

30th Annual Canberra Marathon

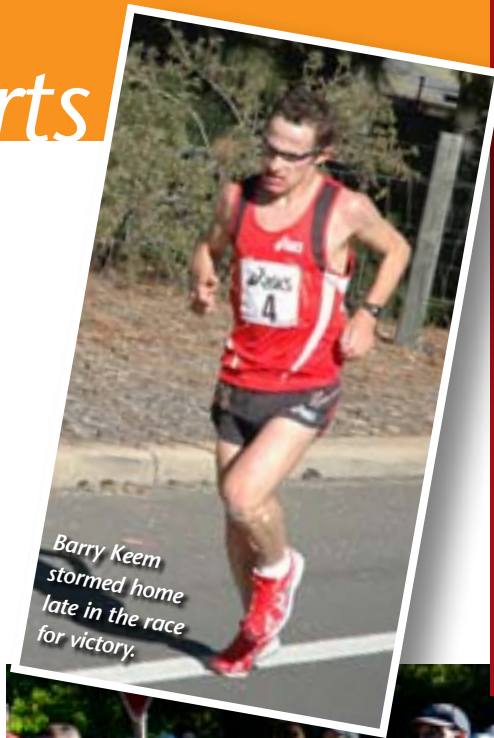
Sunday, April 9th, 2006

by Ali Dawson

Nearly 1000 runners braved near-freezing conditions last month to take on the National Capital's ultimate athletic challenge, the Canberra Marathon.

CELEBRATING ITS 30th year, the Marathon winds its way through Canberra's parliamentary gardens and along the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. With pre-race favourite Magnus Michelsson rumoured to be going after the Marathon/Ultra Marathon double, the Victorian established an early lead with fellow race-favourites James Barker and Barry Keem. Michelsson and Barker broke away from Keem at the 6km mark, with Jeremy Horne leading the chasers.

Michelsson and Barker continued to work together over the first half of the race, until Michelsson began to increase the intensity, drawing away from Barker, passing the halfway mark in 69.30. By 25km, Michelsson had strengthened his position and appeared to have set up an unbeatable lead. At this point he had pushed his lead over Barker out to 1.45, a good half a kilometre.



Barry Keem stormed home late in the race for victory.



The "3:30" pace group.



Michelsson and Barker worked together early in the race.

However, the marathon is such an unpredictable event, and the winner is never determined until crossing the finishing line. Keem certainly had other ideas as to who the winner of the race would be.

After being approximately two minutes behind at the half-way point, Keem began to find rhythm and strength which saw him make inroads into a fading Barker. He moved into second spot at approximately 31km and went about cementing his position, running strongly over the next 11km.

However, little did Keem know that he was making up significant ground on Michelsson. With 6km to go Michelsson's lead had shrunk to 68 seconds. It began to appear that the early pace set by Michelsson had got the better of him and it was not longer a question of how fast he would run, but whether or not he could hang on to the finish.

With Keem pressing, Michelsson's lead quickly evaporated with every passing kilometre. With 2km to the finish, Michelsson's lead had diminished to a mere 15 seconds. Keem hit the lead with a kilometre

to go, with a tiring Michelsson unable to respond.

With victory assured, Keem continued to cruise through to the finish to record his first marathon win, establishing a new personal best in the process (2.24.10).

Michelsson finished the race a gallant second, choosing not to continue on the additional 7.8km of the Ultra Marathon. Barker took out third, requiring medical assistance at the line.

In the women's race, Shireen Crompton was first across the line in 2.42.55. This was the New Zealander's second Canberra Marathon win, after taking it out two years ago.

In her marathon debut, 6 Foot Track champion Emma Murray finished second, with NSW runner Verity Tolhurst coming in third.

Being the first Australian athletes home, Keem and Murray won expenses paid trips to a Japanese marathon in December. Keem is expected to line up at Fukoka whilst Murray will tackle the women's Tokyo Marathon.

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RESULTS

- | | |
|----------------------|---------|
| 1. Barry Keem | 2.24.10 |
| 2. Magnus Michelsson | 2.25.02 |
| 3. James Barker | 2.27.07 |
| 4. Jeremy Horne | 2.29.29 |
| 5. Matthew Thomas | 2.32.53 |
| 6. Ben Stutterd | 2.33.23 |
| 7. Jonathan Blake | 2.38.17 |
| 8. Rod Draper | 2.39.02 |
| 9. Damien Jackel | 2.39.59 |
| 10. Ian Jones | 2.40.12 |

Women

- | | |
|---------------------|---------|
| 1. Shireen Crompton | 2.42.55 |
| 2. Emma Murray | 2.45.42 |
| 3. Verity Tolhurst | 2.58.20 |
| 4. Siri Terjesen | 2.58.35 |
| 5. Kirra Rankin | 2.58.48 |
| 6. Suzanne Kelly | 3.02.28 |
| 7. Julie McNamara | 3.05.20 |
| 8. Erin Hargrave | 3.05.43 |
| 9. Fleur Flanery | 3.07.15 |
| 10. Jacqui Parrish | 3.08.36 |

Photos: Lennon Wicks & Blue Elephant Photography



New Zealand's Shireen Crompton was the first women's competitor.