

CENTURION FOOTNOTES

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DATES...DATES...DATES

There are always ultra opportunities on offer for those walkers wanting a challenge. Some are shown below. In addition, the AURA calendar shows additional Australian ultra events that may suit serious ultra walkers – check it out at <http://aura.asn.au/>.

June 23-24, 2018	Parish Walk (85 Miles)	Isle of Man
Jun 29 →, 2018	Fotrally, Sweden, 29 June onwards! See http://fotrally.se/ .	Sweden
Jul 14, 2018	Adelaide 24H/12H/6H	Adelaide, SA
Aug 12, 2018	Inaugural 100km Walk	Komló, HUN
Aug 18-19, 2018	2018 English Centurions 24H Qualifier (Track) See http://my6.raceresult.com/71067/	Douglas, IOM
Aug 25-26, 2018	Wadelincourt 24 Hours Walk (2019 Paris-Alsace qualifier)	Wadelincourt, BEL
Sep 15-16, 2018	Nijmegen-Rotterdam (160km)	Nijmegen, NED
Sept 15-16, 2018	Roubaix 28 Hours Walk (TBC)	Roubaix, FRA
Oct 7-8, 2018	2018 NZ Centurions 24H Qualifier See https://nz.srichinmoyraces.org/races/auck/24hr	Auckland, NZ
Oct 20-21, 2018	African Centurions 24H Qualifier See http://www.africancenturion.com/	Capetown, SA (TBC)

The Australian, Continental and American Centurion qualifiers have now been completed so we have 3 remaining Centurions qualifiers for the year, to be held in England, New Zealand and Africa.

2018 SRI CHINMOY 24 HOUR TRACK RACE SYDNEY, NSW, JUNE 2-3

The first weekend in June was a big one for ultra distance athletes in Australia, with a variety of meets on the calendar, one of the most prestigious being the annual Sri Chinmoy "24 Hours on Track" at the Campbelltown Athletics Centre, near Sydney. Events on offer included 24-Hour, 12-Hour, 6-Hour and Marathon Track Races.

The Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour race has been staged variously at Adelaide, Brisbane and Sydney since 1982 and is the oldest ultra in Australia. The event is renowned for the level of care and service provided to runners, and the family atmosphere amongst helpers and athletes (most of the organising team are or have been ultra runners). This was the 35th staging (it was cancelled in 1998 and 2001 due to deaths of prominent Sri Chinmoy personnel), so it is level pegging with the Victorian 24 Hour Track Championship which is held at Coburg each April, was first held in 1984 and has also seen 35 stagings.

As an aside, you can check out the Sri Chinmoy past winners (from 1982 to 2008) at https://www.aura.asn.au/data/Results/Older/SriChinmoy_YearlySummary_29-01-09.pdf and the Victorian 24H past winners (all of them) at <http://www.coburg24hr.org/24hr/history/past-winners/>. There are some well known names in those lists! Note that Yiannos Kouros' world record of 303.506km was set in the Sri Chinmoy race in Adelaide in 1997.

Anyway, I digress! Conditions at Campbellfield were ok from a temperature point of view (7 – 18°C), mostly cloudy but with buffeting winds in the 35-45 km/hr range. Thankfully it had been raining the previous day but cleared on the Friday night.

Three walkers were among the largely running field in the 24 Hour option and all did well. **Justin Scholz** (C61) completed yet another 100 miles walk, this time with **21:48:12**, his 10th 100 mile walk finish. Of course, he has plenty of 100 mile run finishes as well so is a multi talented athlete! NSW racewalker **Robert Osborne** walked well for the first half before slowing, his final distance still a good 124.232km. And 72 year old NSW walker **David Attrill** did an excellent walk, finishing 24th with 120.632km.

2018 Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour Championship

13.	Justin Scholz	161.200 km	M45	21:50:43
22.	Robert Osborne	124.232 km	M60+	23:56:49
24.	David Attrill	120.632 km	M70+	23:57:04

Two other of our Australian Centurions were in action, but as runners, and both exceeded 100 miles. **Sharon Scholz** (C63) finished 4th with 188.450km and **Anyce Melham** (C65) finished 11th with 163.852 km.

Event website at <https://au.srichinmoyraces.org/events/24hour>

Full results at <https://my5.raceresult.com/99351/results?lang=en>



Justin Scholz after completing yet another 100 mile walk (photo Sharon Scholz)

2018 PARIS-ALSACE CLASSIC, ACROSS FRANCE, MAY 30-JUNE 2

The 70th edition of the famous Paris-Alsace classic was held over a 4 day period starting on May 30th, with a small and select group of the world's best ultra distance walkers testing themselves out in a demanding multi-day format. First to a description of the stages (4 for women and 3 for men).

