could hardly bring himself to sleep. "Now I've just got used to the running and I'm not tired. The weather's good and the road's straight. All the other days the hills were up and down and the weather was very hot or very cold."

Kouros admitted on the first couple of days of the run that he was running very seriously and did not enjoy anyone cheering or clapping him. He was aiming to get a good lead. He said that he was now enjoying the clapping and cheering from the spectators. He also admitted that when he was running he has a big appetite and eats in six days what he would usually eat in six months.

Joe Record had a very lucky escape on Monday night when his support vehicle ran off the road into a ditch. No one was injured in the accident, but Record could have done without the distraction or wasted time. Eleanor Adams was in front of Margaret Smith but appeared to be very distressed.

When Kouros got to the 810km stage of the 960km Race, he had a 100km lead over Siggie Bauer. He was looking a certainty to beat Cliff Young's record over a shorter course in 83. Brian Bloomer was third, but 65km behind Bauer. Bauer's said "We would be silly to say we're going to win, but we haven't given up hope."

The Bauer Camp had a scare earlier in the day when one of his crew suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning. An exhaust leak in Bauer's support vehicle caused the problem. After an extensive medical, Bauer was cleared to keep running.

The race progressed and Yiannis Kouros was only 80km from Melbourne. He had a commendable lead and he and his crew were starting to enjoy themselves. A roadside feast was planned for the last morning of spaghetti bolognese, fried rice and champagne. It is not known if Kouros indulged in the champagne part of the celebrations.

The ease and magnitude of his performance has stunned everyone. Takis Skoulis said "This man is a God. Carl Lewis, Herb Elliott, they too are gods. When Yiannis reaches Melbourne, then finally the world will know that this man too is a king, a superstar."

Kouros has only gone through one rough patch in the race, which was near Yass. He had gone through two days of hot weather and was confronted with rain and showers. Officials are expecting thousands of Greeks to be lining the streets when Kouros hits Melbourne. Special Police and Guards have been put in place to help escort him through the city. The traditional Greek welcome is expected when he reaches Doncaster.

Kouros was a God-send for the 85 event. Because of the incredible race by Kouros, the event was front page and prime time news when he reached the outskirts of Melbourne.

Meanwhile, Kouros had ran through the night and when dawn broke he was 35km out of Melbourne. He was in a red tracksuit, but when the weather warmed he changed into a red and white t-shirt with red shorts. He ran through the northern suburbs holding a red carnation in one hand and a big bunch of flowers in the other hand. He said that he was very proud to be Greek and Australian.

When Kouros got to Melbourne he was a day and 150 kilometres in front of Siggy Bauer. He actually began to walk for a while. His reasoning was that he wanted to be sure of finishing. Mike Agostini was cynical about this and said "I later realised that he was also walking because while he wanted to break Young's record and possibly win the Outstanding Achievement award of a Mitsubishi car, he was also money minded enough to know that if he finished before 1030am, as it seemed he might easily do, he probably wouldn't earn the leader's prize for Day five of \$ 2 500. Little did I realise that it would eventually mean actually slowing someone down - but then how could anyone be expected to anticipate such a performance?"

Kouros finally stopped for a rest on the outskirts of Melbourne. He had a shower, shave and a meal before heading into Coburg. Melbourne has the largest Greek population of anywhere outside Greece and it seems that they had congregated to Coburg on the day that Kouros ran through.

It was complete bedlam when he reached Sydney Road. The road was three deep with school kids, shop workers and anyone else who wanted to see the Greek marvel. He was also escorted by a bodyguard to make sure that no one got over excited.

At the intersection of Moreland Road the crowd was at its thickest. Greek flags formed an arch of honour and the crowd showered him with flowers. Kouros admitted later that this is what he had been waiting for.

Whilst Kouros was running through the streets of Melbourne towards the finishing line, Cliff Young was lying in Hospital in Holbrook, NSW. He had been withdrawn after



being diagnosed with pleurisy and pneumonia.

Cliff announced that he was retiring and going to pay more attention to his wife, Mary. Mary had other ideas and said that she would train and run in the Westfield herself. Cliff also said that he would like to move from Colac to a warmer climate. He was happy to be handing his crown to Kouros and said that he was incredible.

Cliff was in hospital for a week. When he was discharged from hospital a taxi rolled up and gave Cliff a ride back to Colac. This was curtesy of Westfield.

It was ironical that on the last day, Kouros was wearing a T-shirt with the Sri-Chinmoy motto "You can easily challenge the pride of frightening distance". He was doing exactly that!

Takis Skoulis once again summed it up when he said "This is his strong point, he's mentally fit." It is believed that Kouros will stay in Melbourne for a week before heading back to Tripolis where his wife Theresa is expecting their first baby in two months.

There were fears that a member of the Turkish population would try and harm Kouros towards the end of his run. The rational was that Turkey and Greece were involved in hostilities over Cyprus and killing a new God in Greek folklore would have a devastating effect on the Greek nation. Fortunately, these fears were unfounded and no harm came to Yiannis Kouros!

At the Westfield Doncaster Shopping centre, even more Greeks had gathered to welcome their new hero.

Kouros crossed the Finish line five days, five hours, seven minutes and six seconds. It was ten hours better than Cliff Young's record in 83, but Kouros had run a further 80km than his predecessors in the previous two races. In distance terms, Kouros was 185km better than Cliff Young. It was at 3.34pm that Yiannis Kouros finally learned the true meaning of a hero's welcome.

When Yiannis Kouros crossed the finish line sixty five year old Frank Pearson was bringing up the rear. He was at the half way mark and was yet to reach the border. This did not worry Pearson though.

He was interviewed on the road and said "I don't suppose there will be to many people around to welcome me by the time I finish. I've come this far and I'm going to finish even if I have to walk the rest of the way. There's an eight day limit on the race and I can't see myself finishing in eight days. I'm sore in the feet and got blisters on them. If it wasn't for the damm blisters I'd still be running now. But I'm going to keep going and I'm going to make it. I'm a pensioner you know".

"He runs like a man possessed. Trancelike, yet very relaxed, his body exudes strength while his features suggest calmness and confidence". That is how Mike Agostini described Yiannis Kouros after he had blitzed the field.

Kouros had run his first marathon in a little over three hours, he just missed bettering his own 24hr track record, he beat his 48 hr record and he just kept getting further and further in front of the field. At the start of the he was averaging 14kph, sometimes dropped to 8kph and ended up averaging 10kph for the race.

He suffered from one blister and had seven hours sleep. Some runners got more

sleep each night. Probably why they were still out there running! He got upset during the race, when his manager tried to take him back to the Van. A cardinal sin in Ultra running. An Ultra runner never goes further than what he has to.

The Chiropractor in Kouros's team was amazed with his condition at the end and said "I find it incredible. He's in excellent condition. He hasn't lost much weight and it's only body fat. There's no wastage in his muscles."

One photographer was heard say towards the end of Kouros's epic run that "It's worse than the Queen". Another comment heard at the side of the road was "How do you say good luck in Greek?" said one Aussie to his neighbour. The Sikh shook his head sadly.

The media were there in there hundreds as well. Report's were even being video taped to be sent to Japan. The Greek Consul-General was trying to rearrange his schedule to get to the Finish Line, which was ironic when they did not even recognise the fact that he was racing. The Greek Airline did not even help him with Airfare for the race.

Mike Agostini remembers the finish when he said "As Kouros ran into the Shopping centre, pandemonium reigned. The media fought to get photos of him, while the people all tried to touch the great Greek hero. The sponsors had organised a vintage automobile in which Kouros was to drive in style accompanied by the Joint Managing Director, the General Manager and myself as Race Director".

"But no one could have anticipated the powerful pushing enthusiasm of a mob of hero worshipping Greeks. Indeed , the few moments trying to drive no more than 50 or 60 metres to the Shopping centre were quite frightening at times....It seemed almost a biblical homecoming, part carnival, part pseudo-religious, gaiety and applause all around - yet a constant awareness of the potentially dangerous power of people in mob movement".

The finishing ceremonies seemed to take forever. Kouros led the crowd in a rendition of the Greek National Anthem. He was then led from the stage and indulged in a warm bath. He then had orange juice and beer, which helped him to perform the obligatory Urine test. This was passed with flying colours.

When Bauer ran through Coburg, his Manager, Shane Johnson had these thoughts on the 85 race. "We knew we'd have to go out hard to catch Yiannis. But Siggy is experienced in every aspect of professional running. He knows the game inside out. There are two ways to look at it. He beat us by 120km, but the next runner is seventy km back. He's second for the time being, but Yiannis can be beaten. He's only human and there is a way to beat him. It's just a matter of finding it!

Siggy Bauer ended up second in the 85 Run. He was more than a day slower than Kouros but had still beaten Cliff's run of 83. It was a slight anti climax when he finished and people wandered what would have happened if there had not of been a Kouros in the Race. He was met by a crowd of 2500 and received \$ 5 000 for his efforts. He was one of the pioneers of the sport and helped set up the International Association of Ultra Runners.

Siggy Bauer was interviewed afterwards and said. "I'm used to Kouros being ahead of me. But I'm careful not to copy Yiannis. I have to run it my way. Kouros at present is the world's best runner - on paper. But even the best runner can be beaten. I'll learn from my mistakes on this run. I've come to terms with things I can't change, but there are still things I can change."

Brian Bloomer was third and first Australian home. He was a steward on the Empress of Australia which regularly commutes between Melbourne and Devonport. He was the only Runner that would regularly train in two states every second day of the week. He did the race on such a shoestring budget that he had to acknowledge his sponsors, The Seaman's Union in red text on his T-shirt. He won the Outstanding Achievement Award which was a new \$12 000 Mitsubishi car.

Towards the end, it was Bloomer's Manager, Andy Salter's experience that made the difference between third and fourth. He was supposed to report Bloomer's position to officials, but this could be heard by the other runners. By not doing so, Zabalo did not know the exact location of Bloomer. Another trick of Salter's was to trick Bloomer into thinking he had three hours sleep instead of two. For the record, Bloomer beat Zabalo by one hour and twenty six minutes.

Ramon Zabalo finished fourth, ended up having a French Baroness to act as his interpreter. She was holidaying in Australia and heard his last minute plea for assistance over the radio.

It wasn't long after the race when Kouros was to learn about his new life as a Superstar. He had a spa and a sauna a few hours after the race and was expecting to settle down for a relaxing night at his Uncle's place when he was dragged out by celebrating Greeks to a restaurant in Lonsdale St. Kouros is an obliging person and has not learnt how to say no.

The Australian Taxation Office were quick to get their hands onto Kouros as well. He had not crossed the Finish when a letter was delivered to the Race Director stating how much tax had to be deducted from his winners cheque. Mike Agostini refused to say how much had to be deducted, but Mina Apost( cousin of Kouros) believes that it was close to 47 percent. "The cheque was taken away from him after he was given it at the presentation ceremony. I think the taxation department is having a field day."

According to Takis Skoulis, nothing will change much for Kouros in Greece. He is earning \$300 a month in his present job as a Sports Stadium Supervisor. "Nothing will change for him, every day he will work. He may ask the Greek Athletics ministry for a better job. I don't know whether he will get one. What he does is not an Olympic event" said Skoulis.

Kouros was also contemplating whether to immigrate once his first child was born. On the short list is California or Australia. He is apparently impressed with the lifestyle and friendliness of both areas!

American runner, Donna Hudson was the big improver. She started off very slowly, but had moved up from eleventh to ninth. Her main two rivals, Eleanor Adams and Margaret Smith were up ahead of her, but Hudson was only 40km behind them. Adams had a 9km lead over Margaret Smith.

Mike Agostini had resigned as Race Director before the Race began and returned to Sydney before all the finishers had ambled across the finishing Line. It appears as though he had a personality conflict with one of the other organisers and a conflict with Westfield as well.

Agostini should have realised that Races of this nature do take time to evolve, or Westfield should have realised that the race needed a long term plan to have any hope of

survival. Agostini in the conclusion of his article was quite scathing in the long term viability of the Race and the sponsoring by Westfield but he did end up the article quite well "Thank you, Yiannis Kouros, for showing us ordinary people what one extraordinary person can do. It leaves us no excuses for not trying."

Eleanor Adams put the women's race beyond doubt. She had a 40km lead over Margaret Smith. Tony Rafferty was wedged between the two women, but Donna Hudson was catching up and was only 14km behind Smith. At the rear of the field were Ross Parker, Daryl Brown and Frank Pearson who only have eight days to finish.

Eleanor Adams copped a winging pom tag at the start of the race for complaining about different aspects. This was unfair, especially after she did have to wait ten hours for a physio. Her only complaint now was the traffic.

Eleanor Adams had a great duel with Margaret Smith. Adams looks like snaring the \$5000 first prize for the first woman across the line and a extra \$500 for coming in at seventh place.

Fifth place went to Joe Record. Tony Rafferty was expected to finish ahead of the women and Ross Parker was bringing up the WA flag behind the women. Daryl Brown was bringing up the rear, after Frank Pearson withdrew at Wodonga.

Eleanor Adams was the first woman home, when she crossed the line at 10.58am. She had been on the move for eight days and twenty seven minutes. Eleanor said "This has been the longest and toughest event I've been in yet." She has not got long to rest though as she is running in a marathon in Strasborg in two weeks time followed by a 3200km race around Britain.

## WESTFIELD RUN 85

**Date:** 12 -27 April 1985

**Official Distance:** 960km

**Number of starters:** 27

**Number of finishers:** 11

**Percentage of finishers:** 40.7%

<b>Place</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>State/ Country</b>	<b>Official time</b>	<b>Hrs ran</b>	<b>Average Speed</b>
<b>1</b>	Yiannis Kouros	Greece	5:05:07	125	7.68km
<b>2</b>	Siggy Bauer	New Zealand	6:05:46	149	6.44km
<b>3</b>	Brian Bloomer	vic	6:17:20	161	5.96km
<b>4</b>	Ramon Zabalo	France	6:19:39	163	5.89km
<b>5</b>	Joe Record	WA	6:23:58	168	5.71km
<b>6</b>	Tony Rafferty	Vic	7:16:02	184	5.22km
<b>7</b>	Eleanor Adams	UK	8:00:30	192	5.0km
<b>8</b>	Donna Hudson	USA	8:11:57	203	4.73km
<b>9</b>	Margaret Smith	Vic	8:16:28	208	4.62km
<b>10</b>	Ross Parker	WA	8:22:04	214	4.49km
<b>11</b>	Daryl Brown	SA	9:09:39	225	4.27km

The Greek Legend was definitely born before the 85 Westfield , but the flame was definitely ignited during the five and a bit days that he was on the road. He was a God send and it was only a small slice of what was to come. Some people call him a freak, some people compare him to Bradman, he is definitely blessed with a talent that none of us will ever come close to matching.

## Chapter Five

### *1986 - The Yugoslav's Pub Crawl*

The 1986 Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon saw the forth running of the now, Annual event. It was firmly placed on the International Calender and it had earned the reputation as "The World's Greatest Race."

There was prizemoney of \$60 000 for the event. It was scheduled to start at 1030am from Westfield Parramatta and finish at Westfield Doncaster approximately eight days later when the last runner crosses the line.

Due to the extent of Yiannis Kouros's win in the 85 Westfield there has been a major change to this year's race. Runners that do not make Canberra within 52 hours are to be placed in a stage race for the rest of the Race. There are 32 runners lined up for the race. Nine are from overseas and the rest are from Australia. Four women are amongst the runners.

A Form guide to the Race as prepared by Journalist Peter Stone:

**Eleanor Adams:** 38 year old housewife from the UK who holds 32 world records ranging from 30 miles to the Six Day Races. She finished seventh last year and was first woman across the line. Adams is hot favorite to be first woman across the line again and pick up the \$10 000 first prize.

**Cynthia Cameron:** 43 year old housewife from Victoria who has run 19 marathons since 1980. She stepped up to Ultras last year and finished fifth in a 100km Track Race at Coburg. Could challenge Adams early in the race!

**Donna Hudson:** 38 yr old waitress from New York. She finished the Westfield 11 hours behind Adams last year and the same fate is likely again this year!

**Christine Barrett:** 37 year old housewife from the United Kingdom who smashed Adam's world record at her first six day race in May 84. Has since lost her record to Adams again. This is her first race outside the UK and this could be the telling factor.

**Bertil Jarlacker:** 50 year old wood artist from Sweden who is regarded as a running pioneer in Northern Europe. He began running in 1970 after a cycling accident and in 1982 he ran 3529 kms in 50 days, one hour and 48 minutes. Several of his feats are listed in the Guinness Book of Records. He has the endurance, but will he have the pace.

**Yiannis Kouros:** 29 year old Sports Centre Supervisor from Greece. Won last year by the proverbial country mile. Substantially beat the field at Colac in 84. His finest moment came September last year when he ran 178 miles in 24 hours during Hurricane Gloria in New York. Will anyone beat him?

**Per Lind:** 47 year old School Principal from Norway. He has trained up to 200km a week in temperatures 25 below zero and has a 24 hour distance of 203.6km. If the weather gets lousy, he will come into his element.

**Patrick Macke:** 30 year old Professional Artist from the UK. He now resides in Austria and is one runner that may challenge Kouros. He won the 245km Greek Spartathlon from Athens to Sparta last year.

**Dusan Mravlje:** 33 year old engineer from Yugoslavia. He does not mind a drop of the amber liquid, which is in the interest of carbohydrate loading. Expected to finish in the Top five.

**Ramon Zabalo:** 38 year old Policeman from France. He loves a bottle of red/white wine and is renowned to have one for breakfast. Won the 86 Colac and is expected to finish second or third this year.

**Brian Bloomer:** 45 year old Seaman from Victoria who finished third in last year's race. His work makes training difficult and quite often has to get his miles up on the Empress of Tasmania. He should be one of the leading Aussie again this year.

**Bill Clingan:** 42 year old Sales Controller from NSW who once smoked 40 cigarettes a day. He is now one of Australia's finest long distance runners. He ran his first marathon in 1979 in a time of 2:35 and his best marathon time is now 2:29. Due to his impressive Marathon form he could be a real dark horse.

**Geoff Kirkman:** 35 year old Dentist from South Australia. He applied last year whilst the 85 run was still on. Has placed second in the Adelaide Sri Chimnoy 24hr in 84 and 85. He is now running 350km a week.

Geoff Kirkman started running when he was thirty. He was challenged by a fellow Dentist, Wayne Lowe to run the "City to Bay" Fun Run in Adelaide. The "City To Bay" is a 12km Fun run from Adelaide to Glenelg held every year as a mass participation event. The two of them trained for six weeks and staggered to the line in very average times. They were so elated afterwards, that the afternoon was spent playing tennis. The two of them realised the next day how unfit they were!

After that, Wayne kept throwing up new challenges to Geoff and they kept on doing more Fun Runs. Eventually this led to the progression of "Doing a Marathon". It was at this time that Wayne retired and left his friend Geoff to continue with the challenges. Geoff set himself eighteen months to do the 1983 Gawler to Adelaide Marathon. He joined the local running club, read all the material and thoroughly enjoyed himself. He ran the marathon and did it in a very good time of 2hr and 35 minutes. Not bad for a first up marathon!

After that marathon, Geoff took to training a little too seriously and two things happened. He lost the joy of running and picked up injuries. As a result he stopped training and was back to occasional jogs only.

It was then, that his old friend, Wayne Lowe appeared once again and suggested that Geoff trained for a Ultra! Geoff did not even realise that they existed. He set himself to run in the Sri Chinmoy 24hr in Nov 84. He only had six months to prepare. The race came and he achieved 195km. Geoff described it as an unpleasant experience and he would have achieved more, with more time to train.

He then trained even harder for the 85 24 hr race and as a result the experience was a lot more enjoyable. That race was used to screen applicants for the 86 Westfield. Consequently Geoff qualified and there was no looking back !

The 86 Westfield was originally scheduled to run from Melbourne to Sydney. This was changed at the last minute. Geoff's niece had made a T-shirt for him with the message, "Sydney or bust". This was altered to "Melbourne or bust". Geoff wore it as often as possible. His two daughters also made a banner saying "Go Dad go". As Geoff said it helped when the going got tough.

Prior to the race, he was running over 300kms a week. He did a trial multi day two months before as he had only run long distances on the track. He had to go further and on different terrain's. Kirkman also had to try different diets and different rest/sleep patterns. It was good training for his crew.

The race approached and Geoff sought advise from dietitians, physios and podiatrists. They also had a lot of team meetings to work out how the back up crews would work. Geoff realised that for the runner to go well, the crew had to function as a solid unit as well.

**Alistair McManus:** 35 year old Businessman from Vic. He is a Yorkshireman who emigrated in 1974. He started running in 74 after a trip to Hong Kong. Came back to Aust last year and won the first 100 mile event in Perth in a time of 16 hours, 43 minutes and 30 seconds. Could be a top five chance!

**Keith Marshall:** 60 year old Cleaner from Victoria. He has pushed a wheelbarrow for twenty four hours. He is quite a character and enjoys himself along with his crew.

**Ross Parker:** 37 year old Clerk from West Australia. This is his third Westfield run. He finished tenth last year in eight days, twenty two hours and five minutes. He is a former Aussie rules player and competent cricketer. Definitely an all round athlete!

**Frank Pearson:** 66 year old pensioner from NSW and the oldest runner in the field. Has run 15 Marathons and seven ultra's. He started in last year's race and completed 660km in six days, before being forced out with injury.

**Tony Rafferty:** Tony is a 48 year old Motivation Lecturer from Victoria. Irish by origin, which doesn't matter in this sport. He has finished in the last three Westfield's. A top three finish would be great, but probably out of his reach.

**Joe Record:** 44 year old painter from WA who has competed in the last three Westfield's and finished last year. On the previous two occasions he has had to withdraw one hundred km's from the finish. His Westfield form does not reflect his true ability. Has held many records over the years.

**Dave Taylor:** 34 year old Labourer from NSW. Did well in the Box Hill 24 hr earlier this year. This earned him a start in the Westfield.

**Eddie Westburgh:** 55 year old Army Driver from Tasmania. He has an active Army career and runs between 300 to 400km a week. He achieves this by a half marathon before breakfast and a full marathon every evening.

**Graham Wilkinson:** 40 year old Coal Miner from NSW. He finished third in the Sydney to Bathurst this year. Finshes his shift in the mines at 0230 every day and is up at 0900 hrs to start training.

**Cliff Young:** 64 year old retired potato farmer from Colac. Won the event in 83 and stopped the nation He endeared himself to Australian folklore for life and is back for



another attempt.

Christine Barrett was given a day's notice to race in the Westfield. She was invited to join after American, Marcy Schwain withdrew for fear of Terrorist attacks. The irony is that when Christine left London there was an IRA bomb blast in the middle of the city!

She has only been running for four years. "I broke my leg and I was told running would help build up strength in it" she said.

Eleanor Adams, who was first woman home last year said that there were so many unknown factors in the race that it was impossible to make predictions. "There's no way you can confidently say you'll even finish" said Adams.

She explained how she got into Ultra marathon running when she said "I entered a 12-hour race at my local club one day and broke three records I didn't even know existed and ever since then have been keen on the Ultra Marathon events. Ultra marathon running is still a fairly new sport, but growing in popularity all the time. But there is no money in it at all. It costs me to compete."

Yiannis Kouros was asked if he would ever consider training in Gumboots like Cliff Young. His answer was "No never. Not even in training." His reply was more humble than emphatic though. The journalist who interviewed him was Penny Crisp. She was quite taken by the inner peace that surrounded Kouros like an aura. She said "There's very little of the win-at-all-costs competitor. Just a gentle, diminutive sports stadium supervisor from Tripolis" He now holds 48 Ultra-marathon records from 100 miles to six days!

There will be slight changes to the Race this year. The runners will have 52 hours to get to Canberra. Those that don't make it will compete in a stage race for the rest of the journey. This change has been prompted due to Kouros's domination last year and the eagerness of officials to keep the runners closer together.

Kouros spoke little English twelve months ago. His crew were fighting whilst he was running and he had no idea that Siggy Bauer was more than a day behind him towards the end of the Race. He was asked why he returned and said "Money is not the criteria. I do it to prove to the world that I can do things. It also helps me to remember how close to the earth I am. Running touches the earth in a practical sense."

He also revealed that he had two goals in life. They were to become an Australian citizen and start a physical education course. The second goal is to show Australia his other talents of singing and writing poetry. Definitely an accomplished all round artist!

The race year will be run over 1005km and there is \$60 000 in prizemoney. The race was thrown open when Kouros withdrew with a fractured toe. He was on crutches as Officials explained that the second toe on his right foot fractured during the Anzac Day Marathon in Sydney.

He thinks that the injury was caused when he put a raised sole in his shoe to overcome knee pain. He believed that the higher angle of his foot had put more pressure on his toe, contributing towards the fracture. Yiannis was disappointed when he said "I have been preparing for this event for a year. It was going to be the most significant race of my career."

Fellow Greek runner, Takis Skoulis is Kouros's replacement. New favourites are Joe Record, Brian Bloomer, Ramon Zabalo, Dusan Mravlje, Per Lind and Patrick Macke.

Patrick Macke is the youngest runner at 30 and Frank Pearson is the oldest at 64. Late inclusions include Dan Brannen from the USA and Gary Retgien from New Zealand.

Cliff Young is back for another crack at the race. He was asked where the pain will begin and he said at about the 200km point. 'His skin will blister and tear away leaving raw flesh, his neck and lower back will burn, his knees and ankles will be crucified each time his feet hit the ground. And his mind will be screaming at him to stop'

His mind will shriek "Give up Cliffy. Think how easy it will be to stop, to rest your feet, your muscles, your tendons, your bones. Give up and put this madness behind you." Cliffy will tell his mind to shut up and start thinking about something else.

Cliff summed it up when he said "Anyway my heart's pretty good, I've had it tested. I've got a good heart, a good heart like Phar Lap." Every runner has tremendous heart but will they have the experience to overcome the pain barrier when it occurs?

Graham Wilkinson is yet to find the pain barrier. The most he has ever ran is 200km. "So Ill be breaking new ground. I believe fatigue will be the main problem. I didn't sleep much the night before the race, what with the excitement and seeing the race in front of me. But if I finish I'll be happy. I'll have achieved something few other people have done."

One of the most qualified runners to describe the pain barrier is Tony Rafferty. He has done the Sydney to Melbourne route eleven times, has run across Australia, Death Valley and the Simpson Desert.

"The pain is there after the first ten or so hours and stays right through. You get to the stage where your normal stride shortens and you can't do anything about it. We know how to tolerate the pain but the mind is the problem. It says you must have a rest. And when that happens you've got to push that little bit further." said Rafferty, trying to describe what he goes through when running on the open road.

Patrick Macke described it when he said "You can't climb Everest without some discomfort."

Eleanor Adams described her pain barrier when she said "All the time you say to yourself, why am I doing this? Around four in the morning, just before dawn is the worst time. The body is at its lowest level. And you know the pain is not going away for the rest of the race."

The runners made these comments to a Journalist just before the race. They got there briefings from the race doctor and an official. They then meandered to the starting line and they were off and running.

A team of Medical researchers are going to monitor the runners to produce the first comprehensive stress test in Australia. They are being led by Royal Perth haematologist, Dr Richard Pestell. He wants to "find out what this thing called stress really is"

Dr Pestell's team will conduct four tests on the runners before and after the event. They will look into how the kidneys cope with stress, heart functions during the run, the adrenal gland and four hormones, believed to affect stress, produced by the pituitary gland. Dr Pestell also said that they will be comparing results between the different age groups in the race.

Dave Taylor set himself a gruelling schedule for this year's race. He has been running 400km a week which includes training three times a day and running backwards up Mt Ousley. He even lifts 9lb bricks on his legs whilst he is watching TV.

Taylor has been preparing for the past two years and his preparation had taken over his life in the past six months. Distance running is nothing new to Taylor. At 19 he won the Sydney to Newcastle race. Shortly afterwards he gave up running to concentrate on cricket and football. Recently he won the 24 hour race at the Fairfield Games and finished 10<sup>th</sup> with 183km in the Westfield qualifying run. He wants to become the best long distance runner in the world and said "I'm in this marathon to win - and if I don't I hope my idol Cliff Young does."

Joe Record has put himself to a gruelling test to be fit for this year's race. He ran more than 40km 25 times in one month. In 83 and 84 he was forced out of the race within 100km of the finish. He warned "This is the first time since 1983 that I haven't carried some type of injury."

Last year's second placegetter, Siggy Bauer cannot settle his differences with race management and is running in the Sri Chinmoy 1000 mile race in New York. Westfield requires each runner to sign a contract in which he promises to grant Westfield first rights to sponsor him for one year, should he win. Each runner is also required to wear official race gear with Westfield's name featured prominently. Bauer does not like the terms and decides to run in America. Other athletes support him in principle, but they sign and run anyway.

Donna Hudson collected \$1500 for being second female in last year's Westfield. She said "It's not a sport you can earn a living from. When you consider the pain and effort of running several marathons a day for several days, the baseballers, tenpin bowlers, golfers and tennis players get it easy."

The women's first prize for 1986 is \$10 000 and second place will receive \$5000. This is the richest prizemoney for Ultra-distance women in the world.

Hudson talked about the pain involved in running this race when she said "Crisis points in a long race like this come often. I felt so bad last year that I swore that if I ever did it again I hoped someone would shoot me. I'm much more scared this time because I know how difficult it is and how much it hurts."

Donna Hudson was in a bad way by the end of the race that she walked the last one hundred kilometres and cried for the last fifteen of them. She had got that far and she wasn't going to give it away so close to the finish! Hudson was hoping that she would have a chiropractor in her crew, as she didn't last year and really suffered for it.

Hudson wants to reduce her sleep to two or three hours per night. This is to try and catch her rival, Eleanor Adams. Hudson has been running for eight years and has not suffered any lasting injuries. She passed comment on the end of the 85 race when she said "By the end of the race I will have lost about 5kg, my legs will be blown up and I'll spend the following day resting in bed. It takes a couple of weeks to fully recover."

Donna Hudson originally took up running to keep her weight down. At the start she struggled to run 10km, but within a year she ran her first marathon.

Not all of the publicity before the start of the race was good publicity. Sydney

Columnist, Mark Wallace had a column in The Daily Telgraph titled "My Opinion". His comments against Cliff Young and Westfield were unnecessary. Here are some excerpts from that article of high Journalistic ethics!

"a pathetic old character will be plodding along the road in a vain attempt to relive past glories"

"the man who has had more comebacks than Melba, is at it again."

"Not even Westfield thought it could get any promotional value out of such a silly old man."

"he hasn't been able to sneeze without Westfield's permission ever since his historic victory."

"The man got married on TV in a Westfield Shopping centre."

"there is nothing more pathetic than a champion who doesn't know when to leave well enough alone".

Another example of journalistic licence was an unknown writer who wrote an article titled "Race for insomniacs - not 'the greatest'". It suggested that the winner of the event wasn't the one who was the fastest, but the one who slept the less. This may be true, but that's part of being a multi-day Endurance runner.

The ACT TAB ran a Trifecta on the 86 Westfield. It only cost fifty cents a bet and worked like a normal horse trifecta. It is not known what the winning dividend paid!.

"The Canberra Times" also ran a competition in conjunction with the Westfield Belconnen Mall. The first prize was a \$1,000 open shopping voucher at Westfield. The question was to predict where Cliff would be in the race when he crossed the Canberra checkpoint.

The race got under way with some runners making a terrific pace. At the marathon stage, Dusan Mravlje ran three hours and fourteen minutes, Macke and Kirkman were a minute behind. Race organiser, Charlie Lynn believed that Kirkman, Parker and Skoulis had started the run too fast. He did not expect that they would make it to Melbourne.

At the 70km mark, Patrick Macke was in the lead by 1.2km ahead of Dusan Mravlje and Geoff Kirkman in third. Kirkman's crew got caught in the traffic chaos and he had to borrow drinks from other runners. His plan for the first day was to run at 11-12 kph, have an hour break at nightfall and then another hours break at dawn. His dawn break was taken at Collector where he had a bath

Cliff Young started well and was eleventh with a marathon time of three hours and thirty five minutes. Charlie Lynn believed that Brian Bloomer will be the one to beat. He also believed that Cliff Young would take advantage, if the top runners faltered.

Experienced American Ultra Marathoner, Dan Brannen was a new face in the lineup. He published an article in "UltraRunning" which portrayed the spirit of the race . I have reproduced parts of his article in this book .

*The Westfield Run, the annual road race between Sydney and Melbourne in Australia, is one race which can legitimately claim to be unique. The only event in the world which is anything like it is the bicycle Race Across America. The two races have about the same*

duration ( approximately one week), and they are both round-the-clock endurance events on the open road. But whereas the cycling event makes its big media splash after the fact on ABC's "Wide World of Sport," the Westfield run holds its hoopla right on the road, in the present tense. In effect, the runners carry the riveted attention of an entire country, via TV and radio news crews, down the highway with them, right along with their vehicles, support crews and pain. The result is a virtually uncontrollable river of outsize emotion flowing between the nation's two largest cities.

It all started when 61 year old Cliff Young won the first annual event and captured the hearts of his countrymen. It is no exaggeration to say that today Young is a national hero. His nickname, "Cliffie", is a household word and he is one of the hottest promotional properties down under.

When Yiannis Kouros toed the line for last year's event, few people were aware that the race's terminal city, Melbourne, boasts the largest Greek population of any city in the world outside Greece. They soon found out. For the last twenty miles of Kouros' epic run, these passionately nationalistic people literally lost control of themselves. 30,000 of them flooding the streets and, in effect, shutting down the city to focus all its attention on their hero.

If Kouros' somewhat controversial status as a living legend, as a man of both mystical and mythical athletic prowess, needed any bolstering within the international ultrarunning community, that performance more than provided it. Although precise daily splits were impossible, the following facts about that run have been sorted out and provided by race director Chris Bates:

For the first two days the temperature was over 90, with high humidity. When it finally cooled down, there were thunderstorms and hailshowers. The first 300 miles of the course consists of sizable hills, rolling randomly between sea level and 2500 feet. Much of the roadway is poorly paved, often with a severely sloped shoulder. Then there are the trucks on the Hume Highway, many of whose drivers like to see how close they can come to the support vehicles and runners at over 80mph. Under these conditions Kouros ran non-stop ( eating and drinking on the run) for exactly 24 hours, covering 167 miles. He then rested for 52 minutes, after which he got back on the road and ran non-stop until the 48 hour point, where he had over 287 miles ( 6 more than his own 48 hour world track record).

From that point on, he was off the road a total of about one hour per day, including time for clothing and shoe changes. Though no 3 - day split was taken, his distance was over 400 miles, probably about 405. He ran consistently, eating and drinking on the run, until day 5, when he had a very bad stretch for a few hours, running and walking at less than 4mph. He snapped out of it by taking an unplanned break to soak in a motel bathtub, then ran slowly into Melbourne. The last five miles are mostly uphill, taking the average competitor well over an hour. Kouros ran them at under 7 minutes per mile , finishing fresh and smiling.

So much for putting the legend into perspective.

Thanks to Stu Mittleman, Don Choi, and Trishel Cherns, all of whom turned down an invitation to run the Westfield Run '86 in favour of the Sri Chinmoy 1000 mile, the chance of a lifetime came to me and I got to go to Australia. No sooner was my invitation confirmed than I broke the big toe on my right foot on an easy afternoon run. Broken toes were to be a major theme of this year's race, befalling both the of my support crew and

*Kouros himself in the week before the start. Fortunately, I had a month to recover, and used it well in a mixture of biking, icing and whirlpooling.*

Kouros' break, a freak training accident, was much worse and he was not so lucky. I was back in shape but out one of five crew personnel. Kouros' crew, on the other hand, were out a runner. It was incongruous seeing the man on crutches.

*Talk circulated that this misfortune had cost him well into five figures worth of projected sponsorship packages. The media attention lavished on the Westfield Run has shown corporate sponsors from down under that ultrarunners are well worth investing in. The opportunities to make a living at the sport are so better there that Kouros is in the process of moving to Melbourne. But this year's race would only be heartache for him.*

*The effect this sudden development had on the rest of the field and on the direction of the media interest, was enormous. In talking with members of the best of the rest, such as Patrick Macke (Eng), Ramon Zabalo(Fra) and Dusan Mravlje(Yugoslavia), it became clear to me for the first time that they really held no hope of challenging Kouros. They commit themselves to running for second when he is around. His superiority has, strangely enough, created a brotherhood of mutual identity among athletes for whom it otherwise might be too tempting to assume the roles of prima donnas. Macke commented that, whereas before it was a case of Kouros ahead and a group of friends behind, now the friends would have to break up their friendship because , unexpectedly, victory was now at stake.*

*Race Director, Chris Bates noted the bright side of the tragedy when he noted that the race had been thrown wide open. Westfield are very straight with the runners. They will tell them that the race is "primarily a media event", but at the same time they treat the runners like champions and lavish them with every help possible.*

*The race eventually started with much hype at the Westfield Shoppingtown 50 miles west of Sydney. The hills start right away. Runners are directed to run with the traffic, except for daylight hours when they can run against the traffic on undivided highways. It is sunny and not too warm, with some showers experienced on the first night. In the first 300 kilometres there is much shifting for the lead.*

*Westfield make a major mistake the day before the race, when they hold the coordination of crews, the pre race briefing for runners and crews, the pre race medical check and the vehicle assignment all on the afternoon before the start. Many of the vehicles never showed up, runners and crew were left stranded an hour from their motel ( unable to do food shopping and prepare their vehicles until late that night). The upstart was that some runners and nearly all the crews would begin the race with a sleep deficit. It is the only weak spot in an otherwise well run race.*

*The runners left Sydney and the aggravation of the day before is forgotten. The runners are very excited, as far more attention is being focused on them than what they are use to. Australians are heading the front spot including Brian Bloomer and Cliff Young. The marine steward, Bloomer was barely allowed in the race last year, but finished third and is now the current Aust 24 hr Champion.*

1986 was the first year that a Newsletter was released during the race. This was available to all runners, crew members and officials. They contained serious messages from officials, messages from home and reports of funny happenings on the road. It also saw the start of John Forbe's career as a cartoonist. Many of John's cartoons are contained in this

book.

The first newsletter contained a serious note on safety precautions. This included a note that support /escort vehicles must travel as far to the left of the road as reasonable possible, including driving on the gravel shoulder. There was a special reminder that the runner must travel in front of the support/escort vehicle.

There was also an item about runners running on the right hand side of the road. If they do, the support vehicle must be at least one hundred metres in front. Crews were also reminded that runners must wear reflective material of a nighttime. Runners were also told that if runners stop on double lines, they are to be moved forward until there is sufficient room for the van to pull off the road.

Huon Valley joined the race as a sponsor and each crew received four logo stickers to attach to their Van.

The race director, Chris Bates added a thankyou note in the newsletter. He was pleased with the way that road sense was being used on the open road.

The race manager added a strong note on pacing in the newsletter, threatening people with disqualification if they were paced. How do you pace someone in a race of 1000 kms? Team managers were reminded to put out markers and flashing lights when taking their runners off the road.

At the end of the first day, Pat Macke was in the lead followed by Dusan Mravlje and Geoff Kirkman. Everyone was asking "Geoff who?" One race official said "Tell him to slow down. He won't last!" Bloomer was behind Kirkman in fourth. Mravlje was in the lead for most of the day, but as dusk settled, Macke came from the middle of the pack and grabbed the lead.

Yiannis Kouros took on the role of morale officer for fellow Greek runner, Takis Skoulis, during the race. He followed him on pushbike and had Greek music blasting through portable headphones. Kouros was appreciating that he was riding a bike instead of running.

Pat Macke and Cliff Young were quite happy when the sunny weather left and was replaced with rain. Cliff Young was also vowing that this year's run would be his last.

The second day dawned. Geoff Kirkman now has a 44km lead over Brian Bloomer. Five Aussies are in the top eight.

The Kirkman crew noticed that the attention of the increased on him as soon as he hit the lead. This was a positive thing, as it broke the monotony and everyone would have a laugh at the media trying to keep up with Geoff whilst he kept running!

Heavyweight Champion, Joe Bugner joined Geoff Kirkman for a run on the second day of the race. It must have been quite a sight. The big and the small running along the road.

Eleanor Adams is leading the women's section and is in tenth place overall. She has covered 238km and has a reasonable lead over Christina Barrett, who is feeling the effects of the hot Australian sun.

It was fourteen hours and 121km into the race when Cliff Young retired. His

chiropractor had tried a dozen times to realign his hips, but it was not too be. It was on the crest of a hill outside Mittagong when he called it a day. He rested up in his team vehicle and continued into Canberra to await the arrival of the other runners. "I could see the light last night; I could look back on last year and all the trouble I had with pneumonia. And I'd been having trouble since I started with the hips; I can see that if I keep running I could finish up in a wheelchair. I've had that much pain. I've lost the urge now." Said Cliff from the comfort of his caravan.

Cliff also plans to write his memoirs and train his wife as an Ultra Marathon Runner. Mary has attempted a couple of smaller Ultras with good success.

These are Dan Brannen's thoughts and memories on this stage of the race:

*Cliff Young and Ramon Zabalo are out of the race on day one. Cliff is out of the race with a persistent hip problem and Zabalo is out with a recurrence of sciatica. Pat Macke has the lead at the 100 miles mark, but goes down for a 5 hour sleep. No one else in the race sleeps for more than two and a half hours at a time!*

*Geoff Kirkman is in the lead at the 24 hour mark with 140 miles up. He is expected to falter, but holds the lead with about 230 miles after 48 hours. Bloomer, Mrawlje and Joe Record are bringing up the minor placings. Pat Macke is still running better than anyone, but insists on having five hour sleep breaks.*

*The women are having a great race. Eleanor Adams and Cynthia Cameron have 190 miles( 310 kilometers) up at the 48 hour mark with Donna Hudson slowly catching them up. Donna Hudson has been beset with problems as soon as she arrived in the country. She has claimed the need for a chiropractor on her crew. This is to help offset the hip and leg imbalance contracted from the sloped shoulder.*

*Westfield got one for her just before the race, but her crew proves to be hopelessly incompetent( except for her team captain). She is not being fed, bad vibes have engulfed the whole crew and on the first night she is led five kilometres off track. By the second day, Westfield have replaced some of her crew and she gradually zeroes in on the two females in front of her. Christine Barrett is only a few miles behind Hudson and is running very easily.*

Joe Record celebrated his 45<sup>th</sup> birthday during the race. He was in third place when masseur, Graham Chapman donned a waiter's coat and black tie. He served up a special mixture on toast for breakfast and sang "Happy birthday" as he ran beside Joe. Record said "It's not true, I'm not celebrating my birthday because I'm too short of breath to blow out the candles."

Geoff Kirkman crossed the first major checkpoint at Belconnen Mall on 10.00pm on the Saturday. There were two hundred people there to give him a rousing reception.

The weather slowly improved during the race. More and more media are following the race than ever. Channel Nine and Seven are following it all the way to Melbourne.

Quote of the day at the end of Day 2 went to a crewmember who was instructed to drive the van ahead 5km and wait. He looked concerned and replied "But I haven't got a watch!"

Norwegian runner, Per Lind received 20 minutes coverage on ABC. This included his training program at the AIS.



The Police during the 86 run were being more careful than usual. A Race official saw a very hopeful highway patrolman hiding in his police car, clocking runners with a radar gun. The economy of NSW is suffering, but that is taking things a bit too far. As a precaution, the race manager is going to ring the NSW Police commissioner and find out what the legal speed limit is for Ultra Marathon runners in NSW. Race Management is considering issuing radar detectors to all runners!

The race positions in the early hours of May 4<sup>th</sup> were:

Geoff Kirkman	342km
Brian Bloomer	313km
Joe Record	308km
Per Lind	304km
Pat Macke	300km
Dusan Mravlje	297km
Eddie Westburgh	282km
Ross Parker	280km
Dan Brannen	278km
Eleanor Adams	267km
Cynthia Cameron	263km
Alistair McManus	262km
Donna Hudson	262km
Bertil Jarlacker	259km
Christine Baret	257km
Tony Rafferty	251km
Frank Pearson	239km
Graham Wilkinson	217km
Dave Taylor	210km

Dan Brannen is running steadily at the start of Day 3. He is averaging five miles per hour and is surprised to find himself in fifth. He even thinks that he might finish in the money, but a distinct pain is starting to creep into his left knee and he is worried that his race might be over. He lengthens his breaks and changes his walk/run ratio. He focuses on the journalists during the day and takes in the beautiful sky at night. This is all in an attempt to distract his mind from the pain that is engulfing his knee.

After three days of the race, Eleanor Adams was emerging as a threat for overall supremacy. She was in sixth place and leading the women's division. Geoff Kirkman was still in the lead with 403km. He was 23km ahead of Brian Bloomer with Joe Record in

third over Dusan Mravlje. Per Lind from was running well and had moved into fifth. At this stage of the race four more runners had joined Cliff Young as scratchings. They are Takis Skoulis, Gary Regten, Keith Marshall and Ramon Zabalo .

Geoff Kirkman was struggling going through the hills near Yass, whilst Brian Bloomer was having lots of sensible breaks and looked like pushing Kirkman for many kilometres to come.

It was late in the third night of the race when tragedy dealt it's evil hand. A 46 year old Albury man was killed when he attempted to overtake an escort vehicle for a runner. Police believe that the mans car collided head on with a steel laden semi trailer 20kms north of Jugiong on the section of the Hume Highway known as the "steps and stairs". The driver of the semi was uninjured.

Geoff Kirkman was injured in the accident and taken to Wagga Base Hospital for treatment. The highway was closed to traffic as police worked to clear the wreckage.

Kirkman was hit by a car, thrown out of his running shoes and thrown 12 metres into a ditch by the side of the road. The driver of the car was killed instantly and his car ricocheted off Kirkman's crew van hitting the runner. Kirkman suffered severe lacerations to the head and body. He also received a broken pelvis and was in shock due to the loss of blood. His condition was later reported as stable.

After the semi crashed with the car, the trailer crashed onto it's side, which blocked the Highway and caused another collision. Traffic was banked up for 3km in both directions as police tried to clear the road and free the dead driver from the wreckage of his car.

Geoff Kirkman's father , Laurie Kirkman was crew manager and said he could not see his son anywhere "I had a premonition earlier today that this would happen and I told my wife". Laurie's wife, Wendy and Geoff' wife Jeannie were part of the crew, but were down the road and did not witness the accident. Kirkman was 3km ahead of Bloomer when the accident occurred.

Ultra running stalwart, Kevin Cassidy was crewing for Dusan Mravlje in 1986. At the time of the accident, Dusan was near the lead and Cassidy remembers that night very well ".....as night fell we were covering the treacherous section of highway near Yass when 3 ambulances went passed at a speed that nearly blew us off the map. Up ahead, a truck had had a headon smash with a motorist trying to overtake Geoff's van, when we arrived at the scene in darkness we saw exactly what happened. The truck was laying sideways across the road and the motorist was dead. Geoff could not be found and it was feared that he was crushed in the wreckage somewhere but he was eventually found down an embankment with a smashed pelvis"

One of the unfortunate asides was the unknown person who phoned the Canberra Westfield Media centre and yelled down the phone "You bastards. I hope you are happy. You have just killed one of your runners.". The two officials manning the Media centre knew nothing about the accident and were completely horrified.

