



GEELONG REGION CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM NEWSLETTER



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P.B.'s GALORE AT BURNLEY HALF MARATHON

A small but determined band of Geelong senior athletes bounded enthusiastically from their warm beds, brushed the sleep from their eyes, hastily scooped down breakfast before embarking on a pre-dawn trip along the Melbourne Road to the last race of the Athletics Victoria Winter Season - the Burnley Half Marathon.

Despite a forecast of showers, race day conditions were cool and still - ideal for those hoping to run fast over the relatively flat 6 kilometre loop course around the Yarra Boulevard.

Leading the way for Geelong was Rowan Walker, who emerged out of the shadows 30 minutes prior to start time looking like a Swedish back-packer. Surely he didn't miss his lift and was forced to run from his home in Newtown to the Kevin Bartlett Reserve? Well no, and once free of the extra weight of the back pack, Rowan was ready to fly as he settled in nicely, just off the second pack, before working his way through the field to finish 9th (and first country athlete). Even more impressively, Rowan was able to slash almost two minutes from his time of last season when he used the Burnley Half as a lead-up race to his 6th place finish in the 2003 Melbourne Marathon.

Another runner who would have been delighted with his run was Geoffrey Purnell, who used a large pack of much younger athletes for company for much of the 21.1 kilometres, eventually finishing fourth in the highly competitive 45 - 49 Veteran's Section.

Despite claiming that he was struggling a little of late, the 'ageless' Geoff Clark also finished in fourth place (50 + Veterans), just over a minute after the hirsute Purnell crossed the finish line.

Over the last few years Andrew Chalmers has focused on running a strong marathon. Unfortunately, despite his best intentions, calf problems have curtailed Andrew's progress in the ultimate test of endurance and character. However, under the expert guidance of coach, Lee Troop and a reduction of key sessions per week from three to two, Andrew is now 'flying!' At the Burnley Half Marathon, Andrew set cruise control at 4 minute kilometre pace and kept going, eventually recording the 85 minutes that makes a three hour marathon a realistic goal. All the best on October 10, Andrew.

In the women's race, our gals turned in fabulous performances. All season, Cathryn Hoare has been building up her training quality and quantity, determined to finish the season's longest race on a high. Well, Cathryn not only completed her longest ever run at Burnley but also looked so full of running as she crossed the line that a marathon in the future would not surprise.

In the lead-up to the Athens' Olympics, Freyja Stott took ten weeks long-service leave to accompany fiancée, Lee Troop on his overseas training. And it was obvious that a stint of altitude training at St. Moritz and many kilometres covered around Europe had Freyja in great shape as she slashed 9 minutes from her marathon P.B. Great going, Cathryn and Freyja.

Another Geelong athlete running at Burnley was Olympian, Lee Troop who, despite being in recovery mode, jogged around the course shouting encouragement to his Geelong team - mates. Thanks for the wonderful support, Lee.

BURNLEY HALF MARATHON

Sunday 12th September

2003 Time in ()

MENS' HALF MARATHON

Rowan Walker	9th	69.48	(71.36)
Geoffrey Purnell	69th	79.39	(79.52)
Geoff Clark	81st	80.51	(78.27)
Andrew Chalmers	131st	85.14	
Neil MacDonald	232nd	97.35	(97.17)

Fastest - M Chettle (Glenhuntly)	-	65.51
- M Michelsson (Collingwood)	-	65.54
- G Morgan (Melbourne Uni.)	-	68.09
- J Meagher (Box Hill)	-	68.33
- L Gloster (Glenhuntly)	-	69.20
- J Wilson (Old Hailebury)	-	69.21
- G Schmidlechner (Doncaster)	-	69.24
- R Patterson (Ath. Essendon)	-	69.32
- R Walker (Geelong)	-	69.48
- J Atkinson (Athletics Waverley)	-	71.20

WOMENS' HALF MARATHON

Cathryn Hoare	44th	102.23
Freyja Stott	56th	109.03

Fastest - T Hayles (Inv.)	-	78.44
- K Dick (Doncaster)	-	79.40
- T Austin (Malvern)	-	81.32
- M Jelleff (Malvern)	-	82.51
- K Natoli (Knox Athletic)	-	84.20
- M Murray (Diamond Valley)	-	84.26
- K Collins (Richmond)	-	84.47
- S Van Dueren (Coburg)	-	84.59
- K Wyatt (Keilor St. Bernards)	-	85.11
- S Prosenica (Ath. Essendon)	-	85.13

CROSS - COUNTRY TEAM PRESENTATION NIGHT DINNER AND STATE LEAGUE LAUNCH

Put Saturday the 16th of October in your diary now as this will be a fantastic night.

Come along to Buckley's to wind up a most successful Cross - Country Season and launch the up-coming State League Program with a delicious meal and presentations.

The night kicks off at 6:30 pm.

Cost: \$25 for adults / \$20 for juniors for a two course carvery meal.

Tickets available from Neil MacDonald.

Don't miss out.

Book Now!

VOTES FOR "BEST PERFORMED GEELONG REGION ATHLETES" AT THE BURNLEY HALF MARATHON

Senior Men.

3. Rowan Walker
2. Geoffrey Purnell
1. Geoff Clark
1. Andrew Chalmers

Senior Women.

3. Cathryn Hoare
2. Freyja Stott

THE BUSH INN AWARD

The winner of the Bush Inn Award for the Burnley Half Marathon is **Andrew Chalmers** for his P.B. effort in the lead-up to the Melbourne Marathon.

Well done, Andrew.
Enjoy your meal and the
Bush Inn's famous hospitality.

RUNNER PROFILE

This profile features Cathryn Hoare, arguably Geelong's most improved senior athlete of the Athletics Victoria Winter Season with a string of impressive performances over the longer distances. However, while Cathryn's running times have continued to fall, she is also an absolute whizz when it comes to trivia. So be warned, if you want to be in the running for prizes, make sure Cathryn is sitting at your table for the next Trivia Night.