- The first shared stage of 9.2km was held in the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Marne, starting on Wednesday 30th May at 16:00. All competitors completed 8 laps of a short loop for a total distance of 9.2km.
- The second stage started in Château-Thierry at 20:00 on Wednesday evening, after a short rest. All competitors walked to Charly-sur-Marne and then returned to Château-Thierry, a distance of 35km. The women stopped there but the second stage for the men continued towards Epinal for a massive stage distance of 360km.
- Meanwhile, the women travelled to Vitry-le-François for their next stage, starting at 17:00 on Thursday. This stage finished at Epinal, a distance of 200km. The women had to arrive at Epinal by 7am on Saturday to avoid automatic withdrawal from the event.
- The final shared stage of 55.6km (same for men and women) took place as usual between Plainfaing and Ribeauville and involved a tough climb over the famous Col de Bonhomme. It was indeed a case of keeping the best till last!

Overall, the men had to walk 425km, the women had to walk 300km and a small group of men participated in a 230km ancilliary event called *La Noceenne*. Here are the stages:

Men's Event : 425 km

NEUILLY-SUR-MARNE – NEUILLY-SUR-MARNE (9.2 km) Start Wed 16:00 (8 laps of 1.2km)

CHATEAU-THIERRY – EPINAL (360 km) First start Wed 20:00

2hours rest in BAR-LE-DUC

PLAINFAING – RIBEAUVILLE (56 km) First start Saturday 09:00. Lots of mountains

Women's Event : 300 km

NEUILLY-SUR-MARNE – NEUILLY-SUR-MARNE (9.2 km) Start Wed 16:00 (8 laps of 1.2km)

CHATEAU-THIERRY – CHATEAU-THIERRY (35 km) First start Wed 20:00

VITRY-LE-FRANCOIS – EPINAL (200 km) First start Thursday 17:00

PLAINFAING – RIBEAUVILLE (56 km) First start Saturday 09:00. Lots of mountains

LA NOCEEENNE (Ancillary event) 230 km - Men only

NEUILLY-SUR-MARNE – NEUILLY-SUR-MARNE (9.2 km) Start Wed 16:00 (8 laps of 1.2km)

CHATEAU-THIERRY – VITRY-LE-FRANCOIS (164 km) First start Wednesday at 20:00

PLAINFAING – RIBEAUVILLE (56 km) First start Saturday 09:00. Lots of mountains

At the end of the initial 9.2km stage, Frenchman **Eddy Roze** was leading overall with a time of 48:00, ahead of USA walker **Erin Taylor-Talcott** (49:43) and fellow Frenchman **Florian Letourneau** (50:01). Erin was some 10 minutes ahead of Russian **Irina Poutinseva** in the women's race.

Men Stage 1

1.	ROZE Eddy	FRA	48:00
2.	LETOURNEAU Florian	FRA	50:01
3.	OSIPOV Dmitryi	RUS	50:25
4.	LASSALLE Emmanuel	FRA	51:56
5.	OLIV ARES Mathieu	FRA	52:24
6.	VARAIN Cedric	FRA	55:57
7.	GEORGELIN Serge	FRA	57:23
8.	LOUGRADA Saadi	FRA	58:40
9.	VERMEIR Guido	BEL	59:11
10.	THEVENIN Pascal	FRA	1:02:55
11.	LACROIX Jean-Louis	FRA	1:03:53

Women Stage 1

1.	TAYLOR- TALCOTT Erin	USA	49:43
2.	POUTINSEVA Irina	RUS	59:35
3.	MASLOVA Tatiana	RUS	1:02:45
4.	MIROSHNICHENKO Vera	RUS	1:05:07
5.	BIZARD Claudie	FRA	1:05:11
6.	CRILLEY Kathy	GBR	1:13:14

La Noccenne Stage 1

1.	TOUT AIN Eric	FRA	56:46
2.	JACQUEMIN Mickael	FRA	59:02
3.	HIERNARD Alain	FRA	1:01:51
4.	BALLAND Johann	FRA	1:02:22
5.	CHUI Didier	FRA	1:02:23
6.	DALUZ Robert	FRA	1:04:54

After about an hour's break, they were off again, the women for 35km and the men for a massive 360km stage.

By the time the women had finished their second stage (for a total distance of 44.2km), Erin had increased her lead to nearly 40 minutes and was riding a big high.

1.	TAYLOR-TALCOTT Erin	4:40:16
2.	MASLOVA Tatiana	5:22:09
3.	POUTINSEVA Irina	5:23:35
4.	MIROSHNICHENKO Vera	5:57:39
5.	BIZARD Claudie	6:02:40
6.	CRILLEY Kathy	6:28:58

It was a different story for the men. As the night progressed, they walked on towards Epinal, still some 300km away. They were allowed one stop of 2 hours at Bar-Le-Duc, at the 177km mark and roughly in the middle of the massive stage. With the daytime temperatures in the mid to high twenties and with the nighttime going down towards freezing point, it was a torrid affair, and the men's field had been reduced to 4 by the time Epinal was reached. Russian defending champion **Dmitryi Osipov** had used his vast experience to take the lead and had covered the 369km in 50:35:20. He was now 1 hour and 40 minutes in front of Florian Letourneau and only disaster would prevent another win.

