



GEELONG REGION CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM NEWSLETTER



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THE CURTAIN FALLS ON A MOST SUCCESSFUL 2004 WINTER SEASON FOR GEELONG

High team and individual placings throughout the year, many promising recruits, new junior teams and athletes, great team spirit developed on the bus trips to races, enjoyable social events, many of our talented band of junior athletes gaining selection in Victorian Teams and countless Personal Bests.

Yes! The 2004 Athletics Victoria Winter Season was a great success for Geelong Athletics and was able to build upon the hard work and fast running of the last few seasons.

I believe there were many highlights for the Geelong Team in 2004. However, several spring to mind:

Firstly, it was fantastic to see 14 highly competitive Geelong Teams lining up for the Werribee Park Cross-Country Relays and the Sandown Road Relays. On these Saturdays, Geelong's best middle and long-distance athletes served notice that we were here in numbers and ready to run 'fast'.

Secondly, during the 2004 Winter Season, twelve talented junior athletes made their debut for the Geelong Team. All performed to a high standard and showed that Geelong athletics would be strong for years to come.

Congratulations also to our Under 14 Women (2nd), Under 14 Men (3rd), Under 18 Men (3rd) and Division 4 Men (3rd) who finished the Winter Season in the Team Premiership placings.

And finally, it was wonderful to see our Division One Women finish an outstanding second at the prestigious Sandown Road Relays. This was our best ever women's result in the ultimate test of team quality and depth and indicates that a team victory is possible in 2005. Great work, girls!

Well done to all athletes who have raced for Geelong this Winter Season - there were sixty-five of you! I hope you have enjoyed representing our wonderful city and feel great pride everytime you pull on the Geelong colours.

Congratulations also to our runners who have performed up to high standards with Brenton Rowe and Rebecca Forlong both recording individual Athletics Victoria victories during the Winter Season.

Also, on the bigger stage, Lee Troop (28th place in the marathon) and Craig Mottram (8th in the 5000 metres) represented Australia with distinction at the Athens Olympic Games. Great to also see Georgie Clarke return to full fitness and fast times during the European Summer.

Closer to home, Brenton Rowe (2nd) and Rebecca Forlong (3rd) continued their outstanding cross-country form at the Australian Cross-Country Championships and the School Sport Australia Cross-Country Championships. Other junior athletes selected in Victorian Cross-Country Teams were: Georgie Buckley, Tyron Cover, Kate Sly and Sam Withington. Well done kids! I hope there

are many more representative teams for you in the future.

However, we should not forget the many Geelong runners who have recorded Personal Bests or have just been happy to run up to their own standards while enjoying the team spirit generated on race day or on trips to races.

We also need to acknowledge our wonderful support crew. Much thanks and appreciation to: John Perrott, Lyn Taylor, Chris Sly, Greg Trevarthen and Kevin Varker for driving buses, marshalling, time - keeping, massaging tired limbs, preparing much needed post-race drinks and food or just cheering us on. We couldn't race without you guys.

Also, thank you very much to the athletes' parents and non-competing runners who were able to step in at a moment's notice to act as time-keepers and marshalls.

Finally, thank you very much to: The Corio Bay Sports Medicine Centre, The Athlete's Foot, The Pakington Bakery, Subway, The City of Greater Geelong, The Bush Inn Hotel and Geelong Athletics Inc. for their fantastic support and encouragement throughout the year.

FINAL VOTES FOR THE "BEST PERFORMED GEELONG REGION ATHLETES" DURING THE 2004 WINTER SEASON

"Corio Bay Sports Medicine Centre" Award Open / Under 20 Men.

Rohan Perrott	2 3 1 3	9
Rowan Walker	1 3 3	7
Geoffrey Purnell	1 1 1 2 2	7
Louis Rowan	2 3	5
Matthew McDonough	3 2	5
Nick Wightman	2 2	4
Mark Tucker	3	3
Lee Troop	3	3
Simon Taylor	1	1
Ross Young	1	1
Paul Wilson	1	1
Geoff Clark	1	1
Andrew Chalmers	1	1

"Corio Bay Sports Medicine Centre" Award Open / Under 20 Women.

Rebecca Forlong	3 3 3 1 1 3	14
Loretta McGrath	2 2 2 2	8
Rebecca Tweed	3 3	6
Joanne Lambert	1 1 3 1	6
Cathryn Hoare	1 2 3	6
Nadia Semjanov	1 2 1	4
Ashleigh Wall	2	2
Freyja Stott	1	1

"Subway" Award

Junior Men		
Brenton Rowe	3 3 3 2 3	14

Sam Withington	3 2 2 2	9
Tyron Cover	1 1 3 1	6
Phillip Doolan	2	2
Tom Burns - Wallace	2	2
Tom Perkins	2	2
Michael Kenny	1	1
Hamish Wishart	1	1

"Subway" Award**Junior Women**

Kate Sly	2 2 2 3 3	12
Kelsey Rau	1 3 3 1 1	9
Georgie Buckley	3 2 1	6
Laura Stekelenburg	1 2	3
Harriet Brown	3	3
Eliza Curnow	1	1

GEELONG REGION CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM BEST PERFORMED AGE GROUP ATHLETES 2004

(To be eligible for these awards athletes need to have competed for Geelong at least four times during the 2004 Athletics Victoria Winter Season)

Under 14 Female	Kate Sly
Under 16 Female	Kelsey Rau
Under 18 Female	-
Under 20 Female	Rebecca Forlong
Open Female	Loretta McGrath
Under 14 Male	Sam Withington
Under 16 Male	Tom Burns - Wallace
Under 18 Male	Brenton Rowe
Under 20 Male	Nick Wightman
Open Male	Rohan Perrott
Veteran Male	Geoffrey Purnell

Most Improved Athlete Cathryn Hoare

W.J.P. WOOD TROPHY

For those athletes new to the Geelong Team,
a little background information on the
W.J.P. Wood Trophy.

Ron Palmer and Stuart Robley were entrusted by the family of the late Bill and Ivy Wood with the care of a silver cup won by Bill Wood in 1935 for cross-country running as a member of the Geelong Guild Amateur Athletic Club.

After much thought and discussion it was decided that the W.J.P. Wood Trophy would be awarded by Geelong Athletics on a perpetual basis to the athlete who has demonstrated a commitment to the Geelong Region Cross - Country Team and has proven to be an outstanding winter athlete at any level (local, state, national or international.)

Previous winners of the W.J.P. Wood Trophy have been:

- 2000 - Lee Troop
- 2001 - Craig Mottram
- 2002 - Craig Mottram
- 2003 - Lee Troop

This year, Lee Troop is the winner of the W.J.P. Wood Trophy for his outstanding running during the Athletics Victoria Winter Cross-

Country Season and his excellent 28th placing in the Athens Olympic Games Marathon.
Congratulations, Lee on your selection as the winner of the W.J.P. Wood Trophy for 2004.

