

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD HALF MARATHON MAY 21ST, 2006

by Ali Dawson

Photos courtesy of
Blue Elephant Photography
and Daniel Jones



Being one of the most popular races for distance athletes in Australia, it was no surprise to organisers and runners alike when a capacity field of 5000 lined up for the 2006 Sydney Morning Herald Half Marathon.

The stunning scenery is part of the events appeal.

THE Sydney Morning Herald Half Marathon celebrated its 15th birthday in May, with some of the country's best distance runners on show. The race began on a predictably cold autumn morning in Sydney's CBD, with runners ready to take in the views of Sydney Harbour and the Botanical Gardens.

Sydney runner Glenn Guzzo ran a blistering first kilometre and put a small gap on the rest of the field, but his lead quickly evaporated and a small lead pack formed with Commonwealth Games steeplechase runner Martin Dent and Kim Gillard. It didn't take long for Dent and Gillard to drop Guzzo, but his place in the front group was quickly replaced by relative newcomer, Anthony Haber.

Shortly before the 5km mark Gillard fell off the front, leaving Dent and Haber to go through in 15.10. After reaching the halfway point in 30.30, Dent managed to put a gap on Haber at the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and at the 12km mark dropped him altogether.

The reigning national cross coun-

try champion didn't look back from there, running the remainder of the race on his own. Dent proved his worth, backing up his first half split with a swift 31.00 second 10km. The Canberra resident crossed the line in 64.40, recording his biggest win to date. Haber impressed in his first SMH Half Marathon with a second place time of 65.46, with Guzzo backing up to finish third in 66.58.

In the women's field, Anna Thompson, Robyn Millard, Melinda Vernon and Jenny Gillard formed a lead women's pack early. With Thompson leading from the front, it didn't talk long for the Commonwealth Games representative to break away from the group, tacking onto the men's lead pack in the process.

By the half way point, Thompson had put a substantial break on the rest of the lead women, with closest rival

Millard more than 10 seconds off the pace. From there Thompson did only what was necessary to ensure her first SMH Half Marathon victory. The Victorian was never threatened in her run to the line, finishing the race in 75.44. Fellow Victorian Robyn Millard claimed second in 76.35 with NSW athlete Melinda Vernon in third (77.35).

RAYL



Gotta love that hat!



Anna Thompson continues her great form



Jenny Gillard put in a solid run to finish fourth in the women's.



Dent and Haber, both training partners, were ecstatic with their results.



It's not just a race for the elites.



The Hyde Park turnaround gives you a chance to check out the chasers.

RESULTS

Men

1. Martin Dent 64.40
2. Anthony Haber 65.46
3. Glenn Guzzo 66.58
4. Magnus Michelsson 67.36
5. Jeremey Home 68.47
6. Philo Saunders 69.04
7. Barry Keem 69.17
8. Andrew Knox 69.32
9. Robin Whitely 71.05
10. Jan-Willem Schaar 71.16

Women

1. Anna Thompson 75.44
2. Robyn Millard 76.35
3. Melinda Vernon 77.35
4. Jennifer Gillard 77.45
5. Jenny Truscott 80.12
6. Jenny Wickham 80.38
7. Magda Poulos-Karimali 81.01
8. Liz Miller 81.44
9. Sonja Tpeski 82.41
10. Verity Tolhurst 82.59