

PROM COUNTRY CHALLENGE

Little known Prom Country Challenge (August 2006) must be in the top 5 races of the 100s of races I have completed in Europe and Australia. Away from your show bags, concrete jungle, hordes of runners and \$100 plus entry fees, it is a really stunning race, very well organised by a handful of volunteers. The setting is idyllic, with a start in picturesque Toora, South Gippsland, followed by rolling hills and native forest. The first 19km, mostly on dirt tracks, are up and up and rewarded by a stunning view of the bay. From there, it is all downhill for the remaining 11km back in to Toora, where you can enjoy a free massage to relax, and no queue for it! 6km and 12km races are also on offer, and the area has enough natural interests to make a weekend out of it. My family and I will certainly be back next year, and I would highly recommend this event away from the beaten track.

Sincerely,
Laurent Rossignol

EDITOR: Laurent, I am sure the organisers of the Prom Country Challenge will be delighted that you had such a positive experience at their event.

KEEP IT COMING

I was so moved by Kevin Cassidy's article on returning to his old (literally) stamping ground of Grant's Picnic Ground in Kallista, that I had to write in. It touched me so much, almost to tears! The information on Kevin's earlier training life, running career and minor milestones was beautiful and not merely the content of the work itself – the images were great too, beautifully lush, green and a scene common to many Victorians.

I really love the articles on real people/Aussie runners (such as Nankervis and Wellings) and local heroes, e.g. the fabulous Alan Farrell – these are the guys I look for in fun runs, for their company and endurance skills, things which deserve admiration – not just finishing times.

I loved the high quality photos,

THE RUNNING SPIRIT

There is a spirit among distance runners. A special spirit that is difficult to define. But although it is something intangible, it includes a feeling of companionship and respect for each other. A silent understanding of what each of us experiences on a long run, both the pain of hard effort, and the pride of achievement.

This spirit goes beyond ability. The best elite competitors share it with the most humble runners. All distance runners know that it is not the final time or place that counts, but the effort that each individual puts into the run. We all share the same drive, the same determination, the same exhilaration.

A perfect example of this was seen at the Victorian 8km Cross Championship in Ballarat in August. It was a fine, pleasant day, although there was that special Ballarat chill in the air. Over three hundred runners

broad running coverage – eg, cross country as well as marathons/ athletics/fun runs and related and international events. I like the product reviews – necessary for busy workers who rarely have the time to keep abreast of new developments in making our after-hours pursuits improved.

I would love more stories of the everyday runner – eg, Brad Payme and Alan Farrell, because they are everyday heroes. As a starter runner you look to everyday folk who can assist you in undertaking a lifelong habit and new way of seeing achievement.

As an avid reader of major publications 'Letters to the editor' in daily newspapers, I would love to see healthy comment and dispute in a 2-page format. I would like to hear conjecture, debate and celebration in this community and be able to read it/respond to it.

Great magazine. Can I just thank you for a consistent effort, from front to back? The only place I felt you let yourselves down was in the second-rate (so-called) Astrology section: really, you could have been air conditioning salesmen in those texts – no meaning at all. It almost became

assembled at the start line for the main event, the men's 8km.

The field included several Olympians, as well as National and State Champions. The eventual winner would run under 25 minutes. It also included many club runners of varying abilities and ages. The group stood at the start line, shuffling, shivering a little, anticipating the run ahead. The start was delayed. All had to wait for the last runner in the previous event, the women's 6km, to finish.

She had to run through the men's start line to reach her finish line. As she approached, the call went up, "Track!" "Track!" "Track!" The group split apart creating a path for her to finish her race. She was not an Olympian,

Australian Champion or State Champion. In fact she was going to run over 37 minutes. But she was digging deep and doing her best. We could see the determination on her face.

As she passed through the men's group, they clapped. They respected another distance runner. Her time did not matter. Her place did not matter.

The spirit among distance runners lives on.

Regards,
Chris Worsnop

EDITOR: Congratulations Chris, your little insight has won you a pair of New Balance shoes.



If you've got something important to say, email us at soapbox@runforyourlife.com.au and if we think it's interesting enough to print, you will get the chance to win a pair of top of the line New Balance running shoes!

an insult – if you're gonna give it space, get someone who knows something to report.

Finally, can someone please tell me why the mainstream press do virtually zero coverage of such a great event as the Melbourne Marathon? I was most displeased to read a minor article in '05 in the Age and see a snippet on the evening news, when AFL, NRL, swimming etc all get major coverage in the media and major airtime. Is it some conspiracy that they are unwilling to support the running/athletic fraternity?

Regards,
Sarah Wallace

EDITOR: Sarah, thanks for your honest feedback. We will keep all of your mentioned likes coming in each issue. We have the world's greatest male running astrologer on our staff and he is able to provide small nuggets of 'light-hearted' insight into your future, nothing too serious. In regards to the coverage of the Melbourne Marathon and running in general, this has been something that has had us stumped for years, hence why we created R4YL. It's our own source of media so we can promote distance running in Australia to our hearts content!

"THE WORST THINGS" ABOUT RUNNING.

1. Not running at all
2. Sustaining a debilitating injury half way into a long run.
3. Being driven into the gutter by a motorist, or blown away in the jet stream of a lumbering truck.
4. Forgetting to take the drink bottle on a long run or developing a thirst miles before the next available drink station.
5. Running directly into a strong headwind or the blinding glare of the sun.
6. Tripping, or stumbling, taking a fall.
7. Getting up when it is miserably wet and cold.
8. Hitting the wall or stopping midway.
9. Getting a stitch or a cramp miles from home.
10. Being chased by a barking dog or swooped by an angry magpie.

But by far, 'the worst thing' about running is

Bradley May

EDITOR: Thank you Bradley, you are definitely 100% correct with number one!

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