

ANYCE MELHAM – AUSTRALIAN CENTURION 65

C65 ANYCE MELHAM (23/11/1957)
100 Miles: 23:46:32
24 Hours: 162.431 km
Venue: 15-16 June, 2013, Blacktown Olympic Park NSW

Sydney based ultra running legend Anyce “Kip” Melham had tried to qualify as a centurion in the Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour Championship in June 2012 but slowed too much in the second half and missed out, eventually calling it quits at 122.800km. This year, he contacted me again to advise he would be back to complete unfinished business. And this is just what he did earlier this month in the 2013 Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour Championship in Sydney.

The final outcome - he passed the 100 mile mark in 23:46:32 and went on to walk 162.431km - does not do justice to the way in which he achieved his centurion mark. His hourly laps show the disciplined way in which he paced himself through the 24 Hours:

17, 33, 52, 69, 86, 104, 121, 138, 155, 173, 190, 207, 224, 241, 257, 274, 291, 306, 323, 339, 356, 372, 389, 406
17, 16, 19, 17, 17, 18, 17, 17, 17, 16, 17, 17, 17, 17, 16, 17, 17, 17, 16, 17, 16, 17, 17

It is not often that we see such an even paced walk - his 6 hourly splits were 41.6km, 82.8km, 122.8km and 162.4km. We were very concerned that Anyce did not have enough time up his sleeve after the first half but he assured us that he was on target and he was correct.



Anyce passes the 100 mile mark in his centurion qualifying walk in June 2013

I asked Anyce for a bit of background history: it makes for very interesting reading

Anyce was born in 1957 into a family of 10 children. His mother Maria, father Samuel and grandmother Annie have provided the most loving, caring and supportive environment that every family needs.

With dozens of cousins in the same street and immediate neighbourhood and open paddocks in which to play, the seeds for a healthy upbringing were sown.

As a 6 year old, Anyce broke his upper leg doing the splits while playing cricket on wet grass in the backyard. Elder brother Daryl carried him to the back porch and he spent a month in hospital in traction.

They say lightning strikes twice. Twenty years later, Cliff Young carried an incapacitated Anyce from a muddy, rain soaked Manly Oval on Easter Saturday night. Cliff had just demolished the field in the 1983 Australian 100 Miles Championship to successfully defend his title. Witnessing Cliff up close in that race and for the next decade has been the highlight and inspiration for Anyce every day since.

Three weeks after Manly, it was the world's turn to witness the magnificence, courage and humility of Cliff as

he surged to victory in the Sydney to Melbourne Classic.

Thirty years after Cliff inspired the world, Anyce feels humbled and honoured to join a select group of women and men who have walked 100 miles on the track in a day in Australia.

As a 15 year old, Anyce witnessed his first Olympic Games on TV. It was Munich 1972. The fuse was lit. Soon after, he and five brothers and cousin Eric joined Bankstown Sports Athletics Club. Under the expert care and coaching of Jim Heslop they all thrived. Jim is a gentleman and a gentle man.

A decade of track in the summer and cross country in the winter provided the perfect platform from which Anyce was able to launch his Ultramarathon running adventure.

Anyce's list of major running achievements reads impressively:

- Winner: Australian 24 Hour Track Championship, 2005, 197km. PB 213km.
- Winner: Australian 100 Miles Track Championship, 1980, 1984, 1985. PB 14:41:30.
- Winner: NSW 24 Hour Track Championship, 1989, 1990.
- Winner: NSW 12 Hour Track Championship, 1990, 1991. PB 130km.
- Winner: NSW 50 Miles Track Championship, 1986, 1988. PB 6:03:03.
- NSW Marathon Championship, 1980. PB 2:35:11.



Left: Anyce in walking mode (June 2013)

Right: Anyce shares the track with running legends David Standeven and Cliff Young - 1987 Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour

His first ultra was the annual NSW Road 50 Mile Championship, held on 1st October 1978. His time on that occasion was 6:50:59. In the 1979 edition of this race, he improved his time to 6:03:03, a time that still stands as his PB.

By 1980, he was a seasoned ultra competitor and a good one. For instance, on 13th April 1980, he won the Australian 100 Mile Track Championship at Cherrywood Village, Llandilo, in NSW. His splits indicate the quality of his run - Marathon in 3:11:16, 50 miles in 6:11:07, 100 km in 7:50:37 and a final 100 mile winning time of 14:41:30.

He also ran his marathon PB of 2:35:11 that year in the NSW Championship (22nd June 1980), in a tie for 20th place with his brother Ray. Overall, he has run five NSW Marathon Championships.

His first ever 24 Hour run was in the 1984 Sri Chinmoy Australian Championship where he finished 16th with 163.768 km - a centurion run on his first attempt. Since then he has amassed the enviable record of completing 26 of the Australian Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour Championships - a remarkable achievement - 1984-1987, 1989, 1990, 1992-1997, 1999, 2000, 2002-2013.

His 24 Hour running quickly improved. In the 1986 Sri Chinmoy championship, he was third with 202.862 km and in 1989 he was third once again with his PB time of 213.287 km. Even in 2005 at age 47, he ran 197.779 km and was the overall winner that year.

His PBs indicate the longevity and overall quality of his running

Marathon	2:35:11	NSW Marathon Championship, 1980
50 Miles	6:03:03	NSW 50 Mile Road Championship, 1979
100km	7:50:37	NSW 100 Mile Championship, 1980
12 Hours (Track)	130 km	NSW 12 Hour Track Championship, 1990
100 Miles	14:41:30	Cherrywood Village, Llandilo, NSW, 1980
24 Hours	213.287km	Sri Chinmoy Australian Championship, 1989

He is one of the most prolific of our Australian ultra runners. Up to and including his Blacktown walk on June 15/16, 2013, his tally of 54 ultra runs and walks reads as follows

Marathons	5	1977-1980
50 Miles	8	1978-1989
100 Miles	7	1980-1987
12 Hours	3	1990, 1991, 1998
24 Hours	30	1984-2013 (including 26 Sri Chinmoy)
100km	1	2003

And now he has capped off his wonderful career by joining us as Australian Centurion Number 65.

What now for Anyce?

Now that I have been fortunate to achieve the 100 mile walk after two attempts, I will resume running after an 18 month walk break. As always, my main goal is to chase victory in the Australian 24 hour Track Race.

And some final words on his wonderful runs of years past:

Those days are long gone and as you know, the trick is to age gracefully.



**Anyce 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)**

It has been an invigorating experience to research Anyce's running career and to learn more about this humble and unassuming athlete. Anyce, long may you grace our tracks, both as a runner and perhaps occasionally as a walker.

Tim Erickson
Wednesday 26 June 2013