1.	OSIPOV Dmitryi	50:35:20
2.	LETOURNEAU Florian	52:15:31
3.	VARAIN Cédric	53:13:20

4. GEORGELIN Serge 54:32:38

The women had been ferried to Vitry-Le-Francois and were able to savour some 16 hours of rest before beginning their third stage of 200km to Epinal. As with the men, it was a war of attrition, with the women's field also reduced to four by the finish of the stage and with the placings now vastly different. Russian **Tatiana Maslova** was about 17 minutes in front of compatriot **Irina Poutinseva**, while Erin Taylor-Talcott had dropped to fourth place, behind French woman **Claudie Bizard**. But Erin was still within the cutoff time so lived to fight the final stage. Sadly, English walker **Kathy Crilley** had failed to make the cutoff time at one of the interim towns and was forced to stop. It is a tough event.

1.	MASLOVA Tatiana	35:10:16
2.	POUTINSEVA Irina	35:27:36
3.	BIZARD Claudie	39:16:32
4.	TAYLOR-TALCOTT Erin	41:02:45

After a further break, the final stage commenced for everyone, a 56km walk from Plainfaing to Ribeauville. But this final stage had its own sting, with a largely mountainous contour and one very big climb over the famous Col de Bonhomme.

The final standings showed wins in the main events to defending champions Dmitry Osipov (his 8th win overall and his fifth in a row) and Tatiana Maslova (her third win in 4 years) and a win in the ancillary La Nocenne to Mickael Jacquemin.

Final Standings – Men (425km)

1.	OSIPOV Dmitry	58:11:56
2.	LETOURNEAU Florian	60:00:13
3.	VARAIN Cédric	61:13:23
4.	GEORGELIN Serge	62:38:33

Final Standings -Women (300km)

1.	MASLOVA Tatiana	43:08:24
2.	POUTINSEVA Irina	43:22:10
3.	BIZARD Claudie	47:56:19
4.	TAYLOR-TALCOTT Erin	50:12:43

Final Standings - La Nocenne (230km)

1.	JACQUEMIN Mickael	30:06:30
2.	TOUTAIN Eric	30:54:29
3.	BALLAND Johann	33:03:53
4.	HIERNARD Alain	33:43:08
5.	DALUZ Robert	36:16:34

And now onto a great selection of photos from Emmanuel.



Dmitry Osipov, Florian Letourneau, Cédric Varain, Irina Poutinseva and Tatiana Maslova (photos Emmanuel Tardi)



Claudie Bizard and Erin Taylor-Talcott (in action and finishing)



La Noccenne placegetters Mickhael Jacquemin, Eric Toutain and Johann Balland (photos Emmanuel Tardi)

Some links worth investigating

- Paris-Alsace official website: <http://www.marche-mythique.org/accueil.html>
- Facebook Erin Taylor-Talcott https://www.facebook.com/groups/156213145216838/?ref=nf_target&fref=nf
- A short youtube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRUrHeUFB_k&feature=share
- Emmanuel Tardi's photos: <https://tinyurl.com/yam3fl8k>

I was able to follow the event from start to finish, via the wonderful updates to Erin's Paris-Alsace facebook page by **John Constandinou** who was part of her support team, along with **Emmanuel Tardi** and Erin's husband **Dave Talcott**. Erin became the first American woman to finish this toughest of events and had to fight hard to achieve that finish.

Did you ever think how much support structure is required to participate in this event? Well, for starters you need a large campervan to follow you for the duration. Then you need to fill the roles of driver, cook, masseur, walkers, general helpers, etc, etc. Erin had a 5 person team as follows

- John Constandinou was main driver, clocking up 250km during the race, 180km of transfers for Dave and Erin and 1150km in the before and after event period. On top of that, he helped with walking and handled communications, social media and photos.
- Karen Davies was the second driver, cyclist and general buyer of supplies.
- Dave Talcott was the main walk helper and feeder. He walked around 180km with Erin and looked after all her feeding.
- Jacques "LeFeulliette" was there as an additional person when required, walking when needed and preparing and passing supplies.
- Emmanuel Tardi drove an additional support car, handled all the race liason (having a native French speaker on your team is an essential) and was the general go-to person for all things difficult.

2018 USA CENTURIONS 24H QUALIFIER, FORT SNELLING, MINNESOTA, USA, JUNE 2-3

It was certainly a big weekend for long distance walking on that first weekend in June, with the annual American Centurions qualifying event also taking place at Fort Shelling, Minnesota. The event is held in conjunction with the Fans 24 Hour Championships (see <http://www.fans24hour.org/index.html>) which is a very large event indeed. The great news is that 5 walkers walked in excess of 100 miles and 4 new American Centurion badges (C89-C92) were distributed. Excellent race reports available at http://www.unitedstatescenturionwalkers.com/?page_id=123.

