

22ND WORLD MOUNTAIN RUNNING TROPHY

by **STUART DOYLE**
Images by **LAWRIE MAINWARING**

THE Turkish Athletic Federation won the honour of hosting this year's event. Being an 'even' year, the course was all up-hill (the course is up-and-down-hill on 'odd' years). Mountain running has been building in popularity and exposure, and this year's championships saw a record number of athletes (359) representing a record 36 nations. The fact that medals were won by athletes representing countries from Europe, Oceania, Africa, North America and South America is also evidence of the sport's growing world-wide popularity.

There are 4 races held for the World Trophy: the Junior Women's and Men's races, and the Senior Women's and Men's races. Each country is allowed to field up to 3 competitors in the junior women's race, 4 in the junior men's and senior women's and 6 in the senior men's, with the first 2 in junior women's, 3 in junior men's and senior women's and 4 in senior men's competition counting towards the team competition for each race.

This year Australia selected full teams for both the senior women's and junior men's teams. Sadly we had no representation in the junior women's category. A full team was selected for the senior men's; however, Jeremy Horne and his replacement, David Osmond, were both unavailable, thereby reducing the senior men's contingent to 5.

The World Trophy races were held over different sections of a tough course starting at the outskirts of the city of Bursa (population 2 million) and ascending 1275m over a total of 12km to finish at the top cable car station servicing the Turkish ski resort of Uludag.

Junior Women's Race: 3.409km, 395m altitude gain

The junior women's championship was held over the steepest section of the course. It was also the only race at this year's World Trophy to be dominated by Europeans. Slovakia's Katarina Beresova became the new world champion by blowing away her nearest rivals, Natalya Leontieva and Janna Vokueva of Russia, by a minute and a half in 21.08. Nicole Rogal of New Zealand finished 8th as the first non-European. This category could be very exciting next year from an Australian perspective, if the young sensation Emily Brichacek continues the sort of astonishing form she has shown in mountain running since taking an interest in the sport in late August. Watch out Katarina!

The 22nd World Mountain Running Trophy was held in Bursa, Turkey on the 10th of September. The event is held annually by the World Mountain Running Association and is now under the umbrella of the IAAF, which provides significant financial support to participating teams.

Junior Men's: 8.549km, 895m altitude gain

Australia fielded a young trio of 16-year-olds in this race, which put in a good performance to finish 10th as a team in a race dominated by Eritrea, which had finishers in the 1st, 2nd and 6th slots to win both individual and team honours. The Aussie charge was led by Ryan Gregson of Wollongong, who ran very well to place 24th after sustaining heavy grazing and bruising when he was pushed over in the opening stages of the race. It was a classic welcome to European racing conditions! The next home for Australia was talented mountain runner and triathlete David Mainwaring, with Dominic Perry completing the solid team performance. Turkey was probably disappointed on the day, failing to hold on to the junior men's team champion crown they won in New Zealand last year.

Senior Women's: 8.549km, 895m altitude gain

Conditions were really warming up by the start of the senior women's race, but the heat didn't stop the Europeans taking out the top individual positions, with newcomer Norway having an outstanding debut in placing runners in 4th and 8th position. The race was won by former European Champion Andrea Mayr of Austria, closely followed by the sensational Swiss 20-year-old Martina Strachl, with Isabella Guillot of France grabbing bronze.

Australian Cross Country Champion and City to Surf winner Anna Thompson led home the Aussies with a great 15th placing

in her first mountain race. Next was World Long Distance Mountain Champion Emma Murray, who showed she isn't too bad at the 'short' stuff either with a solid 43rd. Emma's young South Canberra-Tuggeranong club-mate, Jessamy Hosking, had a good battle with fellow Aussie Cindy King of Sydney, finishing within 20 seconds of each other just outside the top 50.

A delighted USA pipped out the Czech Republic and Italy for their first ever team title, with our Aussies placing 10th.

Senior Men's: 12.09km, 1275m altitude gain

Two of the biggest upsets of the day were saved for the last race. The first was the dethroning of reigning World Mountain Running Champion Jonathan Wyatt of New Zealand, when he was out-sprinted in the final straight by Columbia's mountain machine, Rolando Ortiz. Drama had surrounded the race, with Wyatt uncertain of even starting after being attacked by two wild dogs and undergoing hospital treatment, including antibiotics shots just 48 hours before start

time. Wyatt, already widely admired and respected, gained even more legendary status following his valiant effort to fend off Tesfay Fellefe of Eritrea and grab the silver medal. All three ran incredible times on a tough course in trying conditions.