One of Kirkman's crew members said at the scene of the accident "We heard tyres screeching and a horrific crashing sound and then saw Geoff tangled in the wreckage. Blood was pouring out of him - we're still unsure exactly what happened. Everything was going so well. Geoff had been on the road virtually non stop. He was giving it everything.

How could this happen?"

Brian Bloomer took over the lead at the scene of the accident. Bloomer was within several kilometres of the accident and had to run past the wreckage. No comment was made by Westfield management on the night that the accident occurred.

"Where's my son? Oh my god, where's my bloody son?" That was the frantic shout of Laurie Kirkman when he stepped out of the van, peered into the horrific crash and could not see his son.

Mr Kirkman said "I was driving along and had Geoff in my beam light when I felt an almighty bang on our right and we were thrown to the side. I got out and couldn't see Geoff anywhere". Laurie Kirkman kept calling for his son and found him in a ditch 12 metres from the side of the road. "All he could say was 'Poor Bloody formplex' who were his sponsors"

Dark clouds rolled into the Wagga area and this signified the new mood of the race. This was a perfect foil for Dusan Mravlje, who had trained in sub zero European temperatures and had moved past Joe Record into second. Per Lind was trotting along comfortably in forth. Eleanor Adams has a five kilometre lead on Cynthia Cameron. Cameron was set to pounce when the Englishwomen had her next break.

"It hurts like hell". That is how Geoff Kirkman referred to his efforts to walk yesterday, from his bed in Wagga hospital. He admits that he was lucky to be alive and claimed that an inch closer and he might not be with us today. He knows that he still would have been with the leaders if it wasn't for the accident. He also now believes that the race is dangerous and the format should be revised. He is very disappointed at having been knocked out of the race and finds it hard watching the news. His first words whilst lying in the ditch were "Quick I've got to get up and start running".

Kirkman recovers well and is sitting by the side of the road two days later to wish Brian Bloomer well. Bloomer is now in the lead. The police have exonerated the event, but from now on, both support vehicles must follow behind the runner. This means that the crews will not be able to take it in turns to drive on ahead and get a few hours sleep. This will be felt by the crews that only have four instead of five. This will have an effect on some runners by the end of the race.

Kirkman is thankful for the support given by the staff of Wagga Base hospital, Westfield Management, media, friends and relatives. As Geoff said, they were all great. Geoff Kirkman never got back to the same skill level as a runner, but he wants to enjoy running at some level. As Geoff put it perhaps a marathon without too much difficulty. I must also thank Geoff Kirkman and his wife Jeannie for the wonderful help they have been. Information, press cuttings, photos, and being a celebrity starter for an Ultra I organised, nothing was too much trouble!

Meanwhile, Dusan Mravlje was now in the lead and had a 40km break on Brian Bloomer. Mravlje had revealed his secret formula to the media. It involves downing six to eight stubbies of beer every day. Purely for medicinal purposes. I guess the carbo content would be high!

Shortly after the Kirkman accident, organisers of the race backed the call of the police to improve race safety. The New South Wales Police Acting Assistant commissioner for Traffic, Ken Chapman said that he is not interested in banning the race, but he might

have a look at night time running.

Race Director, Chris Bates said "If they can suggest any way of improving the security in this sort of racing we'd be happy to hear from them". Mr Bates also said that the decision to continue the race was made with the consent of every runner. Police also confirmed that the Kirkman crew was in no way responsible for the tragedy.

It is believed that a sack of potatoes caused the Kirkman accident. According to an eyewitness, a driver of one of the semis stopped to pick up an abandoned sack of potatoes. As a result, the other truck swerved into the overtaking lane and collided with a car attempting to overtake Kirkman's escort vehicle. "What I saw was the two semis and then this great explosion of glass, and then the blue datsun went screaming across the road knocking Kirkman into a gully" was how the eye witness described the accident. It was 46 year old Albury man, Raymond Ward who died instantly in the accident.

The Member for Hume, Mr Wal Fife strongly criticised the use of the Hume Highway for events such as the Westfield. Mr Fife said "I travelled from Wagga to Canberra on Sunday night and was at the scene of the accident soon after it occurred. During the evening I observed a number of runners and their escort vehicles and in many instances these constituted a traffic hazard. I have no criticism of the behaviour of the teams, all appeared to be acting in a responsible manner to minimise danger."

The family of the victim were upset at how the whole accident was treated by the media. Mr Ward's son, Stephen said that no one had mentioned that his father had been killed while he was trying to avoid the runner. "The runners are willing to take the chance of being on the road, but are we willing to take the risk of them being on the road? I would like to see them off the road at night, and organisers enforcing where the support vehicles are." Said Stephen Ward.

Stephen Ward also said that he had seen support vehicles in the middle of the road in a television report since the accident. He said newspaper reports devoted three quarters of the articles to the runner who was injured and a couple of paragraphs to his father.

In a strange coincidence, Geoff Kirkman's brother, Ian was involved in a car smash twenty four hours earlier. He ended up with 26 stiches and an injured leg that kept him on crutches for a long time. Geoff believed that it was a strange coincidence and proved that it was hard to kill a Kirkman".

There were seventeen runners left in the field after the accident. They all put emotion aside and kept going with the task in hand. The top three in the men's was being fought between Bloomer, Mravlje and Lind. The top three in the women's was being fought between Adams, Cameron and Hudson.

Brian Bloomer is still in the lead with Dusan Mravlje and Joe Record hot on his heels. Pat Macke was improving at a great rate of knots and had moved into fourth place. The women were still having a right royal battle with Cynthia Cameron celebrating her 44<sup>th</sup> birthday on the road.

A big feature of the race, was the fact that support crews would move onto other runners if their own runner retired or was taken sick. Certainly shows the spirit of the race.

Christine Barrett was fortunate enough to meet her first kangaroo yesterday. Unfortunately it was the flat variety. Hopefully she meets a real one by the end of the trip!

Eddie Westburgh pulled out after suffering a double hernia. He had been running for 500km with the condition!

It was half way into Day four when Brannen's left knee was extremely swollen and enlarged. His crew closed ranks and promised to help him get to Melbourne. He kept going for another three hours and the agony got worse. The knee locked and he could not move. Brannen looked up in the night sky and saw his whole world tumble. His crew were soon around him. It wasn't long before they were all in a Motel Room, exchanging stories, reminiscing and laughing. Cynthia Cameron was to retire shortly after with a similar problem.

Half of Brannen's crew went back and helped Ross Parker, whilst the rest of them hooked up with Donna Hudson's crew.

The third newsletter contained a reminder on the finish. There was a reminder to the crews to keep themselves fresh and give themselves allocated sleep times. Westfield was also volunteering temporary relief drivers if the situation got bad.

It was 48km north of Albury when Dusan Mravlje made his move on race leader, Brian Bloomer. Mravlje sent Bloomer a message earlier in the day, telling Bloomer to expect him for Tea. That was the confidence of the man. It was at Gerogery where Mravlje caught Bloomer. He was elated on taking the lead. Bloomer was resting at the time and was suffering from stomach and leg cramps. By the afternoon, Mravlje held a 10km lead over Bloomer who was still recovering. Joe Record and Pat Macke were battling it out for third and fourth respectively. Macke was starting to look the stronger of the two runners and was only ten kilometres behind Bloomer.

Eleanor Adams was fifth and had a 20km lead over Donna Hudson. Adams had run well during the day and had moved up four places. She is being accompanied on this trip by her twelve year old son, Stephen. He is being a model crew man and has learnt to cook some tasty delights for his mum in the past few days!

Controversy arose when the Kirkman family revealed that crews were not aware of the police rules governing the race. This was in particular reference to Rule no 6 which stated that a second vehicle displaying a warning sign must be 500 metres behind the first one trailing the runner.

The Kirkman accident was also discussed in the Senate when the Minister representing the Minister of Transport, Senator Gletzelt said that Ultra Marathons should be banned off the highways.

One strange story from the 86 Westfield was that one runner ran away and hid from his crew for three hours on the second day. When he was found, he peeked through his bush hideaway and refused to come out.

Brian Bloomer had a strange encounter when running through Wagga. A cow that had fallen from a nearby truck joined him. The cow joined Bloomer on his run through the city. This caused much amusement to spectators lined up on the side of the road.

Dave Taylor retired after stage two of the staged race whilst Frank Pearson is continuing. The three top placings are taken by Mravlje, Bloomer and Macke. Eleanor Adams has moved into fourth whilst Joe Record is now in fifth.

The fifth newsletter brought a reminder about the placement of markers. Runners

and crews were told that failure to comply would lead to disqualification. There was also a note about the correct procedures for running on expressways in Victoria and information required on runner's projected rest periods.

A funny story comes from Patrick Macke's crew. He almost did his business on top of a beehive, until he was alerted by an ever vigilant crew member. I wonder how fast he would have run with some bees chasing him!

Progress results as of 1500 hrs May 7<sup>th</sup>;

Dusan Mravlje	723km
Brian Bloomer	697km
Patrick Macke	657km
Eleanor Adams	643km
Joe Record	631km
Donna Hudson	626km
Per Lind	614km
Cynthia Cameron	601km
Christine Barrett	583km
Ross Parker	582km
Tony Rafferty	578km
Bertil Jarlacker	571km

Dusan Mravlje was the clear leader in the race when he only had 160km to go. Brian Bloomer was 23km behind him and Patrick Macke had cemented himself in third. Eleanor Adams was in fourth whilst Joe Record had moved back to sixth. Per Lind was the latest casualty and pulled out north of Albury. He was complaining of ankle and knee soreness.

Dusan Mravlje passed through the City Mall at 9pm last night and looked like finishing the race at 1030pm. He was sixty kilometres ahead of second place Patrick Macke who earlier in the day taken second from Brian Bloomer who was battling a leg injury. Bloomer had a 45km lead on 4<sup>th</sup> place Eleanor Adams. Adams had a 15km lead over Record and Hudson. On the final day, there were only eleven of the original 28 competitors still in the field.

Yiannis Kouros said this about Dusan Mravlje's performance "He has run his own race and run it very well. He doesn't speak enough English to know what the expression 'Always the bridesmaid and never the bride' means but he knows how it feels. I have seen him come second to me in two Athens to Sparta Races. He also came second to Pat Macke in another of those races and finished second in the Colac six day Race. So it is his time to win." Dusan Mravlje is also the European 100km record holder which accounts for his great ability to pick up the speed when necessary.

Eleanor Adams is still running well. She is fourth overall with plenty of distance between herself and second place female, Donna Hudson.

The most common question from Journo's becomes "How do you pronounce the Yugoslav's name?". His crew now contains the crew of Kouros and Zabalo which makes for a real convoy stretching along the Hume. Mravlje is tall, dark and well muscled and exudes brute strength. Pat Macke is the opposite and seems to be suffering considerably. His proud crew remains at four, but there are several volunteers to bolster the ranks. Beethoven blares through the speakers to keep Macke in step towards Melbourne.

Dusan Mravlje celebrated the last 10km by having a pub crawl through the streets of Melbourne. His nearest rival was 60km behind, so as Dusan put it "I had nothing else to drink so I had beer". An escort even breath tested him during the final leg, but was discreet enough not to reveal the results to the press. The policeman did say that he would be worried if he was driving a car! Dusan also said that eight cans of beer a day was a normal habit even when he wasn't running!

The strength of Mravlje prevails and he ends up winning. He spends most of the last day drinking beer and gesturing wildly to everyone in sight. The media loves it and the UltraRunning Bridesmaid is in the right place at the right time. He finished second in his last three races, but nothing is going to stop him winning today. It was the turn of the Greeks last year and this year it is the turn of the sizable Slavic population to line the streets and pay homage to their God and hero! One of Dusan's crew member's, Kevin Cassidy even had his parents turn up by the side of the road in Melbourne to wish them Good Luck! This day belongs to Mravlje and no victory for him will ever taste so sweet.

Dusan Mravlje finished the race in six days twelve hours thirty eight minutes and thirty seconds and picked up \$20 000 for his efforts. There were thousands of Yugoslavs there to meet him and his comment was "I very happy"

Brian Bloomer surprised everyone when he finished second. He passed Patrick Macke who is still making his way through the city. At one stage it looked as though Bloomer's race was going to be over, when he tore his calf muscle near Albury. He got it strapped and kept persevering. He now reckons that the rest of his body is stuffed and his calf muscle is ok! Patrick Macke is still ten kilometres from the finishing line!

Towards the end of the race, Pat Macke needed an urgent call of nature. There was nowhere to go, so Chris Stephenson (Race Official) procured a cooking pot for Macke to use. After Macke did his business, Stephenson ran down the road with a covered cooking pot looking for the nearest Bin wondering what he would have to do next for ultra running!

Patrick Macke eventually finished third place after a dramatic 14 hours to complete the last seventeen kilometres of the run. During the last stage, Macke suffered from bouts of delirious behaviour, became disoriented and lost his memory. He did not know that he was in Australia at one stage. He was taken in by a lady in Kew and given a cup of tea and a bath. He returns only to find a bagpiper waiting for him. He gets a tiny spring in his step.( Only because he hates Bagpipes)

His crew of four were struggling to fully comprehend what was happening due to their tiredness. Perhaps the Westfield management will force the size of the crews to be increased in future. He eventually made it. Race Manager, Charlie Lynn said "If we had a courage award he would have been the clear winner".

Pat Macke was later to compile an article entitled "The Last 237km, no 255km, sorry mate". If the story weren't so tragic it would be a comedy of errors. I have reprinted it in full in the last chapter.

Eleanor Adams finished five hours behind Macke and Joe Record battled injury to finish fifth. Another four runners were to finish. Probably the most impressive statistic was that 75% of the females finished the race. This is compared to 30% of the males finishing.

Dusan stays around Melbourne for a few days. He is soaking up the accolades and negotiating a contract with Westfield. Kouros accompanies him on his travels and seems content that it Dusan won. Debate commences wether the race should be switched to a staged format. Bloomer believes that he will go one better next year and finish first. Westfield want to get Bauer and Mittleman in the race next year. The women's race could be wide open next year but Adams and Hudson are declaring "Never Again!". Most of all Macke deserves another try at the last thirty miles!

The 1986 Race definitely had it all. Tragedy, high drama, laughter and success. The absence of the Greek legend did not have an adverse effect and probably helped to make the race a success.



**1986 Race results:**

Dusan Mravlje	6:12:38
Brian Bloomer	7:04:53
Patrick Macke	7:13:02
Eleanor Adams	7:17:58
Joe Record	8:01:14
Donna Hudson	8:06:15
Bertil Jarlacker	8:15:13
Ross Parker	8:17:45
Christine Barrett	8:22:30

## Chapter Six

### ***1987 - Kouros wins his second***

The 1987 Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Ultra marathon was scheduled to be run between 26 Mar to 1 April 87. It was to be run over a distance of 1060km which was the furthest ever for a foot race in Australia. It is destined to be the toughest Westfield yet! The change was due to the terrible accident in 86 when Geoff Kirkman almost lost his life.

The route is over 1000km. It traverses the Monaro High Plains, the bush of East Gippsland, through the Industrial area of Latrobe Valley and then the finishing line at Melbourne. The race carries the richest purse of any Ultra and competitors from all over the world have entered this classic event. As a race official put it " Tough country, tough competition"

The 87 Westfield has a \$40 000 purse for this year. It is the most professional and difficult running race in the world. There is a staff of 50 involved in the running of the race These include race publicists, doctors, quartermaster, operations officer, communications director, race operations clerks, admin clerks and couriers, signposters, lead vehicle escort team, position recorders, mobile officials, night safety crew and frame operators. There are another 250 people employed as crewmembers for the runners.

Over 218 athletes applied to run in this year's Westfield. 26 were selected and eight were from overseas.

There were thirty runners scheduled to start the Race in 1987:

**Dusan Mravlje** - Last year's winner. He was brimming with confidence and knew that he was going to give Kouros a run for his money. Mravlje seems to be in the event for fun, but is strong and fit. He has been training in the hills of Yugoslavia and is ready to pounce in the hills if Kouros stumbles.

**Yiannis Kouros** - Back after his injured toe last year. He was keen to reexert his influence on the world of Ultra Marathon Running. He is the greatest Ultra runner of all time and his name will be linked to the Ultra for ever, just like his Greek predecessor, Phedippides being linked to the Marathon.

The stress fracture that Kouros suffered in 86 cost him dearly. This year he is worried about his left knee locking up. Due to the extreme European winter he has only managed 40 days training and is suffering from a swollen ankle. He prepares peacefully and will tackle any problems that the race gives him. His presence means that the other competitors are fighting for second , not first.

Yiannis shared the following thoughts with a member of the Press before the race about his preparation:

*I knew I had to be careful. Because of the winter in Greece I had only 40 days training for the Westfield Run. My toe was ok but my left ankle was swollen and my left knee was very sore. It sometimes locks into position and I think I will have to have some*

*surgery on it soon because it makes a lot of noise. It was also very hot on the first day so I planned to run carefully.*

*I meditate before every race and plan my run. This year I planned to run easy at the start. Some of the other runners went out very fast but it did not worry me. I do not notice other runners in this race. I just run my best according to my plan.*

**Cliff Young** - Back to have another crack at the event that he put on centre stage in 1983. The usual journo's were saying that he was too old, but could they do any better! He has failed to finish in the past two years and desperately wants to finish this year.

He has been running between 30 and 40km a day and has selected a top crew to support him. This includes physio, Christine Perry who has a lot of experience in the Ultra game and supported Eleanor Adams in the past two years. Cliff's old mate from Ararat, Don Weston will once again be part of his crew.

**Brian Bloomer** - back for his third try at the race. In the past two years he has placed third and second. Could he go one better this year? He has been training in the hills around Daylesford in Victoria. He is quiet about his chances in the race, but he has earned the respect of the Ultra community and will be closely watched as the race progresses.

**Tony Rafferty** - is back for another go at the 1000km between Sydney and Melbourne. He has covered the route more times than any one in history, but will he be fast enough to take the winner's cheque.

**Trishel Cherns** - Canadian runner who could be an outside chance in the race. He is known as "The Insomniac" and the "The Sleepless Wonder" because he doesn't sleep during any of his races. He has had success in American multi day races and could carry this over to the Westfield.

Trishel Cherns was sponsored by Westfield for the 87 Race. He had top class results going in to the race. Westfield provided airfare, hotels, food, caravans and crew and race clothing.

Trishel trained at altitude for four and a half months prior to the race. This was at Vail, Colorado which is 8,200 feet above sea level. He averaged 160 km a week and did light upper body weight work in the gym.

Trishel has been a vegetarian since 1974 with no red meat, fish or fowl. He gets his protein from dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt and eggs. During the race he ate a vegetarian macro biotic diet of organic brown rice, vegetables, eggs, tofu, olive/linseed oil and low doses of vitamins. His crew for the race included chiropractor/applied kinesologist Dr Keith Maitland.

**Dick Tout** - Thirty nine year old from New Zealand who heads the Kiwi invasion. He has a strong marathon background and a professionally organised crew. He is a typical Kiwi and is determined to beat the Aussies on their home soil! He holds the Australasian 24 hr record and ran second to Kouros in the Wellington to Auckland Ultrathon. His crew are all accomplished Marathon Runners and his plan is to run Kouros down!

**Patrick Macke** - From England and is back for another go at the race. He had the "Finish from Hell" last year, but is determined to beat six and a half days and finish strongly. He has vivid recollections of finishing last year but has mentally prepared himself more thoroughly.

**George Audley** - Fifty one year old from WA and is running in his first Westfield. He has been running well in West Australian Ultra races, but isn't likely to figure in the placings for this race.

**Cynthia Cameron** - Is one of the two females in this year's race. She is from Victoria and has established many Australian women's Ultra records.

**Gary Collins** - From NSW and was inspired by the efforts of Dusan Mravlje last year and decided to give it a go.

**Peter Pfister** - Victorian and has been a fringe Ultra runner for a couple of years. He has crewed for a number of runners in the past couple of Westfields and has got the urge to have a go himself.

**Pat Farmer** - from NSW is the youngest runner at twenty four. He is a landscaper who has spent the past four years training for this gruelling race. He was asked his reason for entering the race and said "Because it's there!". He also said "I watched the end of the race that Geoff Molloy won a few years ago and thought I'd give it a go."

Pat Farmer qualified when he completed 160km in a 24 hr race at Hensley Athletic Field and finished eighth. Farmer has also competed in the Sydney to Bathurst race and the Melbourne to Colac. He has qualified in previous years, but has foregone his right to enter and crewed for some of the more experienced runners in the field like Eleanor Adams and Tony Rafferty.

**Mark Gladwell** - From NSW and is running in the race for the first time. Doesn't have a huge running pedigree and isn't expected to make much impact on the results!

**Ron Hill** - Is another of the first timers and is from Victoria. Ron crewed for Pat Macke last year and after witnessing the gruelling finish from Pat decided that the race was for him.

**Terry Cox** - Was also on the same crew and has decided to have a go. Terry has a good running pedigree. Has run from Melbourne to Adelaide and has run for 24hrs on a treadmill. All for charity!

**Kevin Mansell** - Is another of the first timers and from NSW. He has been training for this race for the past four years and qualified for the race by running 186km in a 24hr race at Hensley Park. He finished fifth in this race and ran an incredible 465 laps of the oval in the day.

He is an ex chain smoker and ex alcoholic. He has won quite a few battles just to make it to the starting lineup. Kevin belongs to the same AA Group as Mark Gladwell.

**Charles Naysmith** - From Croydon Park in NSW and is another first timer. Not much is known about his running or personal history!

**Alan Rider** - Is the second Tasmanian to attempt this gruelling run. Hopefully he will get further than Eddie Westburgh in 86.

**Mary Hanudel** - from the USA and is having her first attempt at the race. Mary has been moving very quickly through the World women's ranks and could give this race a good shake up!

**David Standeven** - Is another of the first timers in the field. He is from SA and has been

giving the Sri Chinmoy 24 hr races in that state a real shakeup.

**David Taylor** - From NSW and is having his second go at the race. Could the 1000km be too short for him or the pace too fast?

**Graham Wilkinson** and **Ken Murray** are both first timers from NSW. Not much is known on their running pedigree or background.

**Peter Parcell** - From Ipswich in Queensland and is back for his second attempt at the race. Peter is now living in the Philippines and running Night clubs over there.

**Chuck Jones** - From California is back for another go at the race. He is not likely to figure in the placings and treats this race as a holiday.

**Emile La Harrague** - The last runner in the field is from France. He now lives in New York and is more of a renowned adventurer than Ultra runner.

With the quality of the field the stage is set for another classic race. Yiannis Kouros is the hot favourite, but has he lost touch since his great win two years ago!

The final field was reduced down to 26 runners due to injury and other factors.

The starting formalities got underway and the runners were piped to centre stage. They were introduced to the crowd and seemed very calm. At 1000 hours, the wife of the New South Wales Premier, Mrs Unsworth fires the starters pistol and the runners launch across the line. There is no turning back now!

Dick Tout takes the lead early. He is running an incredible 15kph and goes through the Marathon at 2 hours and 53 minutes followed by Pat Macke in 3 hours and five minutes. He is followed by Kouros, Mravlje, Bloomer and Hill.

Once the early morning fog lifts, the temperature rises in above the April average. The more experienced runners take it easy and increase their fluid intake, whilst the novices push for an early break. They suffer for this later on in the race.

By later afternoon, Kouros has moved towards Tout. They go through the 55km mark together and by the 60km mark Kouros is in the lead. This is the last time that any competitor would see Kouros until the end in Melbourne!

Kouros's manager, Theo Premetis said the runner was finding the going a bit hot but was handling the conditions well. "It's been very hot on the road and Yiannis has just come from minus eight degree temperatures in Europe. But he is in very good spirits and forging ahead well."

Cliff Young was struggling at the start, but was managing to hold on to tenth spot. Cliff was a man of few words when he said "I'm doing all right". Cynthia Cameron was leading the women's race, but Mary Hanudel was close behind her.

Kouros remembers this stage when he said:

After 60 - 70 km I started to feel good. I asked my crew to play some Greek music because I was now relaxed. When I got at Canberra I felt it was more easy than my last run. Maybe it was because I started slow this year. I was not sleepy but I stopped for forty minutes to have a bath and some food. My masseur gave me a rub and I felt good.

The two female competitors are doing it easily and are only 1km apart. Cynthia Cameron is ahead of her rival. As the sun sets, Kouros is in the lead by 2km and is a marathon ahead of the last competitor.

The evening brings relief for the runners. Kouros picks up his pace and Tout keeps attacking. Tout is still losing ground on Kouros, but is moving further ahead the rest of the field. Dusan Mravlje has moved up to third. David Standeven, Patrick Macke and Ron Hill are filling the next three places. This is the first multi day run for Standeven and Hill. Are they pushing too hard, too early?

Brian Bloomer has run into trouble. He started in very light shoes and has bruised feet as a result. Dawn on the second day finds him 80km behind Kouros and 30km behind the lead pack.

The race positions after fourteen hours of running were:

Kouros	187km
Tout	167km
Mravlje	152km
Standeven	139km
Macke	137km
Hill	135km
Bloomer	127km
Audley	125.8km
Wilkinson	124.5km
Hanudel	115.5km
Farmer	115.5km
Cox	115.1km
Pfister	115km
Naysmith	112.9km
Young	112.5km
Collins	111.6km
Cherns	111.2km
Cameron	111km
Jones	110.8km
Rafferty	109km

Mansell	108.1km
LaHarrague	102km
Taylor	88km

Cliff Young is also having feet trouble and keeps changing his shoes to cushion the effect. He is 13km behind Bloomer in 12<sup>th</sup> position. Emile Laharrague is back in 24<sup>th</sup>. He trained in a severe American winter and hasn't had time to acclimitise.

The race newsletter was once again a feature of the race. The first issue didn't have much news or interesting gossip. It contained the usual reminders from race management about safety and procedures to be followed during the year's race.

Liaison Officers from the NSW Police are going to follow the run and help it run smoothly. There was also a reminder from Police and Officials not to have two or more support vehicles together and in adverse conditions to have the second support vehicle three hundred metres behind the runner. There was also a note that if anyone was having problems with their vehicles to get hold of Frank Poole from Budget who will help service Campervans during the run.

24hrs has now passed in the race and Kouros has already arrived in Canberra. He has a short break for a massage, bath and a meal. He is soon on his way again. Tout is second and 40km back running past Lake George. Patrick Macke is third and Dusan Mravlje is forth. Dusan is having problems with his thigh. Mary Hanudel is making good ground on Cynthia Cameron. She is now 22km in front of Cameron.

By nightfall on the second day, Kouros is 50km short of Cooma and has a 60km lead over Tout. Macke is 21km behind Tout and is entering Canberra. Standeven has overtaken Mravlje and is in forth place. Bloomer is 60km short of Canberra and is doing it tough.

Kouros remembered this stage when he said:

*The run to Cooma was more difficult because it was very hot in the afternoon. I did not feel very well. I think maybe I lost some salt and minerals in the heat. My legs were sunburnt and it hurt. The weather was a bigger problem for me than the hills. I felt better when it got cooler at night.*

I arrived in Cooma after midnight and felt like a sleep. I rested for half an hour but couldn't sleep so I started again to run.

Cynthia Cameron has once again caught Mary Hanudel. Both are moving well. Cliff Young is continuing to suffer from foot problems and is walking. He is in 21<sup>st</sup> position. Dave Taylor becomes the first person axed from the event, which is another missed opportunity from the NSW runner!

The second newsletter is published. It noted that Kouros was in the lead and nearing Cooma. Quite an incredible performance for two days running. It also mentioned that the other runners are having a very close battle and it should be interesting all the way to Melbourne.

Race HQ is now located at Belconnen Mall in Canberra. There was a note in the newsletter to add the first cut off point to the Route instructions. The first cut off was at 2000hrs on 28 Mar 97 and is the bridge crossing Lake Burleigh Griffin. Crews were also

advised about the lack of petrol stations in Canberra and to fill up and gain supplies at one of the two that was available. They were also reminded about the lack of nighttime petrol supplies between Canberra and Lakes Entrance. Fill up during the day was the advice!

Runners were also reminded about radio communication, flashing lights, vehicle placements and placement of markers.

Two runners have retired from the run so far. They are David Taylor and Peter Parcell. David Taylor has gone forward to help out with Cliff Young's crew.

The placings as of Day two of the race are:

Kouros	392km
Tout	302km
Macke	267km
Hill	266km
Audley	257km
Standeven	264.1km
Jones	255km
Mravlje	250.5km
Bloomer	250.5km
Wilkinson	245.9km
Rafferty	244.9km
Cherns	242.5km
Cameron	230km
Hanudel	236.4km
Naysmith	233.5km
Pfister	233km
Cox	233.6km
Rider.	220.8km
Collins	220.2km
Mansell	217.4km
Young	215km
Laharrague	208.7km



Farmer	207.9km
Gladwell	196.3km

Day three of the 87 Westfield commences. It is a bleak morning as dark clouds form over the Monaro High plains. The race has been going for two days and Kouros has covered 460km. He is 25km from Bombala when he is met by a group of horsemen from the High country. They have been dispatched to escort him into town where a big reception has been organised. He stops long enough to shake hands and say thankyou. Kouros now has a 80km lead over Dick Tout.

Kouros remembers this stage when he said:

*On Saturday I arrived in Bombala. Some Australian horsemen came to greet me and many children were waiting for me in the town. It made me feel good. I did not want to stop for long because I wanted to cross the gravel road near the border in daytime. I was afraid of this because I thought it would be a dangerous track like the Spartahlon Course between Athens and Sparta in Greece. But it was a good road and I was happy. The countryside was beautiful and peaceful.*

Tout has stopped for a bath in Cooma. He is intent on chasing Kouros and wants to pounce if Kouros should falter in his relentless pace. Tout has a 41km lead over Patrick Macke. George Audley has moved into fourth and Ron Hill is having the run of his life in fifth. Chuck Jones has moved into sixth and is running well.

Mary Hanudel has a seven kilometre lead over Cynthia Cameron but Cameron has rested during the night. The weather turns for the worse on Saturday and a stiff crosswind confronts the runners.

Rumor has it that Kouros may be in trouble when he gets to Melbourne. He was quoted as saying that Australian men were weak This has incurred the wrath of Helen Bloomer and she can't wait to say a few words to him when they reach Melbourne. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned!

Dusan Mravlje is certainly enjoying the Aussie beer again this year. Rumour is that he consumed 15 cans on the first day and 27 between Parramatta and Goulburn. There has been a sudden rush of hotel's between Dandenong and Doncaster applying for a late license!

Kevin Mansell's crew has gone into opposition with the Media. This is judging by the amount of photographic equipment on board. In three days they have taken 7 rolls of film, one black and white and two rolls of kodacolour. His friends are having a slide show after the race and a tape recorder is being used to present a soundtrack with the slide evening. Kevin must also have the biggest crew on the event with 4 drivers, 2 cooks, 1 masseur, 1 photographer, a film editor and a public relations specialist.

The funniest story of Day three must go to the crewmember on Chuck Jones's crew who has taken a shine to swigging toilet flush liquid. The taste isn't addictive, but he reports no trouble with his S bend. This drink wets the spot and it cleans at the same time.

Another story involved Chuck Jones. He developed a leg muscle problem which was causing him considerable pain. The Race Doctor came along, diagnosed the complaint and

prescribed a heel wedge to relieve the pressure. There was only one problem though! Where do you find a corrective heel wedge in the middle of the Australian bush?

It seems that the doctor fancies himself as a design engineer. He removed a mud flap from one of the campervans, carved off a piece of rubber, shaped it with a surgical knife (hacksaw and file) and inserted it into his shoe's. The comment from Chuck Jones was "Thank Heavens I'm running on Dunlop".

Peter Pfister is struggling with the crosswinds and is in a hole so deep that it will need a major operation to bring him out of it. His manager is the 84 winner, Geoff Molloy who is assisted by his own crew chief, Dennis Moore. Pfister makes the Cooma cut off by 15 minutes.

Pat Farmer becomes the third victim of the race when he fails to reach the Cooma cut off in time. His age was the telling factor, but he will go on to achieve many great achievements in the sport. Chuck Jones tears a muscle in his lower calf around midday and is forced to withdraw from the event by late afternoon.

Evening time sees Kouros cross the border into Victoria. He has covered 532km and is averaging 9kph. The distance between first and last is 250 kilometres.

Kouros remembers this stage of the race when he said:

*In Cann River the people gave me a boomerang. I stopped for a quick shower and then kept running. The rain came and it made the bush very fresh. I was in high spirits and asked for some music. I did some singing and some dancing along the road and felt almost as if I was detached from my body. I made good time through Orbost and Lakes Entrance.*

The forth Newsletter for the Run was published on March 29/30. The initial headline said that over half of the runners were past the half way point in the race.

The town that has really excelled with friendliness is the township of Bombala. When they learned that Westfield was coming through the town, they turned on a real welcome with brass bands, picnics, contests and special presentations to all the runners.

Like most country towns the pub is the central social attraction. Frank Budget (the mechanic from Budget) wandered in for a quick lemon squash. He wandered in at the same time as Apex were having their monthly fundraising meeting. He was soon standing on a table asking for bids for his cap and official Budget T-shirt. They raised \$103!

A short time later, Dave Taylor (now on Trishel Chern's crew) wandered into the pub wearing his tracksuit and was placed on the Auction table. A short time later Dave left minus his tracksuit and the local Apex Club was \$100 better off. Runners, crews and officials are warned to exercise caution when they stop at the local Pub in Bombala!

The Westfield Fashion Awards for 1987 must go to Victorian runner, Ron Hill. Ron has a better than average collection of shorts and running tights. At Collector he was spotted wearing a pair of multi coloured shorts and today he was seen wearing a pair of pink running tights with green-yellow flashes across the legs. Ron has been asked to conduct a fashion parade at the end but is non-committal at this stage.

The story of day four must go to Tony Rafferty and crew. Tony was jogging along the highway when he darted off the side and started rummaging in the bushes. His crew slams

on the brakes thinking Tony has slipped and fallen. To their relief, he quickly emerged with something in his hand. He held aloft a pile of X-rated magazines that must have been dumped by a passing motorist! There is no truth in the rumour that Tony and crew have slowed to a very relaxed dawdle!

The quote of the race must go to the spectator near Lakes Entrance who said, "Why is this man running when he has two perfectly good vans!"

Gary Collins was asked by one of his drivers, if he could restart the race tomorrow, what would he change? Gary's reply was "The entry form!"

The best story of the 87 Westfield concerns the Team Manager of Patrick Macke, John Cantwell. Coming into Canberra, Macke wanted a bath so John took off across a lawn into the reception of a Motel. Behind the counter was a neatly dressed Chinese chap:

"Ahh, how can I help you?"

"I want a room for about two hours so we can use the shower!"

This conversation continued because the Chinese chap could not understand this request. Communication ground to a halt, so John left. As he left he looked at the front and realised that he had just visited the Chinese embassy!

March 29 is a big day for Bombala citizens. They have prepared for the arrival of their hero, Cliff Young and declared the day "National Gumboot Day". Various activities are planned which include a "Cliff Young Look a Like comp", a gumboot-throwing contest and street stalls. Cliff doesn't make it until Monday but the celebrations continue until he arrives.

Kouros keeps running well and feels at one with nature as he races through the forests of East Gippsland. He listens to some of his favourite Greek music and sings and frolics along the road. He amazes his crew and race officials.

Tout is 100km behind Kouros and has crossed the border. Macke is 60km behind Tout and is slowly approaching Bombala. Bloomer is moving well and has moved into forth, 32km behind Macke.

Trishel Cherns has moved through the field and is now sixth. Dusan Mravlje is having a bad year. His masseur, Fred Hellyer has cleared his coked thigh but Mravlje is now suffering from an ingrown toenail. The race doctor, Kieran Fallon is called and does a quick operation on Dusan's big toe. Mravlje gets going again but develops a fever two hours later and has to withdraw.

This is a sad exit for last year's champion. But this is the Westfield and it doesn't take reputations into account. This has happened the last three years with Molloy (84 winner) withdrawing in 85, Kouros (85 winner) withdrawing in 86 and now the 86 winner withdrawn. Mary Hanudel passes through Nimmitabel and is leading Cynthia Cameron by 13 kilometres.

Issue five of the Newsletter was published and there was a warning to all crews to stock up on petrol during the day because not many Petrol stations before Bairnsdale are open after dark!

Mary Hanudel was awarded the Best Smile Award from the officials. This was for

the big wave and friendly smile that they received from her every time that they drove past.

A funny story happened in Cooma on Sunday night. A local farmer went into Cooma for his regular Sunday night session. As usual he got drunk. He left quite late on Sunday night to travel the 5km back to his farm but arrived at 1000 hrs on Monday morning. Why did it take so long to travel 5km?

He saw flashing lights along the road and thought Police had set up a breath testing station so he drove up a bush track and waited there until they had gone! Believe it or not!

World Champion whistler, Ralph Withering is part of the crew for Pat Macke. His jobs include whistling Pat into his rest stops. How is that for teamwork! Cynthia Cameron's crew was guilty of putting diesel into a petrol engine. The smoke could be seen for miles around!

Day five of the race starts. It is 96 hours into the race and Kouros has stormed through Orbost, Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale. He is 120km in front of Tout and seems to be developing in strength as the race progresses.

Kouros remembers Gippsland as the worst part of the race when he wrote:

In Sale the wind came and caused me some problems. I was spending too much energy running into it. I stopped early in the morning for a two hour break. The wind was still a problem all the next day. It slowed me down and I used up much energy trying to run against it but after Morwell I became so tired I could not run. I walked for about 7km but could not start running again. I was very tired and my eyelids kept shutting. I had to rest in Moe because I knew I could not go any longer. I had a massage, a hot bath and a meal. After this I had my best sleep. I did not wake for two hours.

The rest of the field remains unchanged. Kevin Mansell and Mark Gladwell are meeting the challenge head on. They have been at the brink of despair a few times, but have always come back. They are displaying moral fibre that makes ordinary people great. All of the other runners are displaying similar substance and will be walking tall at the end of the event.

Evening approaches and Kouros runs into the Latrobe Valley. The last runner is still 30km short of Bombala, which is a difference of 380km!

Day six of the race starts. The weather is foul with dark clouds looming along the coast. This is the worst day for Kouros. He is battered by a headwind and it saps his spirit. The wind dries his throat and he finds it difficult to speak. He cannot meet his plan and he slows to a walk outside Morwell. His eyes keep shutting. He then checks into a hotel in Moe for a bath, massage, meal and a well-deserved three hours sleep. This puts another fallacy to rest. God doesn't usually rest until the seventh day. Kouros had a break at the fifth! He is human after all!

Placings as at 0100 hrs 31 Mar:

Kouros	901.5km
Tout	739.3km
Macke	708.6km
Bloomer	680.2km

Audley	626km
Cherns	618km
Hanudel	618km
Standeven	602km
Rafferty	602km
Cameron	594km
Hill	577km
Cox	570km
Laharrague	563.3km
Collins	563.3km
Naysmith	553.15
Wilkinson	541.15km
Gladwell	539.2km
Mansell	533.5km
Young	531.9km
Pfister	496.4km
Rider	496.4km

The placings for the rest of the field remain unchanged. Kouros has a 140km lead over Tout who has a 32km lead over Macke. Mary Hanudel has moved into seventh and had a 28km lead over Cynthia Cameron. Tony Rafferty is in the top ten with David Standeven. Emil Laharrague is 13<sup>th</sup> , but cannot move for very long at a time.

Cliff Young is in 19<sup>th</sup> and has received a lift from the reception he was given in Bombala. Peter Pfister and Alan Rider withdraw when they reached the NSW/Vic border. Both have run a great race but have had enough. Gary Collins and Chilla Naysmith are in trouble with tendonitis to the knee. The pain is unbearable but they are not going to throw in the towel.

Whilst the leader was near the finish, a lot of the runners were still making it to the half way mark. Yesterday, Emile LaHarrague was at Cooma and decided to have a sleep from 1130am to 3.00pm. His crew paid a visit the local hotel and met two local ladies. The crew was taken home for coffee intending to stay until 3.00pm. However, Emile awoke at 230pm with no crew in sight. Quite a shock for the French runner!

By evening , Kouros has reached the outskirts of Melbourne. He feels better for his break and feels that he can keep going all the way to the finish. He is 140km in front of Tout and 500km in front of the last runner.

It was in the early hours of April 1<sup>st</sup> when Lemmy Moore, driver of Gladwell 2 bus

spotted a half used toilet roll on the side of the road. Realising that it might be useful later on, Grahame Kerruish was dispatched to retrieve it. Unfortunately Grahame leapt straight onto a "Darkie" and exclaimed, "Shit". Anguish turned into joy as the aroma of Greek cooking wafted into the crewmember's nostrils and he realised that he had trod into a Yiannis Kouros dropping.

At the end of the run the shoes are to be auctioned off uncleaned and are expected to fetch a high price. The toilet roll also will be auctioned of and only need arses may apply.

1<sup>st</sup> of April 1987 dawns and Kouros makes his final run through the streets of Melbourne towards the finish. It is early morning but there are many thousands waiting for him. The crowds erupt as he crosses the Finishing Line. He is as fresh as a Sunday morning jogger. The crowds chant his name and he responds with a song, which is an adapted Greek ballad that tells the story of 26 brave men and women who set out from Sydney to conquer Melbourne.

"Fantastic. Everything's fantastic. This is the most fantastic race in the world. This is my best," said Yiannis Kouros as he claimed victory in the 87 Westfield. He arrived at the finishing line at 1245 am and was 150km ahead of his nearest rival. He ran the distance in five and a half days, which was a World record for 1000 kilometres and won \$20 000. He broke two other records in the process. They were the longest point to point distance in 24 hours (273km) and the longest point to point over 48 hours (553km).

Yiannis ran the last three hundred-km with a throat infection. This was contracted whilst running through the wind and rain of Gippsland. The euphoria of winning effected Yiannis as he grabbed the microphone and sang a Greek folk song to the eager crowd. He spent today sleeping in a suburban Motel in Box Hill. One of the remarkable things to come out of this race was the mental ability of Kouros.

Kouros remembers the end of the race when he said:

*My best memory of the run is seeing the big neon sign at Westfield Doncaster. When I saw it I asked my crew to put on a special song called "Old Tripolis". It was composed by my grandfather, who was a singer in our church. I had waited for this moment and when I heard it I ran faster, maybe 15kph. I could have run faster still because of the inspiration from the song. I sang the song and sometimes I skipped because I felt so happy. I was happy because I had run better than last time in 1985.*

*I will run even better next year because I now know the new road. I know I will improve.*

His Drummoyne-based Physiotherapist, Charles Tzannes said "He really drove himself incessantly" commenting on Kouros's single mindedness during the race.

Kouros's Manager, Theo Premetis said "When he runs he is like a pregnant women. He complains. He wants everything spot on". Premetis describes himself as Kouros's lieutenant and said that he had many roles during the race. This included interpreter. Premetis said that Kouros was such a perfectionist that even though he could speak English, he wanted help to frame his replies.

Charles Tzannes commented further on the professionalism of Kouros when he said "He expects 100 percent effort. He yelled. Sometimes the food wasn't right. Or the music wasn't right. He'd let whoever he thought was responsible know all about it".

Kouros said after the race "I wish them luck. They know, of course, that I am not

running against them. I am running against my own previous record. Always."

Kouros only suffered one injury. That was a small blister on the second toe of his right foot. He also suffered laryngitis, which was due to the dry wind of Gippsland and the smoke in the forests of East Gippsland.

Charles Tzannes, also quoted said "His knees would have come in for the most punishment. The more you pound away, the more damaging it is."

A press release on Kouros was most appropriate when it said 'He has overturned man's preconceptions as to the limits of the human body. He runs with the spirit of ancient Greece uppermost in his mind and seems to have the capacity to run forever'.

Theo Premetis also said, "He never tells you anything. Yiannis prepared the entire program. He was the General and we were the soldiers. I was his Lieutenant."

Here are some interesting facts about Kouros and his Run:

**Diet:** One main meal a day, Greek salad, fresh fruit, yoghurt, cakes, dry fruit, sweets and beer. Snacks every 10 or 20 minutes during the day.

**Shoes:** Lazer Breeze open toed shoes from New Zealand.

**Physical Fitness:** Lower than might have been. Has done no physical training between October 86 and February 87.

**Injuries/Illnesses:** Small blister on second toe of right foot and laryngitis.

**Music:** Mostly Greek music.

**Sleep:** Four and half-hours in half-hour stretches.

**Pain:** Able to continue despite high levels of pain.

A sportsmens breakfast was held on arrival of Yiannis Kouros with several sporting celebrities from mainstream sports being present. There were also twenty schoolchildren from a Special School present. The delight on their faces was great.

The attention of the race has now switched to Tout and Macke. Macke has closed to within 15km of Tout. Tout appears to be finished and is running on memory. Macke catches Tout at 4.00pm. He then stops for a rest, which unnerves Tout. Macke passes Tout again later on in the evening and by midnight there is a 20km break between the two runners.

Macke crosses the finishing line at 0330 hrs. Patrick Macke ran 125 miles on the last day, which is definitely a fine performance after his horrible finish in 1986. What a difference one year makes!

He has a 30km break on Tout who ends up coming third. The remaining positions remain unchanged. Wilkinson, Collins and Naysmith end up withdrawing.

Race positions at 3 Apr 87 at 0600hrs:

Kouros            5 days 15 hours

Macke            6 days 16 hours

Tout	6 days 21 hours
Bloomer	926km
Cherns	901km
Audley	896km
Standeven	899km
Hanudel	879km
Cameron	858km
Rafferty	845km
Hill	841km
Cox	820km
Gladwell	810km
Mansell	804km
Laharrague	794km
Young	744km
Wilkinson	749km

On Thursday evening, Mary Hanudel has a 15km lead over Cynthia Cameron. Their two crews are playing a great game of cat and mouse through out the race. The lead constantly changes hands and neither team would let their runner get to far behind the other one. Rest breaks became shorter and less frequent.

It was at Berwick, 60km from the finish when the two runners were running together. They were chatting away to each other as they ran stride for stride. As they got closer to Melbourne the conversation waned. Spectators lined the streets to applaud the two great runners.

Being a hometown girl, was the impetus that Cameron needed and she broke from Hanudel. Hanudel could not respond and walked the rest of the distance. Cameron kept going. She was cheered in by thousands of spectators and late night shoppers. Her battle was finally over after 8 days, 10 hours and 35 minutes.

The run of Mary Hanudel will be regarded as the top American performance of 87. She ran 800 kilometres in six days. Mary Hanudel is looking good at having a crack at Eleanor Adams six day women's record.

Meanwhile greater things were happening on the Highway. Cliff Young was making great progress along the Princess Highway. By the time he reached the city, crowds had closed the road. Cliff responded like royalty; he kissed babies and shook hands. He signed hundreds of autographs as the race was slowly forgotten. People were yelling for him all the way to the end. He had been elevated to Messiah status.



