

The Vetrun

NOVEMBER 1984



W.A. VETERANS' A.C.

"Registered by Australia Post Publication No.WBH 0370".

PATRON: W. J. (Bill) Hughes

PRESIDENT: Barrie Slinger 386 7727

SECRETARY: Duncan Strachan, 459 3859

TREASURER: Frank McLinden, 387 1152

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Jeff Whittam, 387 6438

24 HOUR Record breaking relay SPECIAL



STANDING.(L to R) Elza O'Dea+; Mary Robinson+; Trisha Spain*;
Margaret Harman*; Lorna Butcher+; Enid Crowther+; Jan Fletcher*;
Dorothy Whittam+; Kath Penton+; Margery Forden*; Joan Slinger+;
Cheryl Amies*; Joanne Collins*; Don Caplin (Coach for both teams;
Marilyn Acreman+; Val Pach+; Doreen Dow*; Alicia Ansell*; Joan
Pellier+; Sandy Walton*; Jill Chambers*:

* Over 35 team. + Over 40 team.

RELAY RUN BETWEEN

2pm SATURDAY 20th OCTOBER & 2pm SUNDAY 21st OCTOBER 1984.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA MINISTER FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

- 6 NOV 1984

Mrs J Pellier 39 Lynstead Street BECKENHAM 6107

Dear Mrs Pellier

I am writing to offer my congratulations to you and other members of the Veteran's Athletics Club who were recently involved in establishing new world records for the over 35 years and over 40 years, 24 hours relay race.

To set a world record under any circumstances is a remarkable achievement but to shatter the existing marks by as much as an hour is an amazing effort, and one about which all concerned can be deservedly proud.

The performance of the 2 teams is a wonderful example for other veteran athletes and indeed for athletes of a much younger age.

May I wish you all the best for future events and hope that you meet with the continuing success.

Yours sincerely

Keith Wilson, M.L.A.

MINISTER FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

Thelma Manley

Results

Over 35 Team - 353.437 kms (219 miles 1082 yards). New World Record New World Record New World Record

Why were two teams of ladies from the Club at the Gerry Archer Track this October weekend without mens' teams to accompany them? To find the answer we have to hark back to the fairly recent past.

In October, 1981, a W.A. Veterans Ladies Over 35 Team set a World Record for this event of 300.499 kms (185 miles 1271 yards). A New South Wales Veterans Team subsequently improved this to the remarkable distance of 345.036 kms (214 miles 1135 yards).

Came December, 1983, and our ladies narrowly failed to beat this mark. On the day, Kath Holland ran gamely for five legs before being forced to withdraw. However, nobody who witnessed the sterling efforts of the remaining runners over the next 19 hours will readily forget them. At the close they had completed 341.840 kms (212 miles 716 yards), probably the second best on record.

The feelings of admiration that we all had for our ten ladies were in direct contrast to the feelings of most of the team. Many were disappointed with their fine performance and decided almost right away to attack the record again in 1984.

Joan Pellier assumed the mantle previously borne by Dorothy Whittam and started to organise things. She obtained an excellent sponsor and aroused sufficient enthusiasm to enlist 28 runners. Commemorative T-shirts were obtained and very fetching everyone looked in them. Training sessions started in June and later moved to the Gerry Archer Track when Don Caplin assumed the role of Coach. Preparations were going well but injuries and illnesses gradually whittled away at numbers until just 20 remained. Then Jo Stone was forced to withdraw. Disaster.

At about this time, Jeff Whittam was donating blood when he was disturbed by raised voices in the Clinic. When all was quiet again, the gentleman responsible having satisfied the nurses as to his sexual preferences, Barrie Robinson, for it was he, was also allowed to donate. On learning of the teams' problem, Barrie offered to try to find a replacement for Jo. Joanne Collins subsequently joined the Club and the rest, as they say, is history.

The scene was now set. The two teams were ready to worship at the altars of the twin gods of Time and Distance. Time, for once, was certain; Distance was the great unknown although both teams knew the distances they had to beat. In the Over 40's case it was the 299.437 kms set by the Footloose Five, New York.

At precisely two o'clock Saturday afternoon, Vice-President Dick Horsley fired the pistol to set Jill Chambers and Joan Pellier away on the opening legs. Record pace for each team was 6m 40s and 7m 41s per leg, respectively. Jill and Joan promptly ran well inside the times required to set standards of performance for their team-mates to emulate.

Emulate them they did. The grit and determination shown by all 20 ladies was extraordinary and it was quite apparent from their selfless running that sacrifices were being made for their teams. Relay racing often has this affect and our ladies were not immune to it.