Cathryn Hoare

Occupation Stablehand School Deakin - Honours in Chemical Science.

Age 23 Date of Birth 5 / 7 / 81

Height 167 cm. Weight 56 kg.

Married / Single Single

Coach Mandi Coie

Personal Bests

400m.	67.5
800m.	2:37.1
1500m.	5:18.27
3000m.	11.44
5000m.	20.42
10 000m.	46.23
Half Marathon	102.23

Favourite Food Dark chocolate, pavlova.

Food Eaten Before a Race Banana, jam sandwich.

Favourite Drink Milk.

Favourite Movie "The Matrix", "The Crow", "Phar Lap" and "The Man From Snowy River".

Favourite Book "I can't remember when I last read one that wasn't a text book!"

Favourite Music / Band "Korn", "Powderfinger".

Favourite Night Spot "The Hi Fi Bar during the Melbourne Comedy Festival".

Favourite Holiday Spot "I haven't really been anywhere for years".

A Normal Winter Training Week

Mon. am. Eastern Beach steps / ramps - sometimes sets of reps, sometimes continuous circuits.

Tues. pm. Plyometrics at YMCA gym. Strength work.

Wed. am. Either shorter / faster work at the Eastern Gardens or Landy Field:
Eastern Gardens: 1 x 1000 metres, 2 x 600 metres, 2 x 400 metres @ 1500 metre Race Pace.
Landy Field: 1 x 500 metres, 2 x 300 metres, 4 x 150 metres, 6 x 60 metres @ 800 metre Race Pace.

Thur. pm. Eastern Beach: 3 x 'Joe Gulli' circuit up and down ramps - 25 to 45 minutes continuous.

Fri. Rest.

Sat. pm. Athletics Victoria Race or a session at Landy Field - plyometrics, circuits, drills followed by short sprints - ie. 5 x 40 metres, 5 x 50 metres, 5 x 60 metres or an easy 10 - 16 kilometre run along the Barwon River @ 4.30 - 5.00 minute / km. pace.

Sun. pm. Rest or Geelong Athletics Cross - Country Race of 3 - 8 km. I run with my dog at a very easy pace (the dog is a speed limiting device!)

Other Training / Recovery Sessions.

Go - Kan Ryu Karate. Sempai class (I teach as an Assistant Instructor on Monday nights) Senior class (Instructor training) on Wednesday night.

Favourite Training Session The Wednesday morning session at the Eastern Gardens as we have a good training / gossip group!

Favourite Race Anything but 800 metres. The Coliban Road Relay is always fun.

Best Ever Performance Finishing 7th in the U 15 VLAA State 1500 metre walk final in 1996. I also ran my 3000 metre P.B. that year at the State Road Relays at Latrobe University. Recently, I was really happy to average 4.09 min. / km. pace for the Hogan's Road Leg of the Coliban Road Relay. Taking 12 seconds off my 1500 metre P.B. at the Victorian Country Athletic Championships.

Favourite Place To Train The Barwon River Track and the Bellarine Rail Trail.

Toughest Ever Training Session Physically, probably one of Joe Gulli's circuits at Eastern Beach. Mentally, Day 18 of Mandi Cole's infamous 18 day program (it was 18 days straight with no rest days) I had to do short sprints, then time-trials over 500 metres, 300 metres and 200 metres. I was extremely tired and it was really hard to get motivated to run fast. Then on the next day, instead of getting a long awaited rest, I had to go through a four hour karate grading! However,

Mandi's Program worked because I slashed 12 seconds from my 1500 metre P.B. two weeks later.

Advice To Other Runners "Don't think about it - just do it!" - a comment often heard at our training.

Goals for the Future

1. To smash my 3000 metre P.B. as it's stood for 8 years.
2. To run a 5 minute 1500 metres - Mandi has plans for me to do this during the up-coming track season.
3. To break my 5 km. / 10 km. P.B.s as I have not raced 5000 metres very often and have only completed one 10 km. race.
4. To continue avoiding 400 / 800 metre races as I really hate them, especially the 800!

Anything Else During the summer season our training group does a modified version of "Mona Fartlek" along the Barwon River (we do walk recoveries). Jill Coyte and I take our 'speed limiting devices' (dogs) with us. During one session, Jill's dog Dee, who runs off-lead, veered to the right and tripped on the edge of the track and went straight into the drink, near the Breakwater. The water level was too far below the level of the river bank to reach under her belly and pull her out so we tried to lure her to swim to the bank with my dog, Lexie. However, this was not working and Jill was becoming really worried that Dee was going to drown. Eventually, I lay down on the path across the Breakwater and grabbed Dee by the collar and hauled her up enough for Jill to finish getting her out. And Dee is not a light dog! While all this was going on, the rest of the group was oblivious to our dramas, thinking we had turned back. For weeks after, Jill put Dee on a lead to cross the Breakwater and so far there have been no repeat performances, unless you count Chantelle Faraguna's hat, which we managed to fish out of the river with a stick.

TEAM PHOTO

All athletes and support staff who have represented the Geelong Region Cross - Country Team during 2004 are requested to attend

Landy Field at 8:00am. on Saturday 2nd October for an Official Team Photo.

Please wear your full team uniform but don't worry about A.V. numbers.

This photo will be a fantastic record of your 2004 season and will also be presented to our generous team sponsors.

Athletes will also be able to purchase this photo at cost price.

Please be there to support your team.

**"THE ATHLETE'S FOOT" GEELONG
ATHLETICS CROSS - COUNTRY
CHAMPIONSHIP
EASTERN GARDENS
(Saturday 4th September)**

Changeable weather and a challenging, 1500 metres to the lap, cross - country course greeted Geelong athletes as they assembled at the Eastern Gardens for the running of "The Athlete's Foot" Geelong Cross - Country Championships. Many of Geelong's top junior distance runners had competed in Canberra last weekend at the Australian Cross - Country Championships, so they could have been excused for feeling a little fatigued. However, this did not stop Kate Sly, Rebecca Forlong, Sam Withington and Nick Wightman from backing up one week later on home soil.

