

STEVE JORDAN – AUSTRALIAN CENTURION 64

Steve Jordan began running in the late 1980's, completing his first marathon in 1993. He turned into quite a reasonable runner - his best marathon time was 3.18.31, done in the Melbourne Marathon in 1995, and his best time for 10km was 37.45, done in an Olympic Dream event. In total, he competed in over 200 Victorian Road Runner events and 150 Hobson Bay Running Club events and became a Spartan in 2010, completing his 10th Melbourne Marathon.

In 2002, Steve was diagnosed with a stress fracture in the ankle and a further stress fracture in the foot which meant he was unable to run for 9 months. The late Christine Griffiths aroused his interest in walking events and he found that he was able to walk without pain and without aggravating the stress fractures. He did many walks with Christine whilst he was unable to run and gradually improved his times and the distance he was covering.

In 2004, he went to the Coburg Track and watched the runners and walkers participating in their annual 6/12/24 hour events and he then set himself a goal to participate in the 6 hour walk event in 2005, with the aim of going further later on. It was a good start as he won the 6 Hour event with a promising 43.600km.



Steve attempts his first 6 Hour walk ultra in April 2005 at Coburg

In 2007, he upped the ante and attempted the Coburg 12 Hour walk, finishing 2nd in 85.980km. The next year, he set his sights even higher, targeting the Coburg 24 Hour walk but he found it was a very different kettle of fish as he struggled to 109.932km.

With that inauspicious first 24 Hour walk in 2008, Steve set his mind on a centurion qualification and he was back every year, hoping for the elusive 100 mile finish. Here is the list of his long distance walk races on his way to finally achieving his 100 mile finish - talk about a milestone a long time in the making

2005	Coburg 6H, Coburg, VIC	43.600km, 1 st
2006	Coburg 6H, Coburg, VIC	44.121km, 2 nd (PB)
2007	Coburg 12H, Coburg, VIC	85.980km, 2 nd
2008	Coburg 6H, Coburg, VIC	45.043km, 4 th
	Coburg 24H, Coburg, VIC	109.932km, 5 th
	Moe 6H, Moe, VIC	42.000km, 16 th
2009	Coburg 6H, Coburg, VIC	46.201km, 4 th (PB)
	Coburg 24H, Coburg, VIC	129.801km, 5 th (PB)
	Sri Chinmoy 24H, Brisbane, QLD	111.113km, 15 th
2010	Moe 6H, Moe, VIC	42.830km, 3 rd
	Launceston 12H, Launceston, TAS	84.700km, 1 st
	Coburg 6H, Coburg, VIC	44.440km, 3 rd
	Coburg 24H, Coburg, VIC	114.285km, 5 th
	Sri Chinmoy 24H, St Lucia, QLD	138.533km, 13 th (PB)
	Tan Ultra (53.5km), Melbourne, VIC	7:28:08, 22 nd
	Moe 6H, Moe, VIC	42.714km, 17 th

2011	Launceston 12H, Launceston, TAS	79.385km, 2 nd
	Coburg 6H, Coburg, VIC	45.019km, 3 rd
	Coburg 24H, Coburg, VIC	113.628km, 5 th
	Sri Chinmoy 24H, Nathan, QLD	149.765km, 1 st (PB)
	Tan Ultra (53.5km), Melbourne, VIC	7:22:33, 29 th
2012	Injinji 12H, Canberra, ACT	71.227km, 2 nd
	Coburg 6H, Coburg, VIC	44.492km, 4 th
	Coburg 24H, Coburg, VIC	157.232km, 4 th (PB)
	Sri Chinmoy 24H, Blacktown, NSW	126.514km, 2 nd
	Queensland 24H Championship, Caboolture, QLD	115.635km, 2 nd
2013	Tan Ultra (53.5km), Melbourne, VIC	6:41:42, 33 rd (PB)
	Injinji 12H, Canberra, ACT	83.180km, 1 st
	Coburg 6H, Coburg, VIC	46.157km, 2 nd
	Coburg 24H, Coburg, VIC	148.504km, 1 st
	Sri Chinmoy 24H, Blacktown, NSW	164.478km, 8 th (PB)