On they ran; lap after lap, hour after hour. The long, lonely hours of darkness had their usual depressing effect on times but the coming of daylight saw an improvement.

The morning passed and, to the spectators at least, it now seemed that the magic hour of two o'clock was approaching rather too quickly. Then, with exactly 71 minutes left, the Over 40 team triumphed. Dorothy Whittam waved her baton jubilantly in the air as she passed the Footloose Five's record. We had to wait until just 36 minutes were left for the Over 35 record to fall. Spectators, runners and officials lined the track, as they had for Dorothy, to cheer Doreen Dow as she brought this record back to Western Australia. Channels Seven and Nine were there to tape the occasion and gave the Club good coverage on their News broadcasts the same evening.

It may be wrong to single out one runner for special mention, but it was appropriate that Doreen had the honour of surpassing the previous She had very courageously run every one of her many miles in severe lower back pain. Knowing the pain that she would have to endure, she had nevertheless still journeyed from Bunbury to give the team the best possible chance of success. We all wish you a speedy recovery, Doreen, and look forward to seeing you running again.

While Dorothy and Doreen may have had their final runs in this year's event, back on the track the remaining runners were pressing on with the task of making two new World Records that much harder for others A whistle sounded and there were five minutes left to run. Another whistle blast and Jill Chambers and Elza O'Dea gave it everything they had. The final pistol-shot rang out and, while Jill looked pretty fresh, Elza collapsed into supporters' arms having run herself She quickly recovered and joined the other runners for celebratory photographs and champagne. A sensational finish by Jill and Elza.

Several factors were of assistance to the runners over the 24 hours. These were

Almost perfect conditions for this type of event. - Weather. Accurate lap-time calling and recording of leg times.

All laps run counted in the final totals.

- Baton changing. Consistently good throughout.

- Thelma Manley. Occupied a position on the back-straight of the track by herself for the full 24 hours. This stretch of the track was a desperately lonely place for runners, particularly during the hours of darkness, and Thelma's presence and very vocal encouragement gave them tremendous support. On one occasion Joan Slinger wanted Thelma to sing to her. response heads this report. Thanks for everything, Thelma.

- Physiotherapy. Cliff Bould, Carole Cole, Peta-Ann Phelps, Jeannette Tomlinson, Warren Smith and Graham Mayard restored vigour to

deadened limbs.

- Canteen helpers. A vital job cheerfully done.

Event was run so smoothly that one tended to be - Organisation. unaware of it. Surely, the acid test.

There were many light-hearted, frivolous moments during the 24 hours, all of which contributed to the spirit of the occasion. not reported in detail in order to avoid drawing attention away from the teams' great achievements. The visit of a Japanese touring party to the track is, however, worthy of mention. They took still and movie pictures of just about everything in sight, including themselves holding the Dunlop Shield. Our ladies also enthused (shamed?) some of them into discarding jackets and running a lap of the track. received a standing ovation from all at the track, the 400m runners that is, before leaving. Thanks to our ladies, the Club's fame will spread to Japan.

The 1984 event had all of the ingredients that have made this Relay so successful in the past. Fine planning and organisation, fine running and fine support from officials, helpers and spectators. team-spirit was quite superb. But 1984 was still different. was the first occasion that the ladies had contested this event without men's teams being on the track at the same time. If ever they

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/PRESIDENT.

The President. W.A. Veterans A.C.

168, Broome Street, Cottesloe.

Dear Barrie,

This "World Record" 24 hours have left me feeling delightfully exhausted, very sore and sleepy but most of all, deeply grateful to the W.A. Vets who made the whole event possible.

Nothing was spared, support, catering, marvelous physio's care, but most of all enthusiasm from committee and members of our club who, although not directly involved in the record made us feel the importance of our challenge.

The Champagne was terrific too! Thank You.

Alicia.

24 Hour Relay.

On behalf of the twenty runners of the two 24 hour relay teams, we would like to express sincere thanks for the tremendous back-up support we received from coaches, timekeepers, lap scorers, cheering masses, kitchen hands, organisers and Noddy.

We benefited from them all and would not have broken these world records

without your assistance.

Once more - Many Thanks! 20 Running Persons.

TALES FROM THE TRACK. A small Scot (who shall remain nameless, to preserve his identity and sporran) got out a stubby of beer to celebrate the breaking of the record, but could not find a bottle opener. He went around the crowd trying to borrow one without success, eventually he managed to borrow a 'Swiss Army Knife' that had amongst its many implements a gadget for removing crown caps from bottles. After much struggling, two broken finger nails and a cut finger, he managed to open it and flipped of the top of his beer bottle, as he did so he noticed printed around the top "twist to remove". It was one of the new screw of flip off caps.