Leading the way in the junior men's race were Tim Kilfoyle and Ryan Smith, who went out strongly to open up a sizeable gap on the field as they completed the first of two laps. However, Tim was able to gain a decisive break up the final hill to cross the line in first place from a gallant Ryan. Third to finish was Sam Withington, who ran on strongly despite having completed three tough cross-country races in six days. Kate Sly also employed bold front running tactics to take out the Junior Women's Race as she and Hamish Wishart ran stride for stride for most of the three kilometres. Second to finish was Laura Stekelenburg, who collected her second consecutive Geelong Cross - Country Championship silver medal after running an 800 metre P.B. (2:27.10) earlier in the day.

In the Senior Men's Race, Ross Young found the rhythm breaking hills to his liking as he comfortably extended his lead with each completed lap, eventually winning by 250 metres. However, the battle for second place was an absolute beauty, with Nick Wightman taking the silver medal by a mere 0.2 seconds from an equally fast finishing Simon Taylor. Fresh from a third placing in the Under 20 Australian Cross-Country Championship, Rebecca Forlong ran stride for stride with a few of the stronger male runners to easily win her first Geelong Championship medal from sixteen year old Chelsea Merry, who has made a successful transition to senior ranks. Third to finish was the much improved Cathryn Hoare, who slashed three minutes from her 2003 time.

A big thank you to Tony Stewart and "The Athlete's Foot" for their wonderful support of both the Geelong Road and Cross-Country Championships - Michael Kenny was certainly delighted to win "The Athlete's Foot" spot prize of a new pair of running shoes.

Thanks also to Craig Goddard (Subway Geelong West) and Crichton Collins (The Pakington Bakery) for their continued support of Geelong athletics with regular spot prizes.

JUNIOR MEN 3 km.

1.	Tim Kilfoyle	Deakin	11.06
2.	Ryan Smith	Deakin	11.15
3.	Sam Withington	Chilwell	11.50
4.	Hamish Wishart	Chilwell	12.24

JUNIOR WOMEN 3 km.

1.	Kate Sly	Deakin	12.29
2.	Laura Stekelenburg	Deakin	13.07

SENIOR MEN 6 km.

1.	Ross Young	Deakin	21.22
2.	Nick Wightman	Deakin	22.01
3.	Simon Taylor	Guild	22.01
4.	Louis Rowan	Deakin	22.06
5.	Michael Kenny	Chilwell	22.42
6.	Andrew Bigelow	Inv.	22.56
7.	Geoffrey Purnell	Guild	23.07
8.	Russell Johnson	Corio	24.16
9.	Geoff Clark	Bellarine	24.17

10.	Jaime Werner	Inv.	24.22
11.	Paul Wilson	Guild	24.41
12.	Neil MacDonald	Deakin	26.14
13.	John Skinner	Inv.	26.20

SENIOR WOMEN 6 km.

1.	Rebecca Forlong	Deakin	24.21
2.	Chelsea Merry	Deakin	26.47
3.	Cathryn Hoare	Bellarine	27.28

AROUND THE TRACKS AND TRAILS

Not sure which was tougher - competing in the Athens Olympics against the greatest athletes on the planet or the sleep deprivation involved in following the events through the TV coverage at a time when sane people were sound asleep, tucked-up in bed. However, with our own Craig Mottram and Lee Troop wearing the green and gold, viewing was both compulsory and nerve-racking.

In the 5000 metres, Craig Mottram finished an excellent 8th in 13:25.70, after the field jogged through the first kilometre in a pedestrian 2.58 before things got serious. The following 400 metre splits reveal just how different Championship races are compared to the pace-maker dominated races of the European Circuit. Also, keep in mind that surging can involve a very quick sprint down the back-straight, before easing up for the rest of a lap so even 400 metre splits can be misleading:

31 seconds	1st 200 metres	
74 secs.		
71 secs.	1000 metres	2.58
64 secs.		
61 secs.		
	2000 metres	5.35
62 secs.		
61 secs.		
62 secs.	3000 metres	8.10
62 secs.		
63 secs.		
	4000 metres	10.48
63 secs.		
61 secs.		
52.93 secs.	5000 metres	13:14.39

Amazingly, the great Hicham El Guerrouj ran the last 200 metres in 24.84 to win in 13:14.39 from Kenenisa Bekele (13:14.59) and Eliud Kipchoge (13:15.10). Craig ran a great race to hold on to the lead pack for four kilometres, before gradually losing contact. In the Marathon, Lee Troop finished a highly creditable 27th in 2:18.40, to be first Australian home. During the first half of the race, Lee was prominent at the back of the lead pack, before the heat, hills and constant surging took a toll. However, Lee said that running into the historic Panathinaiko Stadium, to be greeted by his fiancée Freyja and mother Debbie, was an emotional experience that completely erased the disappointments of Sydney. Already Lee is planning for Beijing 2008. The Olympic Marathon was won by Italy's Stefano Baldini (2:10.55 with a 28.30 last 10 kilometres) from Meb Keflezighi (USA 2:11.29) and the rugby tackled Vanderlei de Lima (Brazil 2:12.11).

Well done Craig and Lee - Geelong is very proud of your efforts. Craig also contested the 10 000 metres at the Brussels Grand Prix Meet just after the Olympics but pulled out during the race with knee soreness. Craig will now not contest the Great North Run Half Marathon but rather take a month off before beginning to build-up his training for another assault on the 2005 World Cross-Country Championships.

Another Geelong athlete competing during the European summer was Mark Tucker, who finished his overseas stay with a second place in the World Biathlon Championship (1500 metre run, 200 metre swim, 1500 metre run) in Germany. With his running ability, Mark was in the lead during the opening leg before falling back in the swim, eventually finishing 15 seconds behind the German winner.

A large contingent of Geelong athletes converged on Canberra (Sunday August 29) as Victorian Team members for the combined running of the School Sport Australia Cross-Country Championships and the Telstra Australian Cross-Country Championships.