2004 ATHLETICS VICTORIA INDIVIDUAL WINTER RANKINGS

Congratulations to Rebecca Forlong (Under 20 Women) and Brenton Rowe (Under 18 Men) for capping off outstanding Athletics Victoria Winter Seasons with Number One Ranking in their Age Groupings. Well done also to Sam Withington (Under 14 Men) and Geoff Clark (Mens' Vets 50 +) for their Individual third placings.

MEN'S OPEN (Five Best Performances)

1st	Simon Field (St. Kevins)	31
2nd	Clint Perrett (Mentone)	30
3rd	David Ruschena (Glenhuntly)	28
4th	Martin Fedmowski (Mentone)	26
5th	Nigel Adkin (Old Hailebury)	23
13th	Lee Troop (Geelong)	9
21st	Rohan Perrott (Geelong)	6
26th	Matt McDonough (Geelong)	3
30th	Rowan Walker (Geelong)	2

UNDER 20 MEN (Four Best Performances)

1st	Dean Locke (Peninsula R.R.)	36
2nd	Brendan Woodman (Glenhuntly)	35
3rd	Sam Ellis (Eureka)	35
4th	Robert Boadle (Ballarat YCW)	27
5th	Toby Rayner (Frankston)	26
8th	Nick Wightman (Geelong)	15

UNDER 18 MEN (Four Best Performances)

1st	Brenton Rowe (Geelong)	42
2nd	Kale Symons (Yallourn / Newb.)	37
3rd	Rohan Lindsay - Johns (Ringwood)	31
4th	Tyson Popplestone (Yallourn / Newb.)	29
5th	Luke Searle (Western Suburbs)	19
9th	Phillip Doolan (Geelong)	10
13th	Michael Kenny (Geelong)	7

UNDER 16 MEN (Four Best Performances)

1st	Kane Wille (Knox Athletic)	35
2nd	Ashley Watson (Wendouree)	31
3rd	Mark Seen (Knox Athletic)	28
4th	Jamie Huggett (Ballarat YCW)	28
5th	David Ireland (Keilor St. Bernards)	28

UNDER 14 MEN (Four Best Performances)

1st	Mark Blicavs (Keilor St. Bernards)	44
2nd	Kane Grimster (Frankston)	34
3rd	Sam Withington (Geelong)	30
4th	Adam Conway (Traralgon)	28
5th	Alex Davis (Ballarat YCW)	24
7th	Tyron Cover (Geelong)	14
15th	Ryan Saunders (Geelong)	4

MEN'S 45 + VETERAN (Five Best Perf.)

1st	Phillip Bowes (South Melbourne)	51
2nd	Peter Gaffney (Keilor St. Bernards)	49
3rd	Bert Pelgrim (Ringwood)	37
4th	Antony Milovac (Diamond Valley)	31
5th	Geoff Purnell (Geelong)	30

MEN'S 50 + VETERAN (Five Best Performances)

1st	Charles Chambers (Oakleigh)	53
2nd	Raymond Wilson (Athletics Essendon)	49
3rd	Geoff Clark (Geelong)	37
4th	Tony Bird (Box Hill)	35
5th	Bruce Salisbury (Traralgon)	29
18th	Russell Johnson (Geelong)	2

WOMEN'S OPEN (Five Best Performances)

1st	Lisa Weightman (Knox Athletic)	46
2nd	Kate Seibold - Crosbie (Malvern)	34
3rd	Julia Edwards (Glenhuntly)	32
4th	Simone Braakhuis (Melbourne University)	23
5th	Anna Thompson (Glenhuntly)	22
13th	Rebecca Tweed (Geelong)	9
15th	Loretta McGrath (Geelong)	7

UNDER 20 WOMEN (Four Best Performances)

1st	Rebecca Forlong (Geelong)	44
2nd	Josie Gellert (Eureka)	26
3rd	Rachael Ferry (Peninsula R.R.)	25
4th	Celia Boyle (South Bendigo)	17
5th	Anke Uys (Frankston)	17

UNDER 18 WOMEN (Four Best Performances)

1st	Zhoe Warrington (Frankston)	42
2nd	Anneli Uys (Frankston)	40
3rd	Kate Duncan (Knox Athletic)	33
4th	Bridie O'Shannessy (Glenhuntly)	31
5th	Erin McLaughlin (Glenhuntly)	18

UNDER 16 WOMEN (Four Best Performances)

1st	Rachel Green (Frankston)	42
2nd	Sarah Grahame (Frankston)	35
3rd	Melissa Duncan (Knox Athletic)	31
4th	Renee Owen (Frankston)	30
5th	Kelsey Rau (Geelong)	25
13th	Breanna Ryan (Geelong)	6

UNDER 14 WOMEN (Four Best Performances)

1st	Stephanie Kondogonis (Keilor St. Bern.)	29
1st	Sarah Lund (Glenhuntly)	29
3rd	Grace Thek (Box Hill)	25
4th	Kate Sly (Geelong)	24
5th	Rachel Menadue (Athletics Essendon)	23
6th	Brittany Nash (Athletics Essendon)	22
7th	Linden Hall (Athletics Essendon)	19
8th	Laura Stekelenburg (Geelong)	18
17th	Georgie Buckley (Geelong)	4
21st	Eliza Curnow (Geelong)	2

FINAL TEAM LADDERS

All Team Premiership Ladders have been decided with the running of the Burnley Half Marathon

Well done to all teams but especially so to our Under 14 Girls and Boys who have capped off an excellent Winter Season with fine second and third placings that may have been team premierships if not for an Athletics Victoria race clashing with the Regional Little Athletics Cross-Country Championships.

MEN'S DIV. 1

Glenhuntly	113
Peninsula R.R.	78
Melb. University	61

MEN'S DIV. 4

Oakleigh	101
Knox Athletic	98
Geelong	36

APS	59
Ballarat YCW	57
Geelong	55
Aths. Essendon	55
Diamond Valley	47
Box Hill	46
Malvern	43
Keilor St. Bern.	39
Doncaster	37

MEN'S DIV. 7

Melb. University	117
Coburg 3	65
Coburg 4	49
Diamond Valley	37
Knox Athletic	36
Ringwood	32
Malvern	27
Geelong	11 (14th)

WOMEN'S DIV. 1

Malvern	111
Glenhuntly	91
Melb. University	81
Peninsula R.R.	57
Knox Athletic	55
Richmond	50
Ringwood	45
Geelong	42
Ballarat Harriers	30

MEN'S UNDER 16

Knox Ath.	78
Ballarat YCW	66
Keilor St. Bern.	54
Ballarat Region	52
Ath. Essendon	24
Geelong	23
Frankston	19
Glenhuntly	14

WOMEN'S UNDER 18

Glenhuntly	55
Keilor St. Bern.	49
Frankston	26
Doncaster	22
Ballarat YCW	14
Geelong	10
Western Sub.	9
Diamond Valley	9
Ballarat Region	8