Cliff Young was lucky to gain a start in the 87 Westfield. This was because of his average performances in 85 and 86. Charlie Lynn came to his rescue and convinced Westfield management that he was worthy of a start. Cliff had a feeling that it would be his last race and was determined to finish it as a thankyou to all the people that had assisted him over the years.

His wife, Mary assembled a first rate crew. They included Christine Perry, Don Weston, Ron Kelly and John and Kerrie Champness. Cliff got as far as Canberra and his left foot blew up. His physio produced a new product called "Kold Wrap". It was designed to take the pain and heat out of injuries. It did that and Cliff was soon running again.

Cliff improved dramatically once they left Canberra. He received a marvellous reception in all the Gippsland towns. People were giving out cards, letters and presents to Cliff. He ended up finishing last but he was happy to finish. The Gippslanders had seen Cliff in the flesh and he had said his farewells as a runner!

Once he arrived in the city, he was greeted by hoards of young teenagers who chanted "Cliff Young". They then ran beside him singing the national anthem. This was a real tribute to a great man.

It was ten kilometres from the finish when Cliff decided to run. Unfortunately, his hip dislodged and he was forced back to a walk. He limped the last few kilometres and finished to a hero's welcome. Cliff had returned home once more! 1987 definitely belonged to Cliff and Yiannis!

One of the features of this year's race was the success rate of the veterans. They filled ten of the sixteen places and six of those veterans were from Victoria. First Aussie to finish was 46 year old Brian Bloomer from Victoria. He finished forth after overcoming injury that would have seen a lesser person call it a day.

Kiwi runner, Gary Retgien crewed for Dick Tout in 1987. Gary had competed in the race in 86 and completed over half the distance. Here is Gary's story of the 87 run which was first published in the New Zealand Ultra Runners Association "Ultra News".

*I had been looking forward to rendezvous with the familiar surroundings of Lakes Entrance where my wife Louise and I spent so many pleasant skindiving and camping holidays in the early 60's.*

*Well Dick did stop there, but it certainly wasn't to admire the scenery or do a spot of fishing!*

*After battling a strong headwind since Cann river (near the NSW/Vic border) for the last 36 hours, his arrival at the picturesque Gippsland Lakes district was brought to a halt by a 40 knot gale and a seasprayed waterfront. It was dark, probably about 7pm when we arrived at the reception, spa bath and steaming scallop pies. Dick needed the break and didn't really care where Kouros or Macke were at this stage.*

*He had been talking about getting a doctor or nurse to look at the chafing and thrush problems. Bob Johnson and I discussed the matter and decided not to consult the medical profession.... Reason being, there would be a good chance they would pull him out.*

*His ankles and knees were in the process of expanding 'nicely' and he also had a mouth*

*full of ulcers. The local hospital would have been more than delighted to put him up for a few days.*

*After shaving him, taping - dressing - plastering - double skinning - rubbing him in ointment and vaseline etc. Dick was tucked in while we went pizza hunting with one guy keeping watch. We weren't too worried about the 4hr break as we knew that Macke was also battling the increasing gale well over 50k back the other side of town. However, analysing later, this proved to be the very point in the race where Dick lost a big slice of his lead and allowed Macke to come within striking distance.*

*With the event being day and night running, things can change quickly, when one runner sleeps and the other keeps going...Usually this evens itself out over the 24 hours, but when trouble strikes, watch out!*

*So the next day, Max had the unpleasant duty to tell Dick "He is 24km behind you". Panic in the Kiwi camp - all leave was cancelled. "How did he do it?" Glenn Rymand and I took "big bird" back to Macke too spy on his movements. Macke rested for four hours and ten minutes. Tout rested for two hours and thirty minutes. Patrick was running 57 minutes for 10k. Dick was running 80 minutes for 10k. How far to go? Will he catch at this rate, where and when? Well, with about 65k to go Macke did catch us - and we could not help but admire his pace and the shape he was in. However, he stopped and rested again.*

*Dick took off - but the expected cat and mouse game did not eventuate. As Dick's ankles and knees were ballooning further it was impossible to lift the pace. With great determination he covered 90 miles over the last 24 hours, but had to settle for third place. Behind the singing Kouros and an "orienteeing" Macke ( ask Dick about that sometime).*

*I am writing this particular episode for the uninformed critics, but also for the bulk of genuinely interested ultra runners in NZ wondering why Dick Tout missed out on getting 2<sup>nd</sup> place.*

*After the ¾ way mark, Dick became a physical mess and nobody close to him would have blamed him for calling it a day.*

Comparing his condition to Kouros and Macke would have made it quite clear that Dick was only surviving on sheer guts and will power anyway - that's how I saw it.

Trishel Cherns ran his race very sensibly. After the first day he was 23<sup>rd</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> after the second, 6<sup>th</sup> after day three, 4<sup>th</sup> after day 6 and ended up in fifth position. His daily mileage splits were 97, 83, 84, 69, 86, 77 and 80 which was remarkably consistent! He broke the Canadian 1000km record by eight and a half hours with a time of seven days fourteen hours and 43 minutes. He won \$1500 for a little over a week's work and was more than happy with his result.

Trishel Cherns celebrated his birthday during the run. He was presented with a present in Bombala by 300 people who sang Happy Birthday to him. The second highlight for Trishel in the race was to finish the race with Geoff Kirkman. He was the runner that almost lost his life in the tragic accident in the 86 Race.

Trishel says that his great crew, meditative consciousness to be receptive to God's grace. Determination and focus, good music and the joy of uninterrupted running were the ingredients that got him through the Westfield.

Trishel Cherns had two interesting stories happen to him during the Run. The first

story happened 100 km out of Melbourne when a slender teenage boy appeared out of nowhere in the middle of the night and accompanied him for 35 kilometres. He had never ran more than 2 km in his life but was inspired by the Westfield runners. The young boy ran effortlessly and barefoot. When he stopped it wasn't because of tiredness but he had to travel back home. The amazing thing was that his feet were not blistered. His energy did not drop during the entire jaunt. Trishel marvelled at his natural endurance and the unmarked feet.

The other story concerned Dave Taylor. Dave had dropped out of the race but decided to join Trishel's crew. The rest of the story is best told in Trishel's words:

*He voiced to me the competitive spirit needed to beat an Australian in a racing format.*

*This happened when David Standeven caught me. It went something like this.*

*"Mate break this Bugger's spirit! Bust his balls! He's tough but your tougher. Race him, break him and bury him. He came here for agony, now give him what he wants! Until I see him dead on the road and 20 kilometres behind us. You can't get into the van to rest and I will pour buckets of water all over you to shake your tiredness. I will hit you with a stick and throw stones at you at any signs of weakness"*

*I must say this bloke was dead serious and I was feeling tired enough to believe him. So David Standeven and I raced for many kilometres. Eventually David's knee's got sore and he fell behind. I guess I did not want to face the rath of David Taylor, and wanted to hold my 5<sup>th</sup> position to Melbourne. Not to relinquish it to anyone!*

Not the first overseas runner to have an injured Aussie join their crew and be very surprised by their tactics!

Trishel Cherns set himself a punishing race schedule the year before the Westfield. He competed in nine ultra races around the world. They ranged from a 76km race through to the New York Sri Chinmoy 1000-mile race. The amazing thing was that he achieved forth or better in every race. It was not surprising that Westfield paid his way to Australia after results like that.

The following runners were missing in action during the 87 Westfield:

Chilla Naysmith	NSW	871km
Graeme wilkinson	NSW	783km
Gary Collins	NSW	698km
Peter Pfister	Vic	531km
Alan Rider	Tas	531km
Dusan Mravalje	Yug	480km
Patrick Farmer	NSW	367km
Chuck Jones	USA	362km
Dave Taylor	NSW	170km
Peter Parcell	Qld	155km



**1987 FINAL PLACINGS:**

Yiannis Kouros	5d14h47m
Patrick Macke	6d17h21m
Dick Tout	6d22h19m
Brian Bloomer	7d19h22m
Trishel Cherns	7d23h5m
George Audley	8d1h34m
David Standeven	8d9h19m
Cynthia Cameron	8d10h55m
Mary Hanudel	8d12h44m
Tony Rafferty	8d15h58m
Mark Gladwell	8d17h22m
Terry Cox	8d17h46m
Emile Laharrague	8d18h16m
Kevin Mansell	8d 18h55m
Ron Hill	8d 22h36m
Cliff Young	9d13h17m

The 87 Westfield had been run and won for the second time by Yiannis Kouros. The new route had etched itself into Ultra folklore. All the runners had come and conquered in their own way. Some will return and some will be content and head into new areas! That is what Ultra running is all about.

## Chapter Seven

### *1988 - The Bicentennial*

As soon as the dust settled on the 1987 Run, planning commenced for the 1988 Race. Charlie Lynn was full time Manager for the Race and his staff immediately began planning for 1988..

The runners recovered from their ordeal of 87, and soon had thoughts of next year's race. The ultra runners who didn't run in 87 were more determined and started upping the miles immediately.

Due to the huge interest in becoming a runner in the event, Westfield established qualifying standards. It was obvious that some runners had the score on the board because they had already completed a Westfield Run or had good results in another race. Other runners were just making the step up from the Marathon and needed to be tested. There was a range of Ultra Races now being held in Australia. It was decided that 24hr races would give the runners a Test of their ability and give them a good Qualifying aim! They had to aim to run 200km in that period.

Once the runners felt that they had met the qualifying standards, they could put the Entry Form into Westfield Race. A lot of the runners never met the qualifying standard of 200km, but it gave them something to strive for. They were rarely accepted if they achieved under 160km in 24 hours. On gaining entry to the race they received a Letter of Acceptance.

This Letter congratulated the Runner and informed him that he had to find sponsorship. The runners also had to provide a crew of seven. This would include 1 ,manager, 1 masseur/physio, 1 cook and 4 drivers. The runners were not allowed in the event with any less than 6. The runners would also have to provide two campervans. One 2 berth van would be directly behind the runner and the 6 berth van would hold the bulk of the crew travelling about two hundred metres behind the runner. Each of these vehicles would have to be fitted with CB radios.

The runners had to provide \$150 for vehicle signage and a \$300 bond. Not included on this list was food, drinks, fuel, clothes etc. The average cost per runner worked out close to \$5 000 to \$ 10 000 per year. Some were lucky enough to gain sponsorship, whilst others would go "cap in hand" to the bank Manager. It meant that much to the runners and they were all willing to sacrifice time, effort and material to run in the Westfield.

Future Westfield aspirant, Grahame Kerruish (Mountain Man), started his long road towards qualifying for the 88 event, when he ran 22h 40m in the Manly 100mile in April 87 and finished forth.

The 1988 event was scheduled to start at Westfield Parramatta at 12 Noon on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> Mar 88 and finish by 12 noon on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> Mar 88. The runners had to 30 Sep 87 to qualify!

Westfield also looked after future runners by sending them a Medical bulletin

written by Dr Kieran Fallon, Medical director for the 1987 Run. He covered such areas as Training hints, Injury prevention, Physios, Medical Equipment, Common Injuries on the 87 Run, Diet, Vitamin Supplements, Warning signs and Drug testing. Most of the runners had already sought advice, but there were some runners that had entered previous Westfield's and were quite blind to what was required.

The first 24-hour qualifying race for the 88 Westfield was put on by the Sydney Striders at the end of May 87. Future Westfield aspirants who excelled were Ed Vega (175.25km), Maurice Taylor ( 202.398km), Grahame Kerruish ( 165.72km), Graham Firkin (164.995km), Tony Collins (162.844km), Graeme Townsend (162.23km), Pat Farmer (154.7km), Ernie Cattle (151.655km) and Dave Taylor (130.040km).

A couple of 50 mile races were held in Victoria in June 87 with future Westfield aspirants, Bryan Smith and John Briet putting in good performances.

It was in October 87 when a 48-hour race was conducted in Perth. George Audley won the event with 335km. Joe Record amassed 317km to finish third and Ross Parker ran 300.950km to run fifth. They were all to win starts in the 88 Westfield.

The Colac 6 day race was run in November 87 and it contained a very high-class international field. A lot of the runners were previous or future Westfield runners and they all excelled during the six days. The top five runners were:

Joe Record 890.8km

Dusan Mravlje 863.2km

Pat Macke 856.4km

Eleanor Adams 838.8km

George Perdon 813.2km

Westfield aspirant, **Grahame Kerruish** got the motivation to run after crewing for Mark Gladwell who finished eleventh in 1987. He had already ran in a few Ultras prior to crewing for Gladwell, but seeing the race for himself was enough to push him to the next step.

At forty-eight years old, Grahame is in good health, superfit, non-smoker and a keen follower of the Pritikin diet. He said "I work on the principle that if you put rubbish into your body, you get rubbish out of it"

The training programme utilised by Kerruish would make the strongest man cry. He runs to Hyde Park tower from Riverwood every day and return in the afternoon. That is 42km every day, Monday through to Friday and takes four hours every day. On Saturday mornings he cycles 15km to Lake Gillawarna and goes for a 10km group jog with fellow Western District Joggers. He then cycles home. Sunday will be a competitive event, be it a Marathon, Ultra, Biathlon or Triathlon. During 1987 Graham ran in at least 35 major events, which included 6 City Marathons along the eastern border

Westfield sent a newsletter on November 97 to all competitors which supplied future runners with more information. It included information on The Start, The route, Pre Event Itinerary, Cut off times, Runners clothing, crew clothing, Badges, Vehicles, Vehicle signage, Crew composition, Fundraising, Personal profile and various registration forms

that had to be filled out and returned by the runners.

One of the new areas introduced to the 88 Race was the Introduction of cut off times. The runners would have the following cut off times to beat to stay in the race:

28 hours	180km	Goulburn,
48 hours	275km	Canberra,
72 hours t	395km	Cooma,
93 hours	485km	Bombala,
125 hours	655km	Orbost,
144 hours	750km	Bairnsdale,
168 hours	875km	Traralgon,
188 hours	980km	Packenham
204 hours	Finish	Doncaster.

One would definitely have to be ahead of time from the start. This idea was thought of by Organisers to keep the field from spreading to far apart and to make the race more interesting.

Puma decided to help sponsor the event when they agreed to provide the official clothing for the runners. Each runner would be given:

3 singlets,

6 T-shirts,

1 Jog suit,

1 Track Suit,

1 rain suit,

4 shorts, and

2 pairs of running shoes.

This would go along way to defraying some of the costs that each runner was facing.

Meanwhile, **Owen Tolliday** from Buderim, Qld was making his own way in getting accepted for the race. The thirty eight year old former surfer has only been running for two and a half years. In that time he won the Queensland Marathon, Road Runners Club 50 mile race and the Queensland 24 hour title. That success gave him the stimulus to enter the Westfield.

Tolliday has gathered a good crew for his attempt at the Westfield. He has sought the advice of Ultra Marathon Guru, Ron Grant and is eating an excellent diet. Tolliday was well supported in the local community with Sunshine Coast Tourism, Maroochy Shire, Sunshine Coast Motor Vehicle dealers Association and Tri-Fitness all throwing their weight behind his race attempt.



1988 dawned and a 48 hr Race was ran in Melbourne. Graeme Woods from Queensland earned a place in the Westfield with an excellent 367.83km for first place. Other Westfield aspirants who booked a place in the run were Bryan Smith 358.93km, Ron Hill 330km, Barry Brooks 315km and John Briet with 293km. Several of the Westfield runners also put in solid performances in the Victorian 24-hour race held in February 1988. By then all of the runners had their places in the Westfield and were concentrating on large weekly mileage's.

It was a month before the race and Westfield upped the publicity machine in the print media. Press releases were dished out at a weekly rate. One of the first runners to be profiled was 50 year old, NSW Blacksmith **Graham Firkin**. He has a bone disease that is slowly knitting his spine together. This will leave his spine absolutely rigid.

He didn't have the illness in 1983 and started running for different reasons. "I smoked too many cigarettes, drank too much beer and had to lose some weight" said Firkin He enjoyed his running and had dreams of running in the Westfield. Firkin has run 200km a week in the past twenty weeks and was thankful for the support that his family has given in the past couple of years.

It was early in February 1988 when the runners were provided with a copy of the Race rules. Westfield definitely made sure that their organisation ran like clockwork and left nothing to chance in the lead up to the Bicentennial race. It was two weeks before the start when the runners received a more detailed itinerary of the events happening before the run.

Runners to be profiled in a lead up article in the Sydney Morning Herald were Pat Farmer, Pat Macke, Kevin Mansell, Mark Gladwell and Graham Townsend, (whose wife is expecting their first baby during the run). Pat Farmer was quoted as saying "I do not enjoy the pain. What I do enjoy is the amazing feeling of relief when it has gone"

Owen Tolliday peaked for the Westfield with a 290km run a month before the race. He started the run around the Sunshine Coast around 11.30pm on the Friday and finished lunchtime, Sunday. He had two breaks with 5 and a 1/2 hours total rest. He was happy with the result of the run and it gave his crew the chance to work together in a field environment.

The full list of runners for the 88 event:

<b>SURNAME</b>	<b>FIRST NAME</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>HOMETOWN</b>	<b>STATE/COUNTRY</b>
<u>ADAMS</u>	ELEANOR	40	SELESTON	UK
AUDLEY	GEORGE	52	ALBANY	WA
BARWICK	SANDRA	38	AUCKLAND	NZ
BLOOMER	BRIAN	47	SPRINGVALE	VIC
BREIT	JOHN	30	MOE	VIC
BROOKS	BARRY	47	BALLARAT	VIC
CAREAU	MICHEL	47	QUEBEC	CANADA

<b>CATTLE</b>	ERNIE	38	HOLBROOK	NSW
<b>COLLINS</b>	GARY	27	UMINA	NSW
<b>COLLINS</b>	TONY	40	NORAH HEAD	NSW
<b>COX</b>	TERRY	51	ROSEBUD	Vic
<b>CURRIE</b>	STUART		MURWILLUMBAH	NSW
<b>EARSMAN</b>	DALLAS	60	TAMWORTH	NSW
<b>FARMER</b>	PAT	25	GRANVILLE	NSW
<b>FIRKIN</b>	GRAHAM	50	DHARRUK	NSW
<b>GLADWELL</b>	MARK	40	NORTH ROCKS	NSW
<b>HANUDEL</b>	MARY	28	OHIO	USA
<b>HARRIS</b>	TREVOR	41	CHAPMAN	ACT
<b>HILL</b>	RON	47	DROMANA	VIC
<b>JAVES</b>	IAN	45	MANSFIELD	QLD
<b>KERRUISH</b>	GRAHAME	48	RIVERWOOD	NSW
<b>KOUROS</b>	YIANNIS	32	ATHENS	GREECE
<b>LARSSON</b>	RUNE	31	TROLKATTAN	SWEDEN
<b>MACKE</b>	PAT	32	GRANTHAM	UK
<b>MANSELL</b>	KEVIN	37	CABRAMATTA	NSW
<b>MARTIN</b>	ROSS	45	WENTWORTHVILLE	NSW
<b>MRAVLJE</b>	DUSAN	33	SLOVANIA	YUGOSLAVIA
<b>PARKER</b>	ROSS	39	CRAIGIE	WA
<b>RAFFERTY</b>	TONY	48	YARRAVILLE	VIC
<b>RECORD</b>	JOE	46	MOUNT HELENA	WA
<b>SMITH</b>	BRYAN	44	MELTON	VIC
<b>SPRENGLEMEYER</b>	MARTY	41	IOWA	USA
<b>STANDEVEN</b>	DAVID	35	CHRISTIE DOWN	SA
<b>TAKASHI</b>	TOMOYA		TOKYO	JAPAN
<b>TAYLOR</b>	DAVE	36	APPIN	NSW
<b>TAYLOR</b>	MAURICE	39	HABERFIELD	NSW
<b>TOUT</b>	DICK	40	AUCKLAND	NZ
<b>TOWNSEND</b>	GRAEME	30	MITTAGONG	NSW
<b>TOLLIDAY</b>	OWEN	38	BUDERIM	QLD
<b>VEGA</b>	EDUARDO	47	LIDCOMBE	NSW

<b>WILKINSON</b>	GRAEME	41	GUNNEDAH	NSW
<b>WOODS</b>	GRAEME	41	ROCKHAMPTON	QLD

**Ernie Cattle** from Holbrook, NSW is entering the Westfield for the first time. He has been in the Royal Australian Navy for ten years and is a Physical Training Instructor with an interest in Combat Survival Courses. Ernie is regarded as a Fitness Fanatic in his local community, but has only been running seriously for the past four years.

Ernie has always sought new challenges in life and believes that the Sydney to Melbourne will be that challenge. In the past four years, he has run many Marathons and Ultras and has been eating twelve low fat meals a day. His other interests in life are canoeing and flying Ultra Light aircraft.

Twenty-seven year old, **Gary Collins** from Ettalong in NSW is one of the younger runners in the race. Prior to 1987, Gary's sporting expertise lay in the surfing, swimming and Martial arts. He was watching the 86 Run on TV with his ankle in plaster and was so impressed with the efforts of Dusan Mravlje that he got a pair of tin snips and cut off the plaster. He then went for a run and hasn't looked back since.

He had plenty of knockers prior to the 87 event. He had to train with \$6 specials from K-Mart but still completed an incredible 698km in his first race. He qualified for this year's race with a credible 150km in the Sydney 24hr Race and is confident of completing the full distance of the 88 Westfield.

**Tony Collins**, a dentist from Norah Heads in NSW is competing to raise money for Camperdown Children's Hospital cancer research. He was forced to withdraw at the 928km mark with shin trouble in 1987 but had raised \$11 000 for the appeal and was ecstatic at his efforts.

Salvation Army Officer, **Terry Cox** from Victoria is competing in the event for the second time. He crewed for Pat Macke in 1986 and was so inspired by his effort, that he ran in 87 and completed the course in 8 days, 16 hours and 35 minutes.

Terry has done many Runs for charity prior to 86 and held the record for the longest distance covered on a Treadmill. This was recorded in the Guinness Book of Records. Terry has been covering at least 200km per week in training. Some of this mileage includes running backwards up hills.

An Army Officer of a different sort in the field was 41 year old, **Trevor Harris** from the ACT. Trevor is a Warrant Officer in the Australian Army and twenty months ago the Westfield was an impossible dream. He was involved in a near fatal motorcycle accident. On recovery he set himself to run in the "Westfield". He has been running 250km a week and has run eight Ultras and five marathons in preparation. Trevor is aiming to be the first Aussie home.

**Dallas Earsman** from Tamworth, NSW is one of the older runners in the race. He is a 60 year old Car Salesman. He completed 185km in the 85 run, before having to withdraw with tendonitis. He was injured last year, but is fit and raring to go. His best distance over 24 hours in 140km.

**Pat Farmer** from Granville, NSW is the youngest runner in the field at twenty-five.

He competed last year and completed 367kms.

Farmer has crewed for several top Ultra Marathon Runners in other races and when asked why he wanted to run the Westfield said, "Because it's there". Pat watched Molloy win in 84 and has been inspired ever since.

Forty year old, **Mark Gladwell** from North Rocks, NSW has only been running for the past three and a half years, but finished eleventh in last year's Westfield. He has run between 240 - 280km per week in training and believes that his Army service will help him to discipline his mind in this area.

Mark started running after meeting, Kevin Mansell at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting and the pair have not looked back since. Mark got sponsored per kilometre last year and raised \$10 000 for the NSW Spastic Centre.

**Dusan Mravlje** from Yugoslavia is a previous winner of the event in 1986. He had to withdraw last year, after completing 480km. He cannot understand much English, but he certainly endeared himself to the Australian public when he went on a "Pub Crawl" on the last day of the 86 race. He has completed over twenty Marathons and has excellent time of all ultra distances between 100km and 1000km. He is certainly one to watch in this year's event.

**Rune Larsson** from Sweden is competing in this event for the first time. He has won or been placed in every Ultra event in Europe in the last twelve months. His training regime includes Orienteering, Cross Country Skiing, running, Canoeing, Kayaking. In winter he will ski from one end Sweden to the other and in summer he walks and covers the same distance. He believes that these solo adventures give him the necessary mental capacity to compete in Ultras.

Rune also has a best Marathon time of 2 hours and 18 minutes, which was recorded at Boston. This is definitely world class. He is a bachelor and said "Who could keep up with my lifestyle?"

The 1988 Westfield is starting on St Patrick's Day. This suits **Tony Rafferty** to a tea. Tony has run this route fourteen times and has also run from Fremantle to Surfers Paradise and was the first person to run along the dreaded Birdsville Track.

1986 was a good year for Tony. He won the 1000-mile Race in England and finishing sixth in the La Rochelle 6 Day World Championship. He has started in the last five Westfield's and has only failed to finish on one occasion. A remarkable achievement in itself!

**Joe Record** from WA is a full time Ultra runner. He finished fifth in 1985 and 1986. In the first two years he withdrew with injury but was close to getting a major place on each occasion. Joe boycotted the event in 87 and ran by himself from Sydney to Melbourne. He won the Colac 6 Day Race last year with a total of 890kms and should help to influence the outcome of this year's Westfield.

Telecom Lines Officer, **Bryan Smith** from Melton, Victoria is competing in the event for the first time. He has already run 227km in a 24 hour race and should be very competitive.

**David Standeven** from Christie Downs, South Australia is competing in the race for the second time. He finished seventh last year in a time of 8 days 9 hours and 19

minutes. He began his running career in 1982. In 1986 he ran in two ultra Marathons and won both.

The first was the Manly 100-mile race which he won in an outstanding time of 14 hours and 13 minutes. He then won the Aust 24 hour in October 86 and scored the Aust 200km record at the same time. He weighs slightly over 50kg, and is training over 300km a week. He has a heart bigger than Phar Lap.

**Maurice Taylor** from Kogarah in NSW is another first timer. He has been running since 1976 and has run in thirty marathons, six 50-mile events, three 24 hour events and the 85km Cradle Mountain Run. He has a best distance of 202.3km over 24 hours and should do well in this year's Race.

Thirty six year old, **David Taylor** from Appin in NSW is back for his third attempt. In 1986 he completed 557km and last year he managed 170km before missing the cut off at Goulburn. He has ran from Sydney to Melbourne and back again in 1987. This took 22 days and 16 hours and 15 minutes. Tony Rafferty is the only other runner to run from Melbourne to Sydney and return! He is confident that he will make it to the finish Line on his third attempt.

Japan will be represented by forty six year old Professional Folk Singer, **Tomoya Takaishi**. TV crews from Japan have covered the event during the past two years and are expected to be in bigger numbers this year. Since 1975, he has competed in Marathons, Triathlons and Iron Man ultra races in the USA and Japan. He is known for his ability of smiling, no matter what pain barrier he is suffering.

**Graeme Townsend** from Mittagong, NSW is competing in the event for the first time. He has played first grade cricket, won the NSW Junior and Senior Table Tennis Championship and has a major in Physical Education. His original plans were to run in the 1989 Event, but his 162km in May 1987 impressed officials that they asked him to run in this year's event. Graeme's wife, Cathy is expecting their first baby during this year's race!

**Dick Tout** from New Zealand is entering the event for the second time and is tipped to fill one of the major placings. He finished third last year in a time of 6 days, 2 hours and 29 minutes. He differs from the normal Ultra Runner in that he races to win and doesn't accept second best. Since his first ultra in 1981 he has raced in 14 events and has eleven wins to his credit. Dick has completed over 25 marathons and has a best distance of 247 kms over 24 hours.

**Eduardo Vega** from Lidcombe in NSW emigrated from Peru in 1984. He has been running in Ultra events in that country since 1978. He got accepted into the race after running an incredible 175km at the 24-hour race in 1987. He spent half the night in hospital suffering from dehydration, but was discharged from hospital at 0600 hrs in the morning, went back to the track and started running again. Exactly the guts and determination that officials are looking for!

**Graeme Wood** from Queensland is another first time starter. He is a full time runner and motivational speaker with a personal best of 212km over 24 hours. He trains up to 200km a week and has the luxury of an all-female crew for this year's event.

**Kevin Mansell** from Cabramatta, NSW is running for the second time. Kevin finished 14<sup>th</sup> last year and took just under nine days. On finishing last year, Kevin said "All my life I've been looking for a hero. Now I've found one.... ME".

Kevin began running five years ago when he joined Alcoholics Anonymous to quit drinking and break his eighty cigarettes a day habit. It was at that meeting that he met fellow Ultra Runner, Mark Gladwell and neither have looked back since! Kevin is unsure if he likes running or not, but likes the satisfaction on completing a hard run. He is training over 300km a week and is expected to vastly improve his time on last year's effort!

Ultra Legend, **Cliff Young** is not running this year. He is in retirement but will be Morale Officer for this year's run

**Rod Martin** from NSW is also running in the event for the first time. He is a courier company manager and holds all the Long distance Running records with the Parramatta Athletics club. He has only recently moved to longer races and has a sixth place in the 1987 Sydney to Wollongong and 134km at the 24hr Trial Race.

It was announced at the Press conference two days before the start of the Race, that champion Yiannis Kouros would start twelve hours behind the rest of the field. Race organiser, Charlie Lynn originally asked Kouros a week ago to start twenty-four hours behind the rest of the field. Kouros rejected this saying that he did not have enough time to change his tactics. Kouros has been offered another \$5 000 on top of the \$25 000 first prize if he makes up the 12 hour delayed start and is the first to cross the Finishing Line.

Several of the runners protested when this Delayed Start was announced at the Press Conference. Victorian Runner, Brian Bloomer threatened possible protest action by the rest of the strong field. "It'd be nice if the runners ran down the road and waited at the 50 mile mark until Kouros joined us and then we'll all start off and have a fair dinkum race" Bloomer also said that if the Australian Ultra Runners Association had any teeth they would pull all the runners out of the race.

Tony Rafferty was furious and said "It's ridiculous and makes a circus of the whole race. What's all this business about Kouros automatically winning - he's a human being and we haven't seen the best of some of the other runners yet"

Michel Careau of Canada was annoyed and said, "A race is a race. All the runners should start at the same time. Psychologically we should all line up together. Now instead of chasing Kouros, he will be chasing us. It is unfortunate, but it will not change the way I will run my race".

Race Organiser, Charlie Lynn explained safety reasons and a need to sustain the public interest as reasons why Kouros would be starting twelve hours behind the rest of the field.

By the morning of the race, the runners had calmed down on the handicapping issue and realised that they still had a job to do. Brian Bloomer, who twenty four hours earlier had suggested some sort of combined runners protest was quoted as saying shortly before the race "Kouros might well win or lose by a month but it's no good crying about it -we'll just go out and run".

The day of the race was now here and the World's largest Point to Point footrace was ready to start. It was the sixth running of the event and 1015km long. It had Bicentennial endorsement and the promoters are hoping that it will be a major part of Australia's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Mayor of Parramatta presented each runner with a medallion and certificate. This was very well received and is sure to be treasured for years to come. The journey was set to encompass a variety of terrain and meander it's way from Sydney to Canberra and

then through the Snowy Mountains before winding up in the flatlands of Gippsland and the Finish at Melbourne.

It promises to be a great battle in the Womens Race as well. There are three women lined up for the event. They are Eleanor Adams (UK), Mary Hanudel(USA) and Sandra Barwick(NZ). Media coverage for the event is promising to be at an all time high. Channel Nine and a Japanese Film crew are making separate documentaries.

The race was finally underway at 11am. A huge crowd was at Westfield Shoppingtown, Parramatta and lined the roads on the way out of the city.

Firsttimer, Ernie Cattle was leading at the Marathon stage. He went through at three hours and two minutes, which is a very fast for the start of an Ultra! By tea time, the field was starting to be in some sort of order. Dick Tout was in the lead from Dusan Mravlje, Ernie Cattle and Patrick Macke was in forth place.

When Yiannis Kouros started at 11pm. Dick Tout had covered 120km.

Dick Tout and crew became the first runner and vehicles to use the new Bypass Road between Goulburn and Canberra. The preliminary speeches were being made by the VIPs and Officials when along came Tout and crew heading straight for the ribbon. "Determined not to be upstaged, the ribbon was officially cut and Tout calmly jogged through followed by his support crew. They became the first runner and vehicles to use the bypass and the event was duly reported on ABC TV."

It was early in the morning when Dick Tout was seen chasing three sheep along the road. New Zealanders have an affection for sheep but this is ridiculous "Needless to say, instead of lamb chops for breakfast, Dick had to settle for a massage".

Brian Bloomer's van was spotted during the night with an assortment of hubcaps and junk in the van. The Westfield Newsletter Reporter suggested that they would "Probably have a trash & treasure sale at the end of the race"

The top ten placings after twenty four hours of running were:

- |     |                     |       |
|-----|---------------------|-------|
| 1.  | Richard Tout        | 242km |
| 2.  | Dusan Mravlje       | 225km |
| 3.  | Owen Tolliday       | 204km |
| 4.  | Patrick Macke       | 203km |
| 5.  | Rune Larssen        | 201km |
| 6.  | Bryan Smith         | 198km |
| 7.  | Ian Javes           | 194km |
| 8.  | Marty Sprengelmeyer | 193km |
| 9.  | Joe Record          | 192km |
| 10. | Graeme Wilkinson    | 192km |

Women's Placings after 24 hours were:

22	Eleanor Adams	163km
26	Mary Hanudel	159km
34	Sandra Barwick	144km

The second day of the race dawned and there were two withdrawals. They were Dallas Earsman from NSW who withdrew after covering 150km, suffering from blisters. Tony Rafferty was also withdrawn. He covered 168km, but failed to reach the first cut off in the allotted time. Tony had competed and completed the course on the last five occasions. Every Champion has one bad race. Unfortunately the critics and cynics who seem to gleefully surface on masse every time a Tall Poppy fails in Australian sport were soon out and baying for Tony's blood.

Yiannis Kouros was moving through the field. As he passed each runner he would present them with a T-shirt bearing the words "Yiannis Kouros -Ultra Marathon Man". In other sports this would be regarded as One-upmanship, but Kouros felt humble every time he passed a fellow runner. Kouros knew the responsibilities that came with being the best Ultra runner in the World.

Dick Tout was keeping his slender lead, but was being challenged by Larsson, Mravlje and Macke. New Australian runner, Byran Smith was moving through the field and was up with the leaders.

Michel Careau smashed the Canadian 48-hour record when he recorded 288.5km. The previous mark stood at 277.6km.

The funniest story of Day two goes to the crew manager of Graeme Townsend's crew. Graeme needed to go to the toilet. One of his crew called the Manager for a "Date Roll" to which his reply was "I haven't got any date roll , but will a banana cake do?"

Top Ten after Day two were:

1.	Dick Tout	405km
2.	Rune Larssen	376km
3.	Dusan Mravlje	368km
4.	Bryan Smith	367km
5.	Patrick Macke	348km
6.	Owen Tolliday	346km
7.	Yiannis Kouros	345km
8.	David Standeven	306km
9.	Graeme Woods	305km
10.	Tony Collins	304km



Women placings were:

13	Eleanor Adams	295km
24	Mary Hanudel	270km
25	Sandra Barwick	268km

Day three started and Dick Tout maintained his lead. He was initially troubled by Kouros's twelve hour handicap but like the champion he is, he stuck to his own plan and kept motoring down the highway. Kouros was moving up fast and was third by the end of the day.

There was a battle between Rune Larssen and Dusan Mravlje for second early in the day, but by the end of the day Larssen had slipped into fourth.

Rune Larssen was struggling with the heat, but would come alive at night time. This was described by Larssen when he said "The nights became my best time for running. It was pleasantly cool for the body and the eyes had all the stars of the southern sky to look at. The Australians are crammed together in a few big cities on their great continent. The countryside is peacefully desolate, and at night one will not see too many cars."

Quote of day three must go to a crew member who said to his noisy companion "Shut up or you'll wake up the runner.....when he's asleep, we don't work!"

Marty Sprengelmeyer was moving well and had plodded into eleventh place by the end of the day. Pat Macke was suffering in the Australian heat. Newcomers to the race, Bryan Smith and Owen Tolliday were having a great race though and were in fifth and sixth position respectively.

One of Ian Javes crew members had an interesting situation today. They were going through a small town, when a crew member related an interesting incident to a Race Official "I just had a young lady approach me and ask 'What does a runner's crew member feel like?' - so I showed her".

Two Australians had to withdraw during the day. Brian Bloomer was withdrawn after completing 202km. He was suffering from extreme runner's knee. Graham Firkin withdrew at the 385km mark with the same injury. Firkin had suffered for the last 170km and had made a distance record for the Sydney Striders in the process. His wife and friends were very proud of his achievement. He vowed to return next year.

The top ten placings after Day three were:

1.	Richard Tout	575km
2.	Dusan Mravlje	536km
3.	Yiannis Kouros	532km
4.	Rune Larssen	524km
5.	Bryan Smith	524km
6.	Owen Tolliday	495km
7.	Patrick Macke	494km

8.	David Standeven	479km
9.	Joe Record	476km
10.	Graeme Woods	474km

The Women's Positions were:

12	Eleanor Adams	451km
28	Mary Hanudel	404km
33	Sandra Barwick	397km

The forth day started and the heat and the hills were taking their toll on the runners. Dick Tout was maintaining his lead. He had no problem with the heat because he had trained for it and had the sun on his side. On the other hand, Kouros was really suffering. His body was covered in sunscreen and his crew were even running with large towels next to him to ward off the heat.

During the afternoon, Dusan Mravlje took over second from Kouros and kept his position as day moved into night.

Brian Bloomer decided during the day to split himself and his crew up amongst the other three runners in the NutraSweet Team. His crew members went to Eleanor Adams and Mary Hanudel's crew, whilst Bloomer joined up with Rune Larssen. Larssen immediately picked up his pace and improved during the rest of the day.

Night fell and the cold was to Kouros's liking. By morning, he had passed Mravlje and was within 25km of Tout. Tout was starting to do it hard and by the end of Day four he was only 12km ahead of Kouros. Both runners took breaks at Lakes Entrance realising that the hardest part of the race was in front of them. Rune Larssen and Dusan Mravlje were third and forth.

Australians filled fifth to eighth place. They were Bryan Smith, Owen Tolliday, David Standeven and Graeme Woods.

During the day, two more runners were to withdraw. They were Ernie Cattle and Graeme Townsend. Cattle completed 450km and withdrew with foot ligament damage. Graeme Townsend completed 480km and decided that he had enough. Thirty eight of the original forty three starters were left in the field which was spread over 210km.

The top nine after Day four were:

1.	Richard Tout	702km
2.	Yiannis Kouros	690km
3.	Rune Larssen	644km
4.	Bryan Smith	643km
5.	Dusan Mravlje	640km

6.	David Standeven	617km
6.	Owen Tolliday	617km
7.	Pat Macke	612km
8.	Graeme Woods	609km
9.	Joe Record	582km

The top women positions were:

13	Eleanor Adams	557km
24	Sandra Barwick	513km
26	Mary Hanudel	510km

The fifth day of the race commenced and the late summer sun continued to have a dramatic effect on the thirty eight runners left in the race. The lead runners were lucky. They were out of the highlands and were running along the Victorian coastline.

Tout did well with the stop at Lakes Entrance. Kouros was allowed to have an extra hour's sleep by his crew. When he awoke he was livid and took after Tout. He had 30k to make on Tout.

Bryan Smith and Dusan Mravlje were fighting it out for third some 30km behind Kouros. Larssen was not far behind and was waiting ready to strike.

All of the runners have special signals to their crew when they want something. Kevin Mansell listens to music on a walkman. He raises his arm when he wants a change of music. Yesterday, he raised his hand and an attentive crewmember hopped out with a tape. Kevin asked "Why?" to which the crewmember replied "Because you held up your hand". "No I didn't. I was waving to me mate!"

The distance between first and last was now 230km. Three runners pulled out during the day. They were Rod Martin, Stuart Currie and Eduardo Vega. It was the first Westfield for all three runners but they could hold their heads up high.

The crew of Owen Tolliday were confused when they thought that Owen was coming towards them. A second look told them though that their runner was going the right way. He had had his shorts on the wrong way and had been like that for the last two days!

It was 0115 hrs Tuesday 22 Mar 98 when Yiannis Kouros took the lead. Tout was asleep, whilst his crew watched in silent amazement. Tout's manager summed it succinctly when he said "Tout will now go out and prove that he is King of the Roads... Kouros is God of the Roads...and no-one can beat Greek Gods".

By the end of the fifth day, Kouros had a eleven km lead over Dick Tout.

Top ten after Day Five was:

1.	Yiannis Kouros	848km
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2.	Dick Tout	837km
3.	Dusan Mravlje	793km
4.	Bryan Smith	791km
5.	Rune Larsson	778km
6.	David Standeven	754km
7.	Graham Woods	742km
8.	Owen Tolliday	739km
9.	Pat Macke	735km
10.	Joe Record	720km

The female milege was:

Eleanor Adams	687km
Sandra Barwick	628km
Mary Hanudel	622km

Day six of the race dawned. Dick Tout continued hot on the heels of Kouros. There was only 12km between the two runners. Dusan Mravlje and Bryan Smith continued the battle for third. The experience of Mravlje was to win in the end.

The effect of the heat was eventually too much for Rune Larssen. He had been training in the European winter for the race and the Australian heat was to much for him. At 0100 hrs in the morning, he was admitted to Sale Base Hospital because his crew suspected dehydration. He was ordered to take a long rest by Hospital staff. This was to cost him a place in the top five.

Four Australians were in the bottom half of the top ten runners. They were Owen Tolliday, Graeme Woods, David Standeven and Kevin Mansell. Kevin had put the best run of the day in.

Graeme Woods revealed a new talent today of fossicking for gold! He was staggering along the road when to the horror of his crew, he dropped to his knees. They rushed to assist. He straightened his body and held aloft a dollar coin.

The 30 degree heat continued during the day and four more runners withdrew. They were Maurice Taylor, Joe Record, Barry Brooks and Alan Fairbrother.

Fairbrother had suffered personal tragedy prior to the event when his marriage finished. "My wife, Mary is a fantastic woman but she could only take so much. It's not easy for a wife to hear her husband say 'honey I'm just going for a run, I'll be back in three weeks'".

Barry Brooks remembered one funny story from the race *"I asked for some nutravite for the chafing around my backside. The crew member that was runner at the time had absolutely no medical knowledge, jumped into the body of the campervan and yelled "Barry wants the NutraGrain for his bum!"*

Kouros maintained his lead, but struggled during the cold of the night. Between midnight and 0700hrs he only managed 7km. During this time, Tout closed in and was only 6km away at one stage. Kouros finally came to life, when he got to the outskirts of Pakenham and a big group of locals and the Shire President were there to meet him. This was enough and Yiannis was back in action. It wasn't long before the crowd was lined four deep and were all cheering for the Champion of the Road.

The top Ten after Day six was :

Yiannis Kouros	982km
Dick Tout	964km
Dusan Mravlje	934km
Bryan Smith	923km
David Standeven	900km
Graeme Woods	875km
Owen Tolliday	863km
Marty Sprengelmeyer	848km
Kevin Mansell	841km
Rune Larssen	825km

The three women placings were:

11	Eleanor Adams	824km
21	Sandra Barwick	757km
22	Mary Hanudel	756km

Day Seven of the race started. Over 5000 people were to see the great Yiannis Kouros finish at 4.14pm on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar. His elapsed time was 5 days 19 hours and 14 minutes. His win gained him front-page news coverage all over the country when Television News and Radio Stations used the story as Headlines for the day. He received \$20 000 for winning and another \$5 000 for beating his twelve hour handicap.

Kouros was absolutely wasted when he crossed the finish. "He had lost his voice and he coughed all the way through his Press conference after the race" He said that he felt awful and would not race in the Westfield again. The Greek God was starting to show some chinks in his armour. Even if it was hard work being the best in the world! Kouros also announced that he was contemplating moving his family to Australia. He knew that there was more recognition for him in Australia than in Greece.

Dick Tout was to finish second at 9.18pm on Wednesday night. If Kouros weren't there, would the crowds have been excited about Tout winning.

Dusan Mravlje continued to hold third place over Bryan Smith. Kevin Mansell was once again being the "Mover and shaker" on Day Seven. He was in seventh place and serving notice to the rest of the Ultra World.

Tragedy struck the race, when Mary Hanudel was hit by her own support vehicle. The story is that she stopped suddenly and her vehicle had nowhere to go! Her ankle was trapped under the front wheel. She was transferred to the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne and needed a skin graft and surgery for tendon damage. Police attended the scene but no one was charged over the incident. Mary placed no blame and invited her crew back in 1989.

Rune Larssen was to be told of Mary Hanudel's tragic accident when he only had 100km to go in the race. He had been admitted to Sale Base Hospital and was drawing deep within himself to finish. Rune struggled to accept this and as he said in his own words "But this was a tragedy I could not accept - the absolutely worse and most difficult thing during the entire race. I limped down the road with a depressed and dark mind. All the joy was gone for a long time" Mary Hanudel and Rune Larssen were very good friends. They were later to become married and now have a couple of children.

The Top Ten after Day Seven were:

- |     |                     |                        |
|-----|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1.  | Yiannis Kouros      | 5days 19 hours 14 min  |
| 2.  | Dick Tout           | 6 days 11 hours 18min  |
| 3.  | Dusan Mravlje       | 6 days 14 hours 10 min |
| 4.  | Bryan Smith         | 6days 15 hours 33min   |
| 5.  | David Standeven     | 6days 20hours 33min    |
| 6.  | Graeme Woods        | 1002km                 |
| 7.  | Kevin Mansell       | 993km                  |
| 8.  | Owen Tolliday       | 980km                  |
| 9.  | Marty Sprengelmeyer | 962km                  |
| 10. | Eleanor Adams       | 958km                  |

The last day of the race dawned and the tail enders inched towards the Finish. 43 had started and 23 were to finish.

It was announced today that Champion boxer, Jeff Fenech wanted to do the Westfield. He said, "If I enter the event, I'll be doing so not just to make the distance, but to win". He also said that he wanted his trainer Johnny Lewis to be his crew chief!

Two more runners were to withdraw on the last day. They were Terry Cox and Japan's Tomoya Takashi. At the 909km mark he called it a day. On retiring he promised that he would bring more Japanese runners out next year. Tomoya was to be the star billing at the Westfield Post event celebrations.

Considering that Tomoya had only been running 80km a week, his efforts astounded everyone associated with the run. No one was more surprised with his effort than his manager, Ian Taylor. "I predicted all along he wouldn't get to Canberra, Cooma, everywhere else but Bairnsdale. And I thought he'd get to Melbourne, I was amazed at his run".

His crew were underprepared and had no idea of what was going to happen. One of his crew fell out of the van shortly after the start! Tomoya countered these negatives with plenty of positives. Ian Taylor said "His temperament was great. He might have been boiling inside but he never did his block once. His legs were really good, very supple. He had a better running action than anybody in the race. When he was going he was really going. And his feet were brilliant. He only got one large blister on the last day".

Ian Taylor was hoping that Tomoya would compete next year with a better support crew and be better trained. He was sure that he would be an influence on next year's race!