Georgie Buckley	Girls 12 3km.	13th	12.41
Kate Sly	Girls 13 3km.	14th	12.02
Kelsey Rau	Girls 14/15 4km.	DNF	
Tyron Cover	Boys 11 3km.	8th	11.40
Sam Withington	Boys 13 3km.	27th	11.35
Brenton Rowe	Boys 16/17 6km.	2nd	21.03
	U 18 Mens' 8km.	2nd	21.03
Nick Wightman	U 20 Mens' 8 km.	23rd	27.43
Rebecca Forlong	U 20 Womens' 6km.	3rd	24.24
Matt McDonough	Open Mens' 12 km.	20th	38.45

Our junior athletes followed up their individual races in Canberra with Cross - Country Relays on Tuesday 31st August. Well done to: Georgie Buckley (gold), Brenton Rowe (gold), Kate Sly (bronze) and Tyron Cover (bronze), who all won team medals.

Congratulations also to Eliza Curnow and Laura Stekelenburg (The Geelong College) and Jessie Couch, Bianca Cheever, Kelsey Rau and Taryn Rau (Sacred Heart College) who recorded impressive team victories at the All - Schools Track Relays at Glenhuntly. Great work, girls.

Finally, Loretta McGrath's build-up to the New York Marathon is progressing well with a fine fourth place finish (3rd in the Australian Championship) in the Sydney Half Marathon. Loretta reported that the course and weather conditions made the race very challenging but she was delighted with her run.

1.	Helen Stanton (Queensland)	1:19.30
2.	Eriko Aketa (Japan)	1:20.15
3.	Angela Bateup (A.C.T.)	1:20.22
4.	Loretta McGrath (Geelong / Vic)	1:21.23

ROD DE HIGHDEN. MARATHON'S MR UNDER-RATED.

In many ways, Rod de Highden is the unsung hero of Australian distance running. Over the last ten years, despite running in the shadow of Steve Moneghetti and Lee Troop, Rod has represented Australia with distinction at Olympic Games, World Athletic Championships and World Cross-Country Championships. I was fortunate to catch up with Rod at Falls Creek, where he was putting in the 'hard yards' that would give him a shot at making his third Olympic Team.

N.M. Rod, welcome back to Falls Creek. How many years have you been coming to the Victorian high-country over the Christmas holiday break?
R.D. I think I first came up in 1995 with Peter O'Donoghue and during that stint we had about seven days where we ran through snow so that was a new experience for me and quite tough running.

N.M. Peter O'Donoghue was certainly a quality athlete.

R.D. He was a Rolls Royce - such a great mover and a great athlete.

N.M. How did Peter run up here because some quality track athletes have found the tough Falls Creek terrain not to their liking?

R.D. I think he enjoyed it. However, we trained with Mona, who was the 'King of the Mountain' back then and he really showed us both how to run up here.

N.M. And Mona has been a great inspiration for you over the years?

R.D. For sure. You can't say a bad thing about Mona. He's been a wonderful ambassador for the sport and is always supportive with other athletes.

N.M. And even though he's 'retired', he is still running particularly well. I noticed that you did 'Mona Fartlek' with him this morning out at Langfords Gap and that he was still hooting along.

R.D. Yes, he's moving fantastically well. He's just keeps showing us all what a class athlete he was and still is.

N.M. You said that heavy snow fell on your first summer trip to Falls Creek but last year we had to leave the mountain early because of bush fires. Your memories of that?

R.D. Actually, it turned out perfectly because I woke up and looked outside and saw thick, choking smog and smoke everywhere so we quickly decided to leave. As it turned out, this was the right decision because I left the mountain on top of my training and was able to head back home and continue training while still in good shape.

N.M. What are your plans for 2004?

R.D. Firstly, I plan to get into my best possible shape, which will hopefully mean P.B. shape over the shorter distances, which should help me run a faster marathon. It's all about trying to make the Australian Team for Athens in August. But it's not about just making the team but to run a great marathon in Athens.

N.M. Have you planned to run a marathon early in the year?

R.D. At this stage I'm trying to get a start in the Rotterdam Marathon which is 13 weeks away. That should give me enough time to run a good 5000 metres and a good 10 000 metres on the track and to give my body every chance to be 'spot on' on the day.

N.M. Why Rotterdam?

R.D. It's two weeks after the World Cross-Country, and I'd like to make the Australian Team for that again. Rotterdam has also proved to be a great course for Australian runners - Troopy ran very well there, Deeks has run well there and I just think you can go there feeling confident that if you're in great shape, you can run well there.

N.M. Rod, in many ways, you are probably the quiet achiever of Australian distance running. Not a lot of the general public know about you but you have made a 'truck load' of Australian Teams. What are some of the Australian Teams you have been in?

R.D. The first one and the most important one at the time was making the Australian Cross - Country Team as a junior in 1988. That race was in Auckland and I finished 19th. That race showed me that I could possibly mix it with the best international runners. Then I progressed through that cross - country background before I made my first senior World Cross - Country Team as a 21 year old. All up, I've made Australian Senior World Cross - Country Teams in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1997 and they were a wonderful chance to get world class competition where I

could gauge myself against the world's best runners.

N.M. And your Olympic Teams?

R.D. In 1994 I sat down with Norm Osborne, my coach at that time, and we worked out that the marathon was going to be my best event and my best chance to make an Olympic Team. So we set out a plan to make the 1996 Atlanta Olympics two years later. Eventually, I was able to make it to Atlanta and then I was also in the Australian Team for the Sydney Olympics four years later.

N.M. And your World Championship Teams?

R.D. They have been a bit disappointing. I made the 1997, 2001 and 2003 Australian Teams for the World Champs but those were my off years where I was hampered by injury and was not able to get it right on the day.

N.M. Who were some of your team mates from the first World Cross - Country Team you made as a junior in 1988?

