

20th Cliff Young Australian Six Day Race

20-26 November 2005

Written by Phil Essam All Images By tallarookimages.com

In the months leading up to this year's race, the interest from prospective entrants was phenomenal with up to 39 runners indicating that they wanted to start. It was about three weeks prior that the great Greek-Australian Ultra runner, Yiannis Kouros indicated that he could start in the race.

Race day dawned and the track was ready to go. Thirty-four runners eventually started. It wasn't long before Kouros, Hardel (France) and Okiyama (Japan) were racing together. Hardel had completed 900 plus kms earlier this year and Okiyama had recently run 400 plus kms over 48 hours. It appeared that the three form runners were testing and probing each other in the early stages. After four hours, it was still very close and Kouros only had a two-lap lead

on Hardel and Okiyama. Kouros had covered 48km in that time.

All of the runners kept going through the Sunday night without much of a break. At 21 hours, Kouros had run 224km for an incredible 46km lead over Hardel and Dvoracek who were in the high 170's.

Garry Wise was the leading Australian with 149.2km and Dawn Parris was leading the women's race with 118km.

At the end of the first day there was no doubt in anyone's mind who was going to win, it was just a question of how far would he run and the winning margin.

The person I am talking about is Yiannis Kouros. He had covered 254.4km, which was 9km further than he had done on the same track twenty-one years ago when he set the World track record for six days. Kouros had done his job and broken any potential challengers.

At 34 hours, Kouros had covered 323.6km and was on course to beat his own World 48hr age record of approximately 444km. Tuesday morning dawned and it was certainly an eventful morning. Kouros at 42 hours had covered 384.8km. Second was Vlastimil Dvoracek with 289.2km.

The 48th hour saw World and Australian Records tumble like flies. Ken Matchett beat the previous World/Australian M80 record. He was also to demolish the 100 mile and 200km records held by the late Drew Kettle. Vlastik Skavril set a new World Record for the M65 48hrs when he added 7 kilometres to George Audley's previous best. Dawn Parris set an Australian record in the W50 48hrs. Yiannis Kouros had a 48-hour total of



Heather Kick

432.4km.

Tuesday evening saw more records fall. Kouros beat Bryan Smith's Australian M45 record for 500km. Bryan is the only other person to run 1000km here at Colac! At half way Yiannis Kouros had covered 590.8km.

Just before midday on Thursday, Kouros had completed 732.4km with Dvoracek on 604.4km. At approximately 2.30pm, the race stopped for seven minutes after a gas bottle caught fire in one of the tents.

Quick thinking by a crew member prevented a major disaster as the bottle was kicked out onto the track. Committee members were soon on hand and runners were halted. The local Fire Brigade were soon on hand and the gas bottle was taken care of. Three runners became impatient and took a route off the track and then double backed. All in all the race suffered a seven minute delay. The three runners were later penalised a lap for disobeying the referee's orders.

Kouros brought up 800km close to the 104th hour. His last 100km was two hours faster than the previous 100km.

The second last day dawned and it looked like being a warm one. During the day, Kouros started to look as though he was suffering, but was soon being helped by the 67-year-old Tasmanian runner, Vlastik Skavril. Vlastik could see that Yiannis was having problems with the heat and soon



Peter Gray

gave up his ice vest for Yiannis to use. He was also running with Yiannis in a bid to keep him on track.

The cool change arrived about 6.00pm on the Friday. Drama was to once again hit at 7.30pm that when a massive storm arrived. It started with the wind and rain taking out some of the available power and lifting the carpeted section on the main straight clear off the track. I stood on the carpet trying to keep it from blowing away and trying hard to prevent the barriers from falling on the runners and guiding the runners through without hurting themselves.

The rain and wind continued for a few minutes and then I heard a crack. I looked down and saw one of the huge Elm trees fall and land on the track. I couldn't see anyone at that part of the course, but raced

down and shouted to see if there was anyone there. At the same time the remaining power seemed to go off. I established that no one was hurt before a runner came around, I guided him to the outside and then back onto the track. For the next few minutes I kept on guiding the runners around the fallen tree.

I was joined by some others who proceeded to start clearing the tree off the track. After an hour's hard work the track was open again and runners were back doing the 400m course. We were just so lucky that no one had been injured. It was then I remembered the famous 1985 New York race when Yiannis kept running during the tornado and set the six-day road race record.



Stan Miskin

It was about 6:20am when Yiannis brought up 1000km establishing a new World Age Record for M45 with a time of 5D 17:41:57. By 9.00am that morning, Yiannis had covered 1,016.0km.

It was shortly after 10.00am when three bus loads of the Greek community arrived and we knew that history was to be made. The atmosphere became electric as Yiannis first beat his World six day track record and pushed even more to the overall World Record.

At 5D 23:43, Yiannis broke the existing six-day overall record. He didn't stop though, but kept on going. A huge crowd had built up and TV cameras from WinNews had turned up to film this historic moment. The crowd were chanting "Kouros, Kouros, Kouros" each time the Legend came past.

Then before we knew it the count down to the end was upon us. It was 144 hours and history had been made at Memorial Square, Colac. 1,036.8km of pure history!

Results

Men

1. Yiannis KOUROS	1036.80
2. Vlastimil DVORACEK (CZE)	822.80
3. Katsuhiko TANAKA (JPN)	814.40
4. Kenji OKIYAMA (JPN)	708.00
5. Peter HOSKINSON	704.00
6. Vlastik SKVARIL	678.00
7. Kjell-Ove SKOGLUND (SWE)	653.60
8. David BILLET	602.40
9. Garry WISE	600.40
10. Muneharu KURODA (JPN)	589.20
11. Eric WRIGHT (RSA)	572.40
12. Arun BHARDWAJ (IND)	556.40
13. Lindsay PHILLIPS	509.60
14. Brock McKINLAY	481.20
15. Graeme BEST (NZ)	474.80
16. John REIDY	469.60
17. Brian BLOOMER	456.80
18. Claude HARDEL (FRA)	454.80 -DNF
19. Peter GRAY	444.80
20. Stan MISKIN (80 yrs)	429.60

Women

1. Dawn PARRIS	640.00
2. Sarah BARNETT	572.40
3. Heather KICK (USA)	458.80
4. Elvira JANOSI (HUN)	100.80 -DNF
5. Deborah DeWILLIAMS	24.00 -DNF



Albert Clark

The makeshift accommodation.



B4YL



Brock McKinlay



Yiannis Kouros



Gary Wise



Ove Skoglund



Tanaka

Eric Wright



Vlastik Skvaril



Lindsay Phillips



Dawn Parris



B4YL



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