WOMEN'S UNDER 14

Keilor St. Bern.	77
Geelong	71
Ath. Essendon	48
Glenhuntly	37
Frankston	19
Ivanhoe	15
Geelong 2	7

Ballarat YCW	33
Glenhuntly	32
Richmond	30
Box Hill	29
South Melb.	28
Peninsula R.R.	20
Williamstown	11
Doncaster	10
Bendigo Uni.	9

MEN'S VET. 40 +

Diamon Valley	72
Keilor St. Bern.	72
Malvern	67
Ringwood	36
Ballarat Harriers	27
Ballarat YCW	25
Geelong	24
South Melb.	22

MEN'S UNDER 18

Knox Athletic	55
Western Suburbs	50
Geelong	42
Keilor St. Bern.	31
Ballarat YCW	25
Yallourn / New.	24
Frankston	13
Ringwood	11
Diamond Valley	10

MEN'S UNDER 14

Ballarat YCW	68
Ivanhoe	45
Geelong	39
Keilor St. Bern.	22
Collingwood 1	18
Collingwood 2	15
Traralgon	13
Ballarat Region	9

WOMEN'S UNDER 16

Frankston 1	86
Frankston 2	79
Keilor St. Bern.	49
Ballarat Region	38
Frankston 3	28
Geelong	16
Glenhuntly	13
Ivanhoe	12
Ath. Essendon	7

AROUND THE TRACKS AND TRAILS

After spending many months training and competing on the European circuit, Mark Tucker has returned to racing on home

soil with a solid second placing in Adelaide's City to Bay Fun Run over 12 km. (1st - Scott Westcott 34.53. 2nd - Mark Tucker 35.15) before comfortably winning the Keith Huddle Bendigo - Eaglehawk Fun Run (6.5 km.) in 19.05. Interestingly, Mark has added to his collection of varied first place trophies (Mark, a reluctant cook at best, has previously won a set of saucepans) with a suitcase as well as \$200 in cash.

Over the last six months, a couple of our endurance athletes have been putting in the 'big miles' in preparation for the October 10 running of the Melbourne Marathon. Unexpectedly warm conditions led to many athletes struggling to the finish line severely dehydrated and disorientated. However, the challenging conditions did not stop Rowan Walker from finishing an outstanding 4th in 2:29.27, a handful of seconds away from the place-getters. Unfortunately, all the hard work put in by Andrew Chalmers during the winter did not result in a 3:00 hour marathon. However, showing litres of determination and grit, Andrew battled on gamely, eventually finishing in 3 hours 41 minutes. Well done Andrew. In the lead-up to the New York Marathon in November, Loretta McGrath chose to contest the Melbourne Half Marathon. Despite not being happy with her pacing after going through the first ten kilometres in a too fast 37.18, Loretta finished a solid third in 82.04, an excellent trial for her race over 42.2 kilometres one month down the track. All the best for New York, Loretta.

On the same day, on the other side of Bass Strait, two of Geelong's (and Australia's) finest athletes contested the Burnie 10 kilometre Road Race. Six weeks after contesting the Athens Olympic Marathon, Lee Troop was keen to add the Burnie title to his list of race victories after being runner-up three times. We all know that Troop's way is to run aggressively, so it was no surprise when he went to the lead at the one kilometre mark, attempting to run the opposition off their legs. At the eight kilometre mark Lee still held a 50 metre lead but the strong wind was beginning to take its toll as the chase group, including Mark Tucker, were closing. Then, within 500 metres of the finish, Mark kicked for home to claim his biggest victory in 30.01 with Troop a gallant second in 30.08. Well done guys - it's great to see Geelong one / two (again) in such a big race.

While some Geelong athletes have been having a well earned rest after a pretty demanding cross - country season, our junior athletes have been turning in some impressive performances.

At the Barwon Zone Primary Schools Athletic Championships at Landy Field on October 7 under atrocious conditions, the following Geelong athletes qualified for the Victorian Primary Schools Moneghetti Regional Championships to be held at Landy Field on October 26th, then hopefully the State Primary School Championships in Bendigo on November 7:

Amy Stekelenburg	1st 11 year 800m.	2:46.85
	1st 11 year 1500m.	5:41.32
Georgie Buckley	1st 12 / 13 year 800m.	2:34.12
	1st 12 / 13 year 1500m.	5:28.24
Tyron Cover	1st 11 year 800m.	2:41.25
	1st 11 year 1500m.	5:34.76
Ryan Saunders	3rd 12/13 year 800m.	2:34.54
	1st 12/13 year 1500m.	5:32.76

Congratulations also to our junior athletes who competed in the Victorian Under 17 - Under 20 All-Schools Championships at Doncaster on 9 / 10 October:

Brenton Rowe	1st U 18 800 metres	1:59.29
	2nd U 18 1500 metres	4:09.47

Kelsey Rau	2nd U 18 3000 metres	9:10.24
	3rd U 17 3000 metres.	10:43.50 (National Under 15 Qualifier)
Laura Stekelenburg	5th U 17 800 metres	2:25.08 (National Under 14 Qualifier)
	5th U 17 1500 metres	5:06.00 (National Under 15 Qualifier)
Tim Kilfoyle	16th U 17 800 metres	2:07.16 (National Under 15 Qualifier)
	5th U 18 800 metres	2:23.60
Taryn Rau	6th U 18 800 metres	2:24.91
Chelsea Merry	3rd U 17 1500 metres	5:03.09
Michael Kenny	2nd U 17 2000 m. Steeple	6:50.69

TEAM PHOTO

Copies of the team photo
(30 cm. x 20 cm.)
are available for purchase at
\$12 or \$25 for the
beautifully framed, limited edition,
collector's print.

Much thanks to Richard
Lawsyz for his great work on
the team photograph.

If you have not already done so,
see Neil MacDonald to collect / pay
for your photo.

LEE TROOP DUAL OLYMPIAN.

After the shattering disappointment of being in the lead pack in the Sydney Olympic Marathon at the half-way mark, then tearing a stomach muscle and struggling to the finish in 66th place, Lee Troop had to overcome both physical and emotional demons before making it to the starting line in Athens. Now, with his highly creditable 28th place finish (2:18.46) over the historic Olympic course under his belt, Lee talks about his race in Athens and his plans for the future.

N.M. Lee, congratulations on your run in Athens. How have you recovered and what have you been up to since arriving back in Geelong?

L.T. I have recovered very, very well. Since I have been home I've done a few School Clinics, Sportsman's Nights, I've been to the local football, basically just doing the normal things that non athletes do.

N.M. I hear that you were only home a few minutes, just off the plane and unpacked before you headed out the door for a run. With jet-lag and the marathon still in your legs, that must have been pretty tough?