R.D. I finished 19th and Julian Paynter finished 28th. Lex Davies, Greg Collier. Dean Rose and Wayne Larden were also in the team. I think the team finished fifth overall, so we did quite well.

N.M. Can you remember the winner of the race - was it some unheard of Kenyan who went onto become a household name?

R.D. The winner of the race was Wilfred Kirochi from Kenya, and he went on to run some great track races over 1500 metres.

N.M. Yes, he went on to win a medal at the World Athletic Championships over 1500 metres.

R.D. Todd Williams, a top American runner was also in the race.

N.M. You mentioned the Atlanta Olympics. Those of us who watched the marathon on TV will remember that you were up with the leaders for a large part of the race. Your memories of that race?

R.D. My memories are that my number one goal was to try to win the race but at the same time, I was determined not to just follow Steve (Moneghetti) but to run my own race. Anyway, I settled down really well and then from about the 3 kilometre mark, I started moving through the field so that at 5 kilometres I was on the back of the big lead bunch. I could see that Steve was just 10 metres ahead and I was feeling quite comfortable. I had committed myself to running confidently so it was just a matter of keeping it going. Then I got to half-way and I was still feeling OK, but soon after that the pace picked up when Thugwane of South Africa, went into the lead and I dropped about 70 metres off the back of the pack, but was able to get back on. Just before 30 kilometres I passed Steve and I think he got as much a shock as I did. He quickly got back in front of me. At 32 - 33 kilometres we went up a large hill and it was like a bomb went off - the pack just disintegrated. At 40 kilometres I was in 16th place and only had to run down hill to the finish line but there was absolutely nothing left in the legs and seven people passed me, so I ended up 23rd. Initially, I was disappointed at being passed by so many people within sight of the line but it only took me a few steps over the line to realise that my legs were jelly and that I had achieved my goal of giving myself every opportunity to win and that I had run the best race I could run on that day.

(Ed. Place-getters in the Atlanta Olympic Marathon: 1. Josia Thugwane (South Africa) 2:12.36 2. Lee Bong-ju (Korea) 2:12.39 3. Eric Wainaina (Kenya) 2:12.44. Rod De Highden 23rd in 2:17.42)

N.M. You've said that your training leading up to Atlanta went very well and that you were in great shape.

R.D. Yes, but I became a bit fixated on the mileage. I did 16 weeks averaging 216 kilometres a week, then a six week taper. Looking back at my training diary, everything seemed to go perfectly. I went to the Sandown Road-Relays, and although I

was 'smashed' by Mona when he broke the record (17.16 for the time-tested 6.2 kilometre course), I still ran a fantastic time (17.32) and knew I was in great shape and ready to run an excellent marathon.

N.M. The 1997 World Championships in Athens. Not such good memories for you but certainly a good story to tell with Mona and his "no Plan B."

R.D. The background to the '97 World Champs is that after we finished the Atlanta Olympic Marathon. Sean Quilty and Mona went for a warm-down jog but I could hardly walk because I was so exhausted. Anyway, I sat on the bus back to the Olympic Village with Chris Wardlaw and he was saying what a fantastic run I'd had and it could have been even better. He then said that with another 12 months of training, I was a realistic chance to come top ten at the 1997 World Championships in Athens. That was the plan but unfortunately, post Atlanta, my body was shot. I believe that the big weeks training leading up to Atlanta eventually started to take their toll. However, eventually I started to turn things around and was able to run a P.B. for the Half Marathon in Tokyo six months later (62.30). Then on the Friday before I was due to fly to Athens I started to get a sore foot. I had been carrying plantar fasciitis that I picked up from running the Athletics Victoria Coliban Road Relay. By the time I got to Athens my foot was really sore and the soreness turned out to be a broken bone in my foot. But because I had put so much commitment into the previous 12 months and the fact that I was already over there, I decided to race. Unfortunately, part of the commitment to race was that if I stood on the starting line, I had to be prepared to finish, no matter what. Five hundred metres into the marathon, I knew I was in big trouble because I couldn't put any weight or pressure on the foot. Eventually, I got to half-way in 68 minutes and ended-up finishing in 3:13.44, basically walking the second half. Then after finishing, I was put into the back of an ambulance because I was cramping so badly every time I tried to move. So, while it might have been good to battle on to the finish, it was also a dark point in my running career where I probably shouldn't have even started and it set me back both mentally and physically for a long time.

N.M. Looking back, are you proud that you were able to keep going when your body and mind must have been screaming out for you to stop?

R.D. Yes, it's a great achievement that I was able to finish a World Athletics Championship Marathon representing Australia but as I said, I should never have started, so it was a pretty stupid thing to do.

N.M. Mona and Troopy speak very highly of your effort in that race.

R.D. For me there has not been great financial rewards associated with running but I have priceless memories and to represent Australia at the World Championships or the Olympics or the World Cross – Country Championships is a great honour and I wanted to make sure that people got their money's worth by not only seeing me start but also by seeing me finish.

N.M. At the Host City Marathon in Sydney, which served as the Selection Trial for the Sydney Olympics, you ran a beautifully judged race.

R.D. Before the race I mentally went through how I'd like the marathon to pan out and how I was going to run and it pretty well worked out perfectly. I had snuck under the qualifying time by 7 seconds at the Fukuoka Marathon (Ed. Rod ran 2:13.53) and I knew that I had to concentrate on the other athletes who had run a qualifier. At half-way we had fellow qualifiers, Ray Boyd and Pat Carroll off the back and it was Lee Troop and myself left with the break-away leader, Magnus Michelsson steaming along out in front. Then, at just over 32 kilometres, Dave Evans, a top class athlete who was watching from the side-lines, started

calling out that I was stupid and that I was leaving it too late and that I'd never catch Magnus. But I was quite happy because I was running with Troopy and all the others in contention had been dropped. At 34 kilometres I started to pick it up but to finally catch Magnus at 41.2 kilometres and then running into the Olympic Stadium as the Olympic Trial winner was one of the greatest thrills of my life. (Ed. Rod ran 2:16.36 over the very challenging Sydney course.)

