

## SABINA HAMATY C86: 23:40:16

Sabina Hamaty is yet another successful Australian ultra distance runners who has taken up the challenge of ultra distance walking and has now joined us as an Australian Centurion.

Sabina, born 14<sup>th</sup> November 1968 and based in Sydney, ran her first ultras in 2009, successfully negotiating her way to finishes in the Six Foot Track in NSW (45km, 6:20:20) and the Bush Capital Bush Marathon in Canberra (60km 6:05:56). Why? Pretty simple really: *I started running when I turned 40 because I needed to do something for myself.*

The following year, Sabina upped the ante with a finish in the North Face 100 (100km, 15:29:24).

In 2012, she made the first of her 4 appearances at the Coburg Carnival, completing the 24H Run in a very promising 184.908km. She also ran an impressive 11:26:28 in the Centennial Park 100km in Sydney.



*Sabina (number 23) competes in her first 24 Hour Run at Coburg in 2012 and again in 2014*

2013 was a big year for Sabina, with 8 long distance ultras, culminating with a second place finish in the iconic 240km Coast to Kosci ultramarathon (32:25:20). She also improved her PBs for 100km (10:13:15), 12H (110.081km) and 24H (187.577km).

The Coast to Kosci was a challenge that called her back, and she had subsequent finishes in 2014 (first woman with 30:14:11), 2015 (first woman with 31:14:15) and 2017 (second woman with 32:08:18).

2015 was a big year for Sabina, with her first 48 Hour Run, done at Caboolture in Queensland in August of that year. Now why would you ever run a 48 Hour Track race? Sabina's answer was a nice one

*When non ultra runners ask the inevitable question, "why run ultras?" I often don't know what to say and mumble the usual, "if you have to ask the question, you won't understand the answer" line, but this time, I had a definite answer. "It's all about the second sunrise". I had read years ago that the second sunrise during a 48 hour run is the most beautiful thing and I wanted to experience it for myself. But. . . would I make it? Was I tough enough to last? Did I have what it takes? There was only one way to find out.<sup>1</sup>*

This was the inaugural women's Australian 48 Hour Championship and Sabina won with an impressive 310.507km, actually finishing third overall, beaten only by the top two men. Her performance made the front cover of the December 2015 edition of the AURA Ultramag.

<sup>1</sup> You can read Sabina's race report in the December 2015 edition of the AURA Ultramag: <https://irp.cdn-website.com/3007bc9f/files/uploaded/31.4.2015.pdf>



And for completeness, how was that second sunrise?

*It was by anyone else's definition the most ordinary of sunrises. From the confines of the Caboolture Historical Village you don't even get a good view of it. But for me, it was an unforgettable moment, that moment in time when I realised I am tough enough and I do have what it takes. As for the next 48 hour race, bring it on! I am ready!*

Sabina repeated her victory in 2017, winning the AURA Australian 48 Hour Championship in Canberra with a distance of 301.093km. She was now a 2 times Australian Champion.



*Sabina successfully negotiates her third Coast to Kosci finish in December 2017*

In 2018, she completed one her bucket list challenges, the Spartathlon in Greece. This 246 km race, held annually between Athens and Sparta, the modern town on the site of ancient Sparta, is huge in every way - huge climbs, huge fields and huge atmosphere. She finished with a time of 35:27:25, 201<sup>st</sup> out of 390 and 22<sup>nd</sup> in the female division.

Her ultra run PBs at that stage read impressively: 10:13:15 (100km), 20:21:11 (100 Miles), 110.081m (12H), 192.499km (24H) and 310.507km(48H). Add to that 3 finishes in the Coast to Kosci and a Spartathlon finish.

The next few years promised much but it was not to be. As with all of us, 2020-2022 were lean years, with Covid-19 shutting down most opportunities. Sabina did lots of bushwalking, with the occasional race when possible.

2023 saw her wanting to explore new ground, so she eyed the ultra distance walking scene as a new sphere of activity. She had seen plenty of walkers in action at Coburg and at other Australian ultra races and she knew about the Australian Centurions and our own Australian ultra distance walking records. It was time to give it a go.

Fast forward to the Southern Sydney 48 Hour Run on the weekend of 10-11 June 2023. Sabina had never competed as a walker before and contacted me earlier that year to setup her attempt at the Australian 48 Hour walk record in the Sydney race. She was successful, walking to a new Australian records for the 200km Walk (35:36:17) and the 48 Hour Walk (250.820km).

*Well! I did it! I got to 200 km just before the 36 hour mark (200 km record) and completed over 250 km for the full 48 hr. My feet are a complete mess but the rest of me is OK. To be honest that was harder than I thought it would be. My back just suddenly went in the last hour and I could barely stand upright. I came off the track an hour early but would not have achieved much more if I had stayed*



*Sabina matches strides with Anyce Melham (C65) in the Southern Sydney 36 Hour event in June 2023*

Sabina was back in action again as a walker for a second time later that year, fronting for the Australian 6 Day Championship in Adelaide in the first week of October 2023. There were were in fact 2 serious walkers in the field, as David Billett (C50) was also testing himself out against the 6 Day standard (not for the first time in his case)

While David showed his experience to finish with 551.893km, Sabina was not far behind him with her final distance of 537.513km. Deborah DeWilliams had held the Australian 6 Day Walk record with 448.170km, done at Colac in 2004, Sabina bettered that distance by a whopping 89km and also set an inaugural Australian 500km Walk record of 5 Days 16 Hours, 17 minutes and 31 seconds. Sabina now held the Australian walk records for 200km, 500km, 48 Hours and 6 Days. An impressive start to her walking career!

*I'm still overwhelmed with it all and my body is in 'coping with the basics' mode. On day 3 and 4 I was wondering about my mental stability and why I chose such a hard sport but by day 5 I was in a better groove, and I can see*

*how people get addicted to it. Still, I was very glad to finish after 6 days. I obviously have some work to do on my feet and the blisters that keep plaguing me. If I can sort that out, I believe my totals could be much better.*



*Sabina after finishing the 6 Day event in Adelaide in October 2023*

It was now time for Sabina to tie up loose ends and get that Centurion badge! As readers know, we have no official Australian Centurions Qualifier in 2024 but decided instead to designate a number of other 24H races as qualifying opportunities. The first of these was the BUTTER 24, held at the Griffith University Track on the Gold Coast in Queensland on the weekend of 1-2 June. Sabina chose the BUTTER 24 as her designated race and I duly booked flights and made my way north as our official race scrutineer.

The weather forecast was worrying, with up to 30mm of rain a possibility over the weekend. Luckily this was downscaled and, although we did get wet, it was not as bad as expected. In fact, it was initially helpful as Saturday was overcast and cool, a great relief for Queensland at any time of the year. But come early evening, the rain and wind set in, giving us very challenging conditions for most of the night. There was one major casualty with the big TV showing the progressive results being blown over and broken. This required a trip back to Brisbane in the middle of the night by the organisers to source a replacement. Thankfully in the morning out came the sun to dry things out and the last 4 hours were held in much more pleasant conditions. Talk about a mixed bag!

The BUTTER 24 was Sabina's third walk but it was going to be a different sort of challenge, as it would require her to maintain a faster pace and walk pretty much without stop for the full 24 hours. We chatted beforehand and I advised her that she would need to work on her base speed, to enable her to build up a buffer in the first half. This she did, covering 43km in the first 6 hours and 84km in the first 12 hours. Then it was a case of holding her form and her speed for the second half and this she also did, eventually reaching the 100 mile mark in **23:40:16** to become **Australian Centurion Number 86**. She then continued to stroll around until the final gun, reaching a total distance of 162.998 km.

Final words from Sabina:

*I am extremely relieved and pleased to announce I achieved a Centurion performance up at Griffith university over the weekend. This had been on my bucket list since I first heard about it over 10 years ago. I had been training exclusively for walking events for over a year, but in March I finally concluded I was simply too slow and found a walking coach who let me train with her teenage superstars. This improved my average top speed and made the difference between just achieving the total as opposed to just missing out. I wish I could say I found it easy but that would be a total lie. My buffer was never big enough for me to relax and the fact that I only got the 100 miles in the last 15 minutes, gives you an idea of the amount of stress I was under.*

*Despite the adverse weather conditions and the mental self imposed stress, it was a great experience and the only thing that could have made it better is if Greg Ponych had also managed to achieve his Centurion. Alas a combination of blisters due to wet shoes and an upset gut that refused to play along meant he lost precious time.*



*Sabina Hamaty passes the 100 Mile mark at the BUTTER 24 in Queensland to become Australian Centurion C86*

I am very pleased to confirm Sabina as the newest member of the Australian Centurions.

Tim Erickson  
Secretary, Australian Centurion Walkers Inc.  
Friday 28 June 2024