Since his first ultra walk in 2005, he had walked numerous 6 Hour events and 12 Hour events and an amazing eleven 24 Hour events, never once qualifying. In 2009 at Coburg, he was on target for around 14 hours but could not maintain his pace in the second half. In 2012, once again at Coburg, Willy Vermeulen of Belgium and Steve both found themselves just a few laps short of the required distance in the dying hours of the race. Try as they might, they could not maintain the required pace over the final stages and were going to miss out on the 100 mile mark by only a few laps. Willy called it quits with about 40 minutes to go with a distance of 155.927 km while Steve slowed down and just walked it out, finishing with 157.232 km. They were indeed gallant efforts.

If he was ever going to do it, 2013 was going to be the year - he took 7 months long service leave from work so that he could train exclusively. He worked on his technique, racing with the Victorian Race Walking Club at Middle Park and changed his diet, shedding around 7kg as the year progressed. His 24 Hour race in Coburg saw him walk what was a personally disappointing 148km but he persisted in his training and looked ahead to his next opportunity - the Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour Championship in Blacktown, Sydney, in mid June.

And this was where it all came together as he put in an inspired walk. His centurion finish was never really in doubt as he passed the 12 Hour mark with just under 90km, a huge PB in itself. With only 71km to complete in the second 12 Hours of the race, only a disaster could prevent him from his goal. With a superb preparation under his belt, that disaster was never really going to occur and he powered on passing the 100 mile mark along the way in 23:13:33 and eventually reaching a total distance of 164.478km.



Steve savours the moment and stops for a photo as he passes the 100 mile mark in Sydney

Post race, Steve pondered on the long path that he had travelled to this point.

It has been a long but enjoyable journey to finally achieve my Centurion goal. I would not be able to achieve this without the support of many friends along the way who I would like to pass on my gratitude. First there was Terry Mahoney, my first running buddy who trained and coached me in the 80's and 90's and helped get me fit enough to do my first fun run and to run my first marathon. Then there are the many ultra walkers - Karyn O'Neill, Terry O'Neill, Michelle Thompson, Clarrie Jack, Peter Bennett and Brian Glover to name a few, who have all been a delight to train with and to compete against over long periods on and off the track. Lastly, there is Tim Erickson who has worked with me for many years, improving my speed and refining my style. Tim has made every training session a joy and without his help there is no way I would have been able to achieve my Centurion goal.

My goals for the future are to walk 100 miles in 24 hours at my home track at Coburg in 2014, walk 50km in 6 hours and to run another marathon.



**Steve was one of 4 walkers to achieve a centurion finish in Blacktown
Anyce Melham (C 65), Sharon Scholz (C 63), Justin Scholz (C 61) and Steve Jordan (C 64)**

Alas, Steve did not get the chance to achieve any of those goals. Within 12 months of that wonderful Sydney walk, he had been diagnosed with a brain tumour (in March 2014). Despite an operation and extensive chemo and radio therapy, the tumour continued to grow and his quality of life diminished.

He kept walking and competing right until the end, walking in the monthly VRR tan runs in both October and November and actually participating in a 6 Hour walk at Middle Park in early October. But his days were numbered and eventually he was forced into palliative care at the Austin Hospital where he passed away on Monday 14th December, aged 57.

It is rare to find someone like Steve who can commit himself so single mindedly to a goal - becoming a centurion. Few would have been prepared to come back year after year, only to suffer yet another failure each time. But from those failures came the most wonderful of victories. It goes without saying that Steve savoured his centurion badge even more than the rest of us - it was a success story that had been a long time in the making.

But there was much more to Steve than just walking and running. In the 6 years we walked and trained together, I never heard him swear, lose his cool or speak ill of anyone. He was interested in everyone and was the first to ring or offer to help if any of his friends suffered any sort of setback or health scare. He was indeed a gentle man in the true sense of the word.

We have indeed all lost a true friend.

Tim Erickson
Friday 19 December 2014