N.M. Did Dave Evans eventually congratulate you on your perfectly judged race?

R.D. He came out to the stadium afterwards and just shook his head – he just couldn't believe that I was able to catch Magnus because at 32 kilometres, Magnus had a 3 minute lead and was looking unbeatable.

N.M. Magnus certainly put it on the line that day.

R.D. He ran the race he had to run because he didn't have a qualifier so he had to run fast. The way he ran is a credit to him and it's also a credit to him that as I went past him he turned and said, "well done mate, keep it going!" A real class act.

N.M. Did you say anything back to Magnus?

R.D. I don't think so as I was pretty focused on getting to the finish line.

N.M. So, you had qualified for your second Olympics. Your memories of Sydney?

R.D. As I had set myself such a high standard in Atlanta, I was hoping to run a similar race in Sydney. But unfortunately it didn't quite go to plan. I dropped off with Steve at 16 kilometres, eventually finishing 28th but it was slightly disappointing because in Atlanta I was a winning chance for a long way whereas in Sydney I was never going to win after 16 kilometres. However, I look back now and think, while it wasn't as good a result as Atlanta, it was still a good, solid performance. (Ed. Rod ran 2:18.04)

N.M. Apart from the actual marathon, what were the highlights of the Sydney Olympics for you?

R.D. Definitely the Opening Ceremony. I also really enjoyed being around the other Australian distance runners. We had Troopy and Mona and Craig Mottram and Shaun Creighton with Chris Wardlaw as coach, so we had a great team. Also, just being around the Olympic Village with all the other athletes from all over the world was absolutely fantastic and something that will live in my memory forever.

N.M. Last year's World Championships in Paris.

R.D. Everything was going well in the lead-up to Paris. I'd won the Sydney Half – Marathon in drenching rain, running 65 minutes but pulled up with a sore calf so I changed my shoes. I started wearing a new pair of shoes that Asics had sent me but I strained my perineal after wearing the new shoes for a week which set me back for five weeks in training which pretty well destroyed my chances of finishing top twenty in Paris. However, during the five weeks leading up to the marathon I managed to get things together and got myself into the best possible shape given my interrupted build-up. But I couldn't have picked a better place to run a marathon as Paris is a magnificent city. And while I was a bit disappointed with my result, I was still in an Australian Team that finished eighth so I feel that I justified my position in the team. (Ed. Rod ran 2:16.56 for 41st place)

N.M. Let's go back a few years. How did you start in athletics?

R.D. I started Little Athletics when I was seven years old but I didn't get serious until around year nine at school when Chris McKenzie, an accomplished athlete, came to my school and it was then that I started to commit a lot more to running.

N.M. And who were your early coaches?

R.D. John Hirst, Tom Kelly, Norm Osborne were my early coaches and Mal Norwood was a fantastic influence when I was

younger – I used to train with him all the time. Mal also saw me go over to Chris Wardlaw when I decided that I wanted to run marathons.

N.M. You've had some very well respected coaches over the years. Can you go through each coach's basic distance running philosophy?

R.D. I think all of them have been really good because they all have focused on a plan and targets. They also emphasized the importance of having good training partners. At Doncaster we always had a large group of juniors coming through so I had a good group to train with. Then, I moved on and had Mal Norwood to train with. When I joined Chris Wardlaw's group there was Julian Paynter and Robbie O'Donnell and lots of other top runners. Because there were good training partners who respected each other, you tend not to try to race each other at training too much.

N.M. What differences were there between the training of Norm Osborne and Chris Wardlaw?

R.D. Under Norm I ran my P.B. over 5000 metres and finished 49th at World Cross-Country so he was a bit more focused on the faster stuff. And then when I started with Mal Norwood under Chris Wardlaw we started doing more 'Mona Fartlek' type sessions. I also trained with Peter O'Donoghue then and he was a great training partner.

N.M. Were you the only marathoner of note that Norm Osborne has coached?

R.D. He also helped and coached Andrew Garnham but Norm is a very versatile coach who has guided many top athletes across a variety of events.

N.M. I was talking to Norm a few weeks ago and he now advocates a ten or a fourteen day cycle so that you can include enough quality sessions. Did he have you doing that rather than the standard seven day cycle with a long run every Sunday?

R.D. No, it was just the standard seven day cycle.

N.M. At the moment you have a dual coaching arrangement with both Chris Wardlaw and Steve Moneghetti having input into your training and racing.

R.D. Yes, it has been fantastic, almost the perfect combination as Steve has more of a mentor role while 'Rab' oversees the program to make sure everything is on track. Basically, they have held me back a little and have stopped me doing the sixteen weeks of 216 kilometres type training so that I can train well, be on top of things and ultimately, race well.

N.M. I imagine you're doing the standard "Wardlaw System"?

R.D. Yes, but modified by Mona.

N.M. Do you have a key session in your marathon build-up that gives you a good indication as to how you're travelling?

R.D. Aaaahhh Not necessarily a session but races give me an indication as to how I'm going. Also, if I've been consistent in my training, I know I'm ready to race well.

N.M. What about diet? What do you emphasize while you're training hard?

R.D. The main thing I concentrate on is eating well to stay healthy, making sure that I don't become iron deficient or run-down.

N.M. Do you have regular blood tests to ensure your iron stores are adequate?

R.D. I have a phobia about injections and needles so I try not to. I only have blood tests when I start to feel tired and know that something is going wrong.

N.M. Do you take iron supplements?

R.D. Yes.

N.M. What drinks do you take during a marathon?

R.D. I just have Gatorade and have started to experiment with the Powerbar gels.

N.M. Leading up to the Sydney Olympics you were

on the "Olympic Job Program". Can you explain how that works?

R.D. I was fortunate enough to work with Coles Myer for five years under the "Olympic Job Program" which gave me flexible working hours. I was working from 10:00 am. to 4:00 pm. which allowed me to train before and after work. The Program also gave me time-off when I needed to travel overseas to Championship races. As well, the Program also helped further my career as I was looking after National Rugby League and Olympic merchandise which was a dream job for me.