	Name	Country	Number	100 Mile Time	Total Distance
1.	Andrew Titley	IOM	C89	22:27:32	106.8 Miles (new race record)
2.	Marco Bloemerts	NED	C90	23:26:11	102.4 Miles
3.	Rob Robertson	USA	C78	23:29:40	101.9 Miles
4.	David Holmen	USA	C91	23:39:33	101.0 Miles
5.	Arie Kandelaars	NED	C92	23:52:14	100.0 Miles
6.	Radek Lopusnik	USA			81.0 Miles
7.	Gertrude Achterberg	NED			76.5 Miles
8.	Paul Terbrack	USA			76.5 Miles
9.	Robert Schnetzler	USA			62.5 Miles
10.	John Greene	USA	C70		61.5 Miles
11.	David Daubert	USA			55.5 Miles
12.	Bruce Leasure	USA			35.9 Miles
13.	Christie Calin	USA			31.6 Miles

It was a case of fourth centurion badges for **Andrew Titley** (he already had Continental, English and African ones), **Marco Bloemerts** (he already had Continental, NZ and African) and **Arie Kandelaars** (he already had English, NZ and African). Meanwhile, it was **Rob Robertson's** second American centurion finish and he sits on 5 badges overall – he only needs the NZ one to complete his set, and he is intending to make the trip down under later this year.



In action in the American Centurions race - Arie Kandelaars, Gertrude Achterberg, Andrew Titley and Marco Bloemerts



USA Centurion finishers David Holmen, Rob Robertson, Andrew Titley, Marco Bloemerts and Arie Kandelaars (photo Rob Robertson)

EMU 6 DAY ULTRAMARATON, BALATONFÜRED, TURKEY, 3-9 MAY

In the last newsletter, I featured former Czech Republic and now USA based ultra walker **Ivo Majetic (C71)** who had competed in early May in the EMU 6 Day Ultramarathon in Balatonfüred, Hungary, coming 3rd overall against a strong field of runners, with a final walk distance of **786.744km**.

Ivo has subsequently emailed me his own race report which makes for fantastic reading. Thanks Ivo!

6-day walk in Balatonfüred, Hungary, May 3 – 9, 2018

Background

I am an ultra-racewalker with international recognition and a holder of multiple Czech national records, including the best time for 100 miles on USA soil. Since 2015, I represent the USA - the country where I have lived for over 20 years. I live with my family at the foot of the majestic Rocky Mountains in Colorado, near Denver.

In 2000, I quit my ultra-racewalking career to focus on my family. In 2015, I returned to my regular workouts and I fell in love with ultra again. After only 10 weeks of training I was able to finish a 24-hour race in Oklahoma City, walking 172 km for 2nd place. Seven months later, I finished Paris-Alsace – a 3-day race covering 426 km of French countryside.

Why a 6-day race?

Paris-Colmar used to be a fully international race and the top race for every ultra-walker. In the last 15 years, the race organizers significantly changed the format and organization. After my bad experience in 2016, I decided never to participate in that race again (I know, never say never, but this is my current standing). Since 2016, I have been looking for a new challenge and I realized that a walk over 6 days might be a nice one. Some walkers with Paris-Alsace experience had tried a 6-day race and reached some recognizable results. But immediately many questions arose: How would Paris-Colmar compare to a 6-day race? Are they similar or totally different? What about sleep deprivation? I checked results of other walkers I know and I wondered how many kilometers I could walk in 144 consecutive hours.

Venue selection

The first thing is to select a race. It is not easy by any means to organize a race of this size so there are only a few races around the world each year. I was considering three venues:

1. Privas, France – a big plus of this race is that they have an official walking category, so my result would be official. But the weather gets rather hot and the course is on a gravel. Two huge disadvantages for me. The constant gravel in my shoes and lack of traction effect my speed a lot. Even though this slower speed might not cost me the

win balanced by my endurance to hold a pace for 6 days, witnessing my lack short progress lap after lap was something I was not sure I would be able to handle mentally, increasing my chances of quitting the race.

2. Balatonfured, Hungary – An almost flat asphalt course with cabins provided to racers and their helpers. Many runners set their personal best there. It is only about a 6-hour drive from Prague where I still know many supporters of the ultra community so the logistics of arranging support would be easier than France.

3. Across the Years, Arizona – At 20 hours away, this race was within possible driving distance from Denver so the logistics would be manageable. Similar climate and time zone meant no need to deal with acclimatization. But this course is gravel, as well.

After juggling all the pros and cons, It was a no-brainer to pick Balatonfured.

Preparation

I signed up for the 6-day race in Balatonfured. I exchanged many emails and phone calls with Jaroslav Pruckner, a very experienced multi-day walker from Mlada Boleslav, Czechia. He was already planning to walk at Balatonfured. Even though Jaroslav himself participated in the race, he shared with me a lot of his knowledge about multi-day racing before and during the race. Jaroslav also found Rostislav Kovar, a master competitive walker, who would serve as support for us (mainly me) during these long 6 days and nights. I cannot imagine how I would finish this race without the help of these two gentlemen.