L.T. Well, actually, that's not quite correct because I had not even unpacked before I grabbed some running gear and headed out the door. The funny thing is that one minute I was in 40 degree heat and the next minute I'm home and it's 10 degrees, so it was a pretty big shock to the system. The main

thing was that I was trying to keep the running streak going.

N.M. How far did you run?

L.T. Aaaaahhh half an hour.

N.M. Because word spread like wild fire that Troopy, or someone who looked very like him, was running around the Barwon River track. However, most of us could not believe it.

L.T. Yes. I suppose because many people saw me running the Athens Olympic Marathon two days before, they found it hard to believe that, here I was, running in Geelong. Actually, I came across one guy who said, "hey, you're an idiot, aren't you having a break?"

N.M. Did the run get the cob webs out?

L.T. Yes, it did. Obviously I was pretty jet-lagged from sitting on a plane for 24 hours, then we had the "Welcome Home Parade" in Sydney, so it had been a very long day and it was good to get out and run around some familiar areas.

N.M. You mentioned the running streak you have going. How many consecutive days of running have you chalked up?

L.T. As far as days go, I wouldn't have a clue, but it's been two and a half years without missing a run. Not quite up to Rob de Castella's two lots of thousand plus days, but still pretty good.

N.M. You relate the telephone book analogy, used by Chris Wardlaw, to emphasize the importance of accumulated volume and consistency. Would you like to expand on that?

L.T. I guess the telephone book is a pretty good way of looking at running, where each page represents a day of running and if you can run for ten days, you have ten pages and so forth. The idea is to build up as many pages as possible so that you have a really thick book, which is a great running base. The importance of accumulating as many pages can be seen in that one of two pages can be easily torn but a phone book full of pages is very difficult to rip. And the thicker the book, or the bigger the running base, the more boundaries you can push. Because of the huge base I have been able to build up over the last few years, I was able to run 240 kilometres a week and not break down.

N.M. In relation to the telephone book, are you on the A – L section or have you started on the M – Z?

L.T. I'm definitely on the M – Z section. I don't think my base can get any bigger now, it's been a great year of training where I've been able to absorb my training and I've learnt so much about myself and what I'm capable of.

N.M. In preparing for Athens, you spent a couple of stints at Falls Creek over our summer, then went to St. Moritz. Why St. Moritz and do you think the altitude training was highly beneficial?

L.T. Firstly, I chose St. Moritz because it was the same time zone as Athens and it was close to where I needed to be in Europe so I could travel around without having to worry too much about recovery. In the lead-up to Athens I spent five weeks at St. Moritz and looking back now, I think I may have become too consumed with altitude training. It's something that I'm going to look at now and probably change in the future. Because I had been running 240 kilometres a week in the lead-up, then doing the same amount of training at 1600 – 1800 metres altitude, I got very, very fit. However, because I was sleeping in the same thin air, I don't feel as though I was recovering as well or as quickly as I'd like to so I got pretty tired. From now on, we are looking at doing smaller, frequent stints at altitude, just 10 – 20 days at a time, then back down to sea level to absorb the work done up in the mountains.

N.M. Apart from the thin air and the user friendly

time-zone, what sort of facilities does St. Moritz have that makes it such a great place for distance running?

L.T. Like Falls Creek, it's just a great environment with wonderful trails for running. Also, there's not a lot to do so you can have your nap during the day. However, it's very, very expensive and I'll probably never go back there again.

N.M. And you came across Wilson Kipketer, the great Danish / Kenyan 800 metre runner in St. Moritz.

L.T. Yes, he was there as well as most of the best runners in the world. Those who believe in altitude training go to St. Moritz.

N.M. Does St. Moritz have an athletic track?

L.T. Yes, it's at 1800 metres. St. Moritz is a really small town and you can run from one side to the other in about 5 minutes. However, it's surrounded by trails that stretch for thousands of kilometres so you can bump into a world class runner at any time.

N.M. While in St. Moritz you completed an 'epic' run, similar to running up Mt. Bogong.

L.T. Yes, six weeks before the Athens marathon I did a really tough run so that I could draw on that experience when things got tough in the Olympic marathon. I did a two and a half hour run with the first two hours at about 3.45 - 4.00 minute kilometre pace. Then, for the last half hour I ran up to a place where Swiss marathoner, Viktor Rothlin stays. The climb for the last part of the run went from 1800 metres to 2500 metres and it was super steep and it completely knocked the wind out of me. About five minutes from the top my quads were screaming and I was ready to call it quits but I managed to battle on.

N.M. Were you wearing a heart - rate monitor?

L.T. I don't wear heart-rate monitors as I don't need a device to tell me how hard I'm working. I like to run to how I feel. Some people use them and benefit from them but to me, a heart - rate monitor would be more of a complication and a distraction.

N.M. Heat acclimatization was always going to be a worry in the lead-up to Athens. To help in your preparation you spent time in Ostia.

L.T. Yes, that's right – I spent three weeks in Italy and the heat was 30 – 32 degrees each day with the same sort of stifling heat of Athens so I was pretty happy with how that part of my preparation went.

N.M. So basically, you planned to taper in the Italian heat so that your body could acclimatize while doing less running?

L.T. Yes, although I probably needed a short recovery buffer between the altitude training and the heat acclimatization so that I could fully absorb the hard training. As it was, I was trying to freshen-up in the heat and I wasn't recovering as well as I would have liked. So, that's probably another area where I might have done things differently.

N.M. For Athens, Nike developed a cooling vest that was hopefully going to help the endurance athletes. How did you use the cooling vest and did you find it effective?

L.T. Yes, I did use it. Basically, you put it on an hour before you compete and even warm-up with it on. It helps to keep your core body temperature slightly lower than it would normally be on a hot day and delays the inevitable body temperature rise that occurs in a race like the marathon. I wasn't going to use it because I was not finding the heat a problem but then, when I got to the race start, we were in a room and I became a bit hot and flustered so I threw it on and it probably helped me relax more than anything. There were also a few other athletes wearing them. Did it benefit me? Probably 1 % although I feel as though I had acclimatized to the heat really well in Ostia.

N.M. Did you hydrate any differently for the Athens Marathon compared to other cool weather marathons?

L.T. Not really, although I obviously tried to consume as much fluid as possible before the race. In the race I made a conscious effort to get all my drinks. At about 17 kilometres I felt like I was going to vomit as the drinks weren't leaving my stomach properly so I went back to plain water and did not have any problems after that. At every 2.5 kilometre drink station I made sure I got my drinks and used the sponges.

N.M. What do you drink apart from water?

L.T. A thing called "Carbo Shots" which is an electrolyte replacement drink. The concentration was at about 6% carbohydrate, which was probably a bit high and may have caused the problem at 17 kilometres. For my next marathon we are looking at reducing the carbohydrate content to about 4% so that it is more easily absorbed.