N.M. Are you still working for Coles Myer?

R.D. No, I've moved on or they moved me on when the "Buying Department" started to close down. Now I'm lecturing at Holmesglen T.A.F.E., which has been fantastic because my background is economics, marketing and sports management.

N.M. Have you still got the flexible hours to allow you to train in the daylight hours?

R.D. Yes, plus I get all the school holidays, so it works in really well.

N.M. You mentioned before that Asics is one of your sponsors and that they look after you with shoes. Could you please explain how Asics looks after you and how you rotate your shoes around to reduce the chance of injury?

R.D. I'm quite lucky that I've run a few marathons in Japan, so while there, I visited the Asics Laboratory where they made a mould of my feet and from that they hand-make my racing flats. And after the problems I experienced in the lead-up to Paris, I've stuck to the Kayanos and the DS Trainers. I have four pairs of these on the go at any one time and I rotate these around. As soon as my feet start to feel a bit sore and the heel counter becomes a little softer, I change the shoes over.

N.M. What was involved in the production of your hand-made racing flats?

R.D. First they measured my feet and worked out which type of shoe would be best for the marathon and best for my feet. The shoe's designer also designs shoes for number of the top Japanese marathoners and he actually walked the Sydney Olympic marathon course to work out what type of shoes would be best for that one race.

N.M. So, when you need a new pair a racing flats, you just ring them up and a new hand-made pair are sent to you?

R.D. Yes, Asics have been great sponsors.

N.M. You've been to Olympic Games, World Championships and World Cross - Country Championships and have seen many wonderful athletes. Do you have any athletic heroes?

R.D. It's quite an interesting question. I always say that one of my heroes is Debbie Flintoff-King because I believe she was an athlete who got the most out of her career. I used to work with Dave Culbert before he became a National Selector and he is one of my most admired athletes because he got the most out of his career and the ability he was given. I think that's something I'd like to be able to say about myself when I finish: that I might not have been the best runner but rather someone who got the most out of my career and the talent I was given.

So that's why I really think highly of Debbie Flintoff-King and Dave Culbert.

N.M. Even though Dave is now a selector?

R.D. Well, he's still a good friend and if I'm fortunate enough to get into the team for Athens

N.M. He'll be a very, very good friend!

R.D. Yes, an even better friend.

N.M. You've been a top runner over a long

period of time. What has been your most memorable experience?

R.D. For me, the fact that my four best marathons have been at the Atlanta and Sydney Olympics and the races that gained me selection in those Olympic Teams. Hopefully, that will continue on with Athens.

N.M. So, when it has counted, you have been able to deliver.

R.D. Yes, I suppose so.

N.M. Which of the 'Big City Marathons' have you run?

R.D. I ran Boston in 2001 and that was a fantastic experience except that my calves tightened up and I didn't run so well. (Rod ran 2:26.33 for 34th place) I've also run London in 1998 (Rod ran 2:26), just after the Athens' World Championships debacle, and I've been fortunate to win the Gold Coast Marathon twice. (Rod won the Gold Coast Marathon in 1995 (2:13.59) and 2002 (2:15.22)

N.M. Rod, all the best for the up-coming Rotterdam Marathon. I hope you can run sub 2:12 and gain selection for your third Australian Olympic Team.

R.D. Thanks. Neil.

Ed. Rod did not run the 2004 Rotterdam Marathon, instead choosing to run the Nagano Marathon. Unfortunately, he went into the Nagano race with a chest infection and pulled out at the 27 kilometre mark. Lee Troop, Sisay Bezabeh and Nick Harrison were selected to run the marathon for Australia at the Athens Olympics.

RUNNER PROFILE

Roderic De Highden

Occupation Lecturer at Holmesglen T.A.F.E.

Age 35 Date of Birth 15 / 1 / 69

Height 178 cm. Weight 62 kg.

Married / Single Married to Celeste

Coaches Chris Wardlaw / Steve Moneghetti

Personal Bests

5000m.	13.40.04
10 000m.	28.38.52
Half Marathon	62.28
Marathon	2:13.53

Favourite Food Chicken Pasta

Food Eaten Before a Race Vegemite on Toast

Favourite Drink Coke

Favourite Movie "Barcelano" (a black comedy)

Favourite Book ?

Favourite Music / Band "U2" and "Radiohead"

Favourite TV Show "Seinfeld"

Favourite Night Spot Laurent Coffee Shop in Balwyn

Favourite Holiday Spot Palm Cove, Far North Queensland.

A Normal Training Week.

Mon. am. 8 km. relaxed run.
pm. 17 km. Yarra Bend Golf Course, Yarra River (on grass)

Tues. am. 8 km. relaxed run.
pm. 16 km. including "Mona Fartlek"
Physio with Robbie O'Donnell / Anne Lord.

Wed. am. 8 km. relaxed run.
pm. 25 km. Westerfolds Park Templestowe.

Massage.

Thur. am. 8 km. relaxed run.
pm. Track Session: 8 x 400 metres with 200 metre 'float' between.

Fri. am. REST.
pm. 12 km. relaxed.

Sat. am. 16 km. including an 8 km. surge.
pm. 8 km. relaxed run.

Sun. am. 2 hours 30 minutes run.
Massage.
pm. 8 km. relaxed run.

Other Training / Recovery Sessions.

Massage twice a week. Physio once a week.

Favourite Training Session "Mona Fartlek"

Favourite Races Olympic Games Marathons.

Best Ever Performances Finishing 23rd in the Atlanta Olympic Marathon.

Favourite Place To Train Palm Beach, Queensland.

Toughest Ever Training Session Running up Mt. Bogong.

Most Admired Runners / People Very strong admiration for Steve Moneghetti, Robert de Castella and Chris Wardlaw.

Advice to Other Runners "The greatest challenge in life is to challenge ones self!"