In my workouts, I did not do anything special for this race. I took many long walks on early weekend mornings (typically 25-30 km) and 10 km lunch hour walks once or twice a week. I went to the gym to lift weights 2-4 times a week to gain some strength. In February, I participated in a test 24-hour walk in Bourges, France. I tried different paces and rest scenarios in the race – 10-minute frequent breaks or 30-minute breaks less often. In total, I slept for about 1.5 hours. Without tapering and without a helper, I still finished fifth and managed to complete a reasonable 175.2 km. I felt confident that my preparation was working, but would it continue to work when the time stretched from 1 day to 6?

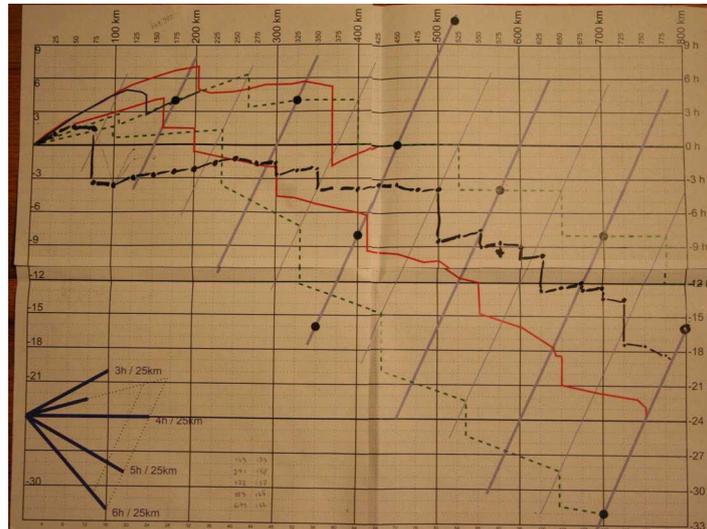
Because this was my first 6-day race in my life, I did not have any experience with pace and sleep strategy. I had some general ideas and the recent experience from Paris-Alsace and several 24-hour races. I read some race reports online and talked to different walkers who did this very demanding race in the past and were willing to share their experience.

My estimate was that I should be able to walk 600 km easily and 700 km could be within my reach. I had no idea if walking 700 km would take me all 6 days or if I would have time to continue beyond this mark. But how to get to this mark? Start fast and hope for the best later on, or walk 116 km ($=700/6$) every day and hope that I can keep the pace? Or a mix of the above? My answer was always the same - "I don't know, anything can happen". I did not have any plan for split times or distances. Instead, I split the race in 25 km chunks, which happened to be exactly 27 laps. Why 25 km? Basically, my shortest workout was 25 km so I knew how that felt and that it is easy. Each chunk should take a manageable 3.5 – 4 hours of walking and there are only 28 chunks to finish my goal.

I also had to figure out the acclimatization. I flew to Europe on April 22 so I got 11 days to adjust my brain and sleep habit to the eight-hour time difference. It was just enough because almost every morning since my transfer to Europe I woke up at around 4 am.

Progress chart

I like to process my races and generate charts, so I prepared a chart for this race, too. I created a graph showing the distance traveled in 25 km chunks. Diagonal purple lines show each 12-hour periods. Completing 25 km in 4 hours was represented by a horizontal line. Walking 25 km in more than 4 hours would mean a down slope and walking 25 km in less than 4 hours would mean an up slope. Periods of rest were vertical lines pointing straight down. For my reference, I graphed my walk in Paris-Alsace 2016 (top red line), a predicted performance needed for 825 km (top dotted green line), the performance of Dominique Bunel, current 6-day record holder, (lower solid red line) and a predicted performance needed for 700 km (bottom dotted green line). I would track my own performance during the race by drawing segment for each 25 km (black line segments).



This sophisticated but easy plot would give me an instant glance of my overall and recent pace and pauses. I would be able to quickly assess the necessary pace for reaching certain goals and determine if I can afford to take a break and for how long. This chart was really handy during the race. For example, when I was approaching 200 km I was astonished that in spite of huge problems the first night and sleeping for 6 hours I was closing up to Dominique Bunel. This chart was also very handy in the final stage of the race when I needed to know which goals were realistic and which were already out of my reach. Here is the chart with my progress (black line). Start is on the left edge, end of sixth day is last purple line on the right.

