

## Mansfield to Mt Buller Summit 50km Road Race, Victoria

22nd January, 2006

by Kevin Cassidy

“CULT STATUS” is the best description of this event. Back in the 80’s, on numerous visits to his brother’s Mansfield home, Peter Armistead trained regularly on the Mount Buller road. “It would make a great race along here” he once observed, and so it came to be in 1991. 32 kilometres of undulations leading to the brutal 16 kilometre ascent to the summit of one of Victoria’s highest peaks, with the final two kilometres taking in the descent, finishing at the front door of the Arlberg Ski Lodge.

This event is the one time each year when the old guard of ultrarunners from the 80’s and 90’s gather together in our roles as race organisers and officials. Believe me, the tall stories grow taller every year. Give us another year or two and I’m sure someone will come up with a sub two hour marathon from 25 years ago.

Under normal circumstances, mention of weather conditions is often a boring waste of time and ink. 2006 however, provided unprecedented circumstances. With bushfires raging across the state and the mercury climbing to 39 degrees on the Saturday, the environment was nightmarish. A race day forecast of 43 degrees made for an ominous task ahead.

With the first 30 kilometres being run on a shadeless road, Tim Cochrane bolted away at

four minute kilometre pace and the field soon strung out. Former Australian Football League umpire, Adrian Panozzo, was attempting his first ultra alongside numerous regulars. Susan Olley, Brian O’Farrell, Rudi Kinshofer, Kelvin Marshall, Brian Gawne and Steve Trevaskis front up again and again. Garry Wise and Robert Boyce, two reasonably new ultra gurus, have caught the bug and can be observed at ultras all over the country. Danny Cole was returning from injury and freely admitted to being severely under trained but having a crack regardless. The surprise appearance came from Gerry Surridge, a classy athlete from the 70’s now residing in Ballarat. Gerry was to prove that age is no barrier.

As always, the collection of broken down ex-runners embarked on the job of kangaroo hopping along the road in the definitive role of mobile aid stations. At 20 kilometres, I was dripping with sweat and almost dying of heat stroke: and all I was doing was handing out drinks! I could only imagine how the runners felt, running under the blazing furnace-like sunshine. My sympathy and respect for them was to rise several notches as the day progressed.

I eventually resettled my aid station half way up the mountain at 41 kilometres. The runners coming past bore no resemblance to those at the start. “Punch Drunk” is the only term I could use as tired, exhausted bodies dragged themselves ever upward. Garry Wise surprised me by arriving in a cheerful and lucid state and happy to exchange pleasantries.

While Ross Shilston recorded times at the summit, runners were arriving at the finish. Tim Cochrane stormed home with several new faces in hot pursuit. Drew Arthurson, Michael Norden, Brent Dower and Stephen Callahan all performed admirably in their first attempts over this rugged course.

Clearly suffering from injury, Kelvin Marshall

Tim Cochrane leads the field.

### RESULTS:

1. Tim COCHRANE	4.27.04
2. Drew ARTHURSON	4.47.35
=3. Michael NORDEN	4.51.39
=3. Brent DOWER	4.51.39
5. Stephen CALLAHAN	4.57.57
6. Chris MURPHY	5.12.00
7. Gerry SURRIDGE	5.13.03
8. Kelvin MARSHALL	5.18.14
9. Paul ROBINSON	5.19.45
10. Brian GAWNE	5.29.54
11. Susan OLLEY ( F)	5.43.56
12. Adrian PANOZZO	5.51.29
13. Neil RAMPLING	5.55.26
14. Brian HARRISON	6.12.13
15. Garry WISE	6.21.44
16. Rudi KINSHOFER	6.33.06
=17. Danny COLE	6.45.45
=17. Paul BAN	6.45.45
=17. Robert BOYCE	6.45.45
20. Brian O’FARRELL	7.00.00
21. Richard McCORMICK	7.16.42
DNF’s: Deanne NOBBS [F], Steve TREVASKIS, Alan KERR, Martin HUNT	

slugged it out, as did Rudi Kinshofer who was not having the best of days. Brian Gawne maintained his perfect finishing record while the ever reliable Susan Olley added another female title to her belt.

Richard McCormick provided an incisive quote at the summit. “Another Mountain Conquered” he gasped succinctly as he gulped down a large cup of water. “Oooohhh, that was solid” was Adrian Panozzo’s statement of the obvious as he crossed the finish line. **RAYL**

Right: The Three Amigos. Robert Boyce, Paul Ban and Danny Cole.



Twenty-five runners toe the line.



Drew Arthurson.



Peter Armistead manning the aid station at 35km.



Michael Norden ahead of Brent Dower. Both went on to finish together in equal third place.



Richard McCormick leads ex-AFL umpire Adrian Panozzo.