Goals for the Future

"To run my fastest over 5000 metres, 10 000 metres and marathon in 2004"

Anything else? "I started running at the age of seven when a man came to my Primary School and spoke about Little Athletics. I thought it sounded pretty good so I went along to try it out".

PAULA RADCLIFFE - HER THOUGHTS ON ATHENS AND BEYOND.

Life as an elite sports' person can be a roller-coaster ride.

Sure, the fame, money and privileges can be a fantastic reward for years of dedication and sacrifice. However, the lows can be devastating, especially when athletes set lofty goals for themselves and public expectations weigh so heavily.

No Olympic event lays bare one's soul and character more than the Marathon, where a medal can take you to the greatest heights while many athletes back in the pack are forced to battle on, their bodies broken, their spirit crushed and their suffering on show for the world to see.

A few weeks after her Olympics ended in shattering heartbreak, Paula Radcliffe wrote the following article for the Telegraph. Thought you might like to see how she is coping and what she has to say about the race and the future.

"My Athens Olympic experience has definitely been the most devastating and traumatic of my life, and for a while it felt as though I would never get over it. I was extremely depressed and exhausted and struggled to see beyond what I had lost and how hard I and many others around me had worked for it.

Yet, I did not for one moment consider retiring or taking time out. In fact, it was when I began running again a few days ago that I began to turn the corner. Running has always been my stress release, my escape and my best way of coping with tough times. I'm not good at being unhappy, so going running for as long or as little as I feel like has become my therapy. Somehow if I can go out and run, things fall into perspective – I'm healthy and feel alive. I can still feel and think and take in the beauty of the scenery I run through.

The people I love and care about still love me and are there for me. Events such as the school hostage horror in Beslan reinforce this perspective still further. Underneath I'm still the same person and will soon be back to full strength and health and doing what I love – running fast.

It is important for me to put Athens behind me and move on, but first I need to learn what I can from the experience. Certainly it was extremely hot the day of the race, yet I prepared for this and was totally hydrated when I stopped, so this was not a factor. Yes, I was under pressure, from outside and from myself, but I have coped with this before and would have done so here.

My problems were more to do with an injury sustained just two weeks before the Games. In any marathon build-up there are always small hiccups and I had already had a minor calf strain, which took three days to clear. This had been a worry but the time off refreshed me and, just three weeks before, my last long run at altitude went extremely well and I was feeling good.

However, my quad felt a little tight during a run in Spain and afterwards went into total spasm. Despite the best treatment, the injury would clear but then return to kick me in the teeth each time I tried to run.

A week before the marathon I was forced to travel into Athens early. The muscle itself was OK but a haematoma on the underside of the muscle was discovered. This is an unusual injury, and I definitely picked up on the fact that people around me were very unsure as to whether I would make the start line. I was determined to get there and we took a very aggressive line of treatment. However, the period was extremely stressful and I was unable to sleep with worry some nights and suffered an upset stomach from the high doses of anti-inflammatories. I also did get some dizzy spells but put these down to stress.

I was very nervous on race day, but when I warmed up felt that the leg would hold out and I relaxed. In the race I did not feel the conditions were too bad and felt alright to begin with. However, after just 10 kilometres my stomach problems started and my legs were also feeling very weak. My brain was doing all the right things but my body seemed unable to respond. My legs became more and more sore and eventually I had to concede that there was no way I could push my body any further. I was in shock and disbelief that it could end like that and even tried running again but my legs could not carry me.

I still don't have all the answers and may never get them. However, it's most likely that I had run my marathon just to get to the start line. The anti-inflammatories and stress upset my bowel so that I was unable to absorb enough energy and nutrients. Even though I loaded up with carbohydrates as normal – and extra – they were unable to get through and my fuel tank was very low before I began the race. This meant I had to break down body tissue for fuel while I was running. Had I pushed further I would

have damaged my body further. As it is, tests showed my liver was struggling to cope and I lost a lot of weight.

I make no apologies for stopping. I've wondered before if sometimes I might push my body too hard. Now at least I have the answer, I do have a safety button. That night was the worst of my life. My body hurt all over but my heart was totally broken.

I don't have any regrets about trying the 10,000 metres. At least I won't always be wondering if I could have raced it. My legs were just unable to recover from the trauma. Even now, nearly three weeks later, my legs are still sore.

The next day I escaped Athens and returned home to my family to begin the healing process. I spent several days crying and going over and over things in my mind. I didn't want to go out and face the world, feeling embarrassed and ashamed and unable to handle concern and sympathy, let alone criticism, without breaking down. Yet, people have been extremely kind and understanding – the hundreds of letters have touched me so much. It will take me a long time to thank everyone but I will do so as I appreciate the thoughts and time taken so much.

Some of the press have been a different matter. Up until now most of my contact has been with sports or feature journalists. Now my family and I have had to face the sensationalist tabloid press, who simply invent stories. I accept that everyone has criticisms, comments and opinions on my races and decisions and this is their right. However, fabrications such as pregnancy, loss of a baby and splits with my support team which have absolutely no substance and are extremely hurtful are, I feel, a step too far. I choose to follow my sport and achieve the best that I can – being in the public eye is a by-product of this that I have to cope with. The British public are, I feel, the best in the world in terms of their understanding, support and compassion. However, something needs to be done to control certain elements of the British press and in this I understand the England footballers' decision to boycott the media. It should be remembered that athletes are human beings with rights and feelings, too.

Now I am concentrating on rebuilding my body and my morale. I feel angry and hurt and am determined to learn from the mistakes I made, but I don't doubt my ability to become stronger and wiser as a result. My dream is postponed, not over, and as soon as I am ready I will set new goals on the way to my next shot at it."

GEELONG REGION CROSS COUNTRY TEAM WEBSITE

Thanks to Andrew Bigelow, the Geelong Region Cross - Country Team now has a website where you can view the latest news, photos, interviews and newsletters. While still a work in progress, it looks fantastic. Thanks very much, Andrew.

Log on at:

<http://au.geocities.com/grxct/>

**FINALLY, THANK YOU TO THE
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