Organization

The organization in Balatonfured is fabulous. I do not have experience from other 6-day races, but what I read online, and what I learned from other racers, the organization in Balatonfured is really great. The course is almost flat with smooth 100% asphalt surface. Yeah, the chalk sign near the public restroom “Mt. Restroom” definitely had the meaning later in the race. 27 laps makes 25 km (928 meters per lap). Each racer had available cabin with bed, kitchen, toilet and shower, all only 3 meters off the course. The main official refreshment place was full of different drinks (Cola, Fanta, sport drink, different kinds of juice, flavored energy milk, etc) and food (cookies, fruit, bread, hot soup, yogurt, etc). Four times a day we received a full hot meal with soup. Massage performed by professionals was available day or night. Precise chip lap counting is a must for this kind of race in these days, (yeah, I saw a couple of racers going backward to retrieve a forgotten chip).

Weather

Weather was reasonably good. All six days were similar with low night temperatures 13-18C and high temperatures around 23-28C. Yes, afternoons were hot and sunny but we did not experience anything like rain, storm, tropical hot, wind, hail, etc... Once or twice a day, each racer got a refreshing ice-cream from organizers. In order to cope with the hot afternoon sun, I kept my hat with neck cover and white t-shirt wet and two times I took a short nap to avoid the highest heat.

Race field – walkers

There were close to 100 racers on the start line. Most of them were runners (running at least a part of the race) but there were a couple of walkers at the start, following the ultra walk rules the whole race (so called honor system, so not official). Besides me (representing USA), there was my buddy **Jaroslav Pruckner** from the Czech Republic, **Christophe Biet** from France (personal best 649km), **Attila Márton** from Hungary, **Martina Haussmann** from Germany and **David Hobern** from Great Britain.

Day 1 – Thursday May 3 (sunny 28C)

Note: In this race report I will end each day with the longest sleep break of the night, usually shortly after midnight, so this report actually has 7 days.

Start. Sharply at noon, we gathered around the start line and the sound of a gun started us on our six-day adventure. Weather was warm (28C) and sunny, but organizers prepared a water station with a big bucket of cold water and a bunch of sponges to keep our hats and t-shirts wet. Runners were heading forward as expected. I was surprised that I was not the fastest walker, Attila Márton was a couple hundred meters ahead of me. I set my ultra-pace and walked my first 25 km chunk in 2:56h. Yeah, faster than I wanted but I felt great. Attila Márton still kept the pace with me. I was drinking and eating refreshment prepared by Hummer Nutrition and it was going fine. But not for too long. My stomach started to feel bad and at 4 pm I threw up on the grass for the first time. Wow, what is going on? Two hours later, the same situation and I was having problems to eat almost anything. I passed the 50 km mark at 6:09h but with a big question-mark about my stomach. Shortly after 8pm, I stopped for 40 minutes to have a restful dinner. Maybe my stomach would calm down if I did not eat in a hurry. But my stomach wasn't getting any better. At 11pm, I tried to have a late dinner but I ate almost nothing (with empty bowl next to me just in case I needed it). Whenever I put anything in my mouth, my gag reflex was triggered. Only 11 hours into the race and I was unable to get anything in my stomach. Rosta and Jaroslav made many suggestions, but nothing worked. I took a short nap but it did not help. I walked another lap, talking to helpers from different countries and spent over 30 minutes sitting with the official medical staff. They tried to help me, prepared some special stomach medicines, but nothing worked. Well, the race was over for me -much sooner than I wanted. The last chance was to take a long sleep break, hope for the best and start over in the morning. We already started to organize our departure from the race. I fell asleep without setting my alarm, no need to hurry.

Day 2 – Friday May 4 (sunny 17-26C)

I woke up at 5:15am. Jaroslav was already walking. Physically, I felt recovered. My stomach was better but still not normal. I gave it a try. I went on the course and started to cover more laps. My speed was steady at around 8.3 km/h, which nicely surprised me. I started to eat what I hoped would be ok – bread with butter and jelly or ham with cheese, crackers, fruits, soup, had boiled eggs, etc. Little pieces each time, my stomach was getting better. I was not sure what my position was in the race, that was the last thing I was worried about, but I assumed it was somewhere down around 50th place. Shortly before 8am I passed the 100 km mark at 19:39:51h. That would be a good time for 100 miles, but not 100 km. I knew that I had lost about 6 hours, but I was moving and eating again so I was back in the race! My troubles of the night before seemed to be behind me.

Because we were on the race for almost 24 hours, most of the runners were not running any more or running much slower. As you would expect, that was my time to utilize my steady walking pace – I started to pass runners while walking. Yeah, here we go! People started to realize that I was not just a regular walker, that I was planning to reach some significant goal this week. Of course, if my stomach stayed fine. A lot of people – runners and helpers – kept asking me about my stomach because my problems from the last night were so obvious (and loud).

I also found a very nice procedure for relaxing. Because our cabins were so close to the course, I was able to take frequent showers, alternating hot and cold water every few seconds, to revive my muscles while only losing 5-7 minutes. Meanwhile my speed dropped to about 7.25 km/h which is still not bad for such a long race. Very often, I combined my shower break with eating a main dish, so I saved some time. I passed the 200 km mark at 34:09:02h. Meaning I did the second 100 km in reasonable 14:29h.

