

BARRY LOVEDAY - ULTRA LEGEND

Barry Loveday, born 5th October 1977, migrated to Australia from England in 2009 and settled in Melbourne with his wife Vicki and son. Living in Pascoe Vale, Coburg Harriers was the obvious choice for him and he was soon a regular runner with the club. In England, his normal running regime had consisted of charity runs up to 10km and he was not looking for anything further.

It was in April 2009 that he witnessed his first ultra, the Coburg 24 Hour event. Talking to runners Justin and Sharon Scholz, he was amazed at the complexity of the event, the variety of goods on their feed table and their obvious organisation. That night at home, he thought further about the event and realised that they would still be pounding the laps while he slept through the night. This was something that he had to try!

With a limited amount of longer training under his belt, he embarked on his ultra career with the Tan Ultra (53.4 km) in August 2009. At the moment his career total stands at 4 ultra runs and 1 ultra walk - but for a bloke who has done so few ultras, Barry has made a huge mark on the Australian scene. Let's look at the 4 runs first

August 2009 - Tan Ultra, 53.5km

1. Barry Loveday 3:46:15

Barry's first Ultra was in August 2009 when he chose what is generally regarded as a very tough first up - the Tan Ultra in Melbourne. Just think about it - 13 laps of the Anderson St Hill! But it proved no great challenge for him, winning by the proverbial mile in a huge time of 3:46:15. From the race report:

I must make mention of the truly brilliant fun run time set by Barry Loveday, smashing to bits last year's time by a remarkable 34m 57s in the 53.5km event – (that's an average of 16 min laps, which for record is a minute better than my PB for one!) amazing and all the more impressive under the weather conditions.

April 2010 - Coburg 24 Hour Victorian Championship

1. Barry Loveday 232.602km

Being a local Coburg Harrier lad, Barry chose Coburg for his 24 Hour debut in April 2010 and once again, it was a huge victory for him. From the race report:

As other fall by the wayside, Barry took control, able to maintain a steady 10km/hr gait hour after hour. By halfway, he was well in front with 120.400km as against Justin Scholz with 114.000km and David Kennedy with 111.200km. Just before midnight, Justin gave it away, leaving Barry some 10km ahead of David with a further 11km gap to Tim Ablett.

Barry defied the odds in only his second ultra and his first 24 hour event. Although left on his own overnight with no support staff, he continued his 10km/hr pace right through the night and did not drop his first lap until 6AM on the Sunday morning – 199.600km in 20 hours! By that stage, David with 187.600km and Rudi Kinsofer with 158.000km were in second and third places but looking unlikely to challenge. The only question was – how much would Barry slow!

Well, he did slow but not by all that much, still managing to get around at a consistent 8km/hr with no breaks of any significance. His final distance of 232.602km saw him become the first Coburg Harriers athlete to win this prestigious event and the cheering was long and hard.

During the 2010 winter season, Barry adopted an innovative training program - he combined competing for Coburg Harriers in Athletics Victoria's road and cross country season with his ultra training regime by running from his Pascoe Vale home to AV races held in metropolitan Melbourne. This included a run to Bundoora and back for the 12 km cross country race and later in the season to Burnley and back for the Half Marathon. His next two runs showed that he had moved up another rung in his fitness and running ability.

August 2010 - Tan Ultra, 100km

1. Barry Loveday 7:14:45

Back to the Tan again but this time Barry chose to move up from the 53.5km distance to the 100km distance. For those who know the inner Melbourne jogging track around the Botanic Gardens, that's 24 times up the Anderson St Hill! And once again, he won, this time by an amazing 1 hour and 21 mins. Again, the race director summed it up well

The most impressive and subject to AURA confirmation was the fantastic time of Barry Loveday in the 100m. By my reckoning he posted the fastest 100k time for over 20 years in Australia as recorded by AURA and is ranked 1 in the 100km for 2010. We may well have witnessed a small piece of history last weekend around the TAN. Barry improved

the previous record by over 71mins and as you may have seen from some of the wonderful pictures posted on CR, he finished strongly and he talked to me about trying to go under 7hrs next time, which I think he could well do – what a talent.

Barry's time was the 8th best Australian time of all time and the best in recent years. Given the course which is not exactly a fast one, the room for improvement is obvious. He now holds the Tan records for both the 100km and the 53.5km. And I can't realistically see anyone except Barry beating them for some time yet.



Left: Barry on his way to 232km at Coburg in April 2012

Right: Barry on his way to a win in the Tan 100km Challenge in August 2010 (www.fstop5.com)

January 2011 - Narrabeen Allnighter 12 Hour Race

1. Barry Loveday 147km

Barry's fourth ultra outing was in January 2011 in Narrabeen, NSW, and it was yet another runaway win, 24km ahead of the second placed runner. This is best 100km Road performance EVER by an Australian. In fact, the only two better performances were both done on the track and are as follows

1.	Kouros Yiannis	VIC	161.400	Kensington, SA	04-Oct-97	41
2.	Perdon George	VIC	155.800	Olympic Park, VIC	23-May-70	45

It's not too bad to be third behind Yiannis Kouros and George Perdon, the two best ever Australian ultra runners!

The last word to Barry:

Dad and I finally got back home to Melbourne Sunday Night!!! I struggled to walk down the plane stairway and once on the tarmac I was offered a ride on the baggage buggy, which I gratefully accepted. WOW, love Sydney and Narrabeen great places, lovely people. Got to view the course Saturday lunchtime, good course, very flat. Found running conditions very humid, not used to that sort of heat in Melbourne or the UK so I had to dig deep to stay focused on my race. Then of course the heavy rain and darkness made it that bit tougher for everyone. I am very pleased with my performance of 147km, I would love to eventually have a crack at George Perdon's performance of 155km set back in the 70's. I would like to thank everyone at the race especially my father who crewed for me for 12hrs and Jane who helped me recover after my race, also a big thank you to Ron and all the helpers who organised the event and for their generous hospitality, plus a big thank you to Horrie for his help and encouragement during the race

Unfortunately these superb runs came at a personal cost with a niggling groin injury that failed to respond to rest and eventually forced him out for what was to be an 18 month period. We had met along the Moonee Ponds bike track earlier this year when I was out for a walk and he was out for a slow rehab run. The conversation soon turned to when and how he would return to competition and the fact that he was doing a lot of long walking as part of his recovery. I invited him to join us for our weekly walks and was impressed when he turned up and effortlessly fitted in with our walking speed. The style was pretty basic but the fitness and strength were obvious.

He soon confided to us that he was intending to start his walking career by attempting the Australian 48 Hour championship in Caboolture in late July. It would be an understatement to say that we were amazed but the rest is history. After a few very long walks to prepare himself and with lots of advice from us on technique, he made the trip to Queensland and the rest is history - he completed his first walking race with an Australian All-Comers record of 283.500km and became Australian Centurion number 62 along the way with a 100 mile split of 22:37:57.



Barry on his way to his centurion finish in Caboolture

We welcome Barry as our newest member and we look forward to seeing many more superb run and walk performances from this very talented athlete.

Tim Erickson
22 August 2012