REPORTED TO HAVE HAPPENED TO ONE OF THE RECORD BREAKERS. Arriving home in a very tired state after the run she decided to take a shower, half way through she started to wash her aching feet and suddenly thought "crickey this relay running doesn't half give you hairy feet". Until she realised that she still had her furry slippers on!!!





VETERAN women runners practise their baton change routine

on Sunday afternoon if the two teams of 10 women veterans achieve their two world record targets.

The 35 to 39 age group team will attempt to break the world record of 215 miles set by a New South Wales team in 1983.

The over-40 team hopes to run 190 miles to break a record held by an American team.

Each athlete will run one mile before handing a baton to the next runner.

If a runner drops out from injury or exhaustion, no substitution is allowed.

The athletes have undergone a rigorous fourmonth training program in preparation for this record attempt and are confident that the many hours of toil will be enough to achieve their target.



Jan Fletcher, (receiving), and Doreen Dow, (passing) while the rest of their team being the WA Veteran Ladies Athletic Club watch in the background.

Record breaking relay

TWENTY middleaged women will be braving the elements this weekend in an unusual relay at the Gerry Archer Athletic Track in Belmont.

These women are members of the Western Australian Veterans Athletic Club and they will be striving to complete a 24 hour relay and hopefully attain Australian and World records for their efforts.

A team of ten women aged 35 and over will be contesting the world record which currently stands at 345 kilometres and 36 metres.

Another team of ten women aged 40 and over will be aiming to beat an Australian record.

The rules for the event were set by the US magazine 'Runner's World' which publishes the results of both American and world records each time the event is contested.

The maximum number of team members for the event is ten which is the number the club has chosen as they believe that this offers the greatest prospect of success.

Running will begin on Saturday October 20 at 2pm and will continue until 2pm Sunday October 21.

Organisers and participants welcome anyone to come down to the track and coax them along some time during the 24 hour attempt.

Records go in relays

TWO WA women's veteran teams at the weekend set world age best times for the 24-hour relay.

Competing at Gerry Archer Athletics Field in Belmont, the over-35 team of 10 runners covered 353.4km to beat the previous record set by a NSW team in 1983 by 8.4km.

The over-40 team ran 314.3km from 2pm on Saturday to 2pm yesterday, to add 14.9km to the old mark held by an American team.

WA VETERANS ATHLETIC CLUB: 24 hour relay. Women's Over 35. 353.437km (new world of the control o



Hour's wait



Spain (42), of Mt Claremont (left) and Joan Pellier (44), of nam, with the women who set world records for a 24-hour marathon. - Picture: Mary Mills.

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sbands and a sense of r are basic ingredients rth's record-breaking /Ives.

ter 24 hours on the hop, they ly, two teams of 10 women world records for 24-hour a celebratory drink and a r over-35s and over-40s.

usbands? They cooked the

ed rest,

ho went through a couple of of jelly beans during her 21 the baton. ver-40 team member Joan re addicted runners," de-

Each member of the team ran 1600 metres in about six minutes before passing over to a teammate and waiting about an hour for another run round the track,

"There was no time for sleeping and bread and honey or something sweet when we ate it was mainly snacks of to keep the energy up," said Joan.

The women are part of the growing

WA Veterans' Club - now some 300 strong - and most-followed their husbands into the sport. "We're just a bunch of ordinary

housewives and there are really no stars," said Joan. "For most of us it was a case of joining our men or The women describe themselves as rotting in the house."

"somewhere between serious and fun taking up to six nights a week with a runners" with training and running lay-day on Fridays.

"Meals have to be a bit late because we rarely finish before 6.30 or seven of a night, and weekends are usually taken up totally with competitions," said Joan.

The incentive for their world record

The over 35s covered 353.4km to beat the previous record set by a NSW team in 1983 by 8.4km. The over 40s chalked up 314.3km to add 14.9km to the old mark held by an American This year two teams sponsored by motor-vehicle dealer Lance Gibbons set world records.

team went within three kilometres of

the 24-hour record,

Few beers

Members of the over-35 team were Cheryl Amies, Jan Fletcher, Margaret Harman, Doreen Dow, Trish Spain, Joanne Collins, Marjorie Forden and Gillian Chambers, Alicia Ansell Sandy Walton.

Joan Slinger, Val Pach, Enid Crow-ther, Lorna Butcher, Kath Penton, Elsa O'Dea, Dorothy Whittam, Mary The over 40s were Joan Pellier, Robinson and Marilyn Acreman.

This weekend it will be back to a 10km run through Kings Park and then a few beers and a few laughs.

"We tend to like our food and a few beers," says Joan Pellier, who is quick to point out that smoking is one vice they don't wear.