

Festival City Runner

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RESULTS
RECORD

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TO FINISH, WAS TO WIN

Smiling through the pain of a marathon run

THIS SPORTING LIFE
with Geoff Roach (courtesy the News)

Up O'Connell St they came, past the Oberoi Hotel and on to the delicious downhill sweep towards Adelaide Oval and glory.

Singly at first, then in ever increasing number, men and women of South Australia ran their race against distance, a gale and the clock.

Flecked with the wind-dried sweat of their own perspiration, some sprinting others limping, they veered across King William St., by the Cathedral and into a spectator guard of honor clapping them on to the Victor Richardson Gates finish.

How richly they deserved that applause for they had joined select company.

They had just run 42 kilometres. Completed the first Festival City Marathon.

Various hours earlier at 7.30 Sunday morning, they had assembled in rain and gloom at Gawler's Princes Park to run to Adelaide.

Most were breaking virgin ground. They had no real conception of what awaited them. But all knew with absolute certainty that the southerly gale would be against them, forcing into their eyes and mouths and opposing their bodies all the way.

In the circumstances, the pre-race favorite, Grenville Wood, running his third marathon in three months predicted a winning time of 2 hours, 40 minutes, slow by current standards.

Wood knew that to run even that quickly he would have to apply the only proven wind technique. Get in behind early and let others do the work.

"Sneaky, but the only way to win," he admitted.

Yet, when the start sorted itself out, he was among the group of five that set the pace past Smithfield and Elizabeth, into the left hand turn at Salisbury and then on to Bridge Road at Para Hills.

It was steady going and Wood felt strong, so much so that he was tempted to break another pre-race decision. To wait until Ingle Farm before making his move.

He runs from Ingle Farm to Adelaide and back every day as part of his 180 km per week preparation and was confident nobody could pace him from there.

So it proved.



GRENVILLE WOOD, FIRST ACROSS THE LINE,
2:30.08
(Photo by Sue Forth)

Running in all red, with a prophetic no 1 on his chest, he broke away down Hampstead Road and breezed by the Oberoi just as 22 year old Alan Hanley entered O'Connell St.

Pouring it on down the slope, Wood finished in a fine 2 hr 30.08.

Hanley, meanwhile was running on fear, He knew Bob Barnard, whom he had passed earlier, was coming on strong again. But he dared not look back. To do so

he would surely reveal his anxiety, give Barnard the spark of hope that could turn things around.

So he stared straight ahead and, with arms flailing and his body seeming to sag lower with each stride, he gutsed it out to finish second.

Barnard was next, then daylight. The hard competitive surge had ended. But this marathon wasn't really about who finished first. And what followed was marvellous — a river of runners diverse of shape and size but united of purpose. To finish.

Contrast abounded. Early on came Ian Dobbie, 41, and on his thirteenth marathon, side-by-side with the first junior, Andrew Both. Eighteen year old Both had caught a stitch seven km out, then cramped 200 metres from the finish. But he was smiling broadly over the line.

Track 800 metres star Peter Jenner produced an astonishing finish. He had run within himself until he was sure he could make the distance. Then he looked around for an incentive.

Entering O'Connell St. he spotted 17 marathon man Phil Afford 500 metres ahead and set out to catch him. He did, right on the line.

John Bannon finished a noteworthy twenty-first then hobbled around on legs that could barely support him. He had psyched himself to get past Bridge Rd and knew then he would make it.

But he was astounded that his legs could give way so definitely. "After this an election will be easy," he confided.

Schoolteacher, Tony Weaver, propped at the Gates, faltering as the reality of his effort engulfed him, then eased himself on to the ground to share his thoughts with friends.

Blood coated his calves where they had rubbed together and he was, he said, weak, hungry and thirsty at the same time.

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At one stage he had to fight an urge to stop and go to sleep by the curb.

"My head is so clear but it's a long way from my body. Everything in the extremities is tingling", he said.

"I was bored because it was so slow — my watch even seemed to be slowing down — yet I didn't dare go faster.

"The people along the way were terrific. Little kids and old people were out there clapping or just nodding their heads."

One had the feeling he'd be doing it again next year.

Football umpire Mark Coombe certainly will. "My word I'll be there. There's something mysterious about it. I was all right to the 35km then, exactly as they said, I was in trouble. The companionship, people helping and encouraging each other was really something," said Coombe who finished high up.

Robyn Brown, 26, beat the women home and looked as though she could have run the course again.

Not a bead of sweat disturbed her freckles as she calmly accepted congratulations.

A crack hurdler who moved here from NSW two years ago and competed in the Perth nationals last summer, she ran a fine three hours 29 minutes and will beat that in the future.

"Once you start you can't stop. Otherwise you've wasted everything," she said.

On and on they came the majority in surprisingly good shape.

Robin Millhouse, barechested as always clocked in at 3 hr 22 min, and a 13 year old Jonathan Abrahams cleared the four-hour barrier.

Mates John Auld of Qantas and TAA's Geoff Wickham ran stride for stride the whole way to try and beat four hours. They made it by two minutes.

A one-armed man finished just ahead of a long-haired runner wearing an outrageous pair of checked green bermuda shorts. Still they came.

Inside the oval, the survivors glugged down Berri Juice, joyfully greeting each other and swapping times and experiences.

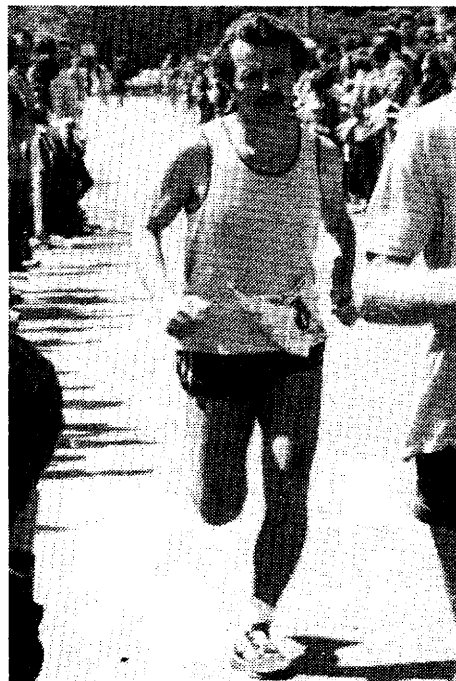
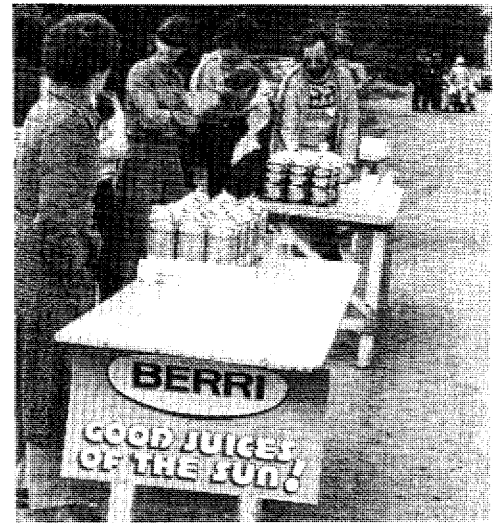
But there was pain too.

One middle-aged man moved agonisingly through the throng, his thin legs knotted with cramp.

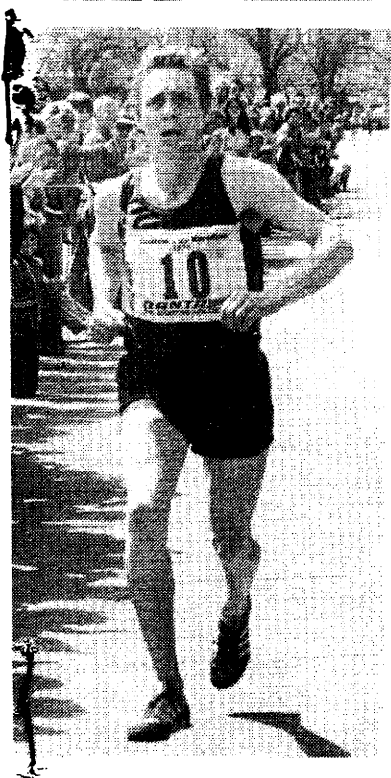
He staggered, then dropped to the ground. A spectator moved quickly to his side. "How do you feel?" he asked.

"How do I feel?" the runner looked up, his eyes moist with pride and fulfilment.

"Bloody marvellous is how I feel. I finished a marathon. It's the greatest moment of my life."



PHOTOS BY SUE FORTH AND RICK TODD



PROFILES

BY SIPRA LLOYD



Bob Barnard, Grenville Wood and Allan Hamley.
(Photo by Rick Todd)

GRENVILLE WOOD, the winner of the Festival City Marathon is 24 years old. He started running marathons 5 years ago when he was 19.

The State Marathon of 1974 was his first attempt at the distance and he admits he intended to pull out of this race at the 13 mile mark. However, at 13 miles he was leading the field and he went on to win it in 2 hours 36 minutes.

The Festival City Marathon was his 10th marathon and his second time at winning the event. He feels it is a little unfortunate he started running marathons so early in his athletic career, as only this year has his training really been tough enough to cope with the strain of running a marathon hard.

His training consists of an 8 mile steady run in the morning and fartlek training in the evenings plus two 20 mile runs a week. Only in the mornings does he train at slower than a 5 minute mile pace. His weekly mileage is around 120 miles a week.

He hopes to compete in marathons overseas but feels he won't be ready for this sort of competition until he

has broken 2.20. "I'm not good enough yet." His personal best time he ran in Perth at the National marathon this year. He finished 12th in a time of 2.22.

He came to Australia from Yorkshire, England 10 years ago and is a draftsman with a building company. He joined an athletic club and started running at 16.

Grenville's best time for 1500 metres is 4.02 and he hopes to go below this during the coming summer months as part of his training for the Olympic Marathon Trials to be held in April in Adelaide.

"It's no good coming third or fourth in an Olympic trial. You have to go all out."

"I advocate long, comfortable, fast running. Running as fast as you can, but as comfortably as you can and as far as you can."

Grenville weighs just under 8½ stone and is 5 feet 10 inches tall.

"I enjoy my running. I think you've really got to **want** to run and that's what drives me on. I believe in fate and when there's something driving you on you've got to keep going. I love running. I'd be lost without it!"

ALLAN HANLEY, second across the line is 22 years old and has been running for 5 years. He is a packer with a medical company. The Festival City Marathon is his 4th marathon and he represented South Australia in the National Marathon in Perth in August where he did a personal best time of 2:26.

Allan runs 90 to 100 miles a week in training. He normally does two sessions of fartlek a week and often trains with Grenville Wood.

His goal is to succeed in running some way. "I don't want to be a slogger all my running career." This season he has had a degree of success. He feels he has done what he set out to.

"My aim primarily was the Australian titles and I was there!"

BOB BARNARD, third man in Festival City Marathon, is 26 years old and started running 5 years ago. He has completed three marathons and runs 110 miles a week.

He runs many miles in the winter months on the roads with one fast session per week. In the summer season he runs a little less mileage and does a track session every night.

Bob says, "Basically, I run because I enjoy it. Racing is secondary because I like to see improvement. I can imagine myself running at 60 or 70."

Bob is a Recreation Officer at the Parks Community Centre where he plans fitness programmes for members of the community.

He says that the high mileage of this year has done something to his body systems which has been very beneficial.

He sees himself more as a cross country runner, but his performances this year in cross country have not pleased him. His future ambitions in running are more in cross country than marathoning. Marathons have been included as part of his training for cross country.

ROBYN BROWN, the first woman in the Festival City Marathon is a 26 year old physical education teacher. Robyn started her athletic career as a sprinter and hurdler at the age of 12 when she joined the Woolongong Athletic Club. When she was 17 she signed up with the South Sydney Athletic Club where she specialised in 100 and 200 metre hurdling. She has represented N.S.W. 5 times in national championships and was the team captain in 1975 for her state. She moved to Adelaide in 1978, when she married a Squth Australian. She started preparing for long distance events last year with 5 and 10 mile runs.

Her husband, a footballer and cricketer has been converted to long distance running and often joins Robyn on her training runs.

Robyn, running her first marathon, ran with a friend until the last few kilometres. She finished in a time of 3

hours 28 minutes, just under a 5 minute a kilometre pace. The furthest she had run previously was 20 miles.

She feels now she'll drop back from her 50 miles a week training and try to develop more leg speed for the shorter distances of 800 metres and 1500 metres over the summer months.

"I enjoy just getting out and running," she says. "There's no pressure on you. Whereas training for sprinting, you've got a schedule and there's a definite specific training you've got to do".

About winning the Festival City Marathon, she says, "All I wanted to do was finish it. Then I got about ½ way and I was told there were only 2 women ahead of me and they were only 3 minutes ahead. So when I passed them I felt I could keep going and be the first woman in."



Wally Beames, age 57, World Veteran Champion leads Robyn Brown first woman across the line.
(Photo by Sue Forth)

But it's 'a bloody long way' for me

By "Advertiser" journalist Bob Howlett who competed in the Festival City Marathon. (Courtesy the Advertiser)

The first Festival City marathon — a sort of fun run for masochists — took place between Gawler and Adelaide yesterday.

State marathon runner Grenville Wood was persuaded to enter and win it, but my field of vision was distinguished by his presence only at the start.

The field was aged mostly between 30 and death at the start and looked closer to the second at the end.

About 700 goose-pimpled people in running shoes stood in light drizzle at Princes Park, Gawler, waiting for the 8 a.m. start.

For most of us, it was the first try at the 42.2 kilometre haul.

The starter appeared elevated above the crowd, and counted down with a devastating lack of theatrics to send us pounding up the first of an-at-the-time infinite series of hills.

It was also one of the few times we weren't running into the wind.

"Too late to pull out now, but hell, its only 26 miles," said the philosopher. Yes.

Through Gawler and down the Main North Road, and Adelaide Oval is just over there. Feet feel fine and knees, the weakest link in a disordered chain of command, are rallying to the cause.

At five kilometres the leaders are out of sight, eliminating permanently any half-baked thought of actually winning the thing. From here it's just for fun.

Every five kilometres, there were drink stations, sponge stops between and the last resort an STA roadliner almost begging to carry us in comfort to the finish.

Through Smithfield, Salisbury, Para Hills, little family groups cheering everyone as a winner.

But in the stretch along Bridge Road the bastard wind blew up.

Smiling STA driver tries temptation again. Not yet — but please don't ask again.

The fun ended, as we were warned it would, somewhere on the slope up to Clearview. The wind became personified, cursed, reviled, spat into (a mistake) and tears of frustration mixed with sweat.

Reports from the toes became more urgent and unreasonable, spectators applauded without quite believing what they saw and grace, balance and

smooth running style degenerated into a shambling shuffle.

Down Hampstead Road, up Nottage Terrace (last bloody hill) Main North Road and the last drink stop. It's strange but with the finish only two kilometres away, we still stop and drink.

Just as well — everyone will finish this run at least two kilograms lighter, most of us double that.

Down O'Connell Street at last — and surely it wasn't this long in the practice runs — roll on Brougham Place.

Past the faithful at St. Peter's and at last, my own prayer is answered.

Just lead me to a small hole and let me die.

I don't know why people run marathons — after all, the original killed its sole entrant — but I do know one thing.

It's a bloody long way.

And some fool was talking about next year!

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HARRY PURVIS is 69 years old, (70 in November) and completed the Festival City Marathon in 4 hours and 25 minutes. Five years ago he retired from the Electricity Trust and he decided he had better do something with his life, so he took up running. He joined a fitness class and became a member of the Veterans Athletic Club.

He has completed the City to Bay 5 times now and his times are improving each year. This year he finished in 55 minutes.

His training for the Festival City Marathon included a 5 week period when he covered 110kms a week which included three 18 mile runs a week.

Harry's wife is very tolerant of all the time running takes. Twice a week Harry runs with a runners' group comprised of men from 35 to 50. He says, "You meet some good mates running and I enjoy the companionship. Running has improved me physically and mentally and given me a greater awareness of things."

Harry has never drunk or smoked during his life and he attributes his ease of breathing now in running to this fact. He feels more people his age should run and said he has no competition in his age group. During the Festival City Marathon he found himself comfortably running with a 30 year old man. He has encouraged some of his friends to take up running. One 65 year old mate of his 'folded' at the 30 km mark according to Harry.

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Harry Purvis, 70 years old in November, 4:25.46
(Photo by Sue Forth)

JOHN CARTER, a 35 year old high school art teacher and international lacrosse player is the current Australian National Lacrosse Coach. John says one of his motives for running the Festival City Marathon was the possibility of winning the draw of a Qantas trip. He was running with a friend until 25 kms and then his better trained friend went on ahead. At the 35 km mark John had "hit the wall".

"..... but I'd made up my mind to finish and that was it!"

He was a little dissapointed not to finish in under 4 hours which was what he'd hoped to do. He had to walk and run the last few kms and the last 2 kms took him 20 minutes. He hopes to run next year and will do more training in the hope of breaking 4 hours.

Festival City Runner

NOVEMBER, 1979

Newsletter of the Distance runners Club of S.A. Inc.

Distributed free of charge to entrants in the FESTIVAL CITY MARATHON and members of the Distance Runners Club. Additional copies \$1. Another issue of the Festival City Runner will be produced in March, after which D.R.C. membership registration for the 1980/81 season is due. A separate subscription will then be charged to non-members.

THE DISTANCE RUNNERS CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

The Distance Runners Club of South Australia is a voluntary body affiliated with the S.A. Amateur Athletic Association with the objective of promoting and developing distance running as a sport and recreation.

The club is responsible for the organisation of runs each weekend and on some week nights throughout Autumn and Winter and organises the Winter competition of the S.A.A.A.

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Phone 25 9812 (W) (085) 24 4149 (H)

SECRETARY: Don Dohnt, 31 First Ave., Nailsworth.

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EDITORS FESTIVAL CITY RUNNER 1979:

Bruce Abrahams, Sipra Lloyd. Correspondence to P.O. Box 388, Unley, 5061



RESULTS RECORD

NUMBER OF ENTRIES: 695
NUMBER OF STARTERS: 525 (estimated)
NUMBER OF FINISHERS: 464 (89%)

FIRST MAN: Grenville WOOD 2:30:08
FIRST WOMAN: Robyn BROWN 3:28.24

Winners of \$835 QANTAS overseas travel plus interstate connection by ANSETT:

Ian HILL 3:53.24
John CARTER 4:23.11

"I consider running, distance running in particular — the healthiest of all contemporary sports. The marathon is not the most arduous sport, as it's commonly known, but the most perfect sport for the human organism. Muscle elasticity, commitment of will, and preparation of the nervous system are all required in a single long run. The ability to recover from stress — not in an armchair, but while actually running — is equally important. The person who can put all these abilities together is a hero, who can rightly congratulate him/herself on the achievement. Medal or not, such a runner has proved his/her mettle."

Emil Zatopek

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL FINISHERS