One of the success stories of the 1988 Westfield was Kevin Mansell. Kevin finished seventh this year in a time of seven days, four hours and fifty-five minutes and in the process he took thirty eight hours of his 1987 result. When the term "Little Aussie Battler" was coined, Kevin Mansell was definitely the picture in the dictionary. His family split when he was young and he was placed in an orphanage with his younger brother. On leaving the orphanage he became an alcoholic. He joined Alcoholics Anonymous and has given up drinking since 20 September 1977.

It took him four years before he got in touch with the rest of his family. It was along hard road, but brother, sister and Kevin became a family again. At the time, Kevin was smoking eighty cigarettes a day and was starting to pay the price. It was 20 April 83 when he gave up smoking.

As a result, the weight piled on. It was suggested that he started jogging. He almost died with exhaustion after running his first session, but six months later he ran in a 12 kilometre Fun Run. It was six months after that when he ran in his first Marathon. He only made it to the thirty kilometre mark, but was introduced to coach, Bill Carlson and has not looked back.

Kevin concedes that each challenge has been difficult, but he has had to accept them. "I had to accept the fact that I was an alcoholic and do something. Similarly I had to accept the fact that I was smoking too heavily and it was killing me". Kevin realises that Ultra Running is a new kind of addiction and it gives him the discipline needed in life.

Kevin spoke of last year's run when he said "I wanted to prove to myself in last year's run that I was equal: I made the statement that I had found my hero, and it was me. For the first time in my life I was able to say 'Hey mate, don't look down on yourself'".

Kevin's final words at the Press conference were "For a change I'm starting to get a little bit of recognition, and why not. That pleases me, and why not because I've worked hard for three years."

Marty Sprengelmeyer from USA was to finish in ninth place in a time of 7 days, 8 hours and 40 minutes. He was wrapped with every phase of the Race, but was disappointed at not seeing a kangaroo.

This is best told in Marty's own words when he said "*I had expected to see kangaroos all over the countryside and was disappointed when all I saw was two dead ones along the side of the road. Late one night my crew leader, Ken Murray, decided to take matters into his own hands. He had our big vehicle drive in front of me. While Donna was giving me something to eat on the other side of the campervan he got out the other side covered with dark brown towels and a pillow on his stomach. When I came in front I heard this commotion in the woods. Something was hopping along making*

*kangaroo noises! It was Kenny the Kangaroo! It completely cracked me up. We were all laughing for a good long time.*

Up to the official cut off point at 11.00pm a further seventeen runners finished the race. Eleanor Adams and Pat Macke crossed the line together. Pat Farmer at 25 became the youngest ever finisher in the Race.

"Mountain Man" Grahame Kerruish crossed the finishing Line three hours later at 0200hrs. He was given an extension to finish after the official cut. On finishing he said "The Mountain Man has made it": He was to write an excellent story on his run at a later date title "On the Run with Mountain Man". This is covered in a later Chapter.

Twenty two others finished the race as well. The 1988 Westfield certainly wrote itself up as a Bicentennial event. It also wrote another chapter in Ultra Running history. As Rune Larssen said "The road down to Melbourne was really worth all the hardship"



**FINAL PLACINGS Westfield RUN 88**

<b>PLACE</b>	<b>RUNNER</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>DATE/TIME FINISHED</b>
1	YIANNIS KOUROS	GREECE	5D 19H 14M	4.14PM 23/3/88
2	DICK TOUT	NEW ZEALAND	6D 11H 18M	9.18PM 23/3/88
3	DUSAN MRAVLJE	YUGOSLAVIA	6D 14H 10M	12.10AM 24/3/88
4	BRYAN SMITH	VICTORIA	6D 15H 33M	1.33AM 24/3/88
5	DAVID STANDEVEN	SA	6D 18H 33M	4.33AM 24/3/88
6	GRAEME WOODS	QLD	7D 2H 5M	12.05PM 24/3/88
7	KEVIN MANSELL	NSW	7D 4H 55M	2.55PM 24/3/88
8	OWEN TOLLIDAY	QLD	7D 7H 29M	5.29PM 24/3/88
9	MARTY SPRENGELMEY ER	USA	7D 8H 40M	6.40PM 24/3/88
10	ELEANOR ADAMS	UK	7D 10H 5M	8.05PM 24/3/88
11	PAT MACKE	UK	7D 10H 5M	8/05PM 24/3/88
12	IAN JAVES	QLD	7D 18H 5M	4.05AM 25/3/88
13	GEORGE AUDLEY	WA	7D 21H 16M	7.16AM 25/3/88
14	MARK GLADWELL	NSW	7D 23 H 18M	9.18AM 25/3/88
15	PAT FARMER	NSW	7D 23H 18M	9.18AM

				25/3/88
16	MICHEL CAREAU	CANADA	8D 2H 30M	12.30PM
				25/3/88
17	SANDRA BARWICK	NZ	8D 4H 10M	2.10PM
				25/3/88
18	RON HILL	VIC	8D 6H 15M	4.15PM
				25/3/88
19	ROSS PARKER	WA	8D 7H 6M	5.06PM
				25/3/88
20	RUNE LARSSSEN	SWEDEN	8D 11H 6M	9.06PM
				25/3/88
21	GRAEME WILKINSON	NSW	8D 12H 9M	10.09PM
				25/3/98
22	JOHN BREIT	VIC	8D 12H 22M	10.22PM
				25/3/98
23	GRAEME KERRUISH	NSW	8D 16H	2.00AM
				26/3/98

One of the most successful runners in the race was Dick Tout. He finished second to Yiannis Kouros and improved eleven hours on his 87 time. In the end there was only sixteen hours between himself and Yiannis Kouros.

Tout is different from the usual Westfield Runner. He has run a two and a half-hour marathon and is a successful businessman. Why would he need to prove himself in this event? He runs more like a runner than an endurance athlete!

Tout is also different from other runners because he doesn't believe in doing the extra miles that some subject themselves to. He averages 140 kilometres a week with an occasional long run of fifty kilometres. Running is the major part of Tout's training program, but he also adds aerobics and gym work to his schedule.

Tout had a professional crew for the whole race. They were all first class runners in their own right and possessed the dogged Kiwi determination. Especially when it is Kiwis versus the Aussies!

After the race, Tout said how he visualised the race before hand. He knew that it was the toughest course in the world. He was still upset over the Kouros handicapping controversy, but was happy with Westfield and knew that it was improving every year.

Race Director, Charlie Lynn was happy with the progression that the 88 Westfield had made. He saw it as a balancing act between the needs of the runner's, sponsors and the

media. He concedes that the handicap given to Yiannis Kouros was the hardest decision he has made in the context of the race, but he believes it was a success.

He was also happy with the introduction of the cut offs. He thought that more than one runner would get knocked out, but says it was a success as the runners had goals to obtain on a daily basis. He was also happy that sponsors like Nutrasweet had come on board and helped to make the event a success.

Controversy continued after the race on the handicap given to Yiannis Kouros. Was it a delayed start or a handicap? Did it really effect the other runners because Yiannis Kouros started twelve hours behind the opposition? All of these questions were debated in Australian Ultra runners Association Newsletter for the next couple of months. The simple fact was that the organisers regarded Yiannis as a class above the rest. They had safety worries if he started at the same time as the other runners. It still made the race very interesting as he had to play catch up for a few days and the determined Dick Tout did not give up without a fight.

All of the runners recovered in their own way after their battle between Sydney and Melbourne. Grahame Kerruish had his feet packed in ice immediately after the race. He ran in the Canberra Marathon just to blow out the cobwebs a couple of weeks later! Barry Brook is having doubts on whether he should have kept going. He wakes up in the middle of the night with his feet still pounding the pavement!

Tony Collins was ecstatic at his effort and glad that he raised \$ 25 000 for research into Children's cancer. Owen Tolliday was exhausted, but vowing to run again in 1989. Dave Taylor was planning to retire, drink beer and potter around the garden. Kevin Mansell was more than happy with his great achievement and planning his next run. Every runner in the race, finisher and non-finisher should be proud of their effort. To have run a marathon is to have lived - to run an Ultra of this magnitude is to have lived and experienced another dimension!

## Chapter Eight

### *1989 - Down to the Wire*

The 1989 race was scheduled to begin on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1989 at 1100hrs. How could the 1989 race be better than last year's? The 88 Race had it all. The 89 race was to even better. It had even more drama, excitement and humour than last year's. Every runner was to be an actor in the rolling stage from Sydney to Melbourne. Thirty-four runners were to compete including eight internationals.

There were to be some changes to the event this year. They included date and start change and the addition of a teams championship and "The Gumboot Award".

Westfield Executive, Chris Bates explained the changes when he said " We have moved the race later into the year due to the changing weather patterns. Last year's event saw over five days of the Run held in temperatures well in excess of 30 degrees. These are not temperatures conducive to good Ultra Running. It also had a very disastrous effect on our Northern Hemisphere athletes who arrived straight from their winter."

Another of the changes is that it will now start from Westfield Liverpool instead of Westfield Parramatta.

"NSW Police have been concerned at the traffic problems and safety conditions for runners in the Parramatta to Liverpool stretch in the past years, particularly Woodville Road and Liverpool Road. In a race like the Westfield, where we use public roads, we always work closely with the police. We originally considered a controlled start for the Parramatta to Liverpool stretch but have decided on a Liverpool start. We still maintain one thousand kilometre event. To coincide with the start of the Run, Macquarie Street, Liverpool will be closed and a one day festival is planned. It will be a great spectacle and a great send off for the runners" said Chris Bates, when explaining the starting venue change.

The 1989 Westfield Run will also have State teams Championship held for the first time. The mileage of the top two placegetters from each state will be tallied and the winning State will be the one with the best total. The sash for the event will be named after an Australian who has helped pioneer the sport of Ultra Running in Australia. The sash this year will be named in honour of Australia's best known Ultra Runner, Tony Rafferty.

A special trophy has been made for the first Australian runner to cross the finishing line. The award is in the shape of a gumboot and was designed by trophy makers, Geoff Hamilton and Barry Higgins. It is handcarved of wood and will be called "The Cliff Young Trophy".

The 1989 Westfield Run is carrying prizemoney of \$50, 000 which makes it the World's richest UltraMarathon for 1989. First prize is worth \$25 000 and tenth prize is worth \$1 000. The Australian Teams Championship is worth \$1 000 to the winning team.

Unfortunately the Women's Section of the 89 Race was cancelled. "We had no application from Australian women. Although this angered some of the international women, we were not going to put in the section for overseas runners to run, collect the

prizemoney and fly back home. Women's running in Australia would not benefit. There were no Australian women last year and only one the year before. Australian women have not yet come to terms with the event and it's distance and are frightened by it" said Race Director, Charlie Lynn, at the pre race media conference.

The 89 Westfield Run will once be conducted over the same course that has been used since 1987. After leaving Sydney, runners proceed south along the Hume Highway via Mittagong and Goulburn. And then taking the Federal Highway through to Canberra. They then proceed along the Monaro Highway and go through Cooma and Bombala to Cann River in Victoria. The runners then turn right onto the Princess highway and run through Orbost, Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale, Sale, Traralgon, Morwell, Moe, Trafalgar, Warragul, Dandenong to the Finishing Line at Doncaster in Melbourne.

Due to police requests to keep the field together and to make the race more interesting, cut off times will be used at various places during the race. They are:

<b>CITY/TOWN</b>	<b>DISTANCE</b>	<b>CUT-OFF TIMES</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME ALLOWED</b>
GOULBURN	163KM	1200 HRS	19 MAY 89	25 HOURS
CANBERRA	255KM	0400 HRS	20 MAY 89	41 HOURS
COOMA	370KM	0100 HRS	21 MAY 89	62 HOURS
BOMBALA	460KM	2300 HRS	21 MAY 89	84 HOURS
ORBOST	630KM	1300 HRS	23 MAY 89	122 HOURS
BAIRNSDALE	725KM	1100 HRS	24 MAY 89	147 HOURS
TRARALGON	845KM	1100 HRS	25 MAY 89	171 HOURS
WARRAGUL	910KM	0100 HRS	26 MAY 89	183 HOURS
DONCASTER	1011KM	2300	26 MAY 89	204 HOURS

It was only a few days before the race, when Yiannis Kouros's place in the 89 Westfield was officially announced. This was due to Kouros having competed in a 100km event in South Africa a couple of months prior to the race. He had raced in the Standard Bank 100km event at Stellenbosch on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1989 but staged his own protest and withdrew shortly before the finish of the race.

As a result the International Amateur Athletic Federation automatically suspended Kouros. They informed Westfield of their decision on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May. This was put on hold by the ruling athletic body in Greece, who decided not to investigate Kouros's actions for another month. Westfield received this letter on the 14<sup>th</sup> May. In the interim, Westfield were working furiously behind the scenes and lobbied to the United Nations Association, Australian Anti-Apartheid movement and the Australian Amateur Athletic Union.

On receiving the news from Greece, Westfield Organiser, David Douglas was quoted as saying "It's been a busy week but it's been worth it".

There were thirty five runners lined up for the 89 Westfield. They included:

**John Breit** - Thirty One year old Sales Rep from Moe, Victoria. Completed the 88 Westfield and finished second in the 1988 Launceston to Hobart Ultra race. Has a big future in Ultra running!

**Kevin Cassidy** - Twenty eight year old Fireman from Preston, Victoria. It is his first time in the event. Not known how he will perform.

**Ernie Cattle** - Thirty nine year old Swimming Pool supervisor from Holbrook in NSW. Competed in last year's race, but failed to finish. Perhaps he will start this year's event at a slower pace.

**Tony Collins** - Forty One year old Dentist from Norah Head in NSW. Ran last year and reached 920km. Raised \$20 000 last year for Children's Cancer and is carrying out the same fundraising venture this year.

**Terry Cox(Senior)** - Fifty two year old Salvation Army Officer from Rosebud in Victoria who has started twice for one finish. Should fill a Top Ten placing.

**Terry Cox(Junior)** - Twenty three year old Unemployed man from Rosebud. Son of Terry Cox senior who is inspired by the achievements of his father on the last two occasions.

**Pat Farmer** - Twenty Six year old Landscape Gardener from NSW. Has started twice for one finish. Has high ambition in the Ultra world and plenty of time on his side.

**Graham Firkin** - Fifty One year old Blacksmith from NSW. Ran the event last year and is hoping to go one better and finish. Has a heart bigger than Phar Lap!

**Mark Gladwell** - Forty one year old Bus driver from North Rocks in NSW. Has completed the run twice for a perfect strike rate. Will be a finisher once again and is hoping to improve his time.

**Ron Hill** - Forty eight year old tractor operator from Victoria. Has raced twice for a perfect finishing rate. Another runner hoping to slash last year's time.

**Frank Kelly** - Thirty five year old Bricklayer from NSW. Has impressed with his performances in the last year.

**Yiannis Kouros** - Thirty three year old Sportsground Supervisor from Greece. World Champion! What will stop him! Hurricanes can't!

**Rune Larssen** - Thirty two year old Physical Education Teacher from Sweden. Finished last year and could give Kouros a run for his money, if Kouros is sick.

**Kevin Mansell** - Thirty eight year old Technician from NSW. Has run twice and finished twice. Has improved his time dramatically and will be a top five finish.

**Don Mitchell** - Forty One year old timber Worker from New Zealand. Number Two Kiwi and might finish in the Top ten.

**Dusan Mravlje** - Thirty Six year old Engineer from Slovenia. Won in 86 when Kouros was injured. Still loves a beer.

**Ross Parker** - Forty year old Clerk from WA. Has three out of four finishes in this race and will rack up another finish.

**Tony Rafferty** - Fifty year old Professional runner and Motivational Lecturer - Father of the Westfield!

**Joe Record** - Forty Eight year old Athlete from WA. Always has an influence on the outcome, even when he is injured and withdraws.

**Bryan Smith** - Forty five year old Lines Officer from Victoria. Finished forth in his first Westfield and will figure in the placings again.

**Marty Sprengelmeyer** - Top American runner who completed the run in good style last year and is sure to figure in Top ten calculations again.

**David Standeven** - South Australian runner who has two starts for two finishes. Has made great improvement in the last two years and is sure to improve again.

**Graham Stenner** - Forty four year old Production Planner from South Aust. Very consistent runner and aims to finish.

**Tomoya Takashi** - Professional singer from Japan. Failed to finish last year, but won many friends with his 900km effort against all odds.

**David Taylor** - Has run on three occasions and has failed to finish each time. Better men would have given up by now!

**Maurice Taylor** - Forty year old from NSW. Trains with Mansell and Gladwell and wants to finish.

**Owen Tolliday** - Queensland champion who is bound to improve on his good time of last year. Holds current Australian 24hr record.

**Richard Tout** - Kiwi champion who will once again try and stick it to Kouros and beat the Aussies on their home soil.

**Graeme Townsend** - Thirty-One year old PE Teacher from Mittagong. Failed to finish last year and desperately wants to improve.

**Eduard Vega** - Forty Eight year old Fitter from NSW. Originally from Peru and has shown a big heart in 24 hour races.

**Norio Wado** - Second Japanese Runner with a background in Triathlons and IronMan events.

**Greg Wishart** - Fifty year old surgical supplier from Victoria. Slowly building a reputation in the southern state for solid ultra performances.

**Graeme Woods** - Forty two year old runner from Queensland who wants to improve on last year's finish.

**Cliff Young** - The original champion who wants to give the race one more go.

All of the runners once again had to qualify for the race. Once they had been accepted, Westfield would send them a letter detailing full requirements for the run. This would include details such as campervans, crew size, equipment and runners clothes.

Closer to the race, all of the runners received a Medical Bulletin from the Race Doctor. This outlined the requirements for the First Aid Kit, a warning about drug taking and drug tests and information on signs and symptoms of various medical problems that could occur on the run.

The runners also received a copy of the race rules, Police conditions of use and route instruction prior to the start. The runners and crew would be left in no doubt of what was expected of them. The Route Instruction also contained a copy of "The Westfield Song". This is printed in full at the start of the book.

One of the runners to gain a start in this year's Westfield was Graham Stenner from Salisbury, South Australia. The forty year old Production Planner turned to Running to keep his fitness after retiring from soccer. This soon turned into an obsession as he tried to improve his endurance at each outing.

He has competed in numerous Fun Runs, 24 hour Races and the Adelaide to Victor Harbour Ultra. He also carried out a Charity Run around the Barossa Valley to raise money for the Woodville Spastic Centre. The distance was 342km and he raised \$1900 by his efforts. Stenner was struggling to find sponsorship to run in the Westfield, but was aiming to beat the seven day target.

Westfield were helping to promote sponsorship of the runners with the release of a glossy thirteen page booklet. It was entitled "Westfield Run - Sponsorship Opportunities - 1989". It introduced the event, covered the history, the competitors and the media coverage that it had received in previous years.

Westfield were making three sponsorship opportunities available. The first was to sponsor the ten international Ultra Runners that were entered for the event. This would cost the prospective business \$250,000, but they would get enormous return for their investment. This return would include advertising in every major conceivable form during and after the race, product endorsement by the runners and a week's free Mall leasing in fifteen Westfield Shopping Centres throughout NSW, ACT and Victoria.

The second sponsorship package available was to sponsor Yiannis Kouros to the tune of \$100,000. This entitled the sponsor to a similar type advertising deal as the international Runners and the use of Yiannis Kouros to speak at Corporate functions twice after the event. First prize for the event was \$25,000. It is not surprising that Kouros was unhappy with Westfield and would try for more prizemoney with figures like this being bandied around.

The third sponsorship package was to sponsor an Australian runner to the sum of \$15,000. This would get the business advertising of a lesser scale of the first two options, but they would be throwing their weight behind an Australian runner. The three sponsorship packages offered by Westfield were an attempt to make it easier for the runners and it also helped Westfield to defray the cost of running the event each year (Approximately \$1 million dollars)

The majority of the runners in the field would still have to raise their own money for the event. It would cost each runner about \$10,000. This would be done by raffles, Garage Sales, Pizza nights and knocking on the doors of local businesses. Some runners would sell their prize violin to raise the money to start. That's dedication!

Ultra runner and rogue, Graham Kerruish was to see the event from a different



perspective this year. He decided to become an official. In 1987, he crewed for Mark Gladwell, in 88 he was a runner and now in 89 it was the third side of the coin.

This is how Graham described the Pre-Race preparations. *"After my first day with Westfield I said to myself "Will the event ever take place" as I observed and came closely involved with the monumental task of putting the race on the road. Would it ever start? It had on previous years so I suppose this year was no different. So much to do, cars and vans to be picked up, 2-way radios and phones to be fitted, signage fixed to vehicles, crews to be finalised, witches hats collected, clothing and money allocated and always the media to content with."*

18 May 1989 was the start of the race. The City of Liverpool took on a carnival like atmosphere. Thousands turned up to see the start of the race.

NSW Runner, Maurice Taylor was interviewed shortly before the race and said the following about Ultra Running and the effect that it has on your life "It totally controls the body and mind. It is something you just have to do. Some days I'll have been out for a long run and not been happy with it. " I have come home and been restless and pacing. Before I could sit down to dinner I've had to put on my running shoes and go out again". He also admitted that it had almost cost him his marriage "You have time for nothing else. I work and run; that is all I do. It totally absorbs you".

Thirty three runner were lined up at the starting line at 1100hrs. Kouros was back in his motel having a sleep. He was not due to start the race until 2300hrs that night. He had agreed to a handicap/delayed start. This was to help make the race interesting and make the field closer together.

The Race started and the runners were off. A battle for the lead quickly developed. John Breit ran the fastest Marathon, but Dick Tout and Dusan Mravlje were hot on his heels. All three runners forgot the rule of running within yourselves for the first couple of days. They were trying to win the Race in a sprint.

The five leading Marathon times were:

1. John Breit 3hr06min
2. Dick Tout 3hr10min
3. Dusan Mravlje 3hr13min
4. Bryan Smith 3hr16min
5. Owen Tolliday 3hr23min

Kouros was to start his race at 2300hrs on the first night. It seemed as though half of the Sydney Greek community were present.

John Breit soon slowed down, but the other two kept up the horrendous pace for the first twenty six hours of the race. At one stage, Mravlje shouted at Tout "This is stupid". Tout replied "I know". Yet they kept up the same pace! They were trying to get a break on each other before trying to keep Kouros at bay! This was to have repercussions for both runners later in the race!

At 7.00am on the first morning of the race the five leaders were:

1. Dick Tout 216.2km
2. Dusan Mravlje 206.2km
3. John Breit 199.3km
4. Bryan Smith 199.3km
5. Graham Woods 193.5km

#Yiannis Kouros had been running for eight hours and had already covered 102km.

It was early on the first morning of the race, when the Race Doctor, Kieran Fallon answered a call from Marty Sprengelmeyer for some treatment. The Doc attended and administered a massage and a rub. Marty and the crew left. It was a couple of minutes later when Kieran put out an SOS (on his Mobile). He had left his keys in the support vehicle and could not get on his CB to get them back. They were eventually returned and the doctor continued with his rounds!

All of the runners except one were to make the first cut off point at Goulburn. Eduardo Vega withdrew at the 142km mark with exhaustion. South Australian runner, Graham Stenner had a very uneventful first day. He reached the township of Goulburn in 21 hours. This was ahead of his planned schedule, so he took a two hours sleep break whilst the crew shopped for supplies.

The second leg to Canberra was to find two more runners out of the race. Kevin Cassidy was withdrawn with a calf muscle tear and Tony Rafferty withdrew with exhaustion.

Tony Rafferty had this to say about pulling out of the race that he helped pioneer by his own great deeds: "Pulling out of a high profile race is a soul destroying experience. Many people suffer - sponsors, friends, crew and loyal supporters one seldom meets - they arrive every year and stand in isolated spots in inclement weather with smiling faces, encouraging comments, and waving arms. In contrast, I won't forget the know-all critics who crawl from the gutter to say I told you so; the tall poppy clippers who suggest retirement; the fence sitters who fold their arms and smirk.

It's a shame that the tall poppy syndrome exists in this country. Even champions have a bad day and should be left alone so that they can bounce back better than ever.

At the beginning of the second day on the road the placing's had changed slightly. They were:

1. Bryan Smith 354.9km
2. Graham Woods 346.9km
3. David Standeven 343.2km
4. John Breit 340.5km
5. Kevin Mansell 330.6km

# Yiannis Kouros had moved into eighth spot and covered 314.3km. He was starting to look very dangerous.

Graham Stenner continued with his race and earned himself another two hours sleep by the time he got to Canberra. He was in eighteenth place, but was starting to notice the cold damp nights.

Swedish runner, Rune Larssen was struggling early on. He was fatigued and had a pain in the chest. After a while he decided to get rid of his negative thoughts. His idea was "There are 450 students at the school in Nosebro where I work. When I'm coming back to my job again, every kid is going to ask me how I did in Australia. I don't want to answer "I dropped out" 450 times. This had the desired effect and he picked up his pace for the rest of the race.

The section from Canberra to Cooma is one of the toughest on the course. The runners had to run 115km and had 21 hours to do it in. The cut off time was one o clock Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 89. Eight runners were in danger of not meeting this cut off. It was seven hours tighter than last year! The Race Director, Charlie Lynn realised that the 1.00am cut off was too severe, so he extended it by one hour. All cut off were then extended by an hour to compensate.

Three runners were withdrawn during this stage. They were Dick Tout (knee problems), Frank Kelly (bleeding ulcer) and Terry Cox Jr(exhaustion). Terry and his father had been running together throughout the race. There last ten kilometres into Cooma had to be run in less than forty minutes. They both made it, but Terry (Junior) was spent as a result and could not continue. It was definitely one of the gutsiest efforts seen on the road between Sydney to Melbourne. He had age and time on his side though and was determined to come back in 1990.

At 0800 hrs on the 21 May 89, the Top five positions were:

- |    |                 |          |
|----|-----------------|----------|
| 1. | David Standeven | 520.2km  |
| 2. | Graham Woods    | 509.6km  |
| 3. | Yiannis Kouros  | 5.05.7km |
| 4. | Don Mitchell    | 497.3km  |
| 5. | Kevin Mansell   | 497.3km  |

Media attention was to focus on Cliff Young through out the race. He struggled to make the cut off point at Canberra (255km) and Cooma (370km). Cliff was to finally retire at the 415km mark. He was 10km short of the Bombala cut-off.

The race director, Charlie Lynn came out on the road that night to help Cliff make it to the cutoff point. Charlie calculated that Cliff would have to run eight kilometres an hour for the rest of the distance. This usually would not of been a problem, but he was reduced to walking. He was walking up the final hill, where he could see the lights of Bombala 10km away. He realised that it was time to finish and said "This is it. There's no way I can make it now. Thanks everyone, I've done my best."

He then announced his retirement from future Sydney to Melbourne Races. In a touching gesture, Cliff turned to the waiting media, who were also braving the howling winds and dreadful colds, and said "Thanks I don't think I have ever seen anything bad written or said about me and you have all been great. Westfield Official, Graham Kerruish was working on the Cooma-Bombala sector and had these memories about Cliff's Westfield

retirement.

*"The Gallant Guy of running Cliff Young who put Ultra Running and the Westfield run where it rightly should be, on top, has been battling all the way since Cooma. As Cliffy was in my work sector I saw this Giant of Ultra running slowly surcuming to the harsh terrain and the bitter biting cold wind. His steps had become noticeably slower, he dragged his feet, stops became more frequent, but still he pushed on with dogged determination. I last saw Cliffy on the track around 11.00pm Sunday evening, emerging from his campervan, the media clustered tightly around him, sensing sensation, eager to interview Cliffy and to get a story.*

*A bitter biting wind was howling down the Monaro Highway, a wind that would have dropped many Aussies half Cliff's age to their knees long before this. I knew Cliff was in trouble making the 12 midnight cut off and around 11.30pm with 8.6km to go the grand master of Ultra running retired from the race stating that he would now give away doing Multi-Day events and stick to smaller events like 24-hour runs - not bad for a great achiever at 67 years of age. It was quite fitting that Cliff retired in the mountains because in a lot of ways he was "The King of the Mountain".*

Rosemary Nash was crewing for Cliff Young and had this to say about his sad retirement on the outskirts of Bombala, "Our runner retired amidst the tears and fog 8km short of Bombala, after running 451km a monumental effort. I suppose we knew it was coming and the disappointment felt, not for us but him, for his hopes and aspirations, but again also with a sense of pride in his accomplishment. No regrets because in his own words "I gave it me best". That is all any crew should expect, not to push for their own personal glory of crossing the line but just to play their part in assisting the runner to do his best".

Graham Stenner was just leaving Bombala when Cliff turned up in his Van with his crew. They exchanged a few words before Graham continued running.

The next stage was between Bombala and Orbost. The time was 2.00pm on Tuesday 22 May 89. From Bombala the road becomes dirt until the half way point and then into Victoria through Cann River and then over the monstrous hills to Orbost. There were three more withdrawals during this stage. They were Graeme Townsend who was medically withdrawn, Ernie Cattle who was suffering from fatigue and overuse injuries and Marty Sprengelmeyer who retired five kilometres out of Cann River.

It was at this point that David Standeven from South Australia took the lead. David had been a quiet achiever in the sport and took a few people by surprise when he hit the lead. His move did not cause much initial excitement because Kouros was in third by the beginning of the forth day.

Problems then began to appear in the Kouros Camp. Kevin Mansell was in second position. Kouros overtook him as they entered the Hills of East Gippsland. Mansell came back at Kouros and passed Kouros on the next down hill. This went on over the next twelve hours for a distance of 160km. Mansell went passed Kouros five times on that day.

Legend has it that the first time Kouros passed Mansell, Kouros gave him his T-shirt that he gives to all the runners. Mansell gave the shirt back to him when he passed him going down the hill. It is believed that the shirt kept passing hands during the afternoon.

Mansell remembers the first time he passed Kouros and said in the Press

Conference after the Race, "I vividly remember the moments leading up to the first time I passed him. A Japanese film crew started to hang around me. It was as if they could smell that something was about to happen, and when I eventually did pass Kouros, they all yelled 'Number one, number one. Beat Kouros, beat Kouros!'"

Swedish runner, Rune Larssen was overjoyed when told of Mansell overtaking Kouros. He leapt six feet into the air and said "Even if Kevin blows out he will always be a hero to me because he's done something I've always wanted to do".

It was about this time, when Rune Larssen passed an unofficial Aid Station. "On a long straightaway there were nothing but sheep pastures as far as the eye could reach. In the middle of all this there was a farm and by the mailbox at the end of the road stood a little boy, maybe six years old, and handed me a can of beer. That kind of beverage was not one of my cravings at the moment, but I did still stop to take a sip. The can was only half full and the content was defizzed. It was apparent that the boy had been standing there all day offering the runners something to drink. The situation made me think about how life can be for someone growing up among the sheeps, far away from playmates."

Could Standeven now stand the final surge from Kouros over the last 300km. Standeven kept to his game plan, but Kouros was slowly closing the gap. It was within 100km of the finish and Kouros was gaining at 1km an hour. Standeven picked up the pace and the statistical projections had them finishing within seconds of each other. The Westfield was now a race!

Graham Stenner now had less than 300km to go to the Finishing Line. He was starting to struggle and was having problems with his knee, but he was determined to make it to the Finish.

It was on the third last day of the run when John Breit withdrew at the 744km mark. He was 19km past Bairnsdale and had knee-swelling problems. Dusan Mravlje was also to retire on the far side of Sale with muscle problems.

A very funny story appeared in the 23<sup>rd</sup> May edition of the Westfield Newsletter. It went as follows: "Kouros and his two vehicles had stopped by the side of the road. On the other side of the road a vehicle was parked with high beam on. Moose from Kouros No 1 Van said to no 2 Van, "If those lights aren't dipped I will break the headlights with a crowbar. It happened to be a Police car and the Policeman with his CB radio on 22 heard Moose's conversation! The policeman went up to Moose and asked who it was that was going to smash his headlights! Moose admitted sheepishly that it was him!"

It was at this time in the race that a very appropriate poem was published in the Westfield Race Newsletter. It didn't have a title. I have named it "A Crew Member's Lament:

The Vans a mess  
The Crew is blue  
The Lights don't work  
They've lost his shoe  
His meal is late  
There's no clean plate  
But on they go to Melbourne

The ups & downs  
The fly arounds  
For ice & soup & biscuits  
The clothes won't dry  
The socks are high  
Yet on they go to Melbourne

They plot, they plan, they calculate  
What's army time & what's the date  
"Your're looking good-good on you mate"  
and still they go to Melbourne

The bleary eyes  
The mornings new  
But remember Dear Supportive Crew  
He's out the front  
He runs the race  
And **he** drives **you** to Melbourne

Kouros now realised that he might not win Line honours and picked up his pace

once again. Standeven was exhausted, but he sensed that he might be able to hold off the challenge from Kouros. He kept on struggling. It was at this time, that Standeven's two children were being driven to Melbourne in the hope that they would see their father pull off a historical victory. Standeven's daughter, Rachel said "We are all really excited and proud of what he has done, so we are going over to surprise him at the finishing line".

The last withdrawal of the race was Joe Record who had run a very strong race. Joe withdrew on the second last day. Legend has it that he walked into a Pub at Traralgon, ordered a beer and stated that he was stuffed. Definitely an understatement!

There was only ten kilometres to go and Standeven was delirious. He was running on memory. His crew was yelling at him to follow the lights of the police escort vehicle. Every media camera and reporter had joined the group in Victoria.

Kouros then started to worry about what was going on. He had plenty of energy left, but realised that he may have miscalculated his final effort. He picked up his pace to 15km an hour as he entered the last 20km. As usual, thousands of the local Greek community turned up to cheer him on. The police were working overtime to maintain a clear path for both runners.

Standeven had five kilometres to go when he slowed to a halt. He could only just maintain direction. His crew tried to lift him, but nothing seemed to register. Somehow he kept following the flashing blue light, but it was very slow. The gap shortened until the lights of Westfield came into view and it was clear that Standeven would be first across the line.

He fell across the Line and was embraced by his teenage daughter, who had been crying over the last few metres "Come on Dad, come on". He then collapsed into the arms of his wife, Cheryl, suffering from dehydration and exhaustion. He was rushed to hospital by ambulance. Westfield Race Director, Charlie Lynn said "He went beyond the limit of human endurance".

Standeven's family was there at the end and were ecstatic at his victory, but shocked at the condition that he was in. His father said "He went hard at it all the way, especially towards the finish"

Standeven's mother, Marjorie, was over the moon at her son's performance "Once he takes the lead, he wont let go. He's happy because he achieved that aim - he's very happy"

Ultra Runner, Peter Armistead was an eye witness to Standeven's heroic efforts and wrote later "The next couple of hours unfolded the most dramatic event I have ever witnessed in sport....Around 5km to go he came to a stop and only a desperate effort by his wife and another lady got him moving again. One of his handler's lines of "Remember the 3 d's" were repeated many times before the finish and it seemed to inspire him on. The 3'd's were determination Defies Defeat and it certainly looked like it would.....Finally the exhausted warrior completed what must be the greatest ultra running effort by an Australian".

David Standeven was a hero in his home state of South Australia. The Editor of the Adelaide paper was to write in his Editorial on May 24, 1989 "Not since Cliff Young trudged into the history books in an earlier ultra Marathon has a runner so captured the imagination. He came from obscurity. He turned in an inspired and indeed, heroic

performance. This does not detract from the achievement of the Greek runner Yiannis Kouros, the champion from the land where the marathon was born.....But it was the local boy who took our breath away by the sheer tenacity with which he overcame exhaustion to take line honours. At the moment of triumph neared Cheryl Standeven said of her husband: He is very determined and he has a big heart!" He sure has!

David Standeven became the third man ever to beat the six day mark for 1000km. It was first done by American, George Littlewood in 1896, Yiannis Kouros was the second person in 1984 and Standeven became the third with this remarkable run. Race Director, Charlie Lynn said "Standeven has put Australia into the record books of ultra distance running"

One race observer who is involved with distance running for a living, questioned if ultramarathon running could qualify as a sport. Geoff Kirkman ( Official this year, leading the race in 86 until the tragic crash) was nearby and said " That's what I thought when I was running marathons. I look at this and thought it's not running, but until they've tried it, they don't know. It's like a miler looking at a marathon runner, or a sprinter looking at a miler, there's no comparison. But I can tell you, it's sport. It's a tough sport, there's no doubt about that".

Kouros crossed the line thirty two minutes after Standeven and was declared the winner by Westfield Officials on corrected time. He looked as though he had just gone for a Training Run. Whilst Kouros was bathing in the glory and making his way to the Presentation area, Standeven was being loaded into an Ambulance with a drip in his arm.

Kevin Mansell was to finish in third position. He finished nine hours and four minutes behind Standeven. Since 1987, Kevin had reduced his Personal best by a massive 67 hours and 56 minutes. Mansell was ecstatic when crossing the line and said, "I still can't believe my time. Not long ago, breaking the six day mark was a distant dream, nearly an impossibility I thought. It's equivalent to a runner in the sixties breaking the magic four minute mile!".

Kevin Mansell was coached in the race by Bill Carlson. Carlson also coached three other runner's in the field. They were Maurie Taylor, Patrick Farmer and Mark Gladwell. Carlson was to describe Mansell as the 'Classic Non-athlete' but qualified this when he said, "The only advantage I have with Kevin is Kevin is prepared to totally maximise, which is the hardest of the lot. That's what separates Kevin from the other guys. He uses total determination to leave the others far behind. I can't say enough about Kevin".

The three year training partnership between Mansell and Carlson has been successful, but Mansell would have liked it to have been more successful in the financial area. He won \$5 000 for third place and \$ 500 for winning the Teams championship, but he will be living in a caravan and can't afford to run a motor car. He explained that the prizemoney will go back into training "It costs me \$50 a week to train and that's not counting the pair of shoes I wear out every three weeks. They cost \$150 a pair. I just think it's about time something came our way, but then again that's what I said after last year's race."

Graeme Woods crossed the Line in forth, but was later disqualified. He underwent a positive drug test during the race and the sample returned positive for the drugs, Ephedrine and Prolintane. These are both stimulants and are banned by the IOC and the IAAF.



At the 600km mark, Graeme was suffering from a respiratory infection and a well meaning crew member gave him some patent cold remedy tablets. These did not clear the infection, so Ephedrine tablets were prescribed at a chemist on route. It was a genuine mistake, but Woods realised that he had to "Cop it sweet" when told of the drug test results. He lost \$3 000 in prizemoney and had no reward for his hours of training!

The day after Standeven crossed the finishing Line he was interviewed by Journalists along with his wife. "I was uncertain what drove me on. I can remember being urged on by the crowd and the fear of humiliation if I was beaten in the dying moments of the race" He also had a feeling during the last few kilometres that Kouros was right there next to him "I thought that if I reached around I could touch him".

Standeven started running to keep his wife company on long runs. Standeven got bored with that and soon found himself doing , Marathons and Ultras. When he first went in the Westfield he finished seventh, last year he finished fifth and this year he planned to be the first Aussie across the Finishing Line. He certainly achieved that!

Standeven's physio, Ian Ford made sure Standeven stopped every five hours. His socks were changed, feet were plastered, his legs were massaged and then ice packs were packed on his legs for the next fifteen minutes.

Over the next three days, seventeen more runners were to cross the line and finish the Greatest Race on Earth.

Graham Stenner continued down the Highway and on the outskirts of Melbourne he was in 11<sup>th</sup> place. He was within 20km of the finishing Line and found that he was starting to fall asleep when he was running. His crew tried everything. This included copious amounts of black coffee and sing along sessions all the way to the Finishing Line. He crossed the Finishing Line in a time of 7 days and 19 hours. It was an emotional moment for himself and his crew. He had exceeded all his expectations and was wrapped.

Graham Kerruish was an official on the run for the first time. In previous years he had been a crew member and a runner. He wrote this about the race on conclusion:

*It has hurt me as I officiated during the run to watch my buddies slog It out on the wind swept, cold and rainy roads, see them battling through the night, striving for cut off points only to see some of them unashamedly drop to their knees, bodies exhausted, racked with injury. Their faces told the story. Bloodshot glazed eyes hanging on stressed anguished faces, staring forlornly ahead as their Melbourne goal shatters on the sweeping merciless roads. I observed all of this and cried tears of blood inside me as I writhed and watched from the inside warmth and comfort of my vehicle.*

One of the buddies that Graham Kerruish was talking about was Sydney Strider, Graham Firkin. Graham completed 292km last year but had to withdraw with a leg injury. Graham was determined to finish this year and he did. It took over eight and a half days, but in the words of Charlie Lynn, "It proves that man can do anything he sets his heart on". Graham's story was recorded by his manager, Alf Field and is entitled "A Record of an Epic". I would not have done justice to the story by summarising it in this chapter. It can be found in full in the last chapter, which is on Favourite Articles. It is worth skipping a few chapters now to read it!

Graham Firkin was interviewed by a Journalist towards the end of the run and was asked about giving up. He said that the thought had crossed his mind quite a few times

during the run, "But then you might be running along in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night and you see an old lady wrapped in a blanket standing out the front of her house just waiting to say 'Good on ya'. Really you wouldn't miss it for all the world".

Westfield put on a party for the runners, crew and friends from 6.00pm on the last evening of the race. There was plenty of food and drink for every runner and crew. The celebrations continued until about 5.00am in the morning. It was a well deserved party for everyone involved.

Yiannis Kouros was surprised by the great improvement of the Australian runners. "I did not expect to get beaten by an Australian. But it is good, not only for Standeven but for Australia and ultra-running".

Kouros summed up what it takes to be a great Ultra Runner: "I think it is the head. You must be positive and say to yourself 'I can do it', without worrying about anything or anyone else. You must train your head to tell your body 'I do not feel pain' and never let your body dictate terms to your head".

A few days after the run, Kouros visited the Evangelistra Greek Orthodox School in Thornbury and looked recovered from his run, except for wearing a pair of runners with the toes cut out. He also announced that he was planning to move his family to Australia. He said that he loved Australia and loved the people.

New Zealander, Dick Tout was disappointed at having to pull out of the race after 318km, but was impressed with improvements that the Australians had made. "There is a new era in ultra racing, we have to move forward. There are new aspects to the sport and the Australians have caught up and passed us. You've got your tail up and passed us by. I have to admit it."

The 1989 Race had it all. The champion was only a certainty to start in the race a week before due to the apartheid controversy. Dusan Mravlje and Dick Tout had an exciting tussle at the beginning. They were both trying to get a break on Kouros and a break on each other. They were both injured and neither finished.

Kevin Mansell and Yiannis Kouros had an exciting tussle through the Hills of East Gippsland. This may have taken the edge of Kouros and that is why he could not catch Standeven at the end. Kouros and Standeven had a titanic struggle at the end of the race, with Standeven getting over the line half an hour before Kouros. Standeven was dead on his feet but Kouros looked as though he could do an about turn and run back to Sydney.

Kevin Mansell also wrote himself into history by beating six days for a 1000km. Graham Firkin finished at the rear but proved that he had a heart bigger than Phar Lap, Graham Woods was disqualified for drug taking, even though it was an innocent gesture by a concerned crew member. The 1989 Westfield had it all.

**OFFICIAL POSITIONS AS DETERMINED BY Westfield**

<b>PLACE</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>COUNTR Y</b>	<b>OFFICIAL TIME</b>	<b>HOURS RUNNING</b>	<b>AVERAGE SPEED</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Yiannis Kouros</b>	<b>Greece</b>	<b>5d2h27m</b>	<b>122.45</b>	<b>8.25</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>David Standeven</b>	<b>South Australia</b>	<b>5d13h55m</b>	<b>133.9</b>	<b>7.55</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Kevin Mansell</b>	<b>Nsw</b>	<b>5d22h59m</b>	<b>142.99</b>	<b>7.07</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Bryan Smith</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>7d4h5m</b>	<b>172.1</b>	<b>5.87</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Maurice Taylor</b>	<b>Nsw</b>	<b>7d7hom</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>5.78</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Don Mitchell</b>	<b>Nz</b>	<b>7d9h11m</b>	<b>177.2</b>	<b>5.71</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Pat Farmer</b>	<b>Nsw</b>	<b>7d13h47m</b>	<b>181.8</b>	<b>5.56</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Rune Larsson</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>7d14h10m</b>	<b>182.2</b>	<b>5.55</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Mark Gladwell</b>	<b>Nsw</b>	<b>7d17h20m</b>	<b>185.3</b>	<b>5.46</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Owen Tolliday</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>7d19hom</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>5.41</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Graeme Stenner</b>	<b>Sa</b>	<b>7d19h45m</b>	<b>187.75</b>	<b>5.38</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Greg Wishart</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>8doh55n</b>	<b>192.9</b>	<b>5.24</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Tony Collins</b>	<b>Nsw</b>	<b>8d1h50m</b>	<b>193.8</b>	<b>5.22</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Ron Hill</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>8d4h47m</b>	<b>196.8</b>	<b>5.14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Terry Cox (SNR)</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>8d7h25m</b>	<b>199.4</b>	<b>5.07</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Tommy Takaishi</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>8d11h52m</b>	<b>203.85</b>	<b>4.96</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Ross Parker</b>	<b>Wa</b>	<b>8d11h56m</b>	<b>203.8</b>	<b>4.96</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Dave Taylor</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>8d12h13m</b>	<b>204.2</b>	<b>4.95</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Graham Firkin</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>8d16h25m</b>	<b>208.4</b>	<b>4.85</b>

**Westfield RUN 1989 WITHDRAWALS**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>DISTANCE</b>
JOE RECORD	WA	808KM
DUSAN MRAVLJE	YUGOSLAVIA	803KM
JOHN BREIT	VIC	744KM
MARTY SPRENGELMEYER	USA	557KM
ERNIE CATTLE	NSW	513KM
GRAEME TOWNSEND	NSW	499KM
CLIFF YOUNG	VIC	451KM
NORIO WADA	JAPAN	437KM
TERRY COX (Jnr)	VIC	370KM
FRANK KELLY	NSW	339KM
DICK TOUT	NZ	318KM
TONY RAFFERTY	VIC	214KM
KEVIN CASSIDY	VIC	191KM
EDUARDO VEGA	NSW	143KM

## Chapter Nine

### *1990 - The Legend Wins Again*

1990 was to see the eighth running of the Westfield Sydney to Melbourne UltraMarathon. Legends and Aussie Folklore had been created in previous years.

63 year old potato farmer, Cliff Young won the event in the first year. That stopped the nation whilst all of Australia followed his footsteps. In the second year, the race was run from Melbourne to Sydney and won by Lawnmower man, Geoff Molloy.

In 1985, Greek Ultra God entered the race for the first time and blitzed the field. The question wasn't, "Would Kouros win?", but by how much would he win. In 1986, Kouros was injured which opened the door for Yugoslav, Dusan Mravlje to win. He consumed a few beers on the way. Tragedy was to strike the race this year when race leader, Geoff Kirkman was run over and a motorist was tragically killed.