N.M. You had a lead-up race over 8.5 kilometres in the Italian town of Almatrice and Stefano Baldini won convincingly. (Ed. Baldini won in 23.44. Lee was 6th in 24.55). After Almatrice, did you think Baldini was the man to beat in Athens? (Ed. Stefano Baldini won the Athens Olympic Marathon in 2:10.55)

L.T. I know Stefano pretty well and he's a great racer. Almatrice was also a big test for me because I knew that I was super-fit and I was keen to see what sort of racing form I was in. As it turned out, Almatrice was pretty similar to my Olympic race in that I felt really strong but I just didn't have 5th gear. The last 5 kilometres at Almatrice was up-hill and I consider myself a really good hill runner. However, Baldini hit the bottom of the hill and just took off and blew me away, taking a minute out of me in that 5 kilometre climb. At the time I thought that I was just tired, that I had three weeks to go and that I'd be fine by marathon day. Looking back, I think I probably over-trained but under-raced all year.

N.M. Over the last year you have changed your training so that it is more marathon specific, with your tougher sessions now on a Tuesday, Friday and your Sunday long run. The reason behind the change?

L.T. At the start of the Olympic year I wanted to do everything possible to run the best race I could run, especially after my experience in Sydney. So I sat down and looked back on what I had been doing and what I could do better. One of the conclusions I came to was that I was just not strong enough so I decided to do more mileage. I then worked out how much my body could handle and 240 kilometres a week ended up being roughly the figure that worked. Then I thought that if I was going to do that much running, I needed to change things around so that I wasn't doing sessions every second day. The two things that went hand in hand were that if I was going to do all that mileage, I couldn't race too often. Looking back now, it was probably not the right plan but the bottom line was that I wanted to stand on the start line to the Athens Olympic Marathon thinking that I had no regrets. I would rather be sitting here now saying to you that, yes, I did over-train a little bit rather than following the usual program, finishing 28th and thinking, "if only I had of trained harder?" Well, I could not have trained any harder and I did everything I could to try to run well – it just didn't happen on the day.

N.M. Did you ever go above 240 kilometres a week?

L.T. I was probably doing more than 240 kilometres a week because people who know me well know that if I go out for an hour run I will usually call it 14 or 15 kilometres whereas there

are days when I'm 'clipping along' at a faster pace and would cover maybe 16 kilometres. So, some of my diary entries that read 240 kilometre weeks might be closer to 250 kilometres.

N.M. Unlike Sydney, where you spent time in the Olympic Village, for Athens you tried a different preparation.

L.T. Yes, I stayed at a hotel out near the marathon start. Being in the Village for the Sydney Olympics, I saw the highs and lows and there's lots of partying going on after athletes finish competing, so the Village can be very distracting. And because I was so focused on running well, I didn't need any of those distractions. So, from the start I had a plan of the training that I was going to do, the races I would run and the places I would stay and I was very comfortable with my race preparation.

N.M. As the Men's Olympic Marathon is the last event on the last day, I would imagine it could be very emotionally draining just waiting around?

L.T. Yes, and the event is tough enough as it is without having to wait so long. We stayed out at a place called Marathonus, which was where the marathon started and I only flew in four days before the race. It was funny because I was in Ostia training and the Olympics are on and the whole world has stopped and here I am training in the morning and hanging out with Freyja after that, quite oblivious to what was happening in Athens as the TV coverage was in Italian and they weren't showing any Australian stuff. So, in many ways, it did not feel like the Olympic Games for me and even when I was in the hotel, it felt more like a 'big city' marathon. That was the mentality we wanted to go in with – keep it simple, do our own thing and don't get caught up in all the hype. And even though I didn't have the greatest of races, I would not change a thing about my final preparations.

N.M. A very good friend of yours, Kerryn McCann ran the Women's Marathon a week before. Did you follow her run? (Ed. Kerryn McCann finished in 31st place, running 2:41.41)

L.T. Yes, I saw Kerryn's run and I spoke to her after her event and she was obviously disappointed with her result but with true Aussie spirit she stuck at it and finished. But from races like that you can learn a lot and hopefully use that knowledge next time around. Kerryn has recovered well and is now getting ready for the New York Marathon in November.

N.M. The women had a brutally hot evening for their race. Was it hard watching their race and all the dramas associated with Paula Radcliffe pulling out knowing that seven days later it would be your turn?

L.T. I think for the women it was 34 degrees and for us it was 29 – 30 degrees. Kerryn did say that she didn't have a problem with the heat but may have over-trained a little like myself, went from altitude a little too late so there were a couple of things that she was not completely happy with.

N.M. You mentioned that your fiancée, Freyja was with you overseas in your preparations but you also had Steve Moneghetti and Ian Cover with you for the final days. Having people around who you feel comfortable with must have been an advantage?

L.T. I think that leading into a big race everyone needs positive people around them rather than people that stress you out and cause conflict.

N.M. Let's talk about the actual Olympic Marathon. How did the race pan out for you?

L.T. Our plans going in were to go "Bang!" at 25 kilometres into the race and run as hard as I could until 35 kilometres, then with the last seven kilometres, what would happen would happen. Well, the lead group went at 20 – 21 kilometres and I couldn't find

5th gear to go with them. After that the elastic band gradually stretched and stretched until it broke at 24 kilometres and I could not get back on. From then on, it was a really tough day at the office. And even though I was picking guys off, eventually I got tired and a few of them got back in front of me over the last five kilometres. I graded my race as a C for effort in that top ten was going to be an A and top 20 was going to be a B and top 30 was a C. I was content with my run, there are no excuses, it was just one of those days where things just didn't go quite right.

N.M. Was there obvious surging going on during the first half of the race?

L.T. Yes, there was. In Championship races, where you don't have pace-makers, you have the Africans up front surging and slowing all the time and that had me struggling because I didn't have the zip in my legs, which is a sign that I had over-trained a little. When the pace was constant, I felt fine but with the surging, I was struggling to get back on each time. And, when the decisive move was made around half-way, I just couldn't bridge the gap. Even at 24 kilometres I thought that I could run on well and pick up a lot of places, but I couldn't do it. De Cecco, the Italian that finished 9th, was back with me at 23 – 24 kilometres but was able to snap out of the rut he was in and finish on strongly. The course was hard but I had trained appropriately for that, it was a hot day but I had done the heat training so I have no excuses. My run wasn't a "Barry Crocker" and it wasn't my best run – it was somewhere in between – a good, solid run.

N.M. What were your thoughts when Hendrik Raamala of South Africa went to the front so early?

L.T. To go that early, it was never going to happen. And he did it in a fashion where he just sprinted down hill and it was always going to catch up with him – it was just silly!

N.M. No surprises that Raamala was a D.N.F.?

L.T. No. But he's a guy that has got so much to offer in the marathon. He's run 2.08 once, but with the number of 60 minute half marathons that he's run, he definitely should be running 2.05.