The Australian men's team travelled to Turkey with high hopes, with team members Ben du Bois and Stephen Brown coming out of

The spectacular view from the top of the course looking back towards the start



From top left to bottom right: Junior Men - Dominic Perry, Ryan Gregson, & David Mainwaring; Senior Women - Anna Thompson, Emma Murray, Jessamy Hosking, and Cindy King; Senior Men - Ben du Bois, Barry Keem, Scott McTaggart, Stephen Brown, and Stuart Doyle.

>> a very successful European Grand Prix Series, Scott McTaggart and Barry Keem racing well in Australia in the lead up and Stuart Doyle showing good improvement over the last year to get his first birth in the Australian team.

Ben du Bois put in another classy performance to finish 29th, and Scott McTaggart had a solid race to grab 39th. Barry Keem fought off a shocking flu to finish in 70th, with Stephen Brown and

Stuart Doyle both finishing a creditable 85th and 101st respectively amongst 150 elite mountain runners, in what was dubbed the most competitive World Trophy ever. It's interesting to note that Europe failed to get a top-3 finisher in this race and had only 4 in the top-10.

The Eritrean team provided arguably the biggest upset in World Mountain Running history by topping the previously undefeated, 25-time world

champions, Italy. Australia placed 11th out of 29 full teams.

Participants will take home many interesting and fond memories from Turkey. The sport is growing year by year, and minds will be cast forward to September 2007, when Jungfrau and Saillon-Ovronnaz in Switzerland will stage the 4th World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge and the 23rd World Mountain Running Trophy.

RESULTS

JUNIOR WOMEN

Individual:

1. Katarina Beresova (Slovakia)	21.08
2. Natalya Leontieva (Russia)	22.45
3. Janna Vokueva (Russia)	22.50
4. Alice Gaggi (Italy)	23.07
5. Natalya Nemkina (Russia)	23.31
6. Esra Gullu (Turkey)	23.37
7. Barbora Suchankova (Slovakia)	23.45
8. Nicole Rogal (New Zealand)	24.02
9. Dilek Cimenkaya (Turkey)	24.08
10. Anita Baierl (Austria)	24.15

Teams:

1. Russia;
2. Slovakia;
3. Turkey

JUNIOR MEN

Individual:

1. Ermias Mehrteab (Eritrea)	41.20
2. Kiflom Sium (Eritrea)	41.54
3. Carlos Juan Carera (Mexico)	43.13
4. Ercan Muslu (Turkey)	43.38
5. Selmani Abis (Turkey)	43.40
6. Debesay Tsiege (Eritrea)	43.48
7. Mahmut Oruc (Turkey)	45.24
8. Andrei Sergeev (Russia)	46.14
9. Maxime Fico (France)	46.18
10. Alessandro Martino (Italy)	46.23
24. Ryan Gregson (Aus)	48.13
30. David Mainwaring (Aus)	48.50
58. Dominic Perry (Aus)	53.44

Teams:

1. Eritrea; 2. Turkey; 3. Italy;
10. Australia

SENIOR WOMEN

Individual:

1. Andrea Mayr (Austria)	47.11
2. Martina Strachl (Switzerland)	47.29
3. Isabella Guillot (France)	47.43
4. Anita Hakenstad-Evertsen (Nor)	48.47
5. Salvini Vittoria (Italy)	49.19
6. Yolanda Fernandez (Columbia)	49.29
7. Anna Pichrtova (Czech Rep)	49.37
8. Kirsten Melkevik-Otterbu (Nor)	49.47
9. Nicole Hunt (USA)	50.13
10. Rachael Dobbs (USA)	50.24
15. Anna Thompson (Aus)	51.08
43. Emma Murray (Aus)	54.52
53. Jessamy Hosking (Aus)	56.32
55. Cindy King (Aus)	56.53

Teams:

1. USA; 2. Czech Republic; 3. Italy;
10. Australia

SENIOR MEN

Individual:

1. Rolando Ortiz (Columbia)	56.16
2. Jonathan Wyatt (New Zealand)	56.22
3. Tesfay Fellefe (Eritrea)	56.39
4. Selahattin Selcuk (Turkey)	57.11
5. Marco De Gasperi (Italy)	58.35
6. Marco Gaiardo (Italy)	58.35
7. Ahmet Aslan (Turkey)	58.46
8. Maekele Tadese (Eritrea)	58.54
9. Fkre Andebrhan (Eritrea)	59.13
10. Simon Gutierrez (USA)	59.21
29. Ben Du Bois (Aus)	61.22
39. Scott McTaggart (Aus)	62.26
70. Barry Keem (Aus)	65.23
85. Stephen Brown (Aus)	66.41
101. Stuart Doyle (Aus)	68.51

Teams:

1. Eritrea; 2. Italy; 3. Turkey; 11. Australia
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Rolando Ortiz (COL) and Jonathan Wyatt (NZ) fight it out to the finish in the senior men's race