1987 saw a route change. The race meandered it's way to Canberra, through Cooma and Bombala and along the Princess Highway to Melbourne. The race was now longer and safer. Yiannis Kouros was in the race again and ended up winning once again. The race in 1988 was a Bicentennial event and it exceeded all expectations. Kouros was to win his third event, but several Aussie stars were born. Mansell, Standeven and Smith were to leave their mark in the Ultra world in the next few years.

1989 saw the most exciting finish to the event. David Standeven finished half an hour ahead of Kouros. Standeven was dead on his feet and Kouros looked as though he could turn around and run back to Sydney. Kouros was awarded the race on corrected time. He had started twelve hours behind the rest of the field! Kevin Mansell finished in third place and was finally given the recognition as the elite athlete that he is.

Kouros, Standeven and Mansell were to all beat the six day mark for 1000km. George Littlewood was the last runner to achieve this. That happened 100 years ago! Graeme Woods, after finishing forth, was disqualified after the race for taking non-prescribed drugs.

What drama would happen in 1990? Would Kouros win? Would another Australian runner come forth and push him to the wire? Would Westfield generate enough publicity to keep the average Australian focused on the race and go shopping at their local Westfield Shopping Centre? It was going to be hard for them to maintain their focus and energy. They needed a new runner with a new story to come forth and push Kouros to the wire!

It wasn't long after the completion of the 89 Westfield that runners were entering events and getting themselves ready for the 1990 event. Peter Gray entered the 50 mile track race in Melbourne in June 89 and finished 6<sup>th</sup> in a time of just under seven and a half hours. Peter then went and backed up this result with 303km at the Queensland 48 hour race two weeks later. Sandra Barwick ran 144.82 km in a 24 hour race on the same weekend, but this was below her usual high standard.

A fifty mile race was held in South Australia in July 89. David Standeven finished

this race in first place and Peter Gray backed up with another consistent fifth. Graham Stenner finished sixth.

August 89 saw the running of the first international Hi-Tec Challenge 24 hour race at Olympic Park in Melbourne. It was a truly International race with competitors from the United Kingdom and New Zealand lining up on the Starting Block. Bryan Smith who ran an incredible 254.5km won the race. Second was Eleanor Adams with 240km.

Third, fourth and fifth were David Standeven, John Breit and Pat Macke. They ran between 238km and 224km respectively. It was probably the best 24-hour race ever seen in this country when you consider the depth of talent. It was another eight years when Australia saw the Yiannis Kouros smash the 300km barrier in Adelaide. Second place was 100km behind him.

12<sup>th</sup> August saw the start of the 1000-mile race in Sydney. It was between Ultra running legend, Tony Rafferty, Pat Farmer and Dave Taylor. All ex-Westfield stalwarts. Pat Farmer issued the challenge to Tony Rafferty in the hope of beating the champion and establishing his own reputation. Tony Rafferty ended up winning easily and breaking the World record.

The Adelaide 24 hour race was held in Oct 89. This was won by Mike March from Tasmania who ran 257 km. Second was David Standeven with 256km. If only Mike March could raise the sponsorship and run in the 1990 Westfield!

The Australian 6 Day race in Colac saw Bryan Smith join the record books when he ran 1002km in six days. He became the fourth person to achieve this in history. Two of those were David Standeven and Kevin Mansell in last year's Westfield. Maurice Taylor ended up finishing second with 894km. Eleanor Adams and Sandra Barwick ended up finishing third and fourth respectively. It certainly had been a great year for Bryan Smith.

The 1990 Westfield was due to start on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May from Westfield Shoppingtown in Liverpool. Liverpool City Council had declared the day as a Festival with street closures and entertainment planned throughout the day and night! There were to be thirty-three runners in the event. These included runners from Australia, USA, Japan, Greece and New Zealand.

The womens event is to be included in the run again this year and has three women entered. They are Sandra Barwick from New Zealand, Wanda Foley and Georgina McConnell both from Baulkham Hills in NSW. Barwick will start favourite against the two Westfield novices.

**Sandra Barwick** from New Zealand is regarded as one of the best female Ultra Marathoners in the World. She currently holds six world records, one British record, five Australasian and one New Zealand record. In 1988 she finished seventeenth in a time of 8 days 4 hours and 10 minutes. She has been running over 200km per week in preparation and is hoping to finish in the Top ten this year.

Twenty seven year old **Michael Bohnke** from NSW is having his first run in the Westfield. He has a best 24 hour distance of 159km which was reached at Campbell Town last year. He has just got out of the RAAF and is hoping to move back to Wagga Wagga after the Westfield.

Gippsland Ultra Marathon Runner, **John Breit** was entering the race for the third

time. He finished in 1988, completed 700 plus kilometres in 1989 and is confident of a Top ten finish in this year's race. John has a reputation of being a tough uncompromising runner in the 24 hour events and is now ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in Australia with a best distance of 238km.

John was being managed for this year's event by Traralgon Bodyline fitness Centre Manager, Gary Gillett who helped organise every little detail for John's race. Sponsorship from the Gippsland business community was forthcoming, but John even held pizza nights at the local Pizza Hut to raise extra dollars. John was offered fifty dollars on the night to eat a whole Pizza. John consumed the Pizza and collected the money for Race funds!

Gippsland Journalist, Rhonda Myring, interviewed John Breit a few weeks before the start of the 1990 Westfield. They must have impressed each other because it was shortly after the 90 Westfield that they started dating and a couple of years later they were happily married and have a healthy baby boy.

John was asked during the interview "What makes a man run 1000 kilometres --- more than once". His reply was "I have to do it. I need to do well this year. I have to do it and I have to do it well." The subject also got onto how to prepare for the toughest race in the world. John's reply was "You have to be mentally tough; that's what makes an ultra-distance runner".

The writer was lucky enough to crew for John Breit in the 1990 Westfield. It was the writer's first experience with the Westfield except for watching it on TV, reading about it in the newspaper and watching the runners run along the Princess Highway at three o'clock in the morning. My race story is told during this chapter. It was ten days of my life that I will never forget.

*It was 1989 and I was posted to Sale in Victoria. I had already run a Marathon. That was now boring! It was time to look further afield for fresh challenges. For years I had marvelled at the runners in the Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon. Cliff Young, Kevin Mansell, Yiannis Kouros - just to name a few! All were living legends in my mind. I decided to start training for an Ultra. I wasn't sure what I had to do, but I knew lots of running was a good start!*

*A few months passed by and the Annual Westfield Race was coming through Sale. I was wrapped. I read all the newspaper reports, watched all the TV coverage and got to see about six of the runners coming through Sale. I missed out on seeing the big runners, but the blokes that I saw were all ordinary human beings. Ordinary human beings doing extraordinary things! Some were in their fifties, some were ex drug addicts, but all had their own remarkable story!*

*Most of my ventures onto the highway were late at night. The first thing that I noticed was the gritty determination etched on the face of each runner. There was no way that they weren't going to make it over the last two hundred and fifty kilometres to Westfield shopping centre in Melbourne. They would have crawled on broken glass to reach the finish line!*

*There was a Gippsland runner in the field by the name of John Breit. I can't remember if he made it to Melbourne that year, but he was getting quite a lot of coverage in the local media and I knew that I had to meet him.*

*Months passed and I was fully committed to training for the Westfield Ultra*

*Marathon. I was running at least one hundred kilometres a week and planning to go in a twelve hour race in Canberra the following January.*

*I was at work one day, when a Gentleman came to the counter wanting a pass. I asked him for identification and it ended up being one John Breit! I asked him "Are you the John Breit who runs in the Westfield?"*

*His reply was "Yes, that's me".*

*Two cups of coffee later and I had adopted my own coach and Westfield runner! I saw quite a bit of John in the next few months. I think sometimes I would be quite overawed by him, sometimes I would think that he was quite arrogant and most of the time I was wrapped that he was helping me as much as he could. I reasoned to myself that one had to have a certain arrogance and single mindedness, when you were trying to be the top in your sport! He would get me out to all the Fun Runs, go running with me when ever he was in Sale and he would stop for coffee, whenever he came on the Base.*

*My own training was going OK. I was quite confident that I would complete the twelve hour race in February next year without too much pain. It was just before Christmas, when John asked me to crew for him in next year's Westfield. As he put it, I would be able to see first hand what I would be up against. I said "Yes" in an instance and worked out the minor details of getting leave later!*

*Christmas and New Year came by and left us just as quickly. I had suffered some injuries, but knew that I was ready to go in the twelve-hour race in February. I went up to Canberra, competed in the race and completed seventy three kilometres. I finished thirteenth out of sixteen and was reasonably happy with my efforts.*

*Two weeks later I decided to run in a 24 hour race in Melbourne. That was foolish! I withdrew from the race after eight hours, after only completing fifty kilometres. Too much too soon! It didn't dent my Ultra running ambitions, but it made me realise that it was going to take much longer.*

*After that I recovered and then got myself ready to crew in the Westfield. I got two weeks leave without pay from work and was ready to roll. We had a team meeting a couple of weeks before hand where I met the rest of the crew. The crew chief was Gary(manager of 3TR)and his wife was Alisia. The other crew members were Dick ( the cook), Alex, John's brother, Mark and the physio, Shirley. They all seemed ok and we discussed what was going to happen.*

*The big day arrived. I met up with the others at Traralgon and after a night there we all went to Melbourne. The next day, we had to run around and gather the equipment for the race. This included the vans, water, clothing etc. We spent a night in Melbourne, before setting out in convoy the next day.*

*The road up to Sydney was certainly a lot quicker than what it was going to be on the way back. I think we got there mid afternoon and by the time we got our hotel it was close to Tea time. We had a couple of beers, handed out the race uniforms and discussed how we were going to do things . John was extremely confident and it seemed as though nothing was going to stop us.*

*The next couple of days were spent with more preparation, more running around and more buying. We were all shown where the race would start from. It was the*



*Westfield Shopping Centre in Liverpool. They already had the stage set up in the main area. Unfortunately we would not be able to see the start of the race, because we had to be waiting down the Highway.*

*So after more packing of the vehicle, more buying of food etc. We got our uniforms. We all got four T-shirt, one windcheater, one yachting jacket and a hat. Not much, but that is what we had to wear the next seven days. God we were going to be smelly!*

Fifty year old **Ralph Bristow** is an Area Manager from Dapto, NSW and is also having his first run in the Westfield. Bristow only ran in his first Marathon four years ago after having run in ten consecutive "City to Surf" races. Since then he has put in some really impressive ultra performances. This has included a third place in the Australian 6 Day Championship with 702km.

Bristow's family were not with him in his early Ultra ambitions but are now backing him one hundred percent. His wife and twenty one year old son, Luke will be part of his crew on his first attempt.

**Terry Cox Senior** is the oldest runner in this year's run at fifty three. He is a Salvation Army Officer who has competed in the last three Westfield's. He has a best result of 8 days 7 hours and 25 minutes which was completed last year. In 1974, Terry raised \$90 000 when he ran from Adelaide to Melbourne for the Royal Children's Hospital Appeal.

Cox also ran 24 hours on a Treadmill in 74 and clocked up 198.4km. Cox believes that this is still a World record. His family life has been racked with tragedy over the years, but he always maintains a happy outlook and attitude.

Terry's son, **Terry Cox Junior** is running in the Westfield for the second time. He made it to the Cooma cut off point last year but had to withdraw due to exhaustion. Father and son had run the last ten kilometres into Cooma in thirty seven minutes. This would have been enough to stop ninety five percent of the athletes in the world today.

Terry Junior is an ex-drug addict who was getting treatment for kidney disease for the first sixteen years of his life. He is only twenty four, but is hopeful of completing the course this year.

**Ernie Cattle** from Holbrook is running in his third Westfield. He is yet to finish due to injuries, but is getting stronger and more experienced as each year goes by. Ernie is an ex - Physical Training instructor in the Navy and is now working as a Swimming Pool Manager.

Cattle's specialty in the Navy was combat Survival and this year he has an all- Navy crew from the Submarine Squadron at HMAS Platypus. The team motto for the year is "Run Silent Run Deep". Ernie has been running 200km a week in preparation and is confident of finishing.

**Tony Collins** from NSW is back for his third attempt. In 1988 he completed 900km before having to quit with a broken heel. In 1989 he finished in thirteenth spot and this year wants to finish in the top ten. The main reason that Tony runs is to raise money for the child cancer patients at Camperdown Childrens Hospital. He raised \$50 000 in 1989 and wants to raise more this year.

Twenty five year old **Peter Gray** is entering the Westfield for the first time. Peter is

from Geelong and has been a battler all his life. He had a hit and run accident when he was five and as a result Peter had to be specially educated. Peter competed in sixty two Triathlons (Single day and Multi day events) before entering the world of Ultras. He crewed for Greg Wishart in 1989 and knows that he is now ready to take on the challenge of the world's toughest race.

**Robert Fickel** from Ashcroft in NSW is running in the event for the first time. Robert's training involves running to and from work every day and doing a long run with the Mt Pritchard Joggers every Sunday. Robert ran his first ultra event in 1989 and recently ran fifth in the Aust 6 Day Race at Campbelltown.

He crewed for Cliff Young and Rune Larssen in 1989 and qualified with a solid 205.4km in 24 hours. Robert's family have moved out of the house during the leadup to this event. This has enabled him to work out his own schedule and go running whenever he feels like it. He calls in and visits his family whenever he could during training. That's dedication!

Robert Fickel was also part of the Sydney Friday night running group. "I'd get up on Friday morning at 5am go to the market to work and get home about 7pm. I'd change, have something to eat and leave home about 8.30 to meet the others including Kevin Mansell, Maurie Taylor and Pat Farmer. We'd run all night and I'd get home about 5.30 in the morning. Then I'd shower, change, have something to eat and head off to work again and be back home again at 7.30pm".

Robert Fickel was fortunate to have the expertise of members of the University of NSW for the race. They provided assistance in the area of nutrition and diet. Robert also had three experienced runners from his club as part of the crew. One of the University members on Robert's crew was Peter Abernathy, a lecturer in the School of sport and leisure studies. He worked closely with Robert before and during the race. The University also used Robert to collect data during the run. This data was in the area of sleep deprivation and Fickel's diet.

**Wanda Foley** from NSW is another runner who has entered the event for the first time. She ran her first Marathon in 1985 and the Westfield has been her ultimate ambition ever since. Wanda also runs for the MS Society of NSW. She is hoping that she can be the third Australian woman to complete the Westfield run since it's inception in 1983.

Wanda finished forth in the Aust 6 Day Race last year and got a total of 659.5km in the process. Her six day run last year raised \$1500 for the charity. In the last six months before the Westfield she ran in two marathons, one 24 hour race, two 12 hour races and one trail run

Wanda Foley decided in 1989 to run in the 1990 Westfield. Wanda's story is an inspiration to all Australian women. I received a six page letter from her husband, Mark in 1997. Excerpts are retyped throughout this chapter for everyone to share.

*Wanda had decided in 1989 to begin preparing for the 1990 race. We began to write to companies seeking sponsorship and to raise money through raffles etc. Of thirty five businesses approached, we received only two offers; Strathfield car Radio provided our CB's and cassette speakers and Amada Medical Supplies provided out First Aid equipment.*

*Closer to the 90 race, City Gym in Sydney gave Wanda a free year's membership*

to assist in her fitness. The Banana Growers Association provided \$ 500, much needed and appreciated. And right at the very last minute, through a chance conversation at a Picnic we were able to receive some major backing from Shell Petroleum. For the rest, we relied on the generous donations of friends and the hard work of the raffle ticket sellers. We were lucky to be members of the Western Districts Joggers Club. This Club has provided many Sydney to Melbourne Competitors and crew and gave Wanda much needed support. One week before the start, Wanda's friend, Pat Farmer arranged for his sponsor, Stacks Sports Equipment, to provide Wanda and her crew with Tracksuits and t-shirts a very nice gesture.

Wanda began running in 1984, joining Western District joggers and her ABC Radio work jogging team. She ran four Marathons between 84 and 85 ranging from 3 hrs 52 minutes and 4 hrs 13 minutes. By 1987, she had run 11 marathons in places as varied as Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart, Townsville and Honolulu. A fellow ABC radio team runner, big Chris Stephenson, had talked her into running the 1986 Bathurst 50 mile ultra Marathon - a race she enjoyed immensely and finished in 9hrs 15 mins.

...and in 1987 she entered the Sydney Striders 24 hour, which she finished managing 157.5km at her first attempt. In 1988 she ran three marathons, the Six Foot Track Trail race, three 24 hour races breaking 100 miles twice (Coburg and Campbelltown and finally entered the Campbelltown 6 Day Race.

This was the first of these events and was held next to Bradbury Oval, organised by John Shaw and Dave Taylor. This was the first of these events and was held next to Bradbury Oval, organised by John Shaw and Dave Taylor. Due to the Fishers Ghost Festival, the oval was being used by a carnival so the 6 Day race was staged on the access road to the ovals and incorporated footpath and a nasty downhill section. This race has since been classified as a 'road race'. Kevin Mansell ran 161km on day one and struggled with a painful knee which he eventually overcame and finished first with 902.5km Wanda was seventh, first lady, with 619km. This six day racing was a new experience for all of us.

In the 1989 6 day race at Campbelltown, Wanda was armed with more knowledge and determination. She finished fourth behind Dave Taylor, Pat Farmer and Ralph Bristow with 659.5km and was first female beating Georgina McConnell, Val Warren and Lucille Gladwell.

So Wanda was primed and ready for her 1990 Sydney to Melbourne attempt. Her good friend, Keith O'Connell, was Crew Manager.

One of Wanda's weekly training runs was an overnight effort starting at the Ampol Crossroads at Liverpool. Many of the crew would take turns running with Wanda as we headed through Liverpool, down Woodville Road to Parramatta, into the City via Parramatta Road and back to Ampol Crossroads via Canterbury Road. These overnights became very popular and were usually held Friday night, and many of us would then head to western Districts for the Saturday morning run afterwards. Others to run with us included Dave Taylor, Bob Fickel, Shaun Scanlon and Keith O'Connell - all Westfield competitors.

Occasionally our group would bump into Mark Gladwell, Kevin Mansell and Maurice Taylor on their overnight run, which would lead to a bizarre chat and get together at around 3am. The value of these runs lay in the chance to practice all the things which might or might not happen during a long race. We always had a following vehicle

*to provide food, drink and medical supplies.*

*What became evident from this training and the Ultra-race circuit was the camaraderie between the runners and crews. Half the reason to travel to races in Adelaide or Melbourne was to catch up with these friends, swap stories, tell whoppers etc and to enjoy the occasion. Everybody suffered the same problems with injuries or sponsorship difficulties but also shared the common goal of getting to the start of the Sydney to Melbourne race.*

**Andrew Law** from Tasmania is hoping to be the first Tasmanian to complete the run. Only two Tasmanians have attempted it before and both got slightly over the half way mark. He is inspired by the efforts of Cliff Young and has a best 24 hour distance of 180km. Andrew's work mates stirred him about going in the race. "They told me they'd pass around a hat so everyone could chip in for my bus fare down to Melbourne instead." Said Law at a pre race press conference.

Andrew's wife, Kerri kept a diary during Andrew's Westfield attempt. Excerpts from her diary are reproduced throughout the Chapter.

Twenty eight year old **Pat Farmer** from Eschol Park is already a Westfield Veteran. This is already his fourth Westfield with a top ten placing to his credit. Pat recently ran the second fastest 1000 mile time ever when he ran second to Tony Rafferty in a Challenge in August last year. Tony Rafferty beat him by over 30kms. Pat Farmer has a best twenty four hour time of 192km.

**Mark Gladwell** is having his fourth start in the Westfield. He has finished his three previous attempts and is confident of making it four in a row. Mark started running in 1984 and has a best 24 hour time of 164km to his credit. Mark's wife, Lucille has taken to training with Mark stating "It's the only time we see each other".<sup>272</sup> She also acts as crew Commander on their regular pilgrimage between Sydney and Melbourne.

**Greg Wishart** from Frankston is having his second start in the Westfield. He finished twelfth last year in a time of eight days and fifty five minutes. His sporting career started in Rowing before moving to Triathlons. He ran in his first Ultra in 1985 and has had excellent results since. These have included running 210.088 kms in the International challenge 24 hour in 1989 and running 721.4km in the 6 Day Race at Colac in 1989. Greg is now running over 200km a week in training and is confident of improving on last year's performance.

**Shaun Scanlon** from NSW is another first timer. Shaun was a champion amateur Boxer in the 60's who missed out on Tokyo Olympic selection due to him fighting in a Pro fight in Newcastle. "I was sprung" he sheepishly admits. Shaun has been in Ultra running since 1989. He has a best twenty four hour distance of 150km and a best Six day distance of 501.86kms to his name. He was training over 500km a week prior to Christmas but has eased down since.

**Ross Parker** from West Australia is the "Veteran" of this year's event. He has raced five times for four finishes. Ross is a keen sportsman who excelled in cricket and football before turning his body to Ultra's in 1984. Ross Parker said, "Westfield has been the biggest part of my running since I started in 1984. It is the one run I continue to look forward to each year and one reason I continue to run"

**Brian Purcell** from the USA is competing for the first time. Brian brings great

credentials with him. In 1988 he won an unusual event called "Man against Beast" in Arkansas. He beat runners and horses to take the total prizemoney. Brian is also one of the few runners to beat Yiannis Kouros. That occurred in the Western State Run in 1988. Brian is hoping to repeat that performance again in this year's race.

**Peter Quirk** is another novice runner in this year's Westfield. Peter is an ex Sydney Swans footballer who set himself the challenge of running in the Westfield after admiring the efforts of the runners in 1983. Peter was hoping to raise money for Rett Syndrome due to his daughter being diagnosed with the disease but was unable to due to the Rett Syndrome Association not being officially registered.

**Rod Martin** from Wentworthville is hoping that his second attempt at the Westfield will bring better results than the first time. He completed 564km in 1988 but had to withdraw with ankle tendonitis. He has a best 24 hour distance of 181.387km and is hopeful of a Top ten finish this year.

**Tatsuya Muramatsu** from Japan is the third Japanese runner to attempt the Westfield since 1983. He has completed the Spartahlon in a time of 34 hours and 36 minutes and has a best twenty four hour distance of 119.2km. He has also completed various Triathlons, Ironman and Ultra events throughout Japan.

**Kevin Mansell** is running in his forth Westfield. He has completed the last three and last year ran himself into the record books when he completed the course in an amazing 5 days 22 hours and fifty nine minutes. Only five runners have broken the six day mark for 1000km. He now believes that he can win the Westfield and after his rapid improvement over the last three years, anything is possible!

**Greg Hillier** is also another runner who is running in the Westfield for the first time. He has been training by running 40km a day, is an excellent sportsman and has a best twenty four hour distance of 140km. Greg has also raised over \$20 000 by running in various charity races through out country Victoria in the previous two years.

**Norio Wada** is running in the Westfield for the second time. He raced in 1989 and completed 439km before being withdrawn by the Race Doctor. He is confident of improving and finishing the course this year. He has a best 24 hour distance of 228km to his credit.

Random drug testing had occurred in 1989, but it was decided that all runners would be tested in accordance with IOC and IAAF rulings. This was because of Graeme Woods disqualification last year and the attempt by Westfield to comply with other major athletic events around the world!

Once again there was going to be cut off points for the race. The runners would have:

24 hours	Marulan	130km
48 hours	Canberra	255km
72 hours	Cooma	370km,
96 hours	465km	Bombala,
120 hours	555km	Cann River,
144 hours	665km	Nowa Nowa,

168 hours	780km	Stratford,
192 hours	900km	Darnum
204hours	Finish	Melbourne!

The prizemoney for 1990 was to be a total of \$50 000. The winner was to receive \$ 25 000, second \$10 000, third \$ 5 000, fourth \$ 3 000 and fifth to tenth \$ 1 000 each.

Greek Ultra legend, Yiannis Kouros has agreed to an eight hour delayed start this year. Publicity from Westfield went to great pains to inform people that Kouros was running under a delayed start and not a handicap. The winner of the race would be the one that ran the race in the shortest time. Last year Standeven was first across the line by half an hour, but lost the race due to Kouros taking lesser time! Kouros is confident of beating the five day mark and really cementing his name into the History books for all time!

Once again, Westfield have released glossy advertising brochures to try and entice Australian businesses to support and sponsor the race. For \$500,000 businesses could invest in the three week "Scratchathon" retail promotion being held by Westfield. They would also get joint naming rights to the race. For \$ 300 000 businesses could obtain exclusive naming rights to the "Scratchathon" or joint naming rights to the Race.

Businesses could buy their own Corporate team for \$ 150 000. This would include 5 Australian runners and 5 Overseas runners. This would give the businesses major Corporate exposure and the opportunity to conduct major promotional activities in association with the event. Businesses could buy a Womens team for \$100 000, Yiannis Kouros for \$ 30 000, sponsor your own competitor for \$10 000, or make a \$ 40 000 donation to the National Heart Foundation. This would guarantee the business an international runner and major promotion for the race. After reading some of this literature, it wasn't surprising that some of the major stars were annoyed at the pittance that they were receiving for their efforts from Westfield.

The team's event for the 1990 Westfield will have an International flavour with New Zealand and Japan being represented. The two female Aussies will also field their own team as well. Prizemoney for the winning team will once again be \$1000 and a sash for each runner. The best two aggregates from each state will count towards the team event.

The organisation for this year's Westfield was once again impeccable. Prior to the race, NSW Police issued all competitors with a set of race rules and NSW conditions as set. All officials following the race were issued with a race Official instruction booklet which set out everyone's daily tasks and what to do if there was a problem. Charlie Lynn's Army background was certainly paying dividends because the Westfield system certainly did operate like a well oiled machine.

A couple of weeks before the start of the 1990 Westfield it seemed as though the partnership between Yiannis Kouros and the Westfield Management was on the rocks. The 34 year old Greek legend is living in Sydney and wasn't even invited to the launch of this year's race. As a result Yiannis held his own Press conference and had a few shots at the Westfield organisers.

"The race is going down. Every year the publicity gets more but the prizemoney gets less. They don't want to spend money but they like to have more publicity. This year they make the race cheaper. They don't invite all the good international runners. The

prizemoney this year is less - \$ 20 000 - but it is nothing because I am not able to run like this every few weeks. I do this race once a year. For me to be what I am I have done 18 years training with no job. This is just the result, so the money is nothing." Kouros also expressed his displeasure at the handicapping system that had been forced onto him by the Westfield management.

Yiannis Kouros also explained that he would be spending the next two weeks at a retreat in the Blue Mountains. This would be to prepare his body and mind for the job in front of him. "It's because I can think positive that I can forget about the pain and problems and keep going. You need your body but mostly you use your mind"

Yiannis Kouros is now living in Australia but his mind is still back in Greece. "Greece is a country of spirit and our people gave most of their lives to fighting. When I'm running I think of the Greek fighters and it helps me. I think I have a link with the past. Twice in my life I went to two places in Greece that I have been before and both the places felt familiar to me like I have been there before. I walked down the street and I knew where I was. It is very strange"

Yiannis Kouros returned from the Blue Mountains a couple of days before the start of the race. He was still upset over the reduction in prizemoney and the handicapping system but was determined to put it behind him until the completion of the race. " I want to focus all my energy on the race, I don't want to think about other things now. It's not that the story has finished. It's just that I have to concentrate on the race first".

The race started to the tune of Chariots of Fire and the runners were off. By evening time, Bryan Smith led the runners as they ran though rain towards Goulburn. Maurice Taylor was second position and Kiwi, Don Mitchell was third with Victorian John Breit running comfortably in forth.

Ernie Cattle had been the early leader in the race but had fallen foul with a stomach upset and was now struggling in fifth. Sandra Barwick was the leading female runner and was in tenth position. The field was already stretched across a 40km spread and it wasn't even twelve hours into the race.

The first casualty in the race was Victorian Greg Hillier. He was forced to withdraw with exhaustion and hypothermia after completing 175km.

Yiannis Kouros started the race eight hours after all the other competitors. More than 5000 people turned up to see Kouros start and he was blessed by a Greek Orthodox Priest before he started. He lifted his baby daughter onto the stage for one last kiss before heading out of the Shopping Centre into the cold night. Westfield Race Director, Charlie Lynn was rapped at the turnout and said "He's the spirit of the event, there's an aura about him. He really has turned this sort of thing into an art form".

*First Day on the road with John Breit:*

*The big day finally dawned and we had our assigned tasks. I was going to be driving the rear vehicle, taking food out to John and running with him when necessary. Gary dropped John down to the start and we all waited five kilometres up the road. The race started about half past ten and it was about twenty minutes later when the first of the runners came running up the road.*

*What a sight! The circus had started! It was only a minute or so later when John*

*came past and our lead van tucked in behind him. I followed in the second van shortly behind that. Apart from the runners, we had also been swamped by media vans and helicopters. What a spectacle! Runners, Vans, media crew and helicopters proceeding up the highway. There were also spectators lining the streets. It felt great just being a crew member!*

*We made our way up the Highway and the circus began to stretch out. John was running with a Kiwi runner and their back up van was directly behind ours. During the first couple of hours the highway was stretching over quite a few rivers, with quite spectacular drops to the riverbeds. I thought that they would make spectacular bungy drops and started to trash the Kiwis behind us on the CB radio. They took it in good humour, but reminded me about the underarm bowling incident. The CB was quiet for the next couple of hours!*

*At the forty two kilometre mark, Westfield had a big banner erected over the road. It read "Congratulations from Westfield, One marathon completed, twenty five to go". Quite an eerie feeling when one realised the awesome task, that was now in front of John. Oh well it was our job to get him there!*

*The day continued and soon evening and night was upon us. John wasn't having anyone run with him at this stage, we would only have to run drinks and food up to him. We were taking him drinks every twenty minutes and a snack every half an hour. It was going to be vitally important to keep the sustenance up to him.*

*The first qualifying stage was at Picton, which was a truck stop about ninety km out of Sydney. I think that we reached it with about six hours to spare. Any runners that didn't make it to a qualifying spot in time were automatically out of the race. It was fair enough because they did have to try and get it finished in a reasonable time. The crew members were working a roster of six hours on, three hours off. During the race I felt a bit bad taking three hours off, when John was plodding down the road, but it was vital that you took your breaks when allocated.*

*It was around 6pm on the second day of the race when Yiannis Kouros became the leader. At the beginning of the day he was in 22<sup>nd</sup> position. Kouros had overtaken second place Peter Gray on the other side of Canberra and soon had his sights focused on Bryan Smith. It was around 4.45pm when race leader, Bryan Smith took a break and was unbothered when Kouros overtook him 4km south of Canberra. During that break, Bryan Smith ended up with two stiches in his head when he stood up in the bath of his Motel room and lost his balance. This cost him a couple of hours running but he is once again running solidly in second position.. Peter Quirk was forth and John Breit was maintaining his solid run in fifth.*

*Kouros had overtaken them all 245km into the race. The first two days of the race was to see the runners suffer from the extremely cold weather. Thankfully the weather started to improve for the second half of the race.*

*Day Two of my Westfield experience:*

*John kept running through the night and was placed in the top ten. He had his first massage break in Goulburn and was feeling good. It was between Goulburn and Canberra, where I did my first bit of running. Crewmembers were allowed to run with their runner on the proviso that it was to guide the runner only, but it also gave the runner a psychological boost because he had to someone to talk to.*



*It was during that morning that we got overtaken by one, Mr Yiannis Kouros. He had started eight hours behind the field and he had caught us already. We knew that he was coming because we could hear this Greek music, blaring five hundred metres behind us. Sure enough, he was soon overtaking John. Kouros is definitely the best ultra distance runner that ever lived. Some say that it is his perfect running style and others say that it his mind being so perfectly in tune. I think that it is a combination of both areas.*

*Kouros overtook us and the day continued. John kept running well. It was soon calculated that we would be running through Canberra during peak hour night time traffic. I took on the job of guiding John through the city. He was going to stop at a hotel the other end of the city for a three hour break. That would include a massage and a sleep. He would only be in the state of sleep known as Rapid eye movement sleep, but it would be enough to keep pushing him. It was quite remarkable to see how the human body could survive without so little sleep!*

*I started running with John about ten kilometres out of the city. I had a reflective vest on and had read the map one hundred times in the last two hours. We got into the city ok and John decided that he needed to relieve himself. His brother, Mark jumped out of the van and we proceeded to guide John into the first Hotel on Northbourne Avenue. It must have looked quite funny to the patrons going into the posh restaurant to see three cold sweaty runners, run into their Hotel. A couple of minutes later, John was back on the road and we were meandering through the city.*

*Half an hour later, we had got through the city and we stopped at a hotel. Time for Massage and sleep break. Down went the witches hat and in we went. Every time a Westfield runner, left the run, he had to put a witches hat on the road. I guess it helped prevent cheating!*

*Well three hours later, we were back on the road again. I ran with John for another hour. The hill out of Canberra towards Cooma was enormous. It seemed to take for ever. I eventually escaped to the sanctity of the caravan for a couple of hours sleep. John kept running through the night and maintained his position in the Top ten.*

Yiannis Kouros passed through the NSW township of Bombala at 8pm on the night of 19<sup>th</sup> May 90. His nearest rivals were still at least three to four hours behind him. There are four Aussie runners in the top six. They were Maurice Taylor, Peter Quirk, Bryan Smith and Peter Gray. Brian Purcell from the USA was also in the top six.

Tasmanian, Andrew Law was doing well when he arrived in Canberra. It was the 253 km mark and his wife, Kerri had the following to say: *Stopped for 3 and a half hours ( Canberra International Hotel) - Ray went in and told them that Andrew was on his way and if at all possible would they provide us with a room - the y obliged of course - at no expense (isn't he a charmer). Andrew has 2 hours solid sleep, 1 and a half hours massage and a spa.*

Westfield legend, Cliff Young wasn't entered in the race this year but was being used as the Official Motivator for the runners. This was obviously working as only two runners had pulled out so far. When Shaun Scanlon looked like missing the 130km cut off, Cliff was there to toe him to the line. When Wanda Foley looked liked pulling out after two days of the race, Cliff was to reassure her with a few kind words. "The conditions are terrible this year. There was rain and hailstones and all sorts of things. I really felt for them last night when I curled up in my nice warm bed." Said Cliff whilst talking about his newfound job on the race.

Top ten race positions at 0600 hrs 20 May 90:

Yiannis Kouros	520km
Bryan Smith	476km
Peter Quirk	472km
Brian Purcell	468km
Maurice Taylor	451km
Peter Gray	445km
John Breit	419km
Don Mitchell	416km
Mark Gladwell	408km
Andrew Law	407km

It was at this stage of the race that Andrew Law was beginning to suffer with the cold: *Stopped for 2 hours - this included sleep/run down and change of clothing and socks. At this stage it was snowing and it was bitterly cold. 40km's out of Bombala the snow set on Andrew whilst he was running and vision was very poor ( approximately 100 metres)* wrote Kerri in the race diary.

Sandra Barwick was leading the women's race with 406km. Georgina McConnell was fifty six kms behind her with 350km. Peter Quirk and Maurice Taylor from NSW were leading the teams event with 923km.

*Day Three of my Westfield experience:*

*The next day dawned and we found ourselves enjoying the bitterly cold high plains. It was round about this time, when John started his hobby for the race which was collecting hubcaps. He would point to a hubcap by the side of the road and one of us would jump out and pick it up. Next stop and the hubcap would be tied onto the back of the van. By the end of the race we had picked up at least twenty different hubcaps. One came from an Official car, that was promptly returned at the end of the race!*

*The day brought more running, more stops, more driving , more hubcaps. Some of it did get a bit monotonous, but we were all focused towards a common goal. Day soon became evening and we were approaching the outskirts of Cooma. What a cold place! We stopped there for an hour or so, whilst John had another massage. The night before I thought the hill out of Canberra was steep. It was nothing compared with the mountain out of Cooma!*

*The hours kept ebbing by as John kept running and we kept backing him up to the hilt. The crewmembers had divided into two teams by now. There was Mark, Gary, his wife and the physio in the front van. Myself, Alex and Dick were in the back van. John ran well through the night and by morning, we were on the outskirts of Bombala. It was nine o clock when we ran into Bombala and had another couple of hours break.*

*It was in Bombala, where I upset the local Greek population. I had been sent to the*

*local milk bar to buy some toasted sandwiches for everyone. One of the owners started saying how good Yiannis Kouros was. So I replied with a statement that Yiannis wasn't that good and he will be beaten some day. The Greek guy replied with a statement that "Don't let my mother hear you say that she comes from the same village as Yiannis". I felt about six inches tall!. For the record, I do believe that Yiannis is the greatest Ultra runner in this era and it is a long time before he will be beaten.*

The weather during this years race was absolutely terrible with Race director conceding that the weather was the worst in the history of the race with everyone, including Yiannis Kouros sufferring.

It's sheer hell out here" said Kevin Mansell, who was in 13<sup>th</sup> spot and was the first to run into a snow storm, 60kph hour winds near Nimmitabel.

"In the morning when I crossed the border I was jumping for joy, singing , dancing, now this weather is getting me down again. It's the worst weather we've had on this race. Last year it was cloudy but dry and the year before that it was sunny" said Yiannis Kouros at the 548km mark of the race.

Cooma, Bombala, Lakes Entrance and Orbost are all towns on the Westfield route. The Westfield has been a big bonus for these towns in the last few years. It has been an event coming to town and it has meant extra dollars for these towns as the race passes through. Cliff Young was guest of honour at a Sportsman's dinner at Cooma on the Friday night of the race. The next morning he ran through the township with 60 of the Primary School children and the Queen of Cooma, Shirley Pusswald.

At 6pm on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 90 the top ten placings were:

1.	Yiannis Kouros	755km
2.	Bryan Smith	697km
3.	Brian Purcell	696km
4.	Maurice Taylor	659km
5.	Peter Quirk	655km
6.	John Breit	631km
7.	Don Mitchell	628km
8.	Andrew Law	611km
9.	Peter Gray	598km
10.	Mark Gladwell	596km

The leading female was still Sandra Barwick who had 581km. The Victorian team of Bryan Smith and John Breit were leading the teams Championship.

Andrew Law's diary entries for the 459.5km and 597km:

At 9.49p, on 20/5 we passed the Victorian Border. All the crew ran with Andrew ( beside two drivers) and cheered and celebrated with Andrew. He thought it was no big deal a she still had to run 500 more. So that was that!

Cliff Young ran with Andrew. Young children from Cabbage Tree Creek primary school cheered and clapped Andrew along. It was great. We were unindated with Muesli bars so that's what we gave the kids.

Brian Purcell was catching up on Kouros at a great rate of knots and only had a gap of 40kms. The cold mountain air had been a benefit to Purcell, as he drew on his trail running experience back in the States. Purcell moved from sixth to second within twenty four hours.

Purcell's crew are playing it very cautious with the race and have refused to let their runner be quizzed on Kouros's progress. "We don't want him to worry about where Kouros is because Brian is running his own race and Kouros isn't in it" said Purcell's crew manager. Purcell is one of the handful of men alive to have beaten Yiannis Kouros in an Ultra Race. This was in the Western States 100 mile race a couple of years ago.

Brian Purcell was very confident when interviewed by reporters and said "I'm running to plan and taking one and a half hour breaks every twelve hours. I'm moving right along and doing so much better than I expected. I think I am a good mountain runner and the more adverse the conditions, the more I like mountain running."

Yiannis Kouros proved yesterday that perhaps he was mortal after all. He was interviewed by reporters as he was trudging along the road towards Melbourne and was quoted as saying "There is something wrong with it, I don't know. I don't feel so optimistic".

His manager, Theo Premetis tried to explain this laps in Kouros's mental concentration when he said "On the forth day he slows down because he can't see the goal that he has set for himself to realise. He is at the point where he is unsure if the goal is realistic or not. And as always, his body has suffered a lot of pain".

*More of my Westfield experience:*

*Back to the story, John kept running, collecting hubcaps, getting massages, eating, drinking and making his way down the highway.*

*It was early the next day when John hit Gippsland. He had a break at Nowa Nowa early in the morning and then started to go for it. I think the biggest boost for John was when he ran through Lakes Entrance and saw about four different runners having a break in different Motels. John was so wrapped to be passing them, that his heart motored into action and he seemed to get a kick bigger than Phar Lap. Or was it the Blues Brothers playing on the speakers.*

*I kept doing my bit by driving, sleeping, running etc., etc., etc. Another day passed and we were on the outskirts of Sale. It was night time and I had given them strict instructions to wake me up.*

*Sale was my home town and I was going to run through Sale with John. Unfortunately it was three o clock in the morning and the only person awake was my flatmate and workmate, Mossy. Mossy had driven five kilometres out of Sale and was waiting for us on the highway. They got me out of bed and I joined John and Mossy on the road.. Mossy ran with us for two kilometres and then ran back to his Patrol vehicle. We ran through Sale. It was deathly quiet and the streets were dead. But it was still great and I felt proud to be out there on the road. We stopped on the other side of town whilst*

*John had another massage break.*

Purcell has got a four kilometre break on Bryan Smith, whose main aim is to be first Australian across the line. He is looking fairly comfortable and has a fifty kilometre break on Maurice Taylor. Following Taylor is Peter Quirk and John Breit in fifth and sixth place respectively.

A very unofficial story going the rounds was that a young boy in Bombala approached an official for a T-shirt. The official said "Yes", but he would want something in return. The official was offered the young boy's 19 year old sister. The official is not saying what his reply was, to the more than generous offer.

There have now been three withdrawals in the race. They are Ernie Cattle, Greg Hillier and Shaun Scanlon. Sandra Barwick is in thirteenth place and still winning the women's race. Georgina McConnell is catching her and has moved up ten places to be in fifteenth place. The other female runner, Wanda Foley is struggling in third last place.

The top ten placings at 0600 hrs 22 May were:

- |     |                |       |
|-----|----------------|-------|
| 1.  | Yiannis Kouros | 807km |
| 2.  | Bryan Smith    | 765km |
| 3.  | Brian Purcell  | 764km |
| 4.  | Maurice Taylor | 725km |
| 5.  | Peter Quirk    | 720km |
| 6.  | Don Mitchell   | 691km |
| 7.  | John Breit     | 680km |
| 8.  | Peter Gray     | 672km |
| 9.  | Andrew Law     | 671km |
| 10. | Kevin Mansell  | 652km |

Kouros started to suffer in the last couple of hundred kilometres. A race was going on behind him for second place, but the Greek was oblivious to all of this. Yiannis Kouros was asked on the last morning of the race on what he was looking forward to on completing the race. "I'm looking forward to completing the remaining 130km without injury. Then I'm looking forward to sleeping for 12 hours."

*Even more of my Westfield experience:*

*Night time soon became day and John's pace picked up dramatically. He was in his home area as well. I forget to mention his parents. They had followed us from Cooma and were providing tremendous moral support for everyone. Mrs Breit was even taking all the washing and doing it in her hotel rooms. Thank Christ, we weren't going to smell our way to Melbourne.*

*Back to Gippsland. As I said John's pace had picked up dramatically. People were coming out onto the road to see John. He was the local boy and was definitely in the Top Ten. John motored through Traralgon, Morwell and his hometown of Moe. It was soon*

*night time and we were on the outskirts of Warragul. It was about nine-o clock at night when we reached the final qualifying stage. We decided to get hold of a few toilet rolls and we all went up ahead of him. He had his own little run through which John thought was excellent. It boosted his morale and it boosted our morale.*

Andrew Law was about fifty kilometres behind Breit going through Gippsland but was starting to struggle as these excerpts from his diary shows:

*- Andrew veered off the road and made a crutch for support. This was modified by the crew to make it more comfortable for him. He struggled on for 2kms.*

*742.3 Stopped - Mark Gladwell came into the van realising Andrew was having problems. He suggested that we put his feet straight into ice water. It seemed cruel but after three hours of constantly putting his feet into ice water for ten minutes at a time the swelling had gone down considerably and believe it or not Andrew was able to keep running. This camaraderie between runners was fantastic, it's such a great sport. This run certainly brings out the best and the worst in the runners.*

*Blister started on left heel. Heel wearing off shoe. Overall Andrew had seven blisters and these only occurred when it was raining fairly heavily and the wet socks rubbing on his feet caused discomfort - blisters.*

*Early morning jogger ran 5km with Andrew. Whilst talking with him we found out that his brother coaches North Hobart football team in Tassie. It's definitely a small world.*

Kouros only had ten kilometres to go when he had to stop. It seemed as though he was gone. He kept going but had to rest again with only four kilometres left. He then heard that Bryan Smith was only fifteen kilometres behind him. Was it going to be a repeat of last year's race? This was enough to get Kouros running again. It wasn't too long before he was crossing the Finishing Line and thanking all of his Greek supporters. His time was 5 days, 23 hours and 55 minutes.

Kouros suffered a bout of flu during the race and over the last three kilometres, the world champion was in agony. At one stage, he was totally delirious and lost his balance. He fell back onto his support vehicle.

Wanda Foley ended up pulling out of the race at the 702km. It was a truly remarkable effort. This is her race story:

*Right from the start, the weather turned nasty with consistent rain right through the first day. Wanda covered 147km on day one, and had minor stomach problems. On day two she reached Canberra and finished the day with 127km. From here the weather got worse. Rain now turned to sleet as we headed for the high country. Approaching Cooma, the air temperature was -5 celsius but the wind chill factor was much colder. Wanda began to be blown off the road by the fierce cross winds and we had a crew member on the side of the road to catch her and prevent her falling each time this happened. This continued for hours until we reached Cooma, and by now we were having trouble keeping Wanda's energy levels up. She was wearing: long tights, long sleeved silk shirt, long sleeved t-shirt, sloppy joe, silk balaclava, gloves, beanie and a gore tex running suit - and still felt the cold.*

*Some of the road sections between Bombala and Cann River had black ice which was an added hazard for runners and crew. By now Wanda had developed shinsplints as*

*a result of the long sections of walking (unexpectedly) - these shinsplints were obviously painful, swelling like tennis balls on the front of Wanda's shins. We iced these regularly, including making Wanda sit with her legs in an esky of ice during her rest breaks in the van, a particularly cruel thing to do given the severe cold weather but it was necessary and it relieved the swelling enough to be able to then strap the shins.*

*We kept this up and actually began to get the injury under control as we did with the blisters and swollen toe problems. Unfortunately this stress was having an effect on Wanda's stomach and she became regularly ill. No amount of re-hydration or food was enough to get this under control and she was reduced to mainly walking, eventually leading to the race doctor convincing her to withdraw from the race, citing exhaustion, south of Lakes Entrance, completing 702km.*

It was disappointing for Wanda Foley not to complete the race, but she completed 702km which is equivalent to seventeen and a half Marathons. Definitely a gutsy effort and one full of praise for her determination.

Kouros dedicated his win to the Greek community and apologised for not arriving a day earlier as he had promised. "I am sorry I didn't come yesterday. I am very happy, not disappointed. I have achieved my goal of coming to Melbourne as soon as possible. Even with so many problems with my body, I beat my body."

On receiving the winner's cheque Kouros criticised the Westfield management for cutting the prizemoney by \$5000 and said that he would not enter the race again unless the prizemoney was increased. He also spoke with reporters from the Doncaster Templestowe News shortly after the race and was very critical of where the race was heading.

He claims that himself and the other 31 runners were being used to raise company revenue for Westfield. "I don't like to see people making money from sport. These people like to see us in pain. We are running because we believe in it. It's like a god for us. Even if they pay me \$50 000 or \$ 100 000, I'm not pleased because they use us and the sport to make money. It's not an athletic spirit. It's a commercial race and the people participating should be rewarded."

He said that \$ 20 000 first prizemoney was terrible, being as the race generated more publicity than the Adelaide Grand Prix and Bathurst 1000

The executive director of the run, Mr Chris Bates was asked about the comments by Yiannis Kouros. He said the runner had "bitten the hand that feeds him".

Chris Bates also said "I have never twisted anyone's arm to enter the event and I will promise that in the future he won't be forced to enter. I won't be sponsoring Kouros next year, so I will have some more money for prizes. He can do his own sponsorship sourcing."

Yiannis Kouros was also asked on what his secret of success was. He explained that running was a form of meditation "If you don't use your mind, you stop everywhere your body stops. You must find the right combination of both."

Bryan Smith and Peter Quirk ended up coming second and third.

*The home stretch:*

*Night time passed and I think it was about six o'clock in the morning when I was*

*back out running with John. We were watching the sun come up and we were watching Melbourne come up in front of us. John was so happy because he knew that he was going to make it and finish well. The only problem was that one of the female Kiwi runners was finishing well. She was catching up. Our crew chief, Gary came out and said a few words to John. John was soon picking up the pace again. I think Gary appealed to John's sexist side!*

*Well we were soon running through Melbourne. The crowds and traffic had picked up even more. There was quite a few times that we were all out there guiding John through the traffic. One never realises how dangerous traffic can be, until you have to guide one runner over highways, roundabouts, train tracks and tram tracks. It was dangerous but we were getting our runner closer and closer to his goal.*

*Before we knew it, the finishing line was within a kilometre. A couple of officials were there to meet us and took care of our vans. We followed twenty metres behind John, as he powered towards the finishing line and it was great! There was a couple of hundred people waiting. (The finishing line was at one of the car parks in the big Westfield shopping centre in Melbourne).*

*John was now down to his last one hundred metres and the roar was deafening. I don't know how John was feeling, but I felt a bloody big tingle going up and down my spine. If this is how it was going to be as a crew member, I was definitely coming back as a runner. John finished and we followed him a couple of seconds later. His parents were there and there was a fair bit of emotion being spilled between him, his parents and us the crew.*

*We tried to party after that. Westfield put on a few beers, but everyone was too stuffed to enjoy it fully. We ended up putting John to bed at nine o'clock that night. We had to carry the guy because he was that stuffed. I think the rest of us were in bed half an hour later!*

*What did I get out of the run? I saw the commitment that was going to be needed. I saw how organised and professional the crew had to be. I saw the best way for food and drink to be organised. Unfortunately the Westfield died a couple of years later due to one reason or another.*

*Any person that can run a marathon has achieved something extremely special. To attempt or run twenty six marathons in a row. Words in the English dictionary cannot describe what they have achieved!*

*In 1997 I was to complete my first twenty four hour race at Coburg. It was the scene of my earlier demise seven years previous. I ran 103.5km and John was part of my crew. He was glad to repay the favour of seven years earlier and he helped to give me the stimulus to rekindle my Ultra running career. Westfield Champion, Kevin Mansell was in the same race in 97. He sprinted around the track to congratulate me when I brought up my 100km. That kind of comradeship between World champion and Novice is rarely found on any Sportsfield today. I was on top of the world that day. In the words of Kevin in 1987 "I finally found my hero in life and it was me!"*

*Sandra Barwick was the first woman home. She finished in the Top ten and beat the women's 1000km record at the same time by four hours and twenty minutes. She also*



bettered her own Westfield result by over 24 hours. "One of the reasons I run is to promote ultra running for women. I hope they won't be frightened off by it and will come back." Said Sandra shortly after finishing.

After Sandra Barwick finished, Federal MP, Michael Lavarch came forth and said that women would continue to be a side show in Australian sport. "The coverage of the race gives the public the impression that there are no female competitors. It is no wonder then the first placed woman will receive less than one sixth of the prizemoney awarded to the male winner." Lavarch said this was most surprising being as that Westfield relies heavily on women for the success of their shopping centres.

Maurice Taylor ended up in fourth place. He said " I found the right mental approach necessary in a race like this. You must train yourself in mental strategy. For example there were times I wanted to go to the toilet but said to myself I should wait for another kilometres or two, or the next sign post. Little things like this make you mentally tougher. When I reached the finish line, I had the satisfaction of knowing I had achieved something. I had beaten my body and mind, and taken 12 hours 20 minutes off my previous best time."

Twenty five year old Geelong runner, Peter Gray became the youngest runner to finish the race when he crossed the line seventh. His time was seven days, eighteen hours and two minutes. In the first couple of days he was second. It was only the icy Snowy Mountains that would get the better of him.

Before getting into Ultras , Peter had completed 62 Triathlons including the South Australian Six day Triathlons. "I'm happy I'm the youngest person to run 1000kms. I had real bad flu, but I still did it". Said Peter shortly after finishing. Over the next eight years, Peter was to become one of the best UltraMarathoners in Australia by completing over 100 ultras and 100 marathons. His finest moment was to come in 1997 when he won the Colac 6 Day race.

Andrew Law was to finish the race and was ecstatic with his efforts:

*30kms to go and we were escorted by a Race Official into Doncaster shopping centre. Mind you we had to stop at all traffic lights. If Andrew had been in the top ten they would have stopped traffic. So stopping and starting every five minutes was extremely difficult.*

*1006 It was a great thrill to cross the finish line - andrew was absolutely thrilled that he had done what he had set out to do. That was to be the first Tasmanian to complete the run. He finished the run in a time of 8 days and eight minute exactly.*

Meanwhile, ex-RAAF runner, Michael Bohnke was near the rear of the field. His spirits soared yesterday, when he received news that he had gained employment with a computer company in Wagga Wagga. Michael started off very strongly in the race, but had more than a few injuries to contend with over the last few days. These include a twisted and bruised ankle.

Bohnke is determined to make it to the finish. He has had special moments on the way. These included sharing muesli bars with schoolchildren at Cabbage Tree Creek and getting cheered in the streets of Lakes Entrance as he battled along the road.

Eduardo Vega was to be the last runner to cross the finishing line when he crossed the forty seven minutes after the official closing time. His only physical reward was a Certificate of achievement and a cold beer but he was still a winner. In last year's race he

only managed 147km before getting injured, but this year he kept going and completed the distance. In the words of Eduardo "Finishing this race was all I wanted to achieve this year".

The eighth Westfield run had been run and won. Yiannis Kouros had won the race in appalling conditions. Every other runner that completed the course were champions as well. Westfield were continuing to look after their runners one hundred percent, but it was still a media exercise and their main purpose was to promote the shopping centre and increase revenue.

Cracks were starting to appear with runners expressing their opinions on the relatively low prizemoney. What would 1991 bring? Would a new champion come forth to challenge Kouros and renew media interest? Would Westfield do something different to try and create renewed interest in the eyes of the public? Would Westfield give the runners extra prizemoney ?

### Westfield FINISHERS 1990

PLACE	NAME	TIME
1	YIANNIS KOUROS	5D 23H 55M
2	Bryan Smith	6d 9h 45m
3	Peter Quirk	6d 11h 40m
4	Maurice Taylor	6d 18h 40m
5	Don Mitchell	6d 21h 27m
6	Brian Purcell	7d 3h 20m
7	John Breit	7d 4h 6m
8	Sandra Barwick	7d 4h 46m
9	Kevin Mansell	7d 12h 52m
10	Tony Collins	7d 14h 59m
11	Peter Gray	7d 18h 2m
12	Andrew Law	8d 8m
13	Mark Gladwell	8d 3h 6m
14	Robert Fickel	8d 6h 59m
15	John Lewis	8d 8h 59m
16	Rod Martin	8d 9h 33m
17	Ross Parker	8d 10h 1m
18	Pat Farmer	8d 10h 27m
19	Michael Bohnke	8d 10h 48m
20	Eduardo Vega	8d 12h 47m

## Chapter Ten

### *1991 - Bryan Smith triumphant*

Ultra events were to continue almost as soon as the last runner crossed the line in the 1990 Westfield. Bob Burns was to win the Aust 48 hour race in June 90 with a distance of 307.94km. Westfield aspirant, Lindsay Philipps ran a very consistent 240.301km in the same event.

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of August 90 saw the second running of the Totos 24 hour Challenge at Olympic Park, Melbourne. Yiannis Kouros was to absolutely blitz the field with an amazing 280.8km. Second was fellow Westfield runner, John Breit with a good total of 238.46km. This would have been good enough to win on any other occasion.

Anyce Kip Melham was to win the Westfield Sydney Striders 24 hour track race in September with a splendid 206.3km. Bryan Smith was to win the CampbellTown Mall 24 hour track race in October with a great total of 222.516km. Peter Gray won the Sri Chinmoy 24 hour race in Adelaide with a total of 202.014km. This was done in scorching heat of 38 degrees.

The CampbellTown 6 Day Race was held in November 90 with Kiwi runner, Sandra Barwick winning with a magnificent 883.631km. Fellow Westfield runner, Tony Collins finished third with 770.104km.

Yiannis Kouros was to win his second 24 hour race in a six month period when he won the Wyong 24 hour race on the Australia Day Weekend with 257.81km. This was an excellent effort when you consider that it was run on a soft grass track. Bryan Smith won his second 24 hour race for the year when he completed 250.729km to win the Victorian 24 hour Championship in February 91.

The stage was certainly set for the 91 Westfield to be a crackerjack event. There were some top performances by runners around Australia. What would the ninth running of the event bring?

1991 was to see major changes in the running of the Westfield Run. "The ninth running of the Sydney to Melbourne Westfield Run will see a number of exciting changes" is how the Executive director of the event, Mr Chris Bates, announced the changes to the Press conference on 16 April 1991.

"We are continually looking at ways to improve the Westfield Run and this year we've increased prizemoney, introduced handicapping for the entire field and through the advice of the NSW and Victorian Police Departments, altered the course of the race to ensure better safety for the runners and the public" said Chris Bates.

The new route for this year's event is 1028km. This is the second longest distance that the race has been run. The event is due to start on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 91 from the

Westfield ShoppingTown in Liverpool. Organisers have given the runners an extra day to complete the event.

The route this year will go along the Hume and Federal Highway's to Canberra and then the Monaro Highway to Cooma. After Cooma, the course goes along the Snowy Mountains Highway through Adaminaby and up to Cabramurra, which is the highest town in Australia.

The course then goes through Kosciusko National Park, before going along the Alpine Way to Corryong. The runners then head to Wodonga before turning left and heading along the Hume Highway towards Melbourne. The finish will once again be at Doncaster Shopping center. It will definitely be a course that will test all the runners.

Fifty runners applied for this year's run. A final field of twenty four was accepted into the race. There are six internationals in the team who are from France, USA, New Zealand and Japan. There are three women in the event and nine runners are having their first start.

This year's run will be a complete handicap run and the prizemoney will total \$100 000. This will include \$30 000 for the first runner across the line and \$30 000 for the runner with the fastest time. This is the richest ever prizemoney available for an Ultra Marathon. Prizemoney will be distributed to the Top ten finishers.

There were complaints from a few of the runners about the new prizemoney system. Kevin Mansell said "I'd like to see it shared around a bit more. The 24 hour handicap is very tough and the way things are I could run 11<sup>th</sup> with the second fastest time and hardly get anything".

Fellow runner, Tony Collins said " It's worked out well for me but some of the others in the last group are going to find it tough".

Australian Ultra Runners Association has established handicaps for the race. The runners will start in four hourly intervals with the first group starting at 1100 hrs on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May and the scratch group starting 24 hours later. Athletics Australia will also be involved in the running of the race.

The Cliff Young Award for the first Aussie to cross the Finish is again being held with \$1000 and the Gumboot trophy. There will also be a new award to remember the late Ernie Cattle. Ernie Cattle from Holbrook ran in the Westfield in 1988,1989 and 1990. He was well known for his sprinting first marathons and died tragically last year when his Ultra light plane crashed. This award will carry \$1000 and a trophy. It will be awarded to the person with the fastest marathon to complete the whole race.

The three women entered for the race are all new to the event and two are from Australia. They are 38 year old, **Dawn Parris** from Melbourne, 40 year old **Helen Stanger** from Sydney in NSW and 39 year old **Randi Bromka** from Colorado in USA. Randi has the advantage of doing a lot of training in the mountains around Colorado and in the winter she is an avid skier. Both Australian women are confident of upstaging their more fancied American opponent.

Top female Ultra Runner, Sandra Barwick from New Zealand is to view the run from a different perspective this year and become an official motivator. Cliff Young and Sandra Barwick are to travel back and forth along the route and do what they can to get the

runners to Melbourne.

**Don Mitchell** from New Zealand is competing for the third time. In 1989 he finished sixth and in 1990 he finished fifth. He is confident of improving on last year's race.

**Jean -Gilles Boussiquet** from Paris is competing in the Westfield for the first time. He is a previous world record holder over 24 hours, 48 hours and 6 days. He is confident of winning and it is only lack of sponsorship that has prevented him from competing on previous occasions.

The Australian contingent is led by Kevin Mansell, David Standeven and Bryan Smith. The three of them belong to the select group of runners that have ran 1000km in under 6 days.

Mansell along with Mark Gladwell will be aiming to be the first runners to complete five Westfield's in a row. **Kevin Mansell** has gone from being an alcoholic and smoker to one of the best athletes for his age in the country. He was asked why he was coming back for his fifth Westfield to which he replied "It's the new challenge every year. Now the challenge is just to finish another one because noone's ever finished five in a row before."

He was also asked about his race tactics to which he replied "I try to run my own race without worrying about anyone behind me or anyone in front of me. When you're running well it's not very hard to motivate yourself. I set myself little goals along the way."

**David Standeven** etched his name into history in 1989 when he beat Kouros by half an hour for line honours.

**Bryan Smith** has two fourth placings and a second to his name. He must start the short priced favourite for this year's run. Bryan Smith is employed as a lines Officer with Telecom and it was only last week that he was climbing the Towers around Mallacoota as part of his every day job. He also gets to train in hilly areas which will help him in this year's race.

**Maurice Taylor** from NSW will also be a leading contender for this year's race. He finished in the Top five in 1989 and 1990. He is confident of repeating his success once again.

**Owen Tolliday** is returning to the race after a years break. In 1988 and 1989 he finished in the Top ten and his recent form suggests that he should not be overlooked.

26 year old, **Peter Gray** from Geelong was the youngest to finish in last year's event. He has been running very well in 24 hour events and should be much improved in 1991. Peter draws inspiration for his races from the Rocky and Chariots of Fire Soundtracks. He has them playing over the support vehicle's loudspeakers and loses himself in the music. Peter Gray will be raising money for the Geelong Salvation Army Alzheimer's Appeal during the 91 Westfield.

**Andrew Law** from Tasmania is back for his second attempt. He finished twelfth last year and was the first Tasmanian ever to finish. Since the 1991 Westfield, Andrew has spent six months dealing with injuries. Two of those months were even spent with his leg in plaster. His tibial tendon had snapped at the 700km of the 1990 race. Surgeons had to remove 4cm of his tendon and then had to have lots of physio and exercise to fully recover. He also had specially made orthotics to help the muscles in the arch of his feet return to normal.

After six months of training, he attempted 7km and 10km runs. He would return home with the odd sore spots, but it didn't look as though he would make the starting line for this year's race. It was two months before the race when Andrew's trainer, Albert Johnson suggested that he take the orthotics out. Andrew's form improved dramatically as a result. He had some tremendous runs over Mount Wellington and was looking in top condition for the race.

There are also nine newcomers in the field. These include 23 year old, **Craig Rowe**, a labourer from Dee Why in NSW. Craig has spent a few years in prison and is using the event to show that he can achieve something worthwhile with his life.

52 year old, **Keith O Connell** is the oldest in the race. This is his first event, but he has crewed for runners over the last four years and should know what is expected of him.

**Shaun Scanlon** from Miller in NSW is having his second start. He is an ex-champion boxer and should do well if he shows his fighting spirit from his pugilistic days.

Twenty five year old, **Lindsay Philips** from Queensland is having his first start in the event.

One of the many people that supplied information for this book was Queenslander, Jan Collins. She was a crew member for Lindsay Phillips in the race and provided a wonderful insight to the life of a crew member in the Westfield. Excerpts from her letter are printed on the next few pages;

*Apparently Lindsay had some problems raising the sponsorship and it only all fell into place in the last few days when we set off from Brisbane - Ray Chatterton, crew Manager, Val Case and myself backup and 2 young men (non runners) - we were still well short of the required crew of seven.*

*Charlie Lynn was adamant that Lindsay would not start unless he had a full crew on board. So on arriving in Sydney a plea for help was broadcast over one of the popular radio stations and a young fellow was game enough to take the trip on. Graeme came from Parramatta and was an absolute God-send when he answered the radio plea. He was such a handy-man and as we had lots of problems with vehicles etc, I don't know how we would have managed.*

*For instance on race start day we still did not have strobe lighting on the vans and he wired and rigged that all up before nightfall. And also that afternoon he and I were off the route to some little town chasing around hardware stores for little bits and pieces to rig up the van before night driving.*

*Coming into Canberra it was soon noticed I was the only crew person who had been to that city so I was designated navigator for sure there. Once again I found myself at Belconnen running around Supermarkets etc I have no idea what the rest of them did, probably slept or showered. I always seemed to miss out on both. As a matter of fact my first shower was in Albury at a Truck stop. "Dear me what am I doing here?"*

*For instance we were told at our crew briefing in Liverpool we would only drive for two hours at a time. Some days I was driving 4/5/6 hours at a time and he would not let me talk at all. "You just concentrate on Lindsay". Well I'm a chatty woman and to sit in silence and not say boo really got on my nerves so we had words (and tears) about that. I guess we were all under stress because we were thrown together at the last minute*

*with the mammoth job of getting this fantastic runner to Melbourne*

*Another memory, running through the Snowy Mountains. Lindsay pleaded for the trees to stop. "When are these trees going to stop" he said. I guess he was sick of the scenery!.*

Jan Collins also wrote an article on her crewing experience in the Westfield. Here are some excerpts from that article:

*The first shock came when the crew manager placed into my shaking hands the keys to the Toyota Dyna 4 berth campervan which I and another lady, Val Case had to drive to Sydney " straight through and be there by 9am the following morning". Thank goodness it was automatic and really fairly easy to handle once out on the highway. We took it in turns and she very graciously handed me the keys in time for Sydney's peak hour traffic.*

*On arrival in Sydney we had pre-race briefing, shopping for food for Lindsay and seven crew members. I also had to do the banking find a Caravan Park for two vehicles for that night and had a very polite confrontation with the Liverpool Traffic Police as I was parked in a one hour parking bay for most of that first day. Being a women comes in handy sometimes. That night I also had to arrange with the NRMA to attend one of the vehicles whose batteries were playing up.*

*PEV1 is crewed by the driver is crewed by the driver who must watch the runner constantly for unannounced stops - Lindsay was great at this - so a very delicate foot on the brake is the tune for your allotted time driving. The navigator does just that but also keeps the Westfield Log, a massive book with every known signpost between Sydney and Melbourne and must put down the exact time the runner passes all these markers en route.*

*He/she also keeps a timed record of all stops whether it is for a sleep, massage, icing of feet, a rest, passing urine, a real pit stop or whatever so deep concentration is again called for here. The third person in this vehicle looks after the runner's food and drinks which entailed keeping an eye on the time and drink content.*

*Lindsay drank every half an hour and we varied the formula between plain water and maximum, So Good with Sustagen, milo, malt etc and vegetable or fruit juices and glucose. He was fed main meals four times a day, plus chocs, nibbles, cake , whatever he felt like whenever. This person also has to feed the other crew members in that van and I quite often forgot to feed myself because I was so busy. Oh and should I forget to say I also had to spend many hours out on the road behind Lindsay, jogging, walking, and general encouragement. When relieved of duty in the PEV1 youi either tore back the 300m to the other van at night or called them up for crew change.*

Just a rare incisive view in to the different world of crewing. The runner you are crewing for certainly takes looking after twenty four hours a day for the duration of the race and any crew that haven't been willing to do this has resulted in a less than 100 percent performance from the runner.

Thirty five year old, **Russel Prince** from New Zealand has excellent times over the shorter Ultras, but it is unknown if he will translate this to the longer distances.

**Tatsuya Muramatsu** from Japan is having his second start. He completed 479km



last year and is confident of completing the event this year.

World Champion Ultra Runner, Yiannis Kouros decided not to compete in the 1991 Race. Westfield Race Director, Charlie Lynn was dismayed at Yiannis' decision and expressed his feelings in a Press Release titled "Inside Westfield 91". Here are excerpts from that Press Statement.

*It's ironic that the World's Greatest Race will be even greater without the world's Greatest ultrarunner.*

*The Kouros saga has generated a fair bit of media comment.*

*Nobody disputes that Yiannis Kouros is the greatest Ultrarunner of all time. His achievements in four previous Westfield Run's, the Colac 6 day race, the New Zealand Ultrathon and the Greek spartathlon are legendary. He is the Greek God of U;traRunning.*

*So why is he not competing in the 1991 Westfield Run?*

*Only Yiannis Kouros can really answer that question.*

*From a race organisers viewpoint it seems he has been badly advised.*

*His manager's demands for appearance money, race expenses, and clothing exceeded \$ 80 000. His booty would probably have increased to \$ 140 000 with prizemoney.*

*One would hope the sport could eventually afford such largesse, but in 1991 it is simply out of the question.*

*Yiannis seems to have forgotten that he achieved his fame through the Westfield Run. Without it he would still be a relatively unknown groundsman at a Sports Stadium in Athens, Greece.*

*He also seems to have forgotten that it was the Westfield Race Organisation which stood behind him when the IAAF imposed an international ban on him for competing in South Africa in 1988. Westfield had the ban rescinded and Yiannis won about \$40 000 as a result.*

*But rather than thank the sponsor for the fame he has achieved, and for the support he has received, he has chosen to knock them instead.*

*Kouros's recent actions indicate that he considers himself to be bigger than the sport.*

*He is naive or is being badly advised.*

*Westfield's decision to stand firm against his demands should encourage him to change either his attitude, his sport or his manager!*

*Either way the other Westfield Runners will benefit. They not only have more prizemoney but they also have a real chance to win it.*

*It looks like being the greatest race yet.*

Yiannis Kouros was to run solo from Sydney to Melbourne at the same time as the

91 Westfield. His run was sponsored by Parklea Markets and his manager, Theo Premetis was to claim that it was the only time that the police would allow him to run . Premetis also said that Kouros wanted to prove that Westfield did not own ultra Distance running and that other companies could afford to sponsor the world's best Ultra distance athlete. The time for his run was never properly recorded and the terrible mix up when he finished was an anticlimax to all his previous finishes in previous Westfield's.

The start of the 1991 Westfield was absolutely great, with Julie Anthony giving a fantastic rendition of 'Advance Australia Fair', whilst the runners waited on centre stage to be called to the starting line.

'Chariots of Fire' played and the final countdown began. The Mayor of Liverpool fires the starting pistol and sends them on their trip down the bitumen road towards Melbourne.

Helen Stangar' attempt on the 1991 Westfield Run was recorded by Bill Hick in his account called " 1991 Westfield Run - The Unfinished Journey". Bill was on Helen's crew for the journey and had helped her with training prior to the event.

Helen's race started well, but the organisation of the crew left a lot to be desired. As Bill Hicks described it "The start of Helen's race began with all the precision and timing of a derailed freight train".

The oldest runner in the field, Keith O' Connel, takes the lead early. All of the runners starting at this time are novice "Westfielders" and are happy to chat for the first few kilometres.

The support vehicles and crews are allowed to join their runners near the Macarthur Tourist Centre at Liverpool. Robert Channells moves into the lead near the Campbelltown exit. He leads at the Marathon mark, with young Lindsay Phillips on his heel.

The marathon times of the first group indicate that they all intend to run sensibly and are not going to burn themselves out in the first 100 kilometres.

Marathon times ( Group 1):

1.	Robert Channells	3 hr 56m
2.	Lindsay Phillips	3 hr 56m
3.	Randi Bromka	4 hr 02m
4.	Helen Stangar	4 hr 02m
5	Dawn Parris	4 hr 05 m
6.	Harry Clements	4 hr 22m
7.	Keith O Connell	4 hr 26 m
8	Craig Rowe	4 hr 48 m

Just after the first group go through their Marathon, the second group of three runners leave on their arduous journey. They are T. Muramatsu, Shaun Scanlon and

Eduardo Vega. Eduardo Vega leads this second group as they go through the marathon.

Their times are:

1. Eduardo Vega 3 hr 53 m
2. Shaun Scanlon 3 hr 57 m
3. Tatch Muramatsu 4 hr 00m

Eduardo Vega fell off the pace slightly from the 55 kilometre mark when he contracted a stomach upset. Shaun Scanlon was running confidently and was confident of breaking 200 kilometres for his first 24 hours of the race. Muramatsu was looking as though he was an improved Ultra runner on last year's run.

It was twelve hours into the race when the third group of runners left from Westfield Shopping Centre at Liverpool. Those runners were Andrew Law, Peter Gray, Tony Collins and Mark Gladwell. There was only a small group of well wishers present when the haunting music of "Advance Australia Fair" echoed through the centre. Westfield Executive, Chris Bates fired the gun at 11.00pm and the small group were off into the cold dark that faced them outside.

It was 11.00am on Thursday when the final group of runners were under starters orders. It is twenty four hours after the first group had left and the scratch runners were now started on their own journey.

The marathon times for the first group of runners were:

1. Russel Prince 3 hr 02m 02s
2. Don Mitchell 3 hr 28m 23s
3. Owen Tolliday 3 hr 33m 14s
4. David Standeven 3 hr 40m 24s
5. Bryan Smith 3 hr 40m 33s
6. Jean Boussiquet 3 hr 56m 39s
7. Maurice Taylor 4 hr 00m 07s
8. Kevin Mansell 4 hr 00m 07s

Russel Prince is running well from the beginning and is letting the rest of the field know that he is in it to win. Bryan Smith reaches the 100km mark in 9 hours and 32 minutes, but is 19km behind Prince. Owen Tolliday is running aggressively and reaches the 100km mark in 9 hours and 12 minutes. Kevin Mansell and Maurice Taylor are running steadily and know that the race does not start until the forth day/.

Don Mitchell and David Standeven are two minutes ahead of Smith at the 100 kilometres mark.

The Frenchman, Jean-Gilles Bousiquet ignores the fast spurts from the other

runners and settles into a steady gait. He is taking his time and getting use to the Australian conditions. He knows that the race does not start until the Monday or Tuesday.

The front runners have been going for 24 hours and Russel Prince has completed 225km. Bryan Smith has 209km. Boussiquet has 201km and Maurice Taylor, David Standeven and Don Mitchell all have 188km to their name. Kevin Mansell is struggling with tonsillitis, but is determined to finish and complete five Westfield runs in a row which is an ultra achievement in itself!

Meanwhile, Robert Channells is in the lead and has a 20km break on Keith O'Connell. Helen Stangar and Randi Bromka are in third and fourth place. Helen has a 10km break on her rival. It is evident that these two runners are going to fight out the women's first prize.

Bill Hicks remembered this part of the journey when he said "We've just finished a rough night. Helen ran to exhaustion and had to stop and be ferried to a motel in Canberra. Because of the sudden decision to stop, and major electrical problems with the lead vehicle, both night shift vehicles went with Helen. This left Hicky and Telf standing on the side of the road at midnight guarding the crew's wicker hats and log book. The temperature dropped to zero degrees that night. Eventually Robbo came and got us and Billy guarded the spot in one of the vans until 4.30am when Helen got back on the road again."

Helen Stangar was only a day into the race when she had a beautiful gift given to her by the side of the road. "She was just about to stop for a break when out of the dark stepped an elderly gentleman with a red rose for her. It was a beautiful thought and one that Helen has said she will always remember."

It was only a day or so into the race, when motivator, Sandra Barwick needed a pit stop and stopped by a bush near the side of the road. She turned her head and saw the body of a lady. Being the curious type, she headed over and ascertained that it was a sex doll. Cliff Young was delighted with the find and tied it to the front of the vehicle for the trip into Canberra. It raised a laugh with everyone concerned.

Russel Prince reached the Canberra mark late on Friday afternoon. He has completed 250km of the race, but finds that Bryan Smith is only 500 metres behind him. Both runners have very capable coaches with them for this event.

Fred Hellyer who is an expert at the Ultra game is coaching Bryan Smith. He was on Geoff Molloy's crew in 84 when he won. Fred is confident that his charge will be the one to beat in 91 and records everything that Bryan eats, drinks and wears.

Max Marsh is the coach of Russel Prince. Max has looked after Dick Tout and Sandra Barwick on previous occasions and is regarded as one of the best running coaches in the southern hemisphere.

As Robert Channells passes through Michelago, the top runners are approaching Canberra Robert now has a 7km lead over Keith O'Connell and a 65km break over the scratch runners.

Robert Channells arrives in Cooma at 0230 hrs in the morning. There is usually a crowd of some description to see the runners into Cooma, but Westfield is old news now and everyone is home in bed. Keith O'Connell continues his consistent run and passes Robert just before sunrise.

Tony Collins is now in third place. He is 6km behind O Connell as he hits the Snowy Mountain Highway towards Adaminaby. Tony had a handicap of 12 hours and has already passed nine runners. He has had two and a half hours rest in his first 55 hours.

By midday on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May, Robert Channells has regained the lead from Keith O Connell. The field positions are:

Position	Name	Handicap	Distance
1	Robert Channells	0	418.1km
2	Keith O Connell	0	413.8km
3	Helen Stangar	0	400.3km
4	Tony Collins	12	398.7km
5	Craig Rowe	0	389.0km
6	Tatch Muramatsu	4	384.7km
7	Eduardo Vega	4	384.9KM
8	Russel Prince	24	383.1km
9	Mark Gladwell	12	377.5km
10	Bryan Smith	24	377.3km
11	Peter Gray	12	375.2km
12	Randi Bromka	0	372.5km
13	Lindsay Philips	0	370.4km
14	Harry Clements	0	370.0km
15	Jean-Gilles Boussiquet	24	365.9km
16	Andrew Law	12	346.1km
17	Dawn Parris	0	341.8km
18	Don Mitchell	24	337.5km
19	Owen Tolliday	24	337.0km
20	Maurice Taylor	24	329.0km
21	Kevin Mansell	24	320.2km
22	Shaun Scanlon	4	305.7km
23	David Standeven	24	276.7km

All of the runners are still in the field at the end of Day three, but there are worrying cracks starting to appear. David Standeven is struggling. His crew are trying to urge him on and he hangs on in the hope that he will make good. Owen Tolliday set a great pace for the first 250km but has groin problems and has to get treatment in Canberra. Shaun Scanlon takes a long break in Canberra. Kevin Mansell has tonsillitis, but is vowing to complete the race and make it five in a row.

The people of Adaminaby turn out in force to greet Robert Channells as he reaches there in mid Saturday afternoon. The town puts on a free BBQ for all of the runners, crews and officials. This is well received by all concerned. It is unfortunate that David Standeven and Owen Tolliday are forced to retire before the township, but they come into town to sample some local hospitality.

By midnight, the runners are headed for the mountain. The temperature has dropped to minus seven degrees and thick black ice has formed on the road.

Tony Collins is running well up the mountain and captures the lead from Robert Channells. Russel Prince has a 11km lead over Bryan Smith and is only 30km behind Tony Collins. Meanwhile French runner, Jean-Gilles Boussiquet is running well and is only 16km behind Bryan Smith.

The women are also running very well. At Adaminaby, Helen Stangar is in third place. Randi Bromka is having tendonitis problems and Dawn Parris is getting stronger after throwing off an ankle scare early in the race.

The generosity of country people never ceased to amaze runners, crew and officials throughout the nine years of the Westfield Run. Bill Hick, who was crewing for Helen Stangar remembered one such incident of country hospitality. "Whilst getting ready to meet Helen the local farm kids came out with some Anzac biscuits for all the crew. A great thought. Then a couple of hours alter in the dark this little boy appears next to Helen and gives her some biscuits also. As if that wasn't enough, he returned puffing a few minutes later with some more for Barb who was running with Helen at the time. You don't meet kids like that every day."

Tony Collins is the first to reach Australia's highest town, Cabramurra. This milestone occurs at 0400 hrs on Sunday morning. Keith o Connell moves into second place from Robert Channells. Bryan Smith also moves ahead of Russel Prince. The French runner, Boussiquet also moves further up the field.

It was at this stage of the race when Bryan Smith overtook Helen Stangar. "Not long after Helen started, Bryan Smith came up beside her and slowed for a chat. They ran together for a while and Bryan even had a plate of porridge with her. The comradeship between these athletes is extraordinary."

By midday on Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, the positions are:

POSITION	NAME	HANDICAP	DISTANCE
1	Tony Collins	12	548.9km
2	Keith O Connell	0	526.1km
3	Bryan Smith	24	508.6km
4	Eduardo Vega	4	506.2km
5	Robert Channells	0	505.4km
6	Mark Gladwell	12	500.8km
7	Russel Prince	24	498.6km
8	Helen Stangar	0	497.8km
9	JeanGilles Boussiquet	24	496.5km
10	Tatch Muramatsu	4	492.2km
11	Craig Rowe	0	490.8km
12	Peter Gray	12	476.0km
13	Lindsay Philips	0	473.3km
14	Andrew Law	12	472.3km
15	Maurice Taylor	24	466.2km
16	Kevin Mansell	24	456.2km
17	Don Mitchell	24	452.2km
18	Dawn Parris	0	449.6km
19	Randi Bromka	0	447.5km
20	Harry Clements	0	443.6km
21	Shaun Scanlon	4	428.2km

The runners are finding it easier to travel the mountains during daytime, because they can see the task in front of them. It is a different story of a night time, when the temperature drops, black ice forms on the road and it is very easy for them to lose their footing as they are plodding through the night.

Tony Collins is the first one to cross the border into Victoria. He enters the small township of Corryong as the sun sets. He is having bronchitis trouble, but is determined not to give up the lead position. He is known as a runner that will never surrender. Bryan

Smith is now in second position and is running off the mountain as Tony passes through Corryong.

Russel Prince is in fifth , whilst Jean-Gilles Boussiquet is content to run back in the pack. Andrew Law is picking up the pace as he runs through the mountains. His training over Mount Wellington is starting to pay dividends.

It was about this stage of the race when a very funny incident happened in Helen Stangar's crew.

"As we drove into the township Barbara asked us to stop so she could do a big wee. She was busting. We told her to nick into the bush on the side of the road and nobody would know. "Trust me!" The moment she left the vehicle, Hicky got on the radio and told every crew within earshot about Barb's little dash into the bush. The calls of "Good Luck Barb" and "We hope everything comes out okay in the long run" filled the air waves for the next few minutes. Even the Japanese crew responded, although we're not sure exactly what they said. Well Barb was having trouble. I think the cold weather had frozen up the plumbing. Eventually she emerged from the bushes which she thought had covered her actions. The natural thing to do of course was to let all those concerned know that everything was okay. The airwaves ran hot with messages of congratulations for Barb. Once again the Japanese sent Barb their best wishes. Now I ask you, where would you meet a group of people more concerned for the welfare of a fellow human being?"

Helen Stangar is now 6<sup>th</sup> and has a sixty kilometre lead over Randi Bromka, who is suffering from shin splints. Eventually the mountains become too steep and she is forced to withdraw at Cabramarra. She has reached 500km and reaches our highest town at 0307hrs on Monday morning. Day four of the race starts and fourteen runners have left the high country and in the state of Victoria.

A couple of one liners heard in the Stangar camp during the race were "Hicky, that was coffee with one tea you wanted wasn't it?" and "Hicky, is there anything I can give you that you would normally get at home". It's hoped that Bill didn't take the lady up on that offer.

By midday on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May, Tony Collins has a 27km lead over Bryan Smith. The Frenchman, Jean-Gilles Boussiquet has ran well off the mountain and is now in third place. The placings at the start of Day four are:

POSITION	NAME	HANDICAP	DISTANCE
1	Tony Collins	12	690.5
2	Bryan Smith	24	663.3km
3	Jean-Gilles Bousiquet	24	639.8km
4	Andrew Law	12	637.6km
5	Mark Gladwell	12	634.0km
6	Keith O Connell	0	621.5km
7	Maurice Taylor	24	619.0km



8	Russel Prince	24	609.0km
9	Robert Channells	0	608.0km
10	Helen Stangar	0	606.1km
11	Eduardo Vega	4	605.9km
12	Kevin Mansell	24	592.8km
13	Don Mitchell	24	592.2km
14	Lindsay Philips	0	590.5km
15	Tatch Muramatsu	4	586.2km
16	Peter Gray	12	576.9km
17	Craig Rowe	0	575.7km
18	Harry Clements	0	555.3km
19	Dawn Parris	0	542.0km
20	Shaun Scanlon	4	527.9km

Tony Collins keeps his lead despite suffering from bronchitis and exercise induced asthma. It was the approaching air of Wodonga that helped onset Collins bronchitis after running through the cool mountain air for the previous four days. "I feel strong and have the smell of victory in my nostrils. My body is holding up well and with the exception of a touch of bronchitis I feel good. I just have to keep going and hopefully things will go my way." Tony Collins was only able to train about 70km a week due to work commitments with his practise. This makes his effort in this year's race even more remarkable.

Bryan Smith is keeping a good pace, but is finding it hard to catch Tony Collins. At the same time, Andrew Law manages to sneak into third from Jean-Gilles Boussiquet.

It was at this stage, when fellow crew members of Bill Hick got their revenge. It was probably Barb exacting revenge after his piece of public broadcasting a couple of day's earlier. She hid his clothes in the shower and he spent 30 minutes and about 2km walking backwards and forwards between the vans trying to remember if he really did get his gear out, and if he did, what van it was in.

Barb was quick to get into Hick's bed very quickly later on in the race. Hicky had set up his mattress at the Corryong Caravan Park. He wrote a few notes outside and had a few minutes of sunshine before going back in the Van and finding barb asleep in his bed.

Russel Prince is forced to retire from the race with bronchial pneumonia at Tallangatta. Shaun Scanlon also retires from the run at Tooma Dam after a great effort. Meanwhile, Maurice Taylor and Kevin Mansell start making their way through the pack with good running.

It is 0300hrs on Wednesday morning when Bryan Smith finally catches the distant

reflection of Tony Collins support vehicles. Smith had only had 3 hours and 49 minutes sleep since leaving Liverpool last Thursday. It is only another hour before Bryan finally catches Tony. At the time, Tony is having a rest, but gets out of bed and walks a few hundred metres with Tony. It is a great show of sportsmanship that is only found in Ultra Running.

At midday 22<sup>nd</sup> May the placings are:

POSITION	NAME	HANDICAP	DISTANCE
1	Bryan Smith	24	813.6km
2	Tony Collins	12	810.9
3	Andrew Law	12	775.2km
4	Maurice Taylor	24	759.0km
5	Jean-Gilles Boussiquet	24	757.5km
6	Mark Gladwell	12	755.6km
7	Lindsay Phillips	0	736.2km
8	Don Mitchell	24	732km
9	Eduardo Vega	4	731.8km
10	Keith O Connell	0	731.4km
11	Peter Gray	12	729.1km
12	Kevin Mansell	24	727.1km
13	Robert Channells	0	705.1km
14	Helen Stangar	0	697.5km
15	Craig Rowe	0	694.9km
16	Harry Clements	0	675.5km
17	Tatch Muramatsu	4	660km

Jean-Gilles Boussiquet and Andrew Law battle through the night. The Frenchman is forced to rest early in the morning and Law has a 20km lead by midday. At the same time, Maurice Taylor moves into 4<sup>th</sup> place.

Dawn Parris is forced to withdraw from the race at 1100hrs. She had covered 606km in six days, but a severe ankle injury and severe tendonitis has taken its toll. "It's not fair. Everything about me is fantastic - my crew is in high spirits, I feel great, I'm motivated, but this bit in my instep just won't let me run - and it won't go away!"

Tatsuya Muramatsu failed in his second bid to complete the Westfield Race. He said he had dedicated his effort to a training partner who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer a week before he arrived in Australia. "It's not just my legs that hurt but also my soul" said Muramatsu, shortly after withdrawing from the race. He was going ok until a viral infection caused him dizziness and constant vomiting.

Helen Stangar is 140km further down the road from Dawn, but is going through her own hell. She has been on the road for seven days and covered a remarkable 750km. In that time she has only had 13 hours rest. Unfortunately it seems as though Melbourne is out of reach this year.

When Yiannis Kouros went past Helen Stangar earlier in the race, Billy Collis "decided to do the right thing and play "Zorba the Greek" over the outside speakers as Kouros went past our lead vehicle. Billy, typically stuffed it up. As he ran past all that could be heard from our vehicle was the "Heel Toe Polka". Billy's comment was "Well that's Greek isn't it?"

Robert Channels is also struggling to stay in the race. His running high has dipped to a running low. He is trying desperately to focus on the finish, but his body is fading and it seems as though it will be too far away. It is 0900 hrs on Wednesday when he withdraws from the race.

The tailenders of the race are now Harry Clements and Craig Rowe. The cut off point at Benalla is now over them like a prison sentence. Harry Clements manages to get into a rhythm and keeps it going towards the cut off, but Craig Rowe must be near the end of his race. His feet have doubled in size and are badly blistered. His final run is one of the great achievements of the 91 Westfield. Officials and onlookers watch as he struggles towards the cut off. He is hallucinating and his feet are killing him. He makes the cut by a whisker, but is asleep by the time he lies down in his van.

Charlie Lynn predicted on the first day of the race that Craig Rowe would last less than two days of the race after seeing Rowe smoking a cigarette on the first day. As a result of Lynn's broadside, Rowe adopted the moniker of "Smokey Rowe and the Nicotine addicts" and blasted Lynn in the Race Newsletter. This provided good motivation for Rowe as he kept plugging on down the road.

Bryan Smith goes through Seymour and has 80km to go to victory. He has a 12km break over Tony Collins, but his crew are not relaxing. They very much know the fighting spirit of Tony Collins and know that he will not give in without a fight.

At the beginning of day 6, Thursday May 23<sup>rd</sup>, there are fourteen runners left in the field.

Position	Name	Handicap	Distance
1	Bryan Smith	24	948.8km
2	Tony Collins	12	936.0km
3	Andrew Law	12	897.5km
4	Maurice Taylor	24	886.2km
5	Kevin Mansell	24	871.9km

6	Jean-Gilles Boussiquet	24	859.2km
7	Mark Gladwell	12	854.4km
8	Don Mitchell	24	851.5km
9	Eduardo Vega	4	851.4km
10	Keith O Connell	0	837.3km
11	Peter Gray	12	836.0km
12	Lindsay Phillips	0	821.0km
13	Harry Clements	0	821.0km
14	Craig Rowe	0	819.5km

The runners have now passed their final check point. Many of them have been defeated. The remaining 14 runners are now set for the most difficult task they have ever faced.

Towards the end of the race, the Westfield run even rated a mention in the 21 May edition of the UK Evening Standard. The "Mick Dennis" column described the race but portrayed it as a pointless exercise and finished the article with the comment "Would you buy a set of dentures from Tony Collins?" Oh well, any publicity is good publicity!

Helen Stangar and her crew were close by when Craig Rowe was at the end of his race. "The next 20 minutes was one of the saddest parts of the race. Craig, because of his background, had more to gain from this race than any other competitor. To his mind his whole future depended on his performance in this race. If he didn't perform he would be a failure. His courage proved to be one of the finest competitors you could ever wish to see. He pushed himself beyond the accepted limits of endurance. He was in agony, and hallucinating, yet he wouldn't give up."

"Helen, practically unable to walk herself, supported Craig for about 200 metres and talked to him as nobody else could, as somebody who had just been through the private hell he was now going through. At the end of their walk together Craig withdrew from the race. Just when you think all the emotional times are behind you, events like this bring back to reality of just what this race does to people." Said Bill Hick when describing the human drama that was unfolding on the Hume Highway.

It is shortly before midnight on Wednesday night when Bryan Smith finally crosses the Finish Line. His time is 6 days 12 hours and 15 minutes after setting out from Sydney. There is only a small crowd waiting at the finishing line, but it is a great experience for Bryan and his wife, Jan. He has won \$30, 000 for winning line honours and another \$ 30 000 for recording the fastest time of the race.

Race doctor, Joe Graiche said Smith had 'genetic superiority ' over the other runners. "His stride and physical stature are above all that I've seen. He has the ability to be better than Yiannis Kouros and experience is all he needs." Is how Graiche described the winner of the 1991 Race. Dr Graiche further added that "He was the only runner who did not require any medical attention throughout the entire race. Unlike the other runners he

did not use any NSAIDS (anti -inflammatory drugs). He came out of the mountains without any chest problems and probably will have only minor blisters."

Bryan Smith later described the Snowy Mountains as the hardest part of the course. "The most difficult part was coming over the Snowy Mountains when it was very cold and only about minus eight degrees. It was very steep and I had icicles dripping off my beard but I had speakers on my car and listening to the music helped."

Smith began running ten years ago and ran his first marathon two years after that. It was only a couple of years after that that he ran in his first Ultra. He described his training for the race when he said " I'm normally a night owl and I started training a few months before this race by staying up late at night: during the run I only got about seven hours sleep altogether"

Smith was interviewed by "The Mail Express" a couple of weeks after the run and declared that he would not run in the Westfield again. "I want to go out on top. And the race is so demanding on the body that if I ran it again I don't know if I could do that."

Smith cited four reasons for his success. They were a better training schedule, a great support crew, thermal clothing and massages. His better training schedule involved a more consistent mileage around the 160km a week. He made sure he had the right clothing prior to going into the event and he took two masseurs with him for the event. This is so they could work on both legs at once.

One of Bryan's masseurs was Fred Hellyer who is a seasoned Westfield campaigner. Hellyer mapped out the course prior to the event, advised Smith when he had a hill to tackle, how steep it was. Hellyer also advised on when rests should be taken and when to power walk. Fred Hellyer was part of Geoff Molloy's crew in 1984 and has picked up a wealth of Ultra knowledge over the years.

Tony Collins is now 18km behind and is assured of second place. He eventually finishes in a time of 7 days, 4 hours and 17 minutes. The real winners out of Tony's run are the youngsters undergoing cancer therapy at Camperdown Hospital in Sydney. Since 1989 he has raised \$100, 000 for them and declared that he would donate his \$15 000 prizemoney from this event to them as well.

Andrew Law knows that he cannot catch Tony Collins, but he can't afford to slacken as Maurice Taylor is only 17km behind him. Maurice is running another consistent race and is assured of finishing in fourth place.

Kevin Mansell is 13km behind Taylor and is holding off a determined challenge from Jean-Gilles Boussiquet. Boussiquet picks up the pace as he enters Melbourne and comes within 300 metres of Kevin as he enters Melbourne.

Mansell is not intimidated though and increases his speed to 14kph as he goes through the city. The Frenchman also picks up the pace and chases Mansell right to the Finish line. This is a classic duel between two world class champions.

Mansell holds off and crosses the end in an emotional state. He is in a frenzy and takes a while to settle down. "Mentally I feel great man. Of course physically I feel like crap, but it's worth it. I love this race and I want to run the next five in a row as well. That's my target, 10 Sydney to Melbourne finishes".

By the time the Frenchman crosses the line, Kevin Mansell is the first to

congratulate him. Unfortunately, the Frenchman suffered crew problems during the race. There was an interpreter on board for the race, but he was injured so his crew have to cart out a mini tape recorder and tape his race plans before relaying them to his wife in the first support van. His crew were relatively experienced (only two had previous Westfield experience) and were arguing with each other. This is ridiculous when Westfield invited a top overseas runner for the event and can't look after him properly.

Don Mitchell finishes two and a half hours after the Frenchman and declares that it was his last. This is the third time that he has finished the Race. Eduardo Vega is the next to finish. This is the first time that he has finished within the allotted time. Last year he finished 47 minutes after the cut off. He crosses the finish line after 8 days 1 hour and 59 minutes and is wrapped in his success.

Mark Gladwell and Peter Gray are the next to finish. Both are seasoned campaigners and Mark joins his friend Kevin Mansell in the record books as being the only runners to finish five Westfields in a row. Peter Gray was asked about the race on completion and said "I said to myself it's gotten to the stage it doesn't matter what placing I come because this race is the best in the world. I had that much energy level at the end I just jumped up in the air in relief" Gray also went to great pains to explain after the race that he did not go for dips in the Tumut Lake, as had been reported in the Press during the race.

Keith O Connell is the next to finish in a time of 8 days 10 hours and 51 minutes. He has crewed for other runners on previous occasions and can be seen plodding around in all the NSW endurance events. He is wearing a large grin and his humour is as sharp as ever as he runs through Melbourne towards the finish.

Sandra Barwick was lucky enough to run the last stretch of the race with the first and last runners, Bryan Smith and Keith O Connell and enjoyed sharing the experience with both of them. This is what Barwick said about her Westfield experience on the other side of the fence. "This experience has given me another outlook on Ultra Distance Running. The gratitude I have at seeing how hard the organising side work, but most of all the satisfaction I have got in giving something back in the way of support - motivation to everyone on this magnificent run and to Ultra Distance Running, a sport I am dedicated to and a very special part of my life along with everyone involved in it."

Queenslander, Lindsay Phillips didn't quite make it to the finish line. His race ended at the 1000km mark when 2300hrs ticked over on the last day. Considering the problems Lindsay had to even get to the starting line, his achievement was excellent and he should be a runner to contend with in future years.

The following quote was said by Helen Stangar during the 1991 Westfield. It typifies the spirit of the typical fighting Ultra Marathon runner.

*I'm going to win!*

*But,*

*If I can't win, I'm going to run a PB*

*But,*

*If I can't run a PB I'm going to run*

*The best I possibly can on the other day.*

**Westfield RUN 1991 - FINAL PLACINGS**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Runner</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Handicap</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Position(fa stest time)</b>
<b>1</b>	Bryan Smith	Australia	24	6d12h50m	1
<b>2</b>	Tony Collins	Australia	12	7d4h17m	5
<b>3</b>	Andrew Law	Australia	12	7d9h32m	7
<b>4</b>	Maurice Taylor	Australia	24	6d23h22m	2
<b>5</b>	Kevin Mansell	Australia	24	7d2h26m	3
<b>6</b>	Jean-Gilles Boussiquet	France	24	7d2h47m	4
<b>7</b>	Don Mitchell	NZ	24	7d5h8m	6
<b>8</b>	Eduardo Vega	Australia	4	8d1h59m	10
<b>9</b>	Mark Gladwell	Australia	12	7d20h45m	8
<b>10</b>	Peter Gray	Australia	12	7d21h28m	9
<b>11</b>	Keith O Connell	Australia	0	8d10h51m	11

## WITHDRAWALS

<b>Serial</b>	<b>Runners</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Km</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<b>12</b>	Lindsay Phillips	Australia	1000km	22May	2300	Retired
<b>13</b>	Craig Rowe	Australia	920.5km	22May	1402	Retired
<b>14</b>	Harry Clements	Australia	874.1km	22May	1403	Tendonitis
<b>15</b>	Robert Channells	Australia	770.0km	22May	0900	Retired
<b>16</b>	Helen Stangar	Australia	750.4km	22 May	0900	Retired
<b>17</b>	Tatsuya Maramatsu	Japan	664.1km	21 May	1310	Viral Infection
<b>18</b>	Dawn Parris	Australia	606.7km	21 May	1100	Tendonitis
<b>19</b>	Russel Prince	NZ	588km	20 May	2330	Bronchial Pneumonia
<b>20</b>	Shaun Scanlon	Australia	526.5km	20 May	1731	Tendonitis
<b>21</b>	Randi Bromka	Australia	500km	20 May	1507	Tendontis
<b>22</b>	Owen Tolliday	Australia	442km	19 May	1730	Hip/Groin strain
<b>23</b>	David Standeven	Australia	422km	19 May	1657	Retired



## Chapter Eleven

### *The Top Thirty Westfield Runners*

Many great runners ran in the Westfield Ultra Marathon between 1983 and 1991. History tells us that the irrepressible Cliff Young won in the first year. Other winners in the nine years were Geoff Molloy, Yiannis Kouros (5), Dusan Mravlje and Bryan Smith. After many hours of calculations I have calculated the thirty greatest runners in the Westfield. Some of the positions will be questioned and bound to cause controversy.

The ranking's were calculated by allocating points for position finished and the time taken in each race. The times were also adjusted, so that each race reflected a standard distance of one thousand kilometres. This stopped the runners from the first couple of years gaining an unfair advantage. No allowance was made though for course conditions or any other climatic variables. One will also observe from the ranking's that runners, who only had one great race did not rate as highly as some of the runners who ran and finished on four or five occasions.

**1. Yiannis Kouros** He was no surprise in landing the number ranking and I don't think that anyone could ever dispute the fact that he was the greatest runner to compete in the Westfield Ultra Marathons. The Greek Ultra Marathon Superstar won the event on five occasions and almost broke the magical five day barrier. After his win in 1985 the organisers tried to handicap him for road safety and spectator interest, but he would still make his way through the field and win the race. 1989 was the only year that he did not win Line Honours.

**2. Bryan Smith** Victorian runner, Bryan Smith was second. He ran his first Westfield in 1988 and ran every year after that through to 1991. He never finished any lower than fourth. Bryan's moment of glory came in 1991 when he won Line Honours and Fastest time. He had to make up a tough twenty four hours during the race and won himself a handsome \$60 000 in the process

**3. Kevin Mansell** Originally from NSW, but now living in South Australia. Kevin finished the Westfield Ultra Marathons on five occasions and was one of only two people to achieve this feat. He gradually improved each year and was definitely a tough customer who could never be underestimated. Between 87 and 89, Kevin knocked an incredible 67 hours of his time and his pinnacle at the top of Ultra running came in 89 when he finished third and became the fourth person in history ever to beat 6 days for 1000km.

**4. Mark Gladwell** Mark was the second runner to compete and finish the Westfield Run on five occasions. Mark was a good friend and training partner of Kevin Mansell and they would regularly run 100k for training every weekend. Mark's highest finish was ninth, but definitely deserves fourth place for his consistency and courage.

**5. Brian Bloomer** Brian Bloomer from Victoria was a Marine steward on the Empress of Tasmania who use to train in Melbourne and Devonport every other day. He always struggled to find sponsorship but managed an incredible third, second and fourth in the three years that he competed in the event.

- 6. David Standeven** No one will ever forget David's incredible run in 1989 when he crossed the line half an hour before Yiannis Kouros and won line honours. David was exhausted and had to be dispatched to hospital for care and observation. He had top ten finishers the two years before, but was never quite the same runner after 1989.
- 7. Maurice Taylor** Maurice from NSW was a very consistent performer who had three Top ten performances in the three years that he ran in the race. Maurice loved the Race and even sold his prized Violin one year so that he could compete.
- 8. Tony Rafferty** Ultra Marathon legend, Tony Rafferty competed in the race on seven occasions and finished in the Top ten four times. The Westfield Run evolved out of the many great battles that Tony had on the road with George Perdon over the years. Tony Rafferty had already been there and done that before this race ever commenced.
- 9. Patrick Macke** English runner, Pat Macke finished with a third, second and eleventh place over the years. In 1986, he was dead on his feet towards the end of the race and took hours to complete the last piece of the journey. His crew were exhausted as well and as a result, Westfield organisers placed a minimum crew of six from the following year.
- 10. Don Mitchell** Don was the highest-ranking New Zealander. He competed in the event on three occasions and got two fifth places and a sixth for his efforts. He was a timber worker and was known as tough and uncompromising who would not give an inch to another runner.
- 11. Eleanor Adams** Eleanor was the highest ranking female finisher in the event, which confirms her rating as the best female Ultra runner in the world. She finished with three top ten finishers which included a seventh, fourth and tenth to her name. She believed that she was just as good as the men and had the score to prove it!
- 12. Dusan Mravlje** The beer swilling Yugoslav won in 86 and endeared himself to the Australian running community. In his only other finish he scored a third and was very unlucky to get injured on a couple of other occasions. He was definitely one of the few runners that had the capability of beating Yiannis Kouros.
- 13. Dick Tout** Dick was the second placed New Zealander. He finished third and second on the two times that he finished the race. He was another runner who had the capability to beat Kouros, but probably started each of his races at too fast a pace.
- 14. Ziggy Bauer** Ziggy from New Zealand finished third in the first year and was one of the sports pioneers. He finished second in the second year of the race, but due to some problems with the organisers did not compete in the Westfield after that and has faded into oblivion since.
- 15. Cliff Young** Cliff put the Westfield on the map in 83 when he won and became an instant folk hero around Australia. After that he finished with a seventh and a sixteenth and it wasn't till 1989 when he was ten km out of Bombala and decided that he'd had enough.
- 16. Tony Collins** Tony from NSW finished the event three times. He raised over 100 000 for the Camperdown Childrens Hospital during his Westfield Runs. His moment of triumph came in 1991 when he was second runner across the line.
- 17. Ross Parker** Ross from West Australia finished the event on four occasions. He wasn't terribly fast, but enjoyed the fact of finishing the race each time. He was an excellent

sportsman who played first grade cricket and football in his time.

**18. John Hughes** Kiwi Policeman, who finished forth and second in the first two years of the event. The high price of sponsorship was the only thing that stopped him from crossing the Tasman in 1985.

**19. Pat Farmer** Pat Farmer was one of the "Young Guns" of the Westfield and finished the event on three occasions. Pat went on in later years to rewrite the record books with his magnificent runs across the Simpson Desert.

**20. Joe Record** Joe from West Australia deserves a ranking much higher than twentieth. He ran on five occasions and managed two top five placings in that time. On the three other times he was injured in the closing stages of the race and had to withdraw. He was such an aggressive runner that he had an effect on the placings every year that he raced.

**21. Owen Tolliday** Owen from Queensland was another former Australian 24 hr track record holder. He ran in the event three times and managed two Top ten placings. In 1991 he was unfortunately injured in the Snowy Mountains.

**22. Ron Hill** Ron from Victoria ran in the event on three occasions. He loved the challenge and was able to finish all three times.

**23. Andrew Law** Known as the "Tassie Tiger", Andrew raced in the last two Westfield's and finished twice. In 1991 he was third across the line and was headed for a big future in the sport until Westfield withdrew their sponsorship.

**24. George Audley** George from West Australia finished the event twice and absolutely loved the event.

**25. Peter Gray** Peter from Victoria was the youngest runner to ever finish the race in 1990. He got two Top ten finishes in the two years that he raced and would always give one hundred percent.

**26. Sandra Barwick** Top female runner from New Zealand who in 1990 claimed the womens race record from Eleanor Adams.

**27. Donna Hudson** American runner who competed twice for two top ten placings. Would have been good to see her and the other two female members of the top thirty in the same race when they were all fully fit.

**28. John Breit** Salesman from Moe in Victoria who ran in the event in 88, 89 and 90. Finished towards the end of the field in 88 but was injured when he was doing well in 89 and had to withdraw at the 750km mark. In 1990 he ran very professionally and finished with a well deserved seventh. Was one of the best twenty four hour runners of his time in Australia.

**29. Geoff Molloy** Ex- Victorian Sun Tour Cycling Champion who won the event in 1984 when the race was ran from Melbourne to Sydney. Geoff was the Australian 24 hour record holder prior to the event and was only really pushed in the 84 event when John Hughes closed the gap on the last morning of the race. Geoff only ran in the race one time after 84 and failed to finish.

**30. George Perdon** The late great George Perdon only competed in the Westfield on

the one occasion, but managed a second place. He regrets having so much sleep in that first year and letting Cliff Young slip away from him. He was the quiet achiever in Australian Ultra running and was the benchmark to which many Ultra runners try to aspire to today.

## Chapter Twelve

### *Humour, Tragedy and Courage – Runners' Stories*

Victorian runner, John Breit was to amuse himself in the 1990 Westfield Run by collecting hubcaps. Or should I say he got his crew collecting the hubcaps. John would be running down the road, spot a hubcap and point. The designated runner would alight from the rear vehicle, grab the hubcap, take it to John for his inspection and then take it to the rear vehicle. At the next pit stop, the new collection piece would be attached to the collection at the rear of one of the vehicles. By Melbourne at least twenty hubcaps had been collected, which was making quite a noise rattling down the road. One of the officials even came and claimed two of the hubcaps at the end of the race.

#### *Running Ronnie*

Our Ronnie is a runner, as slow as slow can be,  
He is a Marathoner, all of us can see.  
He runs along the highways with cars all wizzing by,  
The only regular watchers are birdies from the sky.  
His wife and 3 young children are sitting there at home  
While Ronnie Ronnie's running his lips covered in foam.  
Where oh where is Ronnie? His lovely wife does ask,  
Ron is on the highway. Sticking to his task.  
His legs they pound the pavement his head raised to the sky,  
His sandshoes pounding onwards he wishes he could fly.  
His team of nine mixed humans are bending to their tasks,  
Their job is getting promptly whatever Ronnie asks.  
Mal rants, Mal raves Mal orders them about,  
His number one priority is getting Ronnie out.  
Simon is a wonder as wait on Ron he does,  
Ron just keeps on running won't let the others pass.  
Rebecca, Rebecca the masseur so sweet.

We all do believe this is her very first beat.  
Reggie & Hitch regular drivers are they,  
They drive for young Ronnie but without any pay.  
Margret, Mal's fiancée is here to work too,  
She'll cook handle money and with Mal she will coo.  
Our Sam, Ron's spaghetti will embellish and cook  
Boy, when our Ron eats the public will look,  
For Ron will run onwards by hook or by crook.  
Shakie oh shakie he is burning bright,  
Making our motors run all through the night.  
Charlie our writer is a fatherly sight,  
His number one illness is snoring all night.  
When all get together we have a riotous time,  
I wish I could think of a word that does rhyme.  
Now back to the track all of us must go,  
Somewhere our Ronnie is running in snow.  
His teeth they do chatter his hair it is stiff,  
We know all he needs is a Mars Bar to sniff.  
So out go Rebecca and young Simon too,  
While Mal our commander is sniffing with flu.  
Bravely our crew members all struggle on,  
Following so closely behind our young Ron.  
As foot weary, arm weary lips so dried out,  
He has so much trouble trying to pout.  
In spite of all this, finish he does,  
His loving young wife's eyes are still filled with stars.  
Yes Ann at the finish she knows tha the tried  
And waits there so bravely to give him her prize.  
His children are there they are cheering like mad,

Their voices are yelling, good on ya Dad!

*This poem was written by crew member and lifelong friend to Westfield Runner, Ron Hill, Charlie Pye. Charlie is also a good friend and constant crew member to Colac legend, Drew Kettle when he goes on his treks around Australia.*

English runner, Patrick Macke was going through Canberra when he had an urge to go to the toilet. One of his crew spotted a Chinese Restaurant up the road and so he sprinted up with another of the crew to try and arrange for Patrick to use their facilities. The two crew members tried for five to ten minutes to get through to the Waiter behind the counter what they wanted to do. The waiter could not speak a word of English. They were beginning to think that it was a really genuine Restaurant until they realised that they were at the front Entrance to the Chinese embassy. It is not known if Patrick got to use their facilities.

## ***My 2 experiences. 1986 and 1989 by Kevin Cassidy***

The 1986 Westfield run was to be an experience that I will never forget, it was the toughest week of my life but something that I feel honoured to have been part of. At the time I was a newbie to the Ultra scene with a grand total of 2 Ultras under my belt when I received a phone call from Geoff Hook asking if I wished to be in the crew for Yugoslavian runner, Dusan Mravlje ( I had never heard of him). I jumped at the chance to be a part of the race that grabbed all the headlines and captured the imagination of all as it still rode on the back of CLIFFMANIA.

Before I had time to sneeze, I was in Sydney with a hastily thrown together crew of Dusan's wife (I think it is spelt Strouka), his cousin Andrew ( a Melbournite) and local athlete, Kevin Falloon and a few others (none of us had met before and Dusan spoke no English). The race was expected to be won again by Yiannis Kouros, but when he announced his withdrawal because of a stress fracture, the race was thrown wide open. Ramon Zabalo of France was as dominant a world number two as Yiannis was at number one and he was now the favourite.

Most of the crews were not able to be at the start due to traffic congestion so I missed all the pre race build up but we picked up the race as the field came past the army camp where we were staying. It was Dusan and Ramon leading the field through the first 42km in 3.14. Not long afterwards, Ramon attempted to kick a stray hubcap out of the way, in case it interfered with the following runners, and pinched a nerve in his back which effectively ended his race.

Crowds lined the highway as we motored down the road to Melbourne. As a crew we were all inexperienced and the week was to prove a real lesson. Dusan motored through 100 miles in 16 hours then rested while Patrick Macke took the lead, he was an accomplished 24 hour runner doing his first multi day event. We all got into a routine of cooking, driving, feeding Dusan and sleeping when possible. Geoff Kirkman of Adelaide took the lead on day two and Dusan was second, as night fell we were covering the treacherous section of highway near Yass when 3 ambulances went passed at a speed that nearly blew us off the map. Up ahead, a truck had had a headon smash with a motorist trying to overtake Geoff' van, when we arrived at the scene in darkness we saw exactly what had happened. The truck was laying sideways across the road and the motorist was dead. Geoff could not be found and it was feared that he was crushed in the wreckage somewhere but he was eventually found down an embankment with a smashed pelvis (Geoff presented the medals at the Adelaide 24hr later that year but has not been seen since in the running circles since).

As Dusan rested again, the Aussie battler, Brian Bloomer , took the lead and held it until just before Albury. With the race being so popular, there was a never ending supply of motel and caravan park owners allowing you to use their facilities for washing clothes etc. Dusan worked hard all day in the pursuit of Brian and his tiredness caused him to get rather cranky, as the crew was made up of people without ultra experience, they could not cope with it and emotions ran high. I was the only one who remained detached from it all and focused on my job ( maybe I could understand Dusan better with my experience of 2 Ultras). The press were everywhere, they kept featuring Dusan's wife as the crew chief and tactician, the truth was that she was a gibbering wreck who had never been to any of Dusan's previous races. As an Ultra newbie, it was a real buzz to have the non competing Yiannis Kouros pay us several visits and even more surprising was Yiannis's fluent use of English when all his press conferences needed an interpreter because he "didn't speak



English". I realised right there and then that it was a charade to keep nosy reporters from bothering him.

With out any doubt, the hardest part of crewing was trying to stay awake whilst driving the van at night at 4 miles per hour. Mary Hanudel was the only runner to receive publicity when her van driver fell asleep and ran her over injuring her foot, but there were many other instances that did not get mentioned. There was also the high number of damaged vans caused by sleepy drivers sideswiping the roadside posts ( Budget refused to allow their vans to be used again). During the early Westfield years they only ever caught one runner cheating but rumours and uncertainties surrounded many others, by 1986 it was impossible to cheat with so many officials roving the course.

Dusan took the lead and was cheered through Albury by a huge crowd. The race now became a cat and mouse affair as Dusan often requested that someone drive back and check the distance of his lead, this was harder than you could imagine because many crews would place their officials marker behind a tree and then drive their runner up a dirt side road for a couple of hours sleep, out of sight of the snooping crews of other runners!!!!!!

Dusan maintained his lead all the way to Melbourne and the TV cameras were everywhere as we reached the outer suburbs, we even had the Channel Nine chopper make a landing outside the Ford Factory, I fought hard to manoeuvre the van through the throngs of Yugoslavs that had come out to line the streets and as we passed through my home suburb I was surprised to see my parents standing on the corner cheering. The reception at the finish was incredible and it was followed by an appearance on Hey Hey It's Saturday and several other functions.

What I did not see was the running battle for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Patrick Macke had overtaken Brian Bloomer. The organisers made no secret that they were hoping that Brian would win so that they could make use of his Aussie Battler image for their publicity campaign. With Dusan speaking no English it was a PR disaster for Westfield.

The biggest drama was just starting to occur when Patrick arrived in the City Square in a state of near death, the finish was still another 14km away at Doncaster and most of it was uphill. Patrick's crew dropped his marker in the city square and rushed him to a Motel where he received medical treatment. Brian Bloomer overtook Patrick to grab second place and it was a surprise that no one else was to overtake Patrick as he was delivered back to the City Square to do his final 14km. Prime Time television was giving live coverage of Patrick's ordeal as he staggered along with a walking stick trying hard not to trip on the tram tracks, he was progressing at about 1km per hour before he finally made third spot.

A day later, I was back home and back to the normal routine of my life. It was as if the whole episode was a great big dream, here I was, a fresh and enthusiastic ultra newbie suddenly playing a role in a drama packed race amongst the world's best ultrarunners. I will never forget it.

As I returned to my full time job as a self employed lawn mowing contractor, I was often asked about my experience with Dusan by many of the people I worked for, these were elderly non sporting types but they were all captivated by the footrace between Australia's two major cities. They were indeed heady times and I treasure the fact that I was part of it because I don't believe we will ever see anything like it again in ultrarunning

# *This story was written by Victorian Ultra running stalwart, Kevin Cassidy reminiscing about his time crewing for Dusan Mravlje back in 1986.*

Ballarat runner, Barry Brooks asked his crew member who had run out to join him on the road for some "Nutra Vite" for his bottom. The very confused crew member ran back to the van and told the others, that Barry wanted some NutraGrain for his Bum. We know Kellogs make some claims about their cereals, but to be inserted from the rear!

## ***The last 237km, no 255km, sorry mate by Patrick Macke***

**(Sydney to Melbourne 1986)**

I had reached a point a few kilometres before Wangaratta and I was going to take a short break. It was starting to get dark and I was informed that only 237km remained. It was then that I decided to take my sleep break earlier than usual. In the back of my mind I had the Spartathlon distance of 245km and finding out that less than this remained I thought that I could run straight through to the end of the race after a final sleep.

Despite a little protesting from the crew - they were surprised by me wanting to sleep then when it wasn't planned - I took that sleep. I was back on the road sometime before midnight. It took until I was going through Wangaratta to get running again. I intended then to go non-stop to the finish, about 230km I thought then. One of the vans had to be left behind, as it would not start. One of my four crew members stayed with it. After a while it was revealed to me that 18km more remained than first thought. Instead of 237km remaining at the point of that last sleep stop 255km remained...more than Spartathlon, but I was mentally committed and couldn't change my aim.

Apart from this distance target I needed to know how far ahead Brian Bloomer was in second place. It had been impossible to get any information the whole day and still was. Was he near enough to catch or not? 20,50, 80km??? We had no idea. So we had to presume he was near enough and push on. Still with one vehicle we decided that Johnno would have to hitch a lift ahead to see where Brian was. He did this and returned with a location and a time for him. When we passed that same location we knew how far behind we were. It was about 5 1/2 hours. It was now daylight and we had the second vehicle again. Johnno set off to get another fix on Brian and the next time we passed the same point it was down to less than 2 hours. In the early afternoon we caught and passed him while he was taking a break in a lay-by. I still continued without any break, I was being troubled by one of my calves and it was not a good thing to stop a sit would seize up, we thought.

Evening approached and less than 100km remained and it was shortly after this that we started to make exact calculations as to what kilometre times I had to do in order to get to the finish before the start of the eighth day. Then the crew had to provide me with each kilometre time. Hard work for a crew of four who'd hardly had a chance to sleep and had two vehicles to drive as well as preparing and giving me food and drink all the time. However, I needed this kind of information to keep me going, to keep my mind active, to know where I was and exactly what I was doing. With about 80km to go I needed to average around 9m45s a kilometre and I was doing 8 1/2 and 9. If I could just keep that up for a while then I would only need to average 10 minutes a kilometre, then if I still continued it would get easier and easier. That's how the mind works and stays alert but without those times every kilometre it can't work.

Then some officials came to do the "accounts", collect and check the receipts for expenses. Whilst this was happening no one could give me my times. I slowed. After the accounts were sorted I could get my times again. I had now been running for 24 hours since the last stop and of course Johnno, Raymond, Ron and Terry were just as tired if not more. It's far harder to stay awake sitting in a van or driving at such a slow pace than it is running. Terry couldn't stay awake any longer, he fell asleep in mid-action where he was.

Ron was driving off the road, falling asleep at the wheel.

It was impossible to get my kilometre times anymore. I slowed more. We waited for an official to come by so that we could ask for someone to come and drive. No one came by. Ron couldn't stay awake anymore. Raymond drove one vehicle, Johnno the other. No one could hand me drinks and food anymore let alone give me information about remaining distance....I had to stop each time I wanted food or drink. It was difficult to get moving again each time. I slowed even more. Before it got to late Johnno drove ahead into Melbourne to try and get help.

Thirty kilometres from the end of the race there was supposed to be a motel where everyone could stop for a clean-up and sleep. This now became my target rather than the end. A good shower, a two hour sleep then walk to the finish. How far away this motel??? 10, 20, 30km??? We had no idea, there was only Raymond there now and he had to drive. An official car came by at last and there were two people in the vehicle. We flagged them down and one of them drove our van.

Now Raymond could give me drinks and food again, without me stopping. How far to the motel? No idea! 5,10,15km? An official car now became a pace car ahead of me, it's emergency lights flashing. Johnno was brought back in a car while Terry and Ron were sleeping in the second van ahead so as they'd be ready to join us for the end. But how far the motel? 1,3,5km?? Three I was told. Half an hour later, "the next traffic lights", but we went past them "definitely the next ones", but again we continued through them. At last after another crossroads the pace car pulled to the side, ahead, so at last this must be it.

It was just getting light. Ron and Terry were there waiting in running gear ready to run the rest with me (Just behind). But now I was planning to go to the Motel, get a couple of hours sleep after a good shower and then continue. Due to the circumstances during the previous hours it had been far more of a struggle to get this far than imagined. It had been impossible for a mere four people to provide for all my needs however hard they tried. They'd slept far less than I because they would have to be awake until I was safely tucked in for my sleep breaks and then they would have to be awake before it was time for me to be woken. While I was mobile the minimum of duties meant that they had to be on duty too. Then after five days I ran for thirty hours without any break....

The motel was supposedly the other side of the road adjacent to where we had stopped. Terry crossed the road with me while the Van went up the road to turn around. We were walking on the pavement the other side to the Motel when the van having turned around pulled up alongside as it would be quicker to go in the Van. Terry and I got in the van and then it drove about 2km back up the route.....to the motel.....what was happening??? We got to the motel. I had a shower but I was getting very confused. I was put in bed but there were people all over the place, some sleeping, some standing around talking, others coming in and out. I was out in a different way.

Then someone was waking me. It was Terry. Did I want to carry on? Yes of course. Terry went to rouse everyone. The room was still in a commotion as before. I think Terry had been asked by someone to wake me and ask what I wanted to do, or what was I doing there sleeping with only 30km to go...I don't know how long I'd actually been asleep...only a few minutes, perhaps 20... So everyone was woken up and together with several officials I was taken back to the race course.

But the place I was taken back to did not look familiar. It was not the place I'd crossed the road with Terry. The witches hat had supposedly been stolen. Just before

stopping we had just passed a crossroads so I walked back to the nearest crossroads but it still didn't look familiar. I was worried, very tired of course and therefore confused and getting more confused. I began walking. I had to urinate very frequently ( against the Westfield car). A kilometre or so down the road we passed the witches hat...Though I'd had that break I hadn't been able to get the sleep I desperately needed. The crew, desperately tired like myself were no more able to take control of the situation than I was.

It wasn't surprising that I now fell asleep on my feet while walking. Not knowing where I was I kept walking as if in a dream. What was I doing in Melbourne when I'd never been to Australia in my life? But I remembered the invitation to the race and worked things out from there even if I couldn't actually remember them happening. Some time later my mind clicked back into place. Ron was telling me about Princess Park...then some little way further on I had to stand still for some traffic lights. While waiting I began to wobble, then I began to fall. I was caught and taken to the side of the road where there was a café. I was seated and some one from the café put a cup of coffee into my hands and before anyone could stop me my automatic reaction was to drink from it. Raymond noticed but it was too late, I'd taken a sip and scolded my tongue.

Everyone was concerned about my condition and I was taken across the town to the Park Royal Hotel where the doctor could have a look at me. People were in and out the room again. Johnno was asleep and couldn't be woken..It must have been sixty hours since he'd slept and then only an hour or so.. The doctor saw me. I remember Dusan and Ramon (Zabalo) coming into the room to see me. I was taken back to the route. I remember being in the van cutting a hole in my left shoe for a painful and swollen little toe. But I cannot remember getting out of the van and restarting.

After the race it was reported that I had used a walking stick. It could have been at this time because eat no time do I actually remember using one. I remember being offered one but I didn't take it. None of my crew remembers me using a walking stick either. The first thing I recall next is just before I turned the corner into the pedestrian street in the centre of Melbourne. Dan Brannen was walking with me and telling me that Bloomer had already gone past while I was away. It was sometime in the afternoon now. I was walking very slowly.

I was told by an official that there was only 10km to go. Two hours later and now dark as another night started I saw a sign saying "Doncaster 9km" the 10km earlier was a lie... I was irritated.... But I was now awake enough to start taking control of myself again. I saw an Indian Restaurant and thought that they would make a nice cup of tea. So I turned left and went in the door. Everyone ( my crew and the several race officials with us) were wondering what was happening again as they all followed me in. The owners were very friendly people and happy to provide for us even if five of us looked a little rough...We had several cups of tea and some wonderful rice pudding. Trying to motivate me into action I was told that Eleanor Adams was not far behind. Oh, good, I'll wait for her I answered. We left the comfort of the Indian Restaurant but I still wanted to have a sleep or a bath.

I was driven off to a friend of one of the organisers present to see if I could use their bath. They weren't at home but we found a bath at a perfect family of stranger's home. My first bath of the whole race. It took 996km to get there. I was able to give the wife a bunch of flowers. I'd been given them by a spectator earlier on in the city.

I came back to the race route looking a little better but my crew, waiting there, still looked a bit on the worn out side.... I walked to the end of the race trying my best to ignore

the "Left, right, left, right" marching instructions I was being given all the time when my arms dropped.

I was told that there was only 2km to go but I knew there was more. I could see the building in the distance. Eventually I got to the building, and the END. Johnno, Raymond, Terry, Ron and I all finally got to the END.

*After the 1986 race no runner was allowed to start the race with only four crew members. Pat Macke, his crew and Westfield were extremely lucky that a major catastrophe did not occur during Pat's epic final hours of his race.*

*Canadian Runner, Trishel Cherns was to be joined for twenty kilometres of his race by a 16 year old boy running in bare feet. It was of a night time going through Gippsland. Trishel marvelled at the boy's natural ability and the fact that he did not have one blister on his feet at the end. The boy is believed to have ran back to his starting point, making a round trip of 40km for the night.*

## ***On the Run with "Mountain Man" by Graham Kerruish***

1016 kilometres is a long way to drive. To run this distance seems impossible but 23 runners out of a field of Australian and overseas runners totalling 43, finished the gruelling Sydney to Melbourne Run.

I had the dubious honour of finishing 23<sup>rd</sup>, but finishing the event is every runner's dream and quest.

The Westfield Run this year was over a period of 8 1/2 days, with cut off points on a time basis being set at Goulburn, Canberra, Cooma, Bombala, Orbost, Bairnsdale, Traralgon, Pakenham and Doncaster. Constant heat was a disturbing factor this year with temperatures fluctuating between 28 and 32 during the cloudless days for the whole run. One had to pity the overseas runners who had come from freezing temperatures and struck an Australian heatwave.

The sendoff at Westfield was spectacular as usual and at 11.00 am on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March, 42 pairs of determined feet struck out for Melbourne. The Greek Streak, Yiannis Kouros was off a 12 hour handicap, and would leave at 11pm that night.

This first 24 hours in a run of this magnitude is a settling down period. Many runners, including myself, have not gone beyond 24 hours in a race before, and no-man's land on the second day is something we have to face.

The cut-off point at Goulburn is 28 hours, and I am very pleased when I reach the town at 10.07am, just five hours ahead of cut-off time, and 180km down the track. All is going well, and after a freshen-up at Goulburn I head off towards Canberra.

Around Lake George, Yiannis passes me and gives me a personalised T-shirt. The shirt has a picture of Yiannis on it and is monogrammed "Yiannis Kouros - The Ultra Marathon Star". We all know how great Yiannis is, but his greatest glory is yet to come as she passes every runner in the event and finishes the run in relative ease.

A few blisters have now developed on my feet, but after attention by Kieran Fallon, the race doctor, we press on. My aim is to run the Goulburn/Canberra section without sleep, but in the early hours of Saturday morning I call for a one hour rest, some 25 kms, this side of Canberra. The sleep is magic and I am soon back on the road and pass through the Canberra cut-off some 6 hours in the plus.

The run to Cooma saps both my and the other runner's strength as temperatures rise on the Saturday to 32 degrees. Most runners during the heat of the day, back off the pace, snatching a rest in the middle of the day and picking up the pace when the sun goes down. My run to Cooma is without incident. I am surprised that I feel so well. My crew are absolutely fantastic attending to all my needs. John Fletcher, my team manager, has moulded the crew into a workable machine very early. I am personally indebted to John and each member of the team for their valuable time and for putting up with me.

My mate, Ken Ingerlsole who was to be part of the team for the full trip is to leave us at Nimmitabel around 12 noon to return to Sydney owing to work commitments, and as I am coming into Nimmitabel, a runner loams up behind me and says, "I'm on your crew". Taken by surprise, I gruffly retort, "Does Fletch know?". Yes my manager knows and

Sydney Strider's Brian Colwell, ex-Graham Firkin ( who has had to pull out of the run with a torn calf-muscle) joins our team. Brian's first job is to wash my clothes - a tough assignment within half an hour of joining the team.

On the way to Bombala, we meet up with Cliff Young and his wife Mary, and later on in the afternoon, Charlie Lynn, Race Director, runs with me for a short distance and I state to Charlie that "I am going to make it to Melbourne". At this stage, I do not know what lies ahead of me. Now looking back, I just made Melbourne with possibly only a breath to spare. I arrived in Bombala around 1.00am on the Monday morning, still ahead of the cut-off time, but in a very exhausted state. The last 5km into Bombala was sheer torture, and I feel the distance is well in excess of 5km. My crew bunk me down with a good feed of carbos in preparation for hitting the trail around 3.00am. John Fletcher during my slumber time, bumped into the local constable at Bombala by the name of Lloyd Williams, a Western District jogger and harrier (a long way from home) and he provides us with the road conditions to the Victorian border. I question Lloyd on that last 5km into Bombala. He assures me the distance is accurate. I am amazed.

From Bombala to the state border (half way into the run) is mostly dirt road very scenic and dusty and we are glad to pass back onto the tarred road again and head towards Cann River. At Cann River, we have now joined the Princess highway and ahead lies possibly the toughest segment of the run - over the snowy Mountains to Orbost. I run continuously through the night. Perhaps this is better I can't see the hills , and finally arrive at Orbost at 11.00am on Tuesday, some 5 hours ahead of the cut -off.

Not long out of Orbost, the rot starts to set in. My feet by now are badly blistered and my crew had done a marvellous job getting me this far by patching up blister on top of blister. I am extremely fatigued and suffering from shin splint in my left leg and my hamstrings are tightening up. (I always made the joke that I didn't know I had hamstrings, but I sure do now!) Both my legs are swollen, and around 7.00pm, I am reduced to a walk. Some 20kms out of Lakes Entrance, help out of the darkness emerges in the presence of Mark Gladwell's and Kevin Mansell's trainer, Bill Carlson, who advises me to take 4 hours rest at Lakes entrance and then hit the trail again. "I can't afford 4 hours rest", I retort. "Take 4 or the race is over", is Bill's reply. I don't have a plan or any answers to my problems so we put our marker down and head into Lakes Entrance. I am a crippled , pitiful wreck and my faithful crew carry my twisted bent-up body into a quadriplegic shower at a Lakes entrance caravan park. I am at my lowest point since starting the run, and my crew sense that this may be the end of the line. A big carbo tea before going down and again upon rising 4 hours later and my crew take me back to the marker. My body is deposited on the road. It is now up to me. I realise that the moment of truth has arrived, and around 2am on the Wednesday, I slowly start to push my reluctant body towards Bairnsdale, cut off time 11.00am. Within 10 min I am moving freely but painfully. Every hour, my crew are strapping cold packs to my ankles to reduce the swelling and to ease the pain of the shin splints. Since starting off at 2am, I have now become anti-social. I do not want any crew member to talk or be with me. Water comes every 10 minutes, food every 20 minutes, ice pack changes every hour. I am possessed with only one thought. I am going to make Melbourne and I do not want anybody near me. I have to make it myself. I apologise to my crew gruffly. They sense this inner battle going on and leave me alone. That day, I run continuously for 18 hours. I follow the white line on the side of the road. Flats, up and down hills all blend into one. I make the cut off at Bairnsdale with time to spare, and am back in the race again. Thanks Bill for saving me.

Every kilometre is now tough. My crew patch up my feet - they are a mess. Ice packs



are changed on my legs every hour. I flog my crew relentlessly and around 8pm on the Wednesday, we pull into Sale and bed down for a couple of hours at a motel graciously supplied by Hawker De Havilland, my major sponsor. It is a most welcomed civilised stop and at 10pm, we are on the track again after my crew have loaded me up to the hilt with carbos. We press on during the night and at 8am, Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>, we reach Traralgon some 3 hours ahead of cut-off. I am once again exhausted. My feet are numb with pain, but we have now travelled 875km and we are not giving in. Traralgon to Pakenham is our next goal and we almost lose it. We have 19 hours and 105km to run. Under ordinary circumstances, this would present no problem, but I am almost done. During the run to Pakenham, Ron Grant meets up with me and gives me great encouragement and support. Thankyou Ron. Late Thursday night, I catch up with Terry Cox, Salvation Army Officer. He is doing it tough. We run together for some time, working off each other - two exhausted runners propping each other up. One of my crew members, Steve Grant runs up to me and says "Ok, let's go!" I am exhausted, and snap back, "For Christ's sake, piss off Steve!" Suddenly I realise, I am running with a religious man and I apologise quickly to Terry. He forgives - he is too exhausted to waste breath arguing. Terry, a short time later, calls for a short break with a sore heel. His manager objects but Terry insists. I pull away. I do not see him again. He pulls out with exhaustion at 943km, 73km short of his Everest. I am doing it very tough. The cut off looks in doubt, when over the CB radio comes welcome news - the Pakenham cut off has been extended 3 hours to 10.00am Friday. Five runners were battling to make Pakenham during the night. Only two survived. I had been saved a second time.

At Pakenham, my crew lowered my wrecked body down on a bed. It was very hot. I couldn't sleep. I looked out the windows and door. It resembled a carnival atmosphere. Crews were lazing in the sun, totally exhausted. Some of my crew wandered around in the hot sun, talking with other crews and propping each other up. Then it dawned on me. This was the final assault on Melbourne! Our Everest was within striking distance. We could not give up now. I would crawl to Melbourne if I had to. It didn't quite get to that.

We had some 56kms to get to Doncaster. John Fletcher worked out our time with half an hour to spare. I had to average 5.1kms per hour. It was very hot. By now, my arms, hands and legs were very swollen and my feet...well that's better left unsaid. Wet towels were draped over me. I drank every 10 minutes; ice cubes were placed in my hat. But around 3pm along Dandenong Road, heat exhaustion and fatigue forced me to my knees. My manager quickly grasped the situation, packed me in ice, and summoned a local doctor, through my good friend John Shepperd. The local doctor wanted to hospitalise me. "No way", I said, "Wait until Doncaster" Race Doctor, Kieran Fallon, physios, Chris Perry, Margaret Stewart and Eleanor Adams (who had already finished the run and was still able to help me), packed me in more ice when they arrived on the scene and then set about on the monumental task of repairing my feet. They worked for 2 and a half hours on my feet and at around 6.30pm I eased my remade swollen feet into my biggest pair of shoes and set off in the cool of the night on the last 39kms, assault to Doncaster. I had been saved third time. Thanks Chris, Margaret, Eleanor and Kieran!

The mental game was now on in earnest. Friday night shoppers yelled encouragement, horns of cars tooted as we passed on into the night. My manager keeps me fed on luxuries - donuts, apple pies, cakes etc were used as bait to keep me moving.

Sydney Striders and Western District runners emerge from the night to urge me on. One lady, Wanda Foley from Western District Joggers and Harriers has waited to accompany me through the busy streets of Melbourne. Wanda Foley, along with Frank

Pearson, my physio, became my guardians to Doncaster. They are true blue Westies and stick with me along with the rest of my faithful crew to the end. Other Westies, Keith O Connell and Mark Foley join us and chant "Mountain Man in Melbourne". My adrenelin pumps again and the chant continues till the finish line.

After crossing through the Finish Line, a magic feeling of unsurpassed elation overcomes me. I have made it! No. WE have made it. I am assisted to a chair and allowed to sit down. There is no pressure on me to get up. What a marvellous relief! Charlie Lynn, Race Director, places a beer in my hand and a pizza on my lap.

Many thanks to the 50 odd loyal supporters and Westfield personnel, who wait for me and my crew to come in. Thanks again to Bill Carlson. To Kieran Fallon and his faithful physio, thanks for help on the run and post care. Thanks to all my sponsors and especially Hawker De Havilland, my major sponsor. My crew still continue to talk to me and befriend me. This is most important to me. I have conquered Melbourne, but my crew are the champions.

Thanks Westfield for a great event. I said before and during the run "One shot only at this Run, win or lose". Only days after the run, as I licked my wound a feeling came over me. It wasn't that bad, in fact enjoyable. I know I could do better next time - quicker and with less pain ( This part I like).

Yes Westfield I am ready to do battle again. Ultra Marathoners just won't lie down and can't be trusted when they say "Never Again".

*# This story was written by Graham Kerruish ( alias Mountain Man) who ran and completed the 1988 Westfield. Since the demise of the Westfield Run, Graham has gone back in distance and has now completed over 100 marathons. His story should serve as inspiration for all of us.*

## ***Mark's Gems***

In 1987 when running in his first Westfield, Mark was absolutely stuffed. He was sitting down next to the Van and turned to his wife and said "A Man knows when he's had enough". Lucille's reply is unprintable but needless to say, Mark was soon heading for Melbourne and not looking behind him

It was in the middle of the night when Mark set his heart on catching the runner that only looked to be a few miles up the road. A couple of hours later Mark did catch that runner, but it turned out to be Roadworks with all the necessary Flashing lights.

It was just outside Pakenham one year when Mark Gladwell was relieving himself against the side of his vehicle. He turned around and heard a round of applause from across the Highway. He looked across the road and saw a group of female factory workers having a Smoko Break and finding Mark's situation most amusing.

## ***A Record of an Epic by Alf Field***

### **1989 Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon**

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The Race From Sydney to Melbourne commencing on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1989

The Distance 1, 011 Kilometres

The Runner Graham Firkin, one of 35 starters

The Crew Brian Colwell, Alf Field, Barbara Firkin, Toots Gray, Ken Gray, Barry Jones, Jack Nordish, Steve Nordish

The Result Completed the distance in 8 days, 16 hours and 25 minutes, finishing in 20<sup>th</sup> place. Fifteen competitors did not complete the course

Condition of the

Runner at the Finish Excellent. No blisters on his feet; no muscular or other injuries; sore legs; claimed to be "very tired" but paried on until sunrise on arrival in Melbourne.

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Condition of the Totally knackered

Crew at the Finish:

"Give a big welcome to competitor number 8, Graham Firkin". The announcer's voice boomed around the Westfield Shopping Centre at Liverpool on Sydney's south western outskirts where the 1989 Sydney to Melbourne Run was due to start in 30 minutes.

"Graham is aged 51, is a Blacksmith and competed in the 1988 event, covering 292 kilometers before a leg injury forced him to withdraw," the announcer continued. The polite clapping was drowned by raucous cheers from the group of Sydney Striders gathered to farewell Firko on his epic odyssey.

It suddenly struck me that we would soon be on our way, that the long year of planning and preparation was nearly over. Not that I had done anything much in the way of preparation . Barbara Firkin was the person who did the hard work. She was the one who wrote all the letters begging for sponsorship; she was the one who listed the multitude of items that would be needed and saw that they were purchased, planned the menus, bought the food, rented the vehicles, got the money in. It is certain that without her herculean efforts Graham would not have got to the start line.

It is also fair to say that without the financial and other help from all the sponsors,

the project would not have got to first Base. A big vote of thanks is owed to all sponsors.

I felt a bit of a heel. I had spent the past week trying to get my desk clear to enable me to get away for the trip. I hadn't been able to help the rest of the crew with the myriad of final preparations and packing of the vans. I need not have worried. Firko had a little surprise in store for me.

We hadn't really discussed what my particular function was to be on the team. As far as I was concerned I was going to help in whatever capacity I could. An hour before the start Firko sprung his little surprise: "Alf, I want you to take charge. You do all the calculations, make the decisions and get us to Melbourne. What you say the crew and I will do."

Firko had obviously noticed that on the trip last year that I like to throw my weight around and so I became saddled with this awesome responsibility. It was, however, typical of Firko's own planning for the trip. This time it was completely professional, a complete contrast to last year. He had thought about every last detail and planned with great care. He had realised that it was important to have one person with absolute authority to make the tough and difficult decisions which abound on such a trip and which often need to be made in a hurry. He had decided that I was to be that person. Thanks Firko!

His crew selection had likewise been mulled over. His final selection worked brilliantly well in the long tiring and testing hours on the road. The crew was always a most harmonious bunch united in their desire to see Firko safely into Melbourne.

The professionalism extended right down to his shoe selection. He had bought the top of the range, Nike Stab-Airs, and eventually wore, only one pair all the way to Melbourne, arriving there without a single blister. Quite incredible. When I think of often he changed his shoes last year to no avail...

The gunshot reverberated around the enclosed shopping centre and the red and white garbed runners burst forward like a tidal wave, smiling and waving to friends, oblivious to the trials, tribulations and pain which lay in store for them over the next week.

For a few minutes it was bedlam. Husbands saying farewell to their wives. Crew members dashing to their vehicles and onlookers cheering the intrepid runners.

We were on our way and I think each of us was wandering what dramas the next week had in store for us. Was Firko really capable of getting all the way to Melbourne? Did I have the knowledge and ability to keep him together both physically and mentally for such a long time? All the problems we experienced last year were suddenly very fresh in my mind.

The first day was used to establish routines which were to become ingrained over the next week. Firko was to eat regularly in small quantities, about every hour. His diet consisted of mashed vegetables for his main course and canned fruit in jelly for dessert.

We had discovered last year that Firko was able to absorb mashed vegetables without any ill effect and they provided quick energy as well as all the minerals and trace elements that his body required. The only problem was the monotony of the diet, which I tried to counter by allowing him to choose whatever he wanted to eat at his major rest stops. This gave him something to look forward to every 12 or 14 hours. I also allowed him a low alcohol beer on these occasions.

Initially Firko was quite rebellious about continually eating vegetables and on one occasion grabbed an Esky belonging to some roadside workers as she ran past. He was heard to mutter something about their lunch being better than the crap Alf was feeding him as she was forcibly dispossessed of the Esky!

Later on in the race, after he had lost weight and was running on negligible reserves, he began to actually ask for his vegies as he was then better able to appreciate the benefits that flowed from them.

The other vital part of his diet was his drinks, which were needed to maintain both his fluid and blood sucrose levels. I had spent the best part of the past year accumulating supplies of a carbohydrate polymer powder called Endurolade. It is a South African product which for political reasons is not available in Australia. Every time I heard of someone going to South Africa or had visitors from that part of the world, they were instructed to bring me a few canisters of the vital powder.

When mixed with water, Endurolade is a drink which provides the body with a quick glycogen boost, which is used first by the body, thus allowing the body's natural reserves of glycogen to remain intact. This drink played a big part in keeping Firko going and prevented him from suffering many of the nasties which afflicted other runners.

Another product which I obtained from South Africa in limited quantities was something called a "Squeezy", which was simply Endurolade in a viscous liquid form, rather like condensed milk and packed in plastic sachets. It provides an even quicker burst of energy and I felt they would be useful during the nights when Firko would not require quite so much liquid.

The race consists of a number of segments which must be completed within a stipulated time or the runner is disqualified. The first cutoff point was in Goulburn, 164km from Sydney and the time allowed was 25 hours. As Firko had covered more than 200kms in a 24 hour race, it was considered that he should cover 164kms in 25 hours without any difficulty. Consequently it was decided to give him a couple of hours rest at Mittagong some 77kms from Sydney.

He was following a sequence of 10 minutes running, 5 minutes walking, with stops about every hour for a stretch. The latter was something which he had not done last year and which I felt had been detrimental to his performance then. This routine plus the correct food and drink seemed to be working well and Mittagong was reached without major difficulty at about 8.40pm.

I had allowed for a 2 hour stop in Mittagong but it was nearly two and a half hours before we were on the road again. I was not particularly worried as we had plenty of time in hand to make Goulburn.

The only incident of note that night took place at a point which Firko subsequently named Shit Hill. Included in the equipment on this trip was a toilet seat mounted on foldup legs, the idea being that if Firko needed to go while we were out in the sticks he could take his sea tout behind the nearest bush and do his business.

It was at Shit Hill that Firko received his first urge to use his foldup toilet seat. The seat was duly set up a discreet distance from the road and Firko went about his business. He was just about finished when he felt a little uncomfortable and tried to adjust the seat which promptly collapsed, depositing Firko in his recent deposit.

The language was something to behold. Even the cows in the nearby field hurriedly moved away and Barbara was muttering that she had thought she had finished with cleaning baby's dirty bottoms.

Our first dawn found us less than 30kms from Goulburn and we were all in good spirits because Firko was going so well. A few hours later we crested the hill about Goulburn, and soon passed the cutoff point with almost 2 hours to spare. 164kms covered in a little over 23 hours. Not bad at all.

I ruled a two hour rest period and at exactly 1.00pm we were on the road again. The next cutoff point was 92kms away in Canberra at 4.00am next morning. This gave us 15 hours to cover the distance and I calculated that we would make it with 2 hours to spare.

I felt that the leg from Goulburn to Canberra was going to be crucial in assessing Firko's chances of getting to Melbourne. It was midway through this section last year that he collapsed, totally exhausted. Also by the time we reached Canberra he would have been on the road for around 39 hours with only 4 hours rest. He had to cover this leg in some style if he was going to have any chance of getting to Melbourne.

I needn't have worried. He wasn't even aware of passing the point of last year's trauma, but I must confess to a sigh of relief once we were past it.

Barbara had told me that Firko only wanted Barbara, Steve Nordish and myself to join him out on the road. This meant that the three of us had to share the duties of shuttling his food and drinks out to him while Steve and I had to do most of the motivating, cajoling and assisting through the inevitable low spots. This was not a reflection on the rest of the crew, but merely Firko's view that the three of us understood him best.

The result was that Steve and I spent long periods out on the road with Firko, especially in the hours after midnight and during the latter stages of a leg as we were approaching a cutoff point.

Thus it was that both Steve and I were out on the road with him as we made our way down the mist shredded Northbourne Avenue towards the cutoff point in central Canberra. Firko was a model patient, following every instruction I gave him to the letter and never failing to respond when I asked for an effort. So much so that we arrived at the Canberra cutoff at 2.00am exactly, precisely to the minute 2 hours ahead of the cutoff, as I had calculated 13 hours exactly in Goulburn.

At the motel, where I calculated we could have a 3 hour rest, we examined Firko's feet. I was amazed because they looked as if he had hardly walked around the block let alone run 255kms. There were no blisters, no weals, no red blotches or bruises, just his normal clear white flesh. It was the first time on the trip that I had the feeling that God must be with this man.

Disaster very nearly struck us in Canberra, and from a most unexpected source. I set my alarm for 5.00am and went to sleep instantly and deeply as I had had about the same amount of rest as Firko had. I became conscious of someone beating a drum next to my bed. "Go away" I mumbled and rolled over. The noise from the drum wouldn't go away. Annoyed I sat up in bed. Someone was knocking on the door.

I staggered around in the darkness trying to find the door in the unfamiliar dark

room. It was Barbara. "Wazzamatter" I muttered, cross that she had disturbed my sleep.

"It's quarter to six. Firko is ready to go and is shouting for his crew" she replied. That woke me up with a jolt. Incredibly I had slept right through the alarm, as had the other four crew members sleeping in the same room.

Although everyone was galvanised into action, It was 6.20am before we got back on the road, nearly an hour later than I had planned. I felt sick because I knew that the next leg to Cooma was going to be a tough one with lots of severe climbs, particularly during the latter stages as we passed through the foothills of the Snowy Mountains.

The distance to Cooma is 115kms from Canberra and we needed to get there by 1.00am next morning, only a bit more than 18 hours away. It was going to be tight, but I kept my concerns to myself. Stick to the routine and see how we go.

Around 9.00am we had cause for a small celebration as we passed the spot where Firko was forced to withdraw in agony last year. This year a quick photograph and a celebratory beer. What a contrast!

Our delayed start from Canberra had left us last in the field, at least of those who were still in the run. Firko was progressing so well that we soon began to see the flashing amber lights atop other competitors vehicles. Gradually we pulled up to them. First we passed the irrepressible Cliff Young. Later in the afternoon Firko sailed past the Japanese competitor, Norio Wada.

Dusk was beginning to settle and I sent the second van into Cooma to arrange some accommodation for us. This was something we seemed to be doing at each stop as we invariably arrived in the wee hours. When they returned the first van went for a run to charge its batteries, a daily necessity caused by the long hours of ultra-slow travel.

Cooma was still 45kms away and 7 hours to the cutoff. I calculated that we had half an hour to spare if Firko kept going without any breaks. This was a pretty tough assignment as he had already been on the road for nearly 12 hours since Canberra without any rests other than his brief stretching breaks. And I knew that about 75% of the remaining 45kms were going to be pretty severe uphill climbs.

It was going to be dreadfully close and I rued the hour we lost in Canberra due to my sleeping through the alarm. I wondered if I would ever be able to forgive myself if Firko got eliminated for not making the Cooma cutoff. We just had to get there.

At his next stretching break we had a gentle chat. "Are we going to make it?" Firko asked. "Sure" I said, "Provided you have no rests and reduce your stretches to every two hours."

"How much will we make it by?"

"By five minutes" I lied.

He responded as I knew he would: "Shit we had better get moving then", and he immediately turned and started running.

I had brought enough Squeezies to be able to give Firko about five per night, but this was an emergency. There was no point in missing the cutoff and having squeezies in stock I resolved to cut into our stock to whatever extent was necessary to get to Cooma on time. I



warned Steve that we were both going to need to be out on the road for the next six hours.

Firko responded splendidly both to the Squeezies and to the demands of the occasion. Steve and I set him a tough pace and he never wavered. Naturally he complained about some of the hills, but then so did I, and I hadn't covered 340kms as he had.

We continued to pass other runners and I pitied them for I knew that if we were barely going to make the cutoff, then they could have no chance of doing so. Their race was over.

I will never forget the last 20kms into Cooma. It was bitterly cold, crystal clear night and we were all wearing our warm gear, including gloves and beanies. Every 5kms I recalculated our position relative to the cutoff and found that we still had a steady 30 minutes in hand for emergencies.

Firko had been on the road 16 hours since Canberra without a break and I monitored his condition continuously. A couple of serious cramps could easily cost us our precious 30 minute buffer, but I was more concerned about Firko reaching a state of total exhaustion. Every time I perceived him to be flagging and not maintaining the correct pace, I ordered another Squeezy for him.

The last 10kms were covered on grit, determination and Squeezies every half an hour. It was amazing how he responded to the Squeezies. They were a real find.

Another thing which helped considerably was the speaker mounted on the front of the first van through which tapes could be played. It was on this section that I first became aware of the lift that Firko got from listening to a tape of hymns and spiritual songs by Burl Ives. This was the second time on the trip that I felt that God was looking after Firko.

At 11.00pm I sent the second van ahead to allow at least some of the crew members to have a shower and clean up before we arrived. I told them that I anticipated being at the cutoff point, which was on the outskirts of Cooma, at 12.30 and that we would get to the motel in the centre of Cooma at 1.00am.

Our log book shows that we passed the cutoff point with 29 minutes to spare. I must confess to a bit of deception. I did not tell Firko the good news as I wanted him to make his way to the motel and not have to backtrack when we restarted. We kept looking for a non-existent "Welcome to Cooma" sign which I told him was the cutoff. Just before 1.00am we reached the motel and gratefully got into bed. I only removed my shoes before diving between the sheets.

The next leg to Bombala is about 90kms and we were allowed 22 hours to get there. This seemed fairly comfortable seeing Firko had just completed 115kms in 18 hours, so I felt justified in allowing him a slightly longer rest - 4 hours. That would leave 18 hours to cover 90kms, or 5kms per hour, virtually walking pace. Should be a doddle I thought as I wafted into dreamland.

It was tough getting going again just after 5.00am. It was still bitterly cold and fog had settled down to ground level. Visibility was reduced to about 50 metres. Firko was wearing his black balaclava and looked for all the world like Ned Kelly reincarnated.

Suddenly we picked up conversations on the CB radio. It was Terry Cox's crew. From what they were saying it was quite clear that Terry was very much in the race. Yet he was one of the seven runners behind us going into Cooma. We knew that they could not

possibly have made the cutoff time. He had been running with his son, Terry Cox Junior, and the youngster had been in a lot of trouble when he passed him.

We called them up on the CB to ask what had happened. It transpired that the Race Director had belatedly changed the cutoff time by an hour which enabled the laggards to get into Cooma without disqualification. The Race Director had stated that he had set too tough a cutoff time for Cooma.

I was stunned. We had needlessly put Firko through the wringer to get him to Cooma in time and, almost as bad, we had needlessly used up half our meagre stock of Squeezies. I knew that Firko would take the news badly and yet I had to tell him.

We discussed the issue for some time. We were naturally pleased for the other runners that they could continue. They had all spent many thousands of dollars renting their vans and equipment. Their crews had all taken leave and volunteered their services. It would have been a great shame if they had been eliminated.

It was simply bad luck for us that the cutoff time had been changed after we got to Cooma. It would have been a major bonus if we had known about it 10 or 15kms out. I put it to Firko that the race organisers now owed us a favour and that we might just need a favour before we got to Melbourne. This seemed to calm him down and, indeed, was to prove prophetic.

That day on the road to Bombala turned out to be anything but the doddle I had anticipated. Firko was visibly dragging his heels. The effort to get to Cooma had taken a great deal out of him while the change in the cutoff time was bad psychologically.

It became a long hard slog over extremely undulating terrain. We were still traversing the fringe of the Snowy Mountains. Steve and I were destined to spend long periods out on the road trying to motivate Firko and keep his mind on the job. We had to resort to periodic 15 minute rests with occasional breaks.

Fortunately, after nightfall Firko picked up noticeably and we reached Bombala around 9.30pm, about an hour and a half before the cutoff time. All the cutoff times had in fact been extended by an hour following the change to the Cooma cutoff time but Firko, in a fit of pique, said that he wanted to stick to the old cutoff times.

Firko and the crew were in desperate need of rest so I decided on a gamble. If I gave him a long rest he might recover his energy levels much better from a short break and be able to make up the ground by moving faster the next day. I rostered 6 hours sleep for everyone, which meant that the full break was about 7 hours. It was blissful and did the trick.

The next day, Monday, was by far the easiest and nicest day we experienced. The dawn was perhaps the most magnificent I have ever seen. The colours and cloud formations were stunning and seemed to cover the entire firmament. It set the tone for the day.

After a couple of hours we moved off the edge of the escarpment and started down the scenic Cann River valley, through dense forests and occasionally along the banks of the Cann River itself.

Firko was happy and running comfortably. The crew were relaxed and Brian and Jack took the opportunity to go for runs up ahead through the forest. Even a brief rain

shower could not dampen our spirits.

Several notable events occurred on this section. In quick order we passed the 500km mark, the half way mark and the Victorian State border. The latter seemed to give Firko a special lift.

We also received the first of the newsletters which contained many messages of encouragement for Firko, all of which were greatly appreciated.

The only sour note during the day was when Jack Nordish took over the driving of the lead vehicle. He sniffed the air and asked Barbara whether she was cooking fish only to be told that it was running shoes that he was smelling.

At about 7.00pm we pulled into a motel in Cann River, having covered 90kms during the day. The next cutoff point was still some 77kms away at a town called Orbost. Firko's strong performance during the day enabled me to allow him a 3 hour sleep in Cann River.

When we got underway again, it was back to the serious business. For starters, there is a long 40km climb out of Cann River. It seemed to take forever. The wind was howling but unfortunately we were sheltered by the dense forests that we were travelling through.

I insisted that Firko walk up the hills to conserve his energy, which meant long periods of walking when Steve and I took turns at keeping him company. Burl Ives and Rocky were the main musical fare. Steve said that he counted 25 separate renditions of the Burl Ives tape on that leg! While he came to detest this tape, it actually grew on me. I am listening to it as I type this and it is astonishing how vividly it brings back the memories.

The trip into Orbost was relatively uneventful. Once we cleared the mountains Firko got back into his easy rhythm, alternating 5 minutes running with 5 minutes walking. He was running comfortably and showing no signs of stiffness or pain anywhere.

Once incident about 10kms outside of Orbost is worth recording. We had gradually caught up with Terry Cox. From the slow pace at which he was travelling we deduced that he must be in some sort of trouble.

I was out on the road with Firko at the time and as we started to get close to Terry, he fell forward flat on his face and didn't move. His crew rushed to his assistance and by the time we drew level with him they had him on his feet on the side of the road. He was bent over retching and looked all in.

I turned to Firko and told him that no matter how badly he wanted to get to Melbourne, I was not going to let him do it if it was necessary to drive him to the same condition that Terry was in at that moment. Firko had clearly been shocked at Terry's condition and he agreed with me.

"I don't want my wife, kids or family to ever see me in that condition" he said quietly. Fortunately we understood each other.

I thought that Terry Cox would have to pull out of the race, but ultra-Marathoners have their own form of insanity. Terry got going again, didn't stop for a rest as we did in Orbost, and he remained ahead of us all the way to Melbourne!

When we got to Orbost, Firko had been on the road for exactly five days and had

covered 629kms, an average of 126kms per day. It was hard to believe that the leaders were some 350kms ahead of us and were approaching the finish at that time. Once certainly gets a greater respect for the enormity of these performances when one is out there day after day, living the whole experience and maybe covering 50 or more kilometres per day oneself.

From Orbost the course loops down to the coast at Lakes Entrance and then curves back inland to Bairnsdale, which was the next cutoff point. It is about 60kms to Lakes Entrance and a further 37kms from there to Bairnsdale. After allowing Firko 4 hours sleep we were left with 19 hours to cover the 97kms to the Bairnsdale cutoff. It should be a doddle, I thought, but once again events were going to probe me wrong.

Up to Orbost I had controlled everything that Firko did. I told him when to run, when to walk, when to eat, when to sleep, what to eat, what to drink. About the only thing I did not control were his bodily functions and believe me, he functioned often. If anybody is looking for a donor with a good quality kidney I can recommend Firko's. They are in perfect condition! I can vouch for it as I carefully observed more than 50% of his piddles to check the colour of the urine and to be sure that it contained no blood. If Firko could have found a sponsor who would donate 50 cents for each of his piddles on the road to Melbourne, there would have been no need for any other sponsors!

Thus it was at Orbost that Firko rebelled. In the nicest way, of course.

"Alf, do you mind if I walk and run as I feel up to it? he asked plaintively.

After 630kms I figured that he was probably getting the hang of it, so I agreed. In any event I was feeling pretty bushed and a few extra hours shuteye was very appealing. Once I was sure that everything was going well I climbed into the bunk above the driver's cab in the second vehicle and slept for nearly 4 hours.

I was awakened by this terrible earthquake. Indeed it was several earthquakes. I was in a very tall building and when it eventually collapsed I woke up to find that it was the shuddering of the van as it started and stopped that was causing the earthquakes.

Firko was still going well and had covered more than I had expected him to while I was asleep. We were about 3 hours out of Lakes Entrance and, as had become customary, I joined him for the last pull into town.

I had promised Firko half an hour's break in Lakes Entrance where he could have a change of clothes, let Steve massage his feet and have a proper meal. Firko had asked for steak and kidney pie and to my amazement, tha tis exactly what Barbara produced for him.

Firko still had 8 and half hours left to cover the 37kms to Bairnsdale, working on the old cutoff time and an extra hour if we used the revised cutoff time. It looked pretty comfortable and my idea was to get to Bairnsdale with two or more hours in hand so that Firko could have a rest there.

There is a long climb out of Lakes Entrance. Not nearly as bad as the climb out of Cann River, but still quite a tough slog. We took it fairly slowly, taking nearly an hour and a quarter to complete the 6km hill.

Once on the level Firko started his walk-run-walk routine. He had been doing this for about 15 minutes when suddenly he veered across the road, staggering into me. I could see that something was seriously wrong and sat him down on his haunches.

"What's the matter, mate?"

"Dizzy. Just dizzy" he mumbled, "Can't stand."

"Right, you are going straight to bed," I ordered. He just nodded his assent.

He had clearly been overcome by exhaustion. What concerned me was that I was right next to him and I had not been able to pick up any signs of imminent collapse.

There was a dark, deserted filling station 50 metres up the road. We pulled the vans in there and laid Firko out on the bunk. He was snoring before we had removed his shoes and covered him up.

Some of the crew stretched out for a sleep, others mulled around outside. I sat in the cab to do a bit of figuring and thinking. It was exactly the situation I had dreaded. I kept thinking of the column in the daily newsletter which gave the reasons for those runners who had withdrawn. Half of them had simply withdrawn from "exhaustion".

We still had 29kms to go to Bairnsdale. If I let Firko sleep for an hour, we would have either 6 or 7 hours to get him to the cutoff, depending on which cutoff time was used. It was going to be a resurrection job, similar to that which we had to do on him last year on the road to Canberra. Lots and lots of vegies, no running, slow walking and a few Squeezies. Maximum speed would be 5kms per hour, so a full 6 hours would be needed. An hour's sleep was all we could afford, but we would still be left with the hour from the revised cutoff as an emergency buffer.

I went to look for Barbara to tell her the news. I found her on her own, down a side road quietly sobbing.

"It means so much to him," she said, wiping the tears away. "He is desperate to make it to Melbourne".

"If there is any way of getting him there without half killing him, we'll find it," I promised her.

What had looked like a doddle had become a desperate race to make the cutoff. I blamed myself for allowing him to do his own thing. He had obviously overdone the running. I blamed myself for having a 4 hour sleep. If I had been awake I would have seen the huge effort he put in to make Lakes Entrance so quickly.

Nothing for it now but to institute Operation Resurrection. Lots of vegies and lots of slow walking. And once again it worked. After some two hours, Firko was looking as bright and chipper as she had been at any stage in the run. Better still, he had suffered no further bouts of dizziness.

In fact, he was looking so good that when we came to a gradual decline, I suggested that we trot down the easy half kilometre or so. When we got to the bottom of the hill I was shocked at the change in his condition. He had lost all his chirpiness, his face was drawn and grey and he looked as if he was going to be ill.

Running was immediately banned and within 30 minutes he had recovered to the point where he was smiling and cracking jokes again. After another 30 minutes I decided to try another trot down a gentle decline, but the result was identical to what had happened an hour earlier. The smile faded to be replaced by the drawn, grey look.

My heart sank as I diagnosed what was happening was that when he started running, the pain was causing his body to go into shock. We were going to have to walk all the way into Bairnsdale. Worse still, we were probably going to have to walk the remaining 300kms to Melbourne.

I tried to explain to Firko what was happening to him but I'm not sure that he understood fully. "Walk to Bairnsdale and we'll worry about it from there.," I said.

Firko looked dejected. "I'm sorry to be holding you up," he mumbled.

I put an arm around his shoulder. "Mate, if there is anything which is going to make me very cross, it is you apoligising and feeling sorry for yourself."

Some weeks after the event, Firko confided what I had said had been like a slap across the face, that it felt as if he was back at school. He didn't apologise again on the trip. Nor did I ever have the impression that he was feeling sorry for himself.

The long walk into Bairnsdale was highlighted by the arrival of Firko's son Shane, who was stationed at the Air Force Base at Sale. It was a welcome moment for Firko and helped to break the monotony.

When it became apparent that Firko was going to be able to walk to Bairnsdale and arrive within the original cutoff time, I allowed myself to think about the next leg, which was 120kms to Traralgon. From cutoff time in Bairnsdale to cutoff time in Traralgon was 24 hours, with an extra hour if we used the revised time.

The problem was that I had a runner who couldn't run and was walking at about 5.5km per hour. He was going to need 22 hours to cover the distance at that rate, but he also needed a rest. I decided that we had no alternative but to start using the extra hour available from the revised cutoff times. If he walked 40kms, slept for an hour, walked another 40kms, slept another hour and then hightailed it to Traralgon, it would take exactly 24 hours.

If we followed this schedule, then I could only give Firko a 90 minute break in Bairnsdale. As I could see no other alternative in the circumstances, that is what we did. There was barely time for Firko to shower, shave, have his feet massaged by Steve and get an hour's sleep before we were on the road again.

I walked with Firko for the first 3 hours out of Bairnsdale in order to try to get him up to 6kms per hour pace, thereby building up a small buffer for emergencies. We did cover 18kms during those 3 hours, but it was quite a humiliating experience for me. At the end of the 3 hours my feet were sore, I had a couple of blisters and I was exhausted. My respect for Firko's stamina and guts went up another notch as she continued to stride out towards the setting sun.

It took 7 hours for Firko to walk those first 40kms, an average of 5.7km per hour. This was slightly better than the 5.5km per hour that I had budgeted on, so we had a small buffer. After an hour's sleep, a change of clothes and another foot massage, Firko was walking again. We were into our seventh night on the road.

Firko had lost a considerable amount of weight and his buttocks had almost disappeared. His face was haggard and drawn, and his pace was gradually slowing. As midnight approached, I started to get alarmed. We had only covered about 16 of the next 40kms that I had scheduled before his next hour's rest. At the pace he was going at, we

were not going to make the Traralgon cutoff. Firko was approaching total exhaustion and there was nothing I could do about it.

Three kilometres further on, while he was having a stretch, he asked: "How much further is it to my next rest?"

"About 12kms," I replied. His shoulders sagged.

"Alf do you think I could have half an hour now and reduce the next rest by half an hour?"

My heart went out to him. It was the first time since we had left Sydney that he had actually asked for a rest. I knew how much it had cost him just to ask. I also knew that he was finished, both physically and as far as the race was concerned. He had to have a decent rest and after that there was no way that he could make the cutoff in time. It was crunch time.

"No mate, you can't have half an hour. You are going to have a full hour, maybe more."

I think that the crew also sensed that it was over. It was a brave attempt, but the body, particularly a 51 year old body, can only take so much. Most of the crew found a spot to stretch out and sleep. I sat in the cab with Ken Gray and we discussed the situation.

We were then 784kms into the race and my thinking was to try and nurse Firko through another 16kms so that he could at least have covered 800kms, which would still have been an enormous achievement. He had never been further than 292kms, so 800 was a huge advance.

Although I knew that he was finished, I felt that I owed Firko at least enough time to make it to Traralgon if he had it in him. Once again I hauled out the logbook and a pencil and did some calculating.

About 75 minutes after he had gone down to sleep, I was shaking him awake and turning the lights on to get enough bodies up to get the show on the road.

I gave Firko one of our latest remaining Squeezies while I explained the position to him. There was something over 10 hours to go to the revised cutoff time and 59kms to be covered. With no further rests and by doing a little bit of running from time to time, it was possible to just make it.

Barbara walked the first few hundred metres with him. Suddenly I saw him hug and kiss her, then he was running. Barbara jumped into the van, tears streaming down her face.

"He says that he is going to do it", she sobbed.

I still believe that we witnessed a miracle that night. From being in a state of total exhaustion where he could scarcely put one foot in front of the other, to a mere 90 minutes later being right back into a 5 minute run/5 minute walk routine, is beyond rational explanation.

Not only did it happen, but he kept it up to such a degree that we reached Traralgon with 30 minutes to spare. I now felt certain that God was with Firko on this run and that nothing could stop us now.

To fully appreciate the enormity of this performance, it needs to be seen in perspective. It had taken 5 days to get to Orbost. In the 48 hours since Orbost, Firko had had the following sleeps: 90 minutes outside Lakes Entrance; an hour in Bairnsdale and two one hour sleeps on the road to Traralgon. A total of four and a half hours sleep in 2 days, and that after he had already covered 625kms during the first 5 days. A truly miraculous effort.

Firko's troubles were far from over. We were still 168kms from Melbourne and of more immediate concern, still 65kms from the final cutoff point at Warragul. Firko needed sleep badly, but I had to balance this necessity against the time required to get to Warragul.

In the end I allowed Firko 3 hours sleep, which I felt was the absolute minimum that he needed. This was going to make the next leg very tight indeed as it left only 11 hours to cover the 65kms to Warragul. We would have no emergency buffer and there would be nothing spare for a rest on the way. It was going to be a nailbiting finish.

For the first few hours Firko managed to maintain the required pace but then he started to fade. I knew that he was in trouble when we came to a long, but not particularly steep hill. It seemed to take forever to reach the crest. When we reached it, Firko said that he needed a 5 minute rest. This was only the second time that he had asked for a rest on the whole trip and confirmed to me that he had no reserves left.

The walk down the other side gave him some respite but when he got back to level ground, it was obvious that he was keeping going on willpower only. The vegies and Endurolade drink did not seem to be helping. By this stage all the Squeezies had been used up, so there was nothing available to give him a boost.

We were still 35kms from Warragul, when he asked for another 5 minute rest. What he needed was about 12 hours sleep. I called a halt and put him to bed. Even if we kept going, we were not going to make the cutoff. In fact, I was doubtful that he would even get to Warragul if we kept going without giving him a rest.

It was time to call in the debt that I believe the race Organisers owed us for the cockup at Cooma, which now seemed years ago. The official dealing with our section of the field was Firko's friend "Mountain Man". I knew that he would be along shortly as he always arrived at dinner time.

Sure enough, ten minutes later Mountain Man pitched up. I explained the situation to him and asked if I could use the car telephone to talk to Charlie Lynn, the Race Director and the man with the final authority. I explained to Charlie how we had been prejudiced by the events at Cooma and why I felt that the Race Organisation owed Firko a favour. I told him of Firko's condition and said that I was not prepared to drive him into the ground in order to make the cutoff point at Warragul. I asked for official permission for a late arrival at the cutoff point for Firko.

Fortunately Charlie was very friendly and accepted what I said about Cooma. He agreed to allow Firko to reach Warragul after the official cutoff time and to continue on to Melbourne as an official runner. He said that he would issue instructions accordingly.

Later I checked with Mountain Man and also with the driver of the night safety van which followed the last runner in the field after sunset and found that Charlie was as good as his word. He had told them that we were to continue to Melbourne even if Firko missed his Warragul cutoff time.



After an hour I got Firko up again and we set out for Warragul. It was tough going as Firko still did not seem to have anything in reserve and the Endurolade was not perking him up. The Race Doctor had given us a can of "Maximum" to try. This is an Australian made product similar to Endurolade, but I had refrained from using it because I didn't want to change a winning formula. I decided that it was time to give Maximum a go and it produced an immediate positive effect. Perhaps Firko was saturated with Endurolade.

"Were you there when they crucified my Lord."

"Sometimes it causes me to tremble, trrrremmmbbblllee."

The gravelly tones of Burl Ives's voice filled the night sky for the umpteenth time. I was out on the road again with Firko, but this time there was no respite. I had discovered that Steve Nordish had a serious ankle injury which he had successfully concealed from me for two days until he could no longer walk. He was now resigned to a driving and foot massaging role for the remainder of the journey.

"He walks with me and He talks with me, and tells me I am his own."

More Burl Ives. Seemed appropriate.

Ever so slowly the hours and kilometres ticked by as Firko and I strode up the long straight, dark road. I was too concerned about his weakened state to leave his side.

Midnight came and went. Finally at 2am, the cutoff times at Warragul, we were still some 7kms from the town. I felt exceedingly grateful that we had a debt to call up and that it had been honoured.

"Come home, come home, Ye who are weary come home."

"Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling."

Burl Ives droned on in the background. Eventually the lights of Warragul appeared ahead of us.

It was 3am and I was exhausted. Heaven knows how Firko was feeling. To me it seemed like a miracle that he was still on his feet. Another 2kms into Warragul and then bed.

I noticed an official Westfield Run car pull up and the Race Marshall got out. He trotted up, smiling and waving to the bleary-eyed crew. I thought that it was jolly nice of him to come out at 3am in the morning to give Firko a helping hand into Warragul.

Firko was walking at the time. I was on his right hand side carrying the drinks bottle. The race Marshall joined us on Firko's left hand side.

"Graham, this is something which is very hard for me to do," said the Race Marshall, "but rules are rules and the Warragul cutoff time has already passed."

I suddenly realised that he was not there to help Firko and that he was on the verge of withdrawing him from the race. I am a very easy-going person and used to be able to count the number of times that I have blown my cool on the fingers of one hand. I was about to start on my other hand.

I simply exploded, fumes were literally coming out of my ears. No doubt the lack of

sleep, the physical exhaustion and the emotional pressure of keeping Firko on the road all took their toll.

Suddenly I was poking my forefinger in the Race Marshall's face and yelling at him.

"Who the effing hell do you think you are coming to withdraw this man?" I think that the words were probably somewhat stronger. "You better get on your effing phone and check your effing facts with your effing Race Director before you do anything that you might regret. We have official permission to be late at this cutoff?"

"When did you speak to Charlie?" the Race Marshall wanted to know, quite taken aback by my outburst. I told him and he scurried off with his tail between his legs to check what I had said. A few minutes later he returned to say that everything was as I had said and that we were to continue. He left muttering under his breath about not having been informed and that Charlie should not shoot from the hip like that.

It gave us something to talk about over the last little hike into Warragul.

Firko still had 103kms to cover the finish line in Melbourne. To get there at some sort of respectable time, we had to be on the road again at 6am. That gave us about two hours for a much needed sleep.

"Wake up, Alf, I heard your alarm go off." It was Toots shaking my shoulder. Once again I had slept right through the alarm.

Steve Nordish was propped up on one arm on the adjacent bed. "Last day," he said cheerfully.

"What do you think the odds are of making it?" I asked him.

"I never had any doubts that he would make it", he said. "The only time I was concerned was before Traralgon. He'll make it now." I wasn't so sure. I knew how close Firko had been to collapse the previous day. It was a question of crossing fingers and keeping going. I was determined that we would get him there, even if we had to carry him the last 50kms.

We had been ordered to have someone on Firko's right all the way from Warragul to Melbourne, in case he lurched to the right into the traffic, which was expected to become increasingly heavy. This was the opportunity to give the rest of the crew a chance to be out on the road with Firko and I believe that it was also the time that he was ready for a change of company. A roster was prepared so that everyone could have a turn out on the road. I decided that I would save myself for the last 30kms when I might be most needed.

I had phoned my wife, Rosanne when I began to get confident that Firko was going to make it to Melbourne. I suggested that she might like to fly down on the Friday morning and be with us on the final day. It would also enable her to bring us a packet of Squeezies which I felt would be sorely needed before we got to the Finish line.

From about 10.00 am I was scanning the oncoming traffic, looking for Rosanne. Eventually there was a toot as she flashed past on the other side of the double highway. Then she was parking up ahead of us and running towards us with a broad grin on her face.

"I've never seen Rosanne without a smile on her face," remarked Firko as she rushed up and gave him a peck on the cheek.

As we walked back towards the van to greet the crew, Rosanne said: "I hear that Firko has been withdrawn from the race. What has happened?"

I stopped in midstride. "What are you talking about?"

"I was listening to the news on the car radio and heard that Firko has been withdrawn from the race but is being allowed to complete the course as an unofficial runner."

Once again I was flabbergasted. This was completely contrary to my arrangements with Charlie Lynn, the Race Director. I suddenly realised that we had not seen a race official all morning. Was Firko really out of the race? Did this mean that he was not going to be recognised as a finisher? After the incredibly courageous effort that he had made, was he going to be denied a Finisher's Medal and recognition in the Race Records as a finisher?

We discussed the situation with the rest of the crew and decided that we would not mention anything to Firko until we had further information from a race official. The hours ticked by, but no race official appeared.

Eventually Firko had covered 25kms. I had decided to break the journey into 4 sections of about 25kms each, allowing Firko an hour of sleep at the end of each section.

About halfway through the second 25km leg I noticed a television crew up ahead. I knew instinctively that they were going to question Firko about the circumstances of his withdrawal, something which he still knew nothing about. I dashed forward in the hope that I could fend them off.

Sure enough, the interviewer immediately launched into questioning Firko about why he was continuing after he had been officially withdrawn. I countered by asking from where they had got their information that Firko had been withdrawn. The interviewer replied that it came from an AAP-Reuters wire report. My heart sank. Such a report had to be official. All I could do was to say that we had not had any such notification from the race authorities and as far as we were concerned, Firko was still an official runner.

As a result of this confrontation I had to tell Firko about the radio report. We still had not seen a race official and I was starting to feel a bit desperate. Firko's brother, Ron and his son Shane had arrived to cheer him home. As they needed to go into Melbourne to make some Motel Bookings and Rosanne needed to pick up our Motel key, I suggested that they drive to Melbourne, track down Charlie Lynn and find out exactly what was going on.

Shortly after Firko's second sleep we had our first good news . We had a visit from a couple of policeman who told us that they were there to estimate Firko's speed so that they could estimate his final arrival time. They told us that Charlie Lynn had requested a police escort into Melbourne for Firko, something reserved usually for the leading runner only.

I was quite amused when they figured that he would arrive at 8.30pm. I told them that it would be closer to 3.00am and that I had a week's practise at this sort of thing. We eventually arrived at 3.25am.

It was dusk when Rosanne, Ron and Shane returned from Melbourne. The news was good. Charlie had said to ignore media reports. Firko would be an official finisher. He would get his medal and Finisher's Certificate. They would keep the Finish facilities open until Firko arrived, no matter what time that was. There would be hot food and cold beer waiting for us. The TV cameras would be waiting and the Police escort would see him right

to the finish.

Clearly Charlie was bending over backwards to undo the damage of the erroneous media report of Firko's withdrawal and was honouring the arrangements that I have made with him.

It was a great relief to me and I could now concentrate on getting Firko through the final kilometres to the finish.

We had become quite a cavalcade as we wound our way through the outskirts of Melbourne. Two police cars with flashing blue lights up ahead, then Firko followed by the first van with its flashing amber lights, then Ron's car, the second van and finally the night security ute with its flashing amber light and huge sign "Runner Ahead" on its rear.

I was still very concerned about Firko's condition as I knew that he had already exceeded his limits of endurance, but he kept putting one foot in front of the other. My greatest fear was to have him collapse with only a few kilometres to go. I seemed to be the only one so concerned. The rest of the crew, other than the drivers, had donned their shirts with "Firko's crew emblazoned on the front and were walking in a group around Firko. I remained steadfastly at his right shoulder.

Suddenly Firko veered off to the left and ran off the road. "What the hell is going on?" I wondered as I chased after him. I caught up with him in front of a flower seller's stand that he had spied.

"Alf, can you lend me \$5 to buy Barbara some flowers?"

I can't think of another runner who might have done anything similar, but then Firko is one of Nature's gentlemen. He might even repay the \$5 sometime.

With ten kilometres to go we were joined by Charlie Lynn who walked to the Finish with Firko. I thought that this was a very touching gesture as Charlie had had virtually no sleep during the past 48 hours and this was beyond the call of duty. But then Charlie is also a Sydney Strider.

The final few kilometres seemed an eternity, as they always do, no matter how long the race. After eight days and sixteen hours they seemed to stretch on forever.

Finally there was the Westfield Doncaster shopping centre. The final 50 metre straight to the tape. The bright arclights to enable the TV cameras to capture the moment. Firko kissing Barbara. Firko hugging his mother, who had made a special journey to Melbourne to witness the finish. Handshakes. Backslaps. Pandemonium.

Charlie hanging the most enormous gold medal around Firko's neck. Ken dashing hither and thither with his video camera.

Suddenly we were inside a warm tent. Charlie had honoured his promise. There was a warm pizza and cold beer.

I was all choked up. It was a combination of tiredness, release from the emotional pressure of continually monitoring Firko's condition and the sheer ecstasy of the moment. I could feel the tears welling up. All I could do was to pat Firko on the back as I pulled the tag on a can of beer.

The joy was that Firko had conquered his own personal Everest and I was proud to

be a part of his team, a team which had supported him to the hilt, to the extreme limits of their own endurance. I am sure that they will all join me in saying: "It was a magnificent effort, Firk, and it was a privilege for us to witness it. We are really proud of you."

As I sat there sipping my beer the words from the Burl Ives tape kept ringing through my head.

"And the joy we share as we tarry there,

None other has ever known;

"Come home, come home, its suppertime;

The shadows deepen fast,

We are going home at last."

*This great story was written by Alf Field who was crew manager on Graham Firkin's magnificent run in 1989. As Race Director, charlie Lynn said about this story "It proves that man can do anything he sets his heart on.*

## ***A True Story***

It was late one Saturday night when a Cooma Farmer staggered out of the Pub and got into his car to drive home. He was a couple of kilometres out of town, when he saw a lot of flashing lights up the road and thought that the cops were having a busy night. He pulled into a laneway and watched over the next few hours whilst the Police continued with their blitz. A mate found him asleep in his car the next morning and asked him what he was doing. The farmer was most embarrassed when he found out that the flashing lights belonged to Westfield vehicles and not the local constabulary.

## ***A Day In The Life Of Fred Public During The Westfield Run By Charlie Lynn***

How can we expect the public to maintain interest in a race where the margin between the first and second placed runners is 27 hours - as it was in 1987?

Let's look at what the average family man in Australia would do between the time Yiannis Kouros crosses the Finish Line and the time his nearest competitor Patrick Macke finished in 1987. Remember, this is after he won his previous run by 24 hours.

Let's say Yiannis Kouros crossed the finish line at 6.00am on Monday morning. His nearest rival is approximately 27 hours or 180km behind him.

Fred (representing our target audience) wakes at 6.00am to the news that the great Greek runner, Yiannis Kouros has blitzed the field. It doesn't register. He dozes off again and then suddenly realises he has overslept by 20 minutes. He jumps out of bed, stretches his body, and makes for the bathroom. A quick shave and then puts on his running gear - got to try and keep fit somehow!

Off he goes into the new dawn - his joints are stiff and the fresh breeze sends a chill through his body. After a few minutes he warms up a bit and gets into a more regular cadence. His muscles start to stretch out a bit. He feels pleased with himself but sorry for all of his neighbours who are denying themselves the opportunity to experience the joy of an early morning run. He sees another jogger - a total stranger - they wave and exchange friendly greetings - "G'day mate, owyergoing?", "Good mate, and yourself?". Then it's back to dreamworld.

"Jeez, this feels good. I reckon I could do this forever. I reckon I could do the Westfield if I could get the time to put some training in. Don't think I could catch the Greek though - he must be bloody good.....!"

After a gentle 40 minutes he turns the corner and slows to a walk as he approaches his driveway. A few gentle stretches and it's inside for a shower and the days work.

It's 8.15 am and Fred's wife has prepared breakfast for him - some orange juice, muesli and wholemeal toast. He watches 'Good Morning Australia' and sees Yiannis Kouros talking to the press - looks remarkably fresh for somebody who has just run from Sydney to Melbourne!

Fred then has a chat with the kids and after kissing them all goodbye, he heads off to work. He tunes into the radio and hears an interview with Kouros. Kouros remarks that he could probably do better but nobody has ever been a serious threat to him in an UltraMarathon.

Fred thinks; "Struth he's been finished for three hours already with his nearest competitor is still over 150km from the Finish Line"!

At work Fred's mind is quickly occupied with a number of projects he is working on; a 9.30am meeting, a visit to a construction site at 11.00am and a business lunch at 1.00pm.

During lunch one of his contemporaries says " You jog don't you Fred - what did you think of that Greek that got in this morning?". "Great effort" says Fred, "Just think he has

finished the event, celebrated with his crew and has now been asleep for about four hours - and the nearest competitor is still about 130km from the finish"!

They finish lunch and Fred gets back to business at the office. The afternoon passes quickly and 6.00pm sees Fred back in the car heading for home. "Don't forget to pick up the groceries and then call around to football training to give young Billy a ride home"; he remembers his wife's instructions clearly.

At home he read the afternoon newspapers and then tunes into the evening news. The Kouros victory is now old hat and it just rates a passing mention. But it's enough to trigger Fred's recall - "Struth" he thinks, "Kouros would be out of bed after a deep 10 hour sleep and his nearest competitor is still about 80km from the finish!"

His wife reminds him that they have a P and C meeting to go to at 8.00pm. Fred goes along and listens as concerned parents and teachers debate the issues of education and the running of the local school. He gets back home at 10.30pm and sits down to supper with his wife and they have a quiet yarn about the day's activities.

"Are you going for a run in the morning?" she asks.

"Yep" he replies. "Then there are some clean jocks in the bathroom - and please don't put those shoes on until you get outside - and when you get back take them off before you get inside - and take your socks off too cause they're starting to make the carpet smelly, and shut the door properly on the way out this time.....!" Fred listens, acknowledges, agrees and then goes for his shower.

A good sound sleep and then Fred rouses to his alarm at 6.00am. He takes 15 minutes to get out of bed - wanders down to the lounge - "Where are my bloody jocks" he wanders, - "never where I want them". He bumps around in the dark, finds them in the bathroom - "Why did she put them here?" He goes back to the lounge, puts on his joggers and leaves by the front door, but forgets to shut it.

Today's jog is not as easy but he doesn't quit and plods on for another 8km. Then it's breakfast, kids, wife and off to work again.

Halfway through a meeting at 10.00am one of his contemporaries says, "You jog don't you Fred?" I see that pommy runner Macke just finished the Sydney to Melbourne in second place". "Yeah" said Fred, "Wasn't exactly a photo finish was it!"



## ***Musical Tales***

Sydney runner, Maurice Taylor was struggling to raise money one year for himself to compete in the Westfield one year that he sold his most beloved possession. It was his Stradivarius violin! That's dedication!

## ***The End Of An Era***

It was to be towards the end of 1991 when Westfield pulled the plug on sponsorship of this great Run. No other companies came forth and suddenly the Sydney to Melbourne Run was no more. One could debate the pros and cons of Westfield's sponsorship of the Run, but that isn't the purpose of this Book. My purpose has been to talk about the ordinary men and women striving for their goals on the road between Sydney and Melbourne. Their efforts are now recorded in history. Anyone can do anything that they set their minds to in life. The men and women in this book prove that.

It was in August 1998 when I competed in a 24 hour race in inner Melbourne. There were five ex-Westfield runners in the field. It had been seven years since the last Westfield, but one could sense and feel the warm regard and common bond they had with each other as a result of the great adventures that they had been through together! It was like Returned Soldiers attending Anzac Day Celebrations. Nothing had to be said. They knew themselves what they had been through together!

Former Westfield runner, Helen Stangar blitzed the field that day and won with 228km. This was a new female Australian record. In her own words, she had definitely won, ran a Personal best and ran her best on the day!

It was February 2nd, 2001, when Westfield legend and possibly the best Australian - born Ultra runner of all time, Bryan Smith tragically died on the road during the running of the Trans Australian running race. His wife Jan was by his side at the time. The whole of the sport was in mourning for the Gentleman of the track who was a fine example to all in the sport.

It was a week later when Bryan's family and stalwarts of the sport gathered in Melton, Victoria for Bryan's Memorial Service. It was a fitting end for a true champion with Tony Collin's eulogy bringing more than one tear to my eye. The music picked for the service was very poignant as well. I could imagine Bryan with sunnie's on and listening to the same tracks on his walkman lapping the other runners in the "Great Ultra in the Sky".

Afterwards there was the usual few drinks as people remembered and reminisced about Bryan the person, Bryan the family man and Bryan the Ultra runner. I had one last edition of the book, which I got autographed by the Westfield runners and left on the table for his widow, Jan.

I then walked back into the Hall and saw Kevin Mansell, Pat Farmer, Yiannis Kouros, Maurice Taylor, Tony Collins and a couple of others sat around talking. I was about to leave and give them their much needed privacy, when Kevin called me over and told me to sit down as I was just as much part of it as they were. I sat down and they kept talking. Some of them had already been through their own private hell in the last couple of years.

The conversation will always remain private and between us - but that day saw a great chapter in Australian sport close but never to be forgotten. I got up quietly and walked out the room.

**Phil Essam**

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