N.M. The Brazilian, Vanderlei de Lima went through half in 67.23. What was your split?

L.T. I was about 67.48.

N.M. So, you were still thereabouts.

L.T. Yes, at that stage the elastic band was just starting to stretch.

N.M. The last few kilometres, when you ran through the darkened streets, looked quite eerie. How did it feel?

L.T. Actually, it was quite awesome. It was well lit and the crowds were lining the streets. And to run into the historic Panathinaiko Stadium was probably the highlight of my athletic career. Running through the darkness as a solitary runner made me feel like I belonged as a marathoner. At that stage it was just me and a race so steeped in history and tradition.

N.M. Could you see the stadium lit up in front of you?

L.T. Yes, it was lit up like the Fourth of July – it was unbelievable. Over the last few kilometres we ran down a road and I could see the lights and the crowds waiting for us. Then we ran around the old, historic track. The hardest thing about that was that the bends were so tight, about 30 metre bends and with our legs so stuffed, it was pretty hard to get around.

N.M. On TV it reminded me of the old, hard black track at Landy Field. Is it black asphalt or is it a black synthetic running track?

L.T. No, it's a black synthetic running track.

N.M. Unfortunately, Channel 7 in their wisdom, crossed to the Rhythmic Gymnastics two minutes before you finished but I hear that crossing the line was a pretty emotional experience for you.

L.T. There were two or three key factors leading into the race for me. Obviously, the biggest one was the disappointment of Sydney. Honestly, I swear that I don't remember finishing the marathon in Sydney even though my Mum and my Dad were there with 110 000 other people. This time I was determined to enjoy the moment I crossed the line, no matter what the result. And running the original route, in a race made famous by the legendary Pheidippides, then coming into the Panathinaiko Stadium was an awesome feeling but also a great way to close the book on a pretty tough four years and a lot of emotion spilled out, especially seeing as my Mum, Freyja, Mona, Ian Cover and Bart (Andrew Lambart) were there to share the moment with me. This was a highlight that I will cherish forever.

N.M. The next day you went for a run with Mona up to the Acropolis. Not just a standard recovery run?

L.T. No. There's a Chris Wardlaw tradition that after a major championship you go for a "Soaring With The Eagles" run that signifies the end of one journey and the beginning of another. So, the day after the marathon I said to Mona that we should run to the top of the Acropolis. Freyja was with us too and I was not running too comfortably or quickly, but we eventually made it. At the top of the Acropolis I made a pact with Mona and Freyja that I would continue running for another four years until the Beijing Olympics. In making such a decision, there are many things that need to be considered: like is it financially viable, can I improve, have I achieved all my goals? I had gone through all of those questions and I know in my heart that I can finish in the top ten in Beijing. Two things that I took out of the Athens Olympic Marathon are that the guys who finished first, third and fourth are all 34 – 35 years old, and I will be 35 in Beijing and secondly, due to injuries, I had given those guys in Athens a two year head start, so if I can stay injury-free between now and Beijing, I will be standing on the starting line feeling pretty confident about my chances.

N.M. After his fall in the 1500 metres at the Atlanta Olympics, an inconsolable Hicham El Guerrouj was photographed sobbing under the stadium long after the crowds had departed. El Guerrouj had this photo framed and placed it in his bedroom so that everyday he would be reminded of what had happened and what he needed to do to become an Olympic Champion. Do you have any motivational devices that remind you of the Sydney disappointment and the hard work required to turn things around?

L.T. Every single day I relived the nightmare of Sydney. But I didn't need any motivation to get me going. However, when I was in Athens last year, I purchased a post card of the Panathinaiko Stadium and I wrote "Top 10" across the card and placed it on my bathroom mirror. I also got some yellow "Post-It" notes and numbered each one 1 – 51, because there were 51 weeks until the Olympic Marathon, and every Sunday I'd pull one "Post-It" off as a sort of count-down to my race. The reason I placed these on the bathroom mirror was that at the start of each day and the end of each day, I'd be reminded of my goal and what I had to do to achieve it. I can honestly say that in all of my 31 years, I have never shown as much commitment and dedication to my sport as I've shown in the last twelve months. So, I'm proud that I did everything possible to run the best that I could and I have no regrets. Last Thursday I went to Ballarat and had my post-race analyse with Mona and we went over everything. Many people might know a

little of what I've been through over the last four years but they won't fully understand so it was great to close one chapter in Athens and now I can look optimistically forward to the next four years.

N.M. As an elite athlete you set incredibly high goals for yourself, and work unbelievably hard but can you still go out and have a run purely for enjoyment?

L.T. Yes, I enjoy my running now more than I ever have. You asked before about the people around me and the people who support me: people like Freyja, my family, Mona, Andrew Lambart, Greg Whitfield, who massages me, Danny Hopkins at Nike. When you're surrounded by positive, supportive people, it makes the running so much easier and more enjoyable. I guess I do set tough goals for myself but at the end of the day, I do believe that they are realistic and achievable. It's not as though I say that I'm going to break the World Record or that I'm going to win the Olympic gold medal. Saying things like aiming for the top ten or breaking Deeks' record are all things I believe I am capable of doing. And although I haven't achieved these goals yet, I firmly believe that the next four years will be the best of my running career.

N.M. Not every elite athlete can be an Ian Thorpe or a Cathy Freeman where sponsors reward their efforts handsomely. In fact, most Olympians make great financial sacrifices to represent Australia.

L.T. Yes, that's right, but getting back to your previous question and do I still love to run, and the answer is 'yes'. If I was running purely for the money, I wouldn't be going to the Olympics but rather running the road-racing circuit in the States and running 'Big City Marathons'. Eventually, I might not win a major marathon or make the money I think I deserve, but to say that you've been a triple Olympian would be a fantastic achievement and that's something you can't put a price on.

N.M. What are your race plans for the next twelve months?

L.T. Aaaahhh my running world sort of ended at the Athens Olympics and I haven't made any firm plans yet. However, I've said to Mona that I want to get back to some normal training, with three sessions a week and running 160 – 180 kilometres a week. I'd also like to do a little more racing so races like the 'Burnie Ten', the 'Noosa Bolt', the 'Olympic Dream' might come into calculations. In fact, I might do more racing in the next three months than I did in the previous year.

N.M. Any desire to head back to the track and see if you can improve on your 5000 / 10 000 metre times?

L.T. Definitely the 10 k. However, I don't think I'll ever run faster over 5000 metres. I believe that 7.41 for 3000 metres and 13.14 for 5000 metres are as fast as I can run for those distances but I'm pretty confident that I can run 27.30 for 10 000 metres. So that's one of my goals for the next two years. In fact, I said to Mona the other day that I might try and qualify in the 10 k. for next year's World Championships – I'm definitely not going to run the World Championships Marathon. Before we were talking about setting goals and I pride myself on, if I say I'll do something, then I'll bust a gut to achieve it and I believe that I can definitely run faster over 10 000 metres than my 27.51. The 10 k. has been a frustrating distance for me in that I've either run really well or had a shocker. Now, with all the strength I've gained from the marathon training over the last few years, I just need to get back on the track, get a bit of rhythm back, run a few races, then we'll see what happens in the Zatopek or at the Nationals. I might even head to Europe and do a few track races over there.