Looking at my chart, I realized another surprising thing. I was walking 25 km chunks in about 3:45h while Dominique Bunel (current world record holder with 752 km) had walked 25km chunks in around 4:15h at this point in the race. So I was gaining on him about 30 minutes on every 25 km! Yeah, I know that it is just the beginning of the race and that I lost 6 hours the first night, but from the current point of view, this 6-hour loss might not be significant. I was actually closing up on Dominique! Not a bad observation, right?

During this day, I developed one blister (left heel) and the little toe on my left foot lost skin. I taped the little toe to the other toes, taped the whole heel again and hoped for the best. In the overall standing, I was surprised to discover I had moved up to around 10th place - much better than 24 hours ago. In another words, after huge stomach problems and basically quitting the race, I was back in the race, walking fine, with 25 km chunks in 3:45h or faster, climbing up the positions and closing up on Dominique. My big question was “what is going to happen in the

remaining more than 4 days of the race?" Jaroslav and Rosta forced me to go to take a nap after I crossed 250 km (41:10:56h) at 5:15am.

Day 3 – Saturday May 5 (sunny 18-26C)

I slept only 1:08h and I was back on the course. I was cruising at about 7.2-7.5 km/h which really was not bad. At this time, I was already matching Dominique's split times – what a turn around after my first night. At noon, I took a nice 30-minute break with a shower and a full lunch. Daytime temperatures were getting hot, so it was actually better to walk during nighttime. At noon, I had total of 291 km, so my mileage for the second day was rather impressive 158.5 km. Shortly after noon, I passed the 300 km mark (49:39:38h), so I took a nap for 1:20h to avoid the biggest heat of the day. Every time I took a nap for an hour or more, my body recovered nicely and I could walk with a reasonable speed again. So far, my lap speed never dropped below 7.0 km/h.

Surprisingly, I was in third overall position in the race. Which, considering that I was “only” walking, wasn't bad. Mick Thwaites from Australia was in the lead, followed by Bob Hearn from the USA (about 3 hours behind) and myself another 4 hours behind. But distances to my followers were much smaller. One of them was Didier Sessegolo from France who was in my proximity since now till almost the end of the race. Unfortunately, Bob had to retire from the race soon after 375. km due to an injury.

I was asked to go to sleep again. I did not feel too tired but we still had 3.5 days to walk and without proper rest I will hit a wall soon and walk even slower. So, after 357 km I went to bed, around 11:15pm.

Day 4 – Sunday May 6 (sunny 17-24C)

After 2:40 hours I woke up, quietly sneaked out of the cabin so as not to wake up Jaroslav or Rosta and started to walk. I listened to my music, did not look at my position, watch, or anything. I just looked at the nice stars and remembered that this is exactly how I do my early morning practice in Denver. I really enjoyed the walk keeping easy pace at about 7.3 km/h. I need to admit that not too many things happen this day – quiet night, fresh morning, hot day with two ice-creams from the organizers and a long evening.

At noon, we reached half point. My distance was 428.2 km, which is about the length of Paris- Alsace. But who cares about that local race at this moment, right? This also means that I covered 136.6 km in the third day – more than I was expecting in my predictions. I was still moving fine, completing each 25 km chunk in about 3:30-3:50h.

At noon, I took another hot/cold shower followed by soup and a small portion of the entree while resting in our kitchen. I took another 45-minute break around 4pm with another hot/cold shower. The weather was still hot so it was wiser to take naps during the daytime and walk during the nighttime.

I was slowly approaching the 500 km mark. I was getting tired. My speed dropped to 6.3-6.7 km/h. It would be easy to stop and go to bed, but I really wanted to finish this 25 km chunk before I took a break. The laps seemed to be getting longer and longer. Ten, nine, eight, still a few more seven, six, . keep going, two, one and I did it. At the stroke of midnight, I finished the 500th km (84:01:23h), dove into my bed, and spent a nice solid 4 hours sleeping.

Day 5 – Monday May 7 (sunny 14-26C)

I woke up after 4 hours, and lost 30 minutes with just getting ready, taking some food and drinks. But even though I just woke up, I was still about 2 hours ahead of Dominique. At this moment, I started to focus on four different goals:

- 1) 700 km – which is the king category for 6-day walkers (only five walkers did it). This would be 3.6 km/h or 6:45h per 25 km plus breaks for the remaining 2+ days.
- 2) 752 km – which is the current world record hold by Dominique Bunel. This would be 4.6 km/h or 5:30h per 25 km plus breaks. Really doable.
- 3) 800 km – which would be really awesome and a dream goal. This would be 5.5 km/h or 4:30h per 25 km plus breaks.
- 4) Stay on the podium. For the last 200 km, I was switching between second and third position with Didier but other runners were trying to come from behind.

