

SIX HOUR TRACK RACE - EAST BURWOOD VIC. SUNDAY 24TH OCTOBER, 1993

by Dot Browne (Race Director)

The weather forecast sounded ominous - "change expected with gale-force winds". Not good. However at 8am as we started setting up, the sky didn't look too bad. Les Clarke had secured his tent for the lap-scorers, and runners and crews were starting to arrive. I was delighted that one third of the field were new faces in the ultra-running scene. They came from as far as Shepparton, Moe and Geelong to compete.

The event started at 9am and Keith Alexander went out fast, covering 14km in the first hour and building up a 2 lap lead. Brian Simmons, who had promised to take it easy after his forced break from running, couldn't help himself and sat in second position. Lavinia Petrie, a competitor who has had the most phenomenal success in everything athletic she has tackled recently, was hot on his heels. Greg Wilson, previous winner of this event, showed his experience and sat back in fourth position.

But by 10am the change had set in. The dark clouds were getting blacker as Sandy Kerr produced hot drinks and sandwiches for the lapscorers, and before long, the pelting rain had started bucketing down, sending spectators and crews scurrying for cover and producing rivers of run-off through the lap-scorers' tent. We had to move the leader-board under cover because the felt marker-pens refused to work on the wet slats. Meanwhile, the runners kept circulating. Round and round ... and round, getting soaked to the skin.

By the third hour, Brian Simmons had caught Keith Alexander. They were on the same lap, and Lavinia was holding on to third placing, with Greg Wilson still in fourth position. Some of the inexperienced ultra-runners, Joe Torre, Steve Duckworth, Dave Rabl and Chris Kellar were surprising us, holding on to minor placings at this stage.

It was about the third hour that the tornado hit. Unbelievable winds and lashing rain ripped guy ropes from the ground, flattened crews' tents, sent the cast iron leader boards toppling, spraying the slats all over the wet track like a handful of thrown cards, and whipping sandy grit from the track into everybody's eyes. Runners coming around the top bend were blown into the third lane, and as they turned into the front straight, copped a full frontal into the teeth of the gale, standing them up and reducing many of them to an angled walk, leaning into the wind. Lane one was now two inches deep in water. Unbelievable conditions. Some runners took turns on Mike Browne's massage table to escape the elements.

Lavinia Petrie, having set herself for the 30 mile national record, busted a gut to achieve it. She came in just 1 minute 13 seconds under the existing record to clock 3:40:44 for 30 miles, an amazing feat considering the appalling conditions. However, the effort took its toll. She pulled out 20 minutes later, exhausted.

Would you believe, an hour later, we had bright sunshine, the track steaming and the helpers out with the brooms, trying to entice the track water into the drains. We got the sausage sizzle going, and the smell wafted all over the track. John Harper couldn't get too many takers amongst the runners though. But the helpers and lap-scorers gave them a fright.

By 4 hours, Keith Alexander was starting to tire, and Brian Simmons had hit the front, two laps in the lead, with Greg Wilson in second position. Joe Torre, from Coburg was an amazing first-timer. He ran consistently throughout the race to stay in either 4th or 5th position and seemed to keep the pace going as everyone else faded in the last couple of hours.

By then, it was pancake time. The cooks cleaned the hot plate and changed the menu. It was delicious pancakes with honey, strawberry jam and ice-cream. And meanwhile, while the helpers and spectators were all having fun, the runners were still going round... and round... and round. We even enticed a few tiring athletes to walk a lap and sample our wares. Got them going again.

The experienced ultra-runner, Greg Wilson, won out in the end. He came through strongly in the final two hours to take out his second 6 Hour Track Race victory. It was 4km less than last year, but in the conditions, an amazing effort. Well done Greg! Brian Simmons, in his first ultra, hung on to second place with 72.199km. Fantastic! And Keith Alexander finished well to place third after a fast start. The rest of the field all gutsed it out to complete the six hours and some great results were achieved. Lawrie Crouch even achieved a personal best distance.

Presentations were held soon after the finish. Greg Wilson, in an emotional winner's speech, expressed his sadness that George Perdon, a local resident, was not present. George had been a regular supporter of our Six Hour Track Race at East Burwood, and we all missed him today. Greg made the comment that "Today's race was a character-building event" and we couldn't agree more. Let's hope the poor conditions were not enough to frighten off our newcomers and that we see them again next year.

Thanks once again to my great team of helpers - Col Browne on computer, my son Michael as masseur, Sandy Kerr on refreshments, John Harper, my right hand man, Cherie Baldwin and many of my Croydon Vets. A.C. friends who came to help and support the runners. Another successful event. Thanks a million!

RESULTS

Name	marathon	50km	total km	placing	W
(265) Greg Wilson	3:13:58	3:49:20	74.199	1	
(281) Brian Simmons	3:05:13	3:42:32	72.199	2	
(270) Keith Alexander	3:06:15	3:53:07	70.248	3	
(261) Joe Torre	3:27:53	4:11:09	70.064	4	
(276) Lawrie Crouch	3:44:03	4:29:06	65.993	5	
(263) Geoff Duffell	3:43:56	4:28:05	65.936	6	
(273) Steve Duckworth	3:30:26	4:18:11	64.625	7	
(271) Bill Beauchamp	3:41:57	4:30:44	64.249	8	
(266) Ron Campbell	3:33:05	4:32:48	64.126	9	
(277) Chris Kellar	3:39:54	4:37:36	63.681	10	
(282) Mike Grayling	3:46:00	4:38:04	62.941	11	
(267) Peter Gray	3:44:10	4:38:33	61.249	12	
(274) Dave Rabi	3:49:10	4:52:15	58.39	13	
(268) Keith Green	3:46:16	5:07:25	58.152	14	
(264) Adam Hillbrick	4:19:00	5:19:31	55.536	15	
(272) Jim Clarke	4:40:00	5:33:40	53.849	16	
(280) Lavinia Petrie	3:08:54	3:50:14	51.2	17	W1
(269) Godfrey Pollard	4:54:38	5:52:48	50.957	18	
(275) Norm Johnston	5:22:48		46.008	19	
(262) Ken Matchett	5:41:49		43.122	20	

Local Ultra Winner

"MOUNTAIN VIEWS" 1-11-93

Yarra Valley UltraMarathon runners took out the major placings in the annual 6 Hour Track Race at Burwood recently.

Gale force winds and heavy rain followed by humid conditions made the event extremely difficult.

These conditions, when combined with a fast early pace, made it a race of attrition! It was also as exciting as an UltraMarathon can be, with the result in doubt until the final half hour.

In the early stages tearaway leaders set a suicidal pace. They were accompanied by Lavinia Petrie of Wesburn who chose terrible conditions to attempt breaking her own Australian 30 mile and 50 km records.

Greg Wilson (Toolangi) and Brian Simmons (Chum Creek) were some laps behind, even though running at an event record pace!

Greg was first to realize the penalty to be paid later and eased to a safer pace while Brian, in his first UltraMarathon, stuck grimly to his schedule to break 80 kilometres.

With the inside lane of the track flooded, runners were forced wide and the buffeting wind, at times, had them almost running on the spot. The leaders were fading as early as two hours into the race and soon Brian Simmons had



★ Greg Wilson winning Burwood 6 Hour Track Race.

wrested the lead with Greg Wilson a few laps behind. Lavinia Petrie was fading after her amazing early pace and any records seemed unlikely. However, showing all the courage for

which the 50 year old mother of three is renowned, Lavinia took 1 mi 13 sec off the Women's Australian Record for 30 miles, recording 3 hrs 40 min 44 sec. The effort it

took in the conditions was obvious when she ran out to 50 kms and failed by 42 seconds to break her own record time of 3 hrs 49 min 32 sec.

Lavinia promptly retired from the event but was still awarded First Female prize.

Meanwhile, Brian Simmons was experiencing problems with cramp and was forced to walk, while Greg Wilson cut into his lead. He had built up a 3 lap buffer when he, too, was struck down with leg cramps and forced to walk. A revitalized Brian saw his chance and closed the gap to 1½ laps before Greg could break into a run again.

Keith Alexander, who had held a 5 lap lead in the early stages, was again running fast and looked a threat although 9 laps behind with an hour to run.

In the latter stages, Greg Wilson pulled away again and won by 5 laps from Brian Simmons who, in turn, was 5 laps clear of Keith Alexander.

Results:

1st: Greg Wilson
74.199 kilometres
2nd: Brian Simmons
72.299 kilometres
3rd: Keith Alexander
70.284 kilometres
1st Female: Lavinia Petrie 51.5 kilometres
30 mile Australian record
3 hrs 40 min 44 sec