N.M. And of course, there's a pretty big event for you in March.

L.T. Yes, I'm getting married to Freyja in March. I've found a fantastic girl in Freyja, a person who is really supportive of what I

do and we're both really looking forward to starting a new chapter in our lives together.

N.M. Lee, thanks very much for your time. All the very best to you and Freyja and your future together as well as the next four years leading up to Beijing.

L.T. Thanks, Neil.

ONE SPECIAL DAY

For most of us, Saturday the 28th of August 2004 was just another day. However, not for Craig Mottram, for at 9:05pm. on a warm Athens' night, he would take his place on the start line in the Olympic 5000 metre Final against the greatest athletes on the planet. With the world watching on, six years of dedication, perseverance and damn hard work would be put to the ultimate test. Now back home in Australia after seven long months training and racing on the other side of the world, Craig has been good enough to allow us a peak inside the world of an Olympian as he prepares for his 'one special day'.

SATURDAY 28th AUGUST 2004

8:30am. Woke after a very restless night's sleep. I reckon I slept for an hour at the most and I felt my arms sweating most of the night. Kept trying to remind myself that this was going to be just another race but there were too many thoughts running through my mind and I found it very hard to get to sleep unlike the night after the heat and the next night, when I fell asleep easily.

9:00am. Headed over to the dining hall for breakfast. Ate muesli, toast and some fruit – just the usual pre-race food that works for me. Unfortunately, the only coffee in the Olympic Village was very ordinary so had a cup of tea instead. Started drinking my sports drink. Even though the temperature would be fine for my night race, I need to make sure that I'm well hydrated so I will be drinking sports drink and water throughout the day. For a couple of days after the heat I was drinking Endura Optimiser, a carbohydrate drink to help recovery and aid carbohydrate loading. Now it's the day of the race, I will start using the Endura Electrolyte Mix, as I have been doing for all my races. Will also carry a water bottle around with me during the day.

10:00am. Arrived back at my apartment and tried to relax. Watched some of the morning's events on TV but avoided the athletics as I didn't want to think about running just yet and become too nervous.

11:00am. Went for a very easy 15 minute jog around the warm-up track, which was only about two minutes from where I was staying, just to get the legs ticking over. Lauren (Hewitt) came with me and she chatted about everything but running to take my mind off tonight's race. I don't have a massage on the day I race so had a shower and tried to relax by reading the book that was made into the movie, "Black Hawk Down". However, I'm not great at sitting down for long periods to read and found it hard to concentrate. Consequently, not too many pages were read.

12:00am. Gave up on reading and borrowed "Crocodile Dundee" from Lauren's room-mates, Jana Pittman, Tamsyn Lewis, Sarah Jamieson and Bronwyn Thompson. This old Paul Hogan movie was just what was needed as it was very funny and it killed a couple of hours. The middle of the day can really drag when you're racing late at night so it was great to find something that took my mind off what lay ahead. Because all the hard training has been

completed, waiting to race at the major championships can involve a lot of resting and just hanging around, so it's important to keep the stress levels down by doing things that take your mind off running.

3:00pm. Went back to the dining hall and ate some bread, a banana and a salad – had lots of tomato in the salad, as I love tomatoes.

3:40pm. Nic Bideau arrived in the dining hall and we had a quick chat about the race. However, we have been practising and talking about what needed to be done for the last twelve months. Obviously, there were minor changes in how the race might go because of who had made the final but basically, my plan is to relax early, follow whatever happens and try to be there with a couple of laps to go. We knew that I could run the last kilometre in 2.24 off 13 minute 5000 metre pace. However, it was unlikely that it would be that quick. We also felt that I could run 1.53 – 1.54 for the last 800 metres, provided I was still there. Obviously, the way Olympic Finals are run, still being there was going to be the difficult part. On race days I might only see Nic for 30 minutes or so and that could be in the warm-up area before the race. For Athens, he had Benita Johnson and Hayley McGregor competing so he needed to see them as well. He was also the Distance Coach for the Australian Team so he was always around if I needed to catch up with him.

4:00pm. Went back to my apartment and had a lie down for 60 minutes although I did not sleep.

5:00pm. Headed back to the dining hall for a snack. My routine is to eat 4 hours before a race. Just had some bread and banana and sports drink. Have stopped having toast as it takes a little longer to digest that plain bread.

5:45pm. Back to the apartment and started organising my gear and getting ready.

6:00pm. Had a 15 minute hot and cold shower to invigorate and wake up my body. With so much resting and lounging around, the body can become a little listless and the hot and cold shower flushes out any lactic acid that might still be in the muscles and snaps me back into 'go' mode. However, I only have a brief 10 second blast of cold water so that the cold is not too uncomfortable. Took my time as I did not want to arrive at the Olympic Stadium too soon as there was no shade in the warm-up area.

7:00pm. Caught the bus from the Village to the Olympic Stadium with American 5000 metre finalist, Tim Broe and Nic. A pretty quiet trip with not too much talk going on. Arrived 30 minutes later.

7:45pm. Started warming-up. Just the usual routine – an easy 15 minute jog around the warm-up track infield, some light stretches, some drills and only two strides because we were going to be in the call room for 45 minutes and I did not want to leave all my warm-up out on the warm-up track. Also, I wanted to leave myself some things to do in the call room so that I was not just sitting around getting cold.

8:15pm. Went into the first call room, which was situated at the warm-up track, just 200 metres away from the main stadium. The official checks our numbers, bags, confiscates any mobile phones or walkmans (these are given back after the race). Then, all the 5000 metre finalists walk single file down a huge ramp to the second call room under the main stadium, where our spikes are checked. There's a TV on in the corner showing Kelly Holmes winning her second gold medal in the 1500 metres. However, I concentrate on doing a few stretches and staying loose. Can see Bekele and El Guerrouj. Because of their culture, both are very 'touchy feely' type people so they kiss and hug as a greeting. I give them a quick nod from the other side of the room and keep a pretty wide berth. After his fantastic win in the 1500 metres, El Guerrouj is looking pretty

relaxed. In fact, the call room before a major middle-distance race is a pretty quiet place. Most athletes give each other a nod or a wry smile, if you can manage one but that's about it. Bekele and his two countrymen, Gebremariam and Berhanu sit quietly together. Will they work as a team like the Ethiopians did in the 10 000 metres? El Guerrouj sits quietly by himself, occasionally flicking through a small book that I assume is the Koran. It's funny, but most of us look as though we're about to be marched out and shot rather than run a race.

8:45pm. Leave the second call room after only about 5 minutes and we're led under the stadium where there's 70 – 80 metres of athletic track where we complete our warm-ups with a few more strides.

8:55pm. We're led out onto the track for the start of the Olympic 5000 metre final. While the atmosphere is not quite as electric as it was for Sydney, there is still a huge buzz as the crowd erupts. This is it! This is the moment I have been working so hard for over the last six years. As we walk down the back straight, Borzakovskiy is completing his victory lap after winning the 800 metre final. The crowd is going bananas and Borzakovskiy looks like he's floating on air. I'm ready to go but there's a victory ceremony for another American gold medal so we have to stand around and wait for that. Fortunately, the officials can see that we're all pretty toey so we're allowed to jog around the start area.

9:05pm. Finally, we're called to the line and the camera pans past each athlete. I give a wave and a smile as I'm introduced to the crowd. This is the most relaxed I've been all day. Once the warm-up starts and I'm moving around, the nerves tend to disappear pretty quickly. This is a situation that I've been in many times before and while I can't control what is about to happen, I'm feeling pretty comfortable. I keep telling myself that this is just another race and that I'm in great shape. It's the days leading up to the Olympic final that the race can be built up into something that it's not. Funnily enough, as the starter called, "take your marks", the strangest thought flashes into my mind. Before I go to the track for any race, I always brush my teeth and tonight I have forgotten to do this. Seconds before the Olympic 5000 metre final, for a brief second, I'm thinking, "#%&#, I've forgotten to brush my teeth!" However, I must stress that forgetting to brush my teeth had absolutely no effect on how I raced. Anyway, the gun fires and we're off. The first 200 metres passes in a tick over 32 seconds then the pace drops rapidly and we're jogging, going through the next two laps in 74 and 72 seconds. We pass one kilometre in 2.58 and even though it's really slow, it's hard to fully relax because I'm on edge, waiting for something to happen and someone to pick up the pace. There are even a few little chuckles coming from the group as the American guy, Tim Broe says, "Come on guys, this is the Olympic Final, they'll be booing us soon!"

Obviously, because the top guys could win off a fast pace or a sprint finish, they are not too keen to do all the early leading. However, the pace soon picks up and we're now rolling out laps of 62, 61, 62. I'm feeling comfortable, I'm positioned really well, just behind Bekele and El Guerrouj, the athletes who are going to be there at the finish. If I can relax in behind them, when the race gets serious, I will be already involved. El Guerrouj sits nicely tucked in behind the leaders and looks really comfortable. He's a real 'Rolls Royce' and always looks so smooth. In fact, he's one of those runners who never seems to be breathing heavily. Bekele too looks smooth although he runs with a choppy style and his short legs seem to go at a million miles an hour. It's interesting the way the different athletes prepare for a big race. Between the 5000 metre heat and tonight's final I just did a couple of easy 30 minute runs and some relaxed, rhythm 200's in about 30 seconds so that I don't accumulate any lactate acid. On the other hand, Bekele and the other Ethiopians were still running

hard one kilometre reps after the 10 000 metre final and hard 600 metre reps between the 5000 metre heats and tonight's final. We reach 3000 metres in just over 8.10 and I'm still feeling pretty good. We're about to enter the business end of the race. As we reach the fourth kilometre we're now in single file, a sure sign that the pace is starting to take a toll. I'm now starting to struggle and a couple of athletes pass me. A few doubts start to creep into my mind as the elastic band starts to slowly stretch and stretch. This is where I've got to hang on! For the last three laps I run 63, 64, 61. Unfortunately for me, Bekele and El Guerrouj run 61, 60 and 53, so my final 800 metres is pretty tough. They were kicking it down and still fighting for the gold, whereas I was dropping off with no chance to fight for a medal. In the Olympic heat, I was able to run 54 seconds for the last lap. When I ran 12.55 in London, I was able to run 55 seconds for the last lap, so still being involved in the race up front can make a huge difference to your finishing laps. Initially, as I cross the line I'm not sure of my finishing position but I look up at the screen and I'm relatively happy with my 8th place. We were hoping for top five and even though the race did not pan out the way I'd hoped for, I ran as well as I could on the night. However, if I had come 8th and was two seconds behind the winner, I would have been a lot happier than I am now finishing 8th but unable to keep up after the fourth kilometre.

9:25pm. I leave the track and pass through the media. Chat to Maurie Plant, who was working with the BBC, then Pat Welsh from Channel 7. Everyone seems pretty excited about my run, even though I'm still not sure what to think. Going over the race, the first three guys, El Guerrouj, Bekele and Kipchoge, were always going to be pretty tough to beat. However, I reckon that fourth or fifth place was a realistic chance if I ran my best race.

10:00pm. Went for a cool-down run and caught up with Nic. We jogged together for a while and he summed up my race pretty well with, "don't be too disappointed with your run, but don't be content with the outcome!" Leading up to Athens I had said to Lauren that after the Olympic Final, I didn't want to do any other races for a while but now I've started thinking about the 10 000 metres in Brussels in five days time. Continue my cool-down with Alistair Cragg, Tim Broe and Gebremariam, who also talk about Brussels.

11:30pm. Went back to the Olympic Village and had McDonalds, an ice-cream and a few drinks for the first time in ages. Normally, I'm really strict on my diet but after each major championship, I like to do 'normal' things for a week as a way to unwind.

2:00am. Went to bed thinking that I have no regrets: the last twelve months has been uninterrupted as far as training and racing goes, each race was a progression, my preparation was fantastic, my Olympic heat went perfectly and the final was solid and a great learning experience.

9:30am. Went for a solo 65 minute 'Commitment Run'. Ran at a very easy pace. A great chance to think over last night's race.

RESULTS 2004 OLYMPIC 5000 METRE FINAL

1. El Guerrouj Hicham	MAR	13:14.39
2. Bekele Kenenisa	ETH	13:14.59
3. Kipchoge Eliud	KEN	13:15.10
4. Gebremariam Gebre-egziabher	ETH	13:15.35
5. Berhanu Dejene	ETH	13:16.92
6. Kibowen John	KEN	13:18.24
7. Tadesse Zersenay	ERI	13:24.31
8. Mottram Craig	AUS	13:25.70
9. Bellani Hicham	MAR	13:31.81
10. Saïdi-Sief Ali	ALG	13:32.57

11. Broe Tim	USA	13:33.06
12. Cragg Alistair Ian	IRL	13:43.06
13. Goumri Abderrahim	MAR	13:47.27
14. Moussaoui Samir	ALG	14:02.01
Chebii Abraham	KEN	DNF

SPLITS / LEADER

1000m	Gebremariam Gebre-egziabher	2:58.46
2000m	Kipchoge Eliud	5:35.99
3000m	Bekele Kenenisa	8:10.89
4000m	Kipchoge Eliud	10:48.6

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All the best to those competing over the
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