I did not want to focus on the wrong goal, make a mistake, hit a wall and lose all four goals. I knew that the last two days would be the hardest of all six days, but the end of the race was getting closer. Based on my feeling and pace in the last 3 days, I believed that all four goals were within my reach but it would not be easy. Didier and I were never more than a few laps away from each other, but I knew that I will not be able to pass him at the race finish unless I accumulated extra laps before the finish. Runner Pascal Coindeau from France, currently less than 2 hours behind us, looked really strong on the fourth position and could jeopardize my podium position. I really wanted to avoid that.

Now I walked solid 50 km (in 6:56h), which is under 3:30h per 25 km chunk. At noon, I took another lunch plus hot weather break for 1:35h. This afternoon, my speed dropped down to 6.5 km/h. It was much lower than first three days, but I was still moving.

Right after I passed the 600 km mark (104:50:44h) I faced my second big crises of this race (the first one was my stomach the first day and the third one was the last day). It was 9pm on the fifth night, my seemingly impossible goals were within my reach but my brain was already very tired and I was losing interest in the race. I did not feel tired physically, but I felt extremely lonely, mentally down and I wanted to quit. Really, I did. I was not sure what I was doing and I just wanted to go to bed, fall asleep without an alarm and be done. I took a short break and talked to Rosta. I returned to the lap but my leg hurt and I couldn't find the motivation to keep moving. I went back to our cabin and took an additional 40-minute break. That helped, with my physical bank but not the mental one. I do not know what made me return to the course but I walked again. I did not want to be alone, I needed to talk or listen to someone. My music did not help me at this moment. I walked two faster laps so I could join Jaroslav. Jaroslav is always there, always walking with his steady pace. I joined him, I walked silently next to him for three laps, listening to him tell of his memories, not pushing, wondering why I should keep going and trying to find a reason for the race again. Walking with Jaroslav gave me hope and after three laps I decided to give it a try again and return to my faster pace (6.4 km/h at this time). I wanted to finish this 25 km chunk and go to bed. At this moment, I was only 75km away from 700 km mark and 125 km from the world record. And I had 34 hours to go. I had plenty of time! When I crossed 625 km mark (109:49:57h) at 1:50am, another 25 km chunk completed, I went to bed for 2:45h. That was a sweet nap.

Day 6 – Tuesday May 8 (sunny 13-23C)

I woke up at 4:35am, it was still dark. The last whole day was a head of us with another sunny warm afternoon. I felt fine and my walking speed was back to 7.0 – 7.25 km/h. Not bad considering that it was my sixth day of walking. I took a short break at 10am and moved on. At noon, we finished our fifth day. My cumulative distance was 676.1 km so I had covered a decent 122.1 km in the last 24 hours. I was still moving reasonably fast. I was only 77 km from the world record and the 700 km mark was just around the corner. I started to count down hours from the last 24 hours. The temperature was rising, my speed was dwindling and it was wise to take a nap instead of walking under the hot sun. At 1pm I took a 35-minute nap, relaxed and returned to the course at “full” speed – moving between 6.5 and 7.0 km/h.

Then a new problem arose. I got cracks on my tongue. This was very unpleasant for me because eating solid food hurt more and more. I was able to eat yogurt or similar food but I had to eat more solid food as well. I tried to water it down as much as I could so it was not too painful, but it hurts a lot.

Today I was taking more shorter breaks because my legs were getting tired and I still had almost one more day to walk. At 4:20pm I crossed the 700 km mark (124:19:31h). I “walked” into the king category for world class 6-day walkers and I still had almost 20 hours to go. Amazing. Another two short breaks at 4:30pm and 6pm helped me to relax. At 7:30pm, I took about a 50- minute break – shower, dinner and nap. It was almost certain that I would break the world record sometime in the middle of the night. After consultation with Jarda and Rosta at 10pm, I went to bed and took nice long 3:45 hour sleep. It sounds ridiculous, but I was not rushing anywhere. I believed that I secured the podium position, I knew that unless I did something really stupid, I would break the world record with time to spare and without a nap I would have hard time to continue at my current pace. This also meant that I gave up the “magical” 800km mark. I am sure that the 800km was within my reach. Well, I need to keep some goals for the next time, right ;-). My big concern was if Pascal on fourth position would eliminate my lead while I am sleeping and take my third position.

Later in the afternoon, helpers got chalks and started to draw pictures and write messages on the path. It was nice because each country wrote something specific to them, but I had a really hard time with the messages. It is hard to believe, but it was because of my very tired brain. As I walked, my eyes were on the ground. As I saw a message, my eyes sent a request to my brain to read it and processes it. Again and again and again. But it hurt. And there were a lot of messages and still a lot of laps to go.

Day 7 – Wednesday May 9 (sunny 15-24C)

Finally, the last day was here. I woke up at 1:40am and started walking. I realize that Pascal went to sleep, too, so I had not lost my lead. Didier was 15 laps ahead already so my third overall position looked solid. But my brain was more and more tired. I could not even recognize songs in my headphones from my favorite play list. The pain caused by the missing skin on my left little toe increased, but it was mