



IRENE NEWS

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FROM OUR WALKERS CAPTAIN

On 21 Jun 20 from 11:43 until 22 Jun 20 at 11:43 race walkers and novice walkers (an Irene AC Grand Prix initiative) participated at national level in this unique virtual event.

Typical Irene AC, we made our presence felt and showed the country why we are one, if not, the best race walking clubs in the country.

To clarify the comparative percentiles after the athletes' names, I like to explain it as follow. The tables used to calculate individual performances are based on international data accumulated over many years. All factors such as age and gender are included to level the playing field... or road for walkers. A percentile of 100% is calculated to be at world record level, 90% is internationally competitive, 80 % is SAMA and nationally competitive and 70% represents GNMA qualification times.

The following are the Irene AC members who participated and excelled during the Mid-Winter Solstice National Race Walk Competition:

Elsa Meyer. 10 km, 1st, 1:05:58 and an excellent 98,8 %.

Annatjie Greyvenstein, 10 km, 3rd, 1:13:43 and an excellent 92%. 8th

Estien van Wyngaard, 10 km, 1:05:06, and an excellent, but unofficial, SAMA qualification time.

Marie van Dyk, 10 km, 14th, 1h26:00, and a respectable 74,3%

Isabelle Van Der Schyf, 10 km, 15th, 1:05:54, in a respectable 73,6%

Tania Thompson, 10 km, 24th, 1:18:19 in a respectable performance, by our acclaimed long distance specialist 64,1 %

Thea van Helden, 10 km, 1st 31st, 1:19:03, with a good performance by an injured runner cum novice walker, 55,4%.

Gerard van den Raad, 10 km, 2nd, 1:12:44, in a very competitive and respectable 75,6%

Keith Reynolds, 10 km, 3rd, 0:57:33 in a competitive and respectable 74%

Fanie van Wyngaard 12th, 10 km, 1:20:43 in a commendable 61,1%

Lynette Gough, 10 km Novice Class (debatable why Novice?), 7th, 1:18,48 in a respectable 65,5 %

Anna Pieterse, 10 km Novice Class, 8th, 1:31:05 in a deserving 59,7% (one of our "new kids on the block")

Danie Labuschagne, 5 km, 3rd, 30:08, in a sneaky lazy-bones 79,3%

Congratulations to all participants. Looking forward to seeing more walkers and runners cum walkers in the July 2020 race. Will keep you posted on that race as soon as the details are available.

USE OF ARC FACILITIES

No feedback has been received yet from the ARC management.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

2nd Half Kick Off challenge – 4 July 2020

We have made it to halfway through the year. The longest night of the year is behind us and we can look forward to progressively more sunlight each day for the next 6 months.

Let us see how you have managed to come through the recent chilly start of the winter by completing a run of 5, 10 or 21km to kick off the second half of the year.

Challenge Format:

- Run/Walk a 5km, 10km or 21.1 km on Saturday 4 July
- Runs must be completed anywhere, starting at any time suitable to you, as long as it starts and ends on the 4th of July

Submitting progress:

- Submit run/walk stating distance, total time taken and run or walk
- Submit result by 12:00 on Sunday 5th July .
- Submit via e-mail to keith11523@gmail.com OR Whatsapp to Irene run or walk group OR PM Keith on 0824503275

Results:

Results will be posted in the club newsletter.



COMRADES 2020 (KEITH REYNOLDS)

Comrades 2020 – A realistically different virtual run

What an up and down year for Comrades 2020 proved to be. CMA holding onto a glimmer of hope that they would still be able to host a race, conceding to ASA, multiple groups offering challenges like “Comrades in a week” and finally CMA announcing that they would host an officially sanctioned virtual event.

The on-off decision coupled with the lockdown rules clearly had its toll with an eventual 1138 finishers of the 90 km event. Interest in Comrades in any form was clearly visible with the overall 43785 people who registered for the event. A total number of 39969 people were registered as finishers in one of the distances available. In addition to the 90km event, these are broken down to 5243 that competed 45km, 15538 that completed 21.1km, 11495 that completed 10km and 6555 that completed the 5km event.

Clearly the fighting spirit of Comrades has prevailed through the turmoil.

Thank to the “last minute” announcement by CMA to have the event I am now in a position to claim a personal participation in exactly one third of all the Comrades “official” events that have been held since the inception of the race in 1921 (33 of 99). I was joined by Jack Mortassagne (3745) who was the only other runner to achieve the one third target on the day. Fortunately for him CMA stated that athletes must complete their run with within the 24 hours of June 14. His time of 15:24:08 is perhaps an indication of a new era of the Comrades Marathon existence.

I had a great run, taking the opportunity to complete a “Comrades” again with my sister Anne. We did her first Comrades together in 2000. She went on to complete 11 runs before her Ice Hockey days at national level caught up with her and left her unable to continue running. With her support on a bicycle and family and friends around for the route from around 2 hours into the run, the day turned out quite well for me.

I had planned a single loop run starting and ending at my house. The morning saw us pass the Irene Dairy after 7 Am where the temperature dropped to around minus 5 degrees at the river. Somehow all the hills on the route seemed easier than I had envisioned. All good and well except that the second half was going to be predominantly uphill. What would anything associated with the name of “Comrades” be without some “additional” challenges. I managed to get to 75km before taking my first walk on the day – a distance I had not achieved before. Perhaps if there had been other competitors in sight, I may have pushed on a bit further. At that point, knowing that there was a long uphill pull ahead, I decided to take things easy and ensure a comfortable “Bill Rowan” time. At the end I added a little extra to ensure that my run reflected a little over 90km on Strava and stopped my watch at exactly 8:45:00. Comrades adjusted my 90.19km time back to 8:43:43 to give me my faster time in 7 years, the reward for pushing through the limitations set on us relating to when and where we were allowed to run during the lockdown phases.

Having completed my first run in 1987, I saw first-hand how the race changed dramatically with the extra 30 minutes for qualifying and the additional hour before cut-off. The

millennium race (2000) also introduced the “Bill Rowan” medal which was for any runner finishing between 7:30:01 and 8:59:59, the time in which Bill Rowan won the inaugural race. Before the change, athletes would work hard to earn a “Silver” medal for a sub 7:30 or be content like most with a “Bronze”. The number of silvers awarded in 1999 (822/11287 finishers), has still not been exceeded despite the field doubling in size. Silver medals were awarded to 715 out of 20018 finishers in 2000 (12 hours) and 751 of 11083 finishers in 2001 (11 hours). In 2002, the next down run which saw the cut-off time moved “permanently” back to 12 hours, only 9022 runners finished of which only 584 earned silver.

Fast forward to 2019. CMA introduces the Robert Mtshali medal for runners between 9 and 10 hours. The Ladies silver medal is replaced with the “Isavel Roche- Kelly” medal (first official female winner). Of the 16536 finishers, only 590 were below 7:30 (30 women).

Since 2000 there was a clear drive by CMA to increase the participation at the event. Due to Covid-19 are we now standing on the brink of another change?

At the start of the pandemic, it was thought it would pass quickly. Three months later and there is no end in sight with the infections having passed 10 million and “officially” claiming half a million lives. We live in hope of being able to run again as “usual” but who says we will not have another similar virus in the future? What will become of any of the great races in the long run as the entire world shifts into a “new era”. One thing I am convinced of is that we will never have the same level of “freedom” we have known.

Theory aside, what happened at the “Race the Legends” this year?

I look at the 90 km result and start breaking it down based on athletes who had completed the race 20 times or more by the end of the 2019 event.

Last year 481 completed the run for the 20th time or more. This year, only 428 of this group participated in one of the available distances. Of these, only 38 completed the full 90 km distance. Nine of them finished outside of the “Traditional” 12 hour cut-off time. There is much discussion that this raises some of the points include:

- It is not a real Comrades as it is not run on the route
- Finishers after 12 hours cannot be counted as finishers.
- What will we do with the starts of the other distances – would we count them towards permanent numbers over the distances in future? We all know there has been an agenda by some at CMA Board to extend the range of distances available.
- Will this run count towards the total runs (and towards a green number) as it is an officially sanctioned event by CMA.

As the debate continues, we need to look at the longer-term survival of the race and look at other events around the world. In some cases, race cut-off times are stricter than Comrades (typically standard marathon distance), at other there is virtually no cut-off time.

One thing for sure is that it gave some people who have developed a great relationship with the race to become part of it again.

The oldest finisher in this “Double Plus Green” group is Harold Sacks. Born in 1933 he first ran Comrades in 1978 and completed his last run in 2000 (21 runs). I am sure that at 86 years old he was thrilled to be part of the “Comrades” again for the entire 1:47:37 he took to complete his 10km.

Other returnees included Kenny Craig at age 84. Probably dedicating his entire 56:14 for 5km run to his recently lost friend Clive Crawley (Comrades permanent number 1). Kenny is the runner in the field with the “oldest” first run which he completed in 1959. His last run finished was in 1998, the same year that he crossed the line some time after Clive Crawley to become the second person to finish 40 runs.

Standing out from the rest, Wietsche Van Der Westhuizen completed the 90 km in 10:41:02. The only runner in the 40+ runs group (42) to participate this year.

Born in 1948, now at the age of 74 Paul Selby who first ran the Comrades in 1984 and did his 24th run in 2008 completed an epic “would have been” 25th run in a time of 16:36:07 to end as the last 90km Finisher from the “Double Green Plus” batch. To my knowledge, Paul is still the only person to have started Comrades on the previous evening in Durban, run all the way to the start at Pietermaritzburg (within the Comrades time) and turn around to complete the trip back to Durban within the cut-off time the next morning.

Agnieta Pretorius was the final person to complete the 90km on the day (overall) in a time of 22:50:50

Perhaps the 2020 event was a test by CMA to see how they would manage a possible future “race” where people would be able to participate virtually all the time. This was a chance to see how they would manage a “formal” virtual event (if it comes to that). The biggest challenge would be around educating people on use of the platform as well as understanding how results would be managed.

This year you could change the distance right up to the last minute. This meant that if you failed to achieve your target (bailed) you could change your distance and still claim a “finish” (some would say that is “wrong”, others would argue it is “progressive”).

One athlete at age 65 was disqualified in the 90 km event after submitting a manual entry in the 90 km with a time of 5:15:55 (new race record – impressive at his age).

In accordance with the “rules” this person would face a “ban in future events”. Question is, did this person enter incorrectly or simply not change their category after running into difficulty on the day. Why would the athlete suddenly “cheat” after completing a legitimate 23 runs previously?

Of course, there is also the blatant anomaly of a runner who holds 24 medals that completed the 45 km in a time of 5:27:44.

This does not appear to be wrong at face value but when you delve deeper you find the athlete completed the first 5km in a time of 12:48 (2 mins 34 sec per km). He was clearly just warming up as he then proceeded to complete the next 5km in a time of 5:17 (1 min 4 sec per km). His super-fast start clearly caught up with him in the latter stages as he struggled through

the subsequent 5km sections at the average respective per km pace of 5:46, 7:09, 9:44, 6:49 (great recovery), 6:00, 13:12 and 13:20. Glad CMA had the tools in place to detect this.

Easy to check up on an athlete if they have submitted files from a reputable GPS based device where they can do an analysis of splits and pick up any anomalies. However, manual entries were allowed that are not linked to a tracker. These manual results could raise some questions.

The first person with a “tracked” time is only found in position 5 overall. How would CMA deal with the verification of the first 4. Imagine the debate between runners if there was prize money available.

In the women’s race you need to go to 3rd place who finished 1:22:39 behind the winner to find the first “tracked” run.

Who knows what will happen in future events or even what the running calendar is going to look like over the next year? There is talk that a vaccine against Covid-19 will only be available more than a year from now. What do we do till then?

I know I will keep training in the hope that the 100th year of the existence of the Comrades Marathon, next year, will be held in the way we know it. Perhaps we even get lucky and are able to compete in the 100th running on the route a few years from now.

Till we know, stay safe and stay healthy

Keith (11523)

PERSONALIA

Aletha van den Bergh underwent a knee operation during the week, we wish her a speedy recovery.

Congratulations to the following members who celebrate their birthdays during the week:

Norton	Mole	01 Jul
Maggie	Van Rooyen	01 Jul
Pieter	Reynecke	02 Jul
Noluthando	Siyotula	02 Jul
Maureen	Mossop	03 Jul
Nadia	Liebenberg	04 Jul



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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK



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REGISTERED QUANTITY SURVEYORS • GEREISTREERDE BOUREKENAARS

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PHOTO CORNER

These photos were published in the newsletter of 5 years ago, quite interesting to see some of these faces













