

Victorian Six Hour and 50km Track Championships Newborough, 6 November

Report and images from Kevin Cassidy

Events organised by the Traralgon Harriers always have a distinctive feel. Professional organisation, yet maintaining refreshing country style friendliness. In the shadows of the imposing recreation centre sat the Joe Carmody Athletic Track where a record 30 competitors were thronging around the start line to the gratified expressions of the organisers. Such a field was indicative of the resurgent interest in ultras and the fact that 11 were women was of particular note. Two Queenslanders even embarked on the journey south and managed to cope with daylight savings without an over abundance of distress.

Race favourite, Mal Grimmet powered away early establishing a substantial lead that proved unbeatable. Although slowing in the second half, victory was assured with most of the attention then focusing on the enthralling battle amongst the lead women in Julie Hooper-Childs and Michelle Thompson. Julie, running her first ultra, and Michelle, whose reputation continues to grow, staged an absorbing battle for the entire race in a superb display of consistent, well judged pacing. Julie narrowly prevailed. Respectively, they took second and third places outright. Kelvin Marshall was his usual self as he scooted around the track with regular consistency. Deciding that 50km was enough due to an unco-operative back injury, he flaked out under a tree. "That's my 150th Ultra" he stated wearily, "And you were at my first back in 1992" he continued, glancing in my direction. Deciding that his back was less troublesome if he got up and walked around, he re entered the race. "If I'm going to walk, I may as well do it on the track" was his sound logic.

As always, several races within the race occurred. The first woman to walk around Australia, Deborah de Williams, was preparing for the upcoming Colac Six Day Race in a fancy pair of grey tights while Sandra Howorth was exhibiting her new found running ability after many years as a walker. Garry Wise was also keeping everyone honest. Garry is rapidly becoming a modern day Cliff Young. Taking up running just 12 months ago, he has run more races than most could dream of in 20 years! All with immeasurable aplomb, I might add.

Arguably, the tightest contest had its

origins several days earlier when locals Rob Embelton and Sandra Timmer-Arends challenged each other over a few drinks at the local watering hole. They traded verbal blows all week but when it really mattered, Sandra clocked up a new Australian W40 record for 50km with Rob just 200 metres adrift and leaving him 12 months to ponder how to square the ledger!

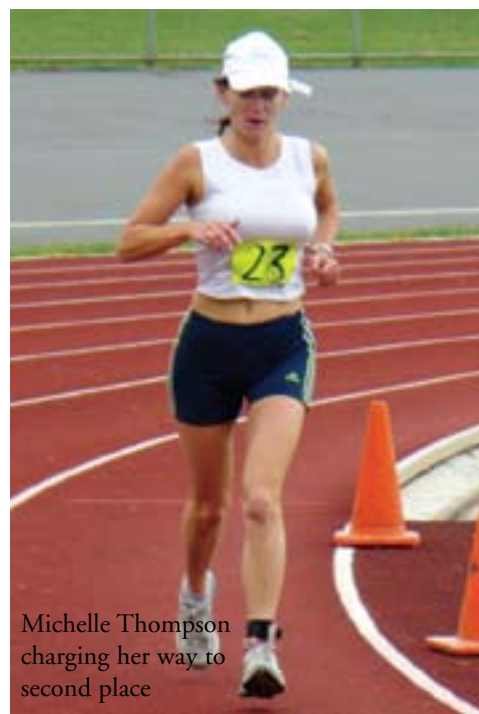
Results- Six Hour (Distances in km)

Men

1. Malcolm Grimmet	70.041
2. Jevvan McGhee	61.013
3. Kelvin Marshall	60.108
4. Robert Boyce	57.490
5. Garry Wise	57.356
6. Trevor Marsh	57.326
7. Richard Comber	55.055
8. Robert Embleton	52.400
9. Peter Anderson	51.664
10. Ian Twite	50.800

Women

1. Julie Hooper-Childs	64.421
2. Michelle Thompson	62.476
3. Jane Sturzaker	53.300
4. Sandra Timmer-Arends	52.400
5. Shirley Young	51.707
6. Dawn Parris	46.794
7. Deborah DeWilliams	45.707
8. Leah Stringer	43.594
9. Sandra Howorth	43.161
10. Faith Anderson	41.641



Michelle Thompson charging her way to second place



Gary Wise enjoying his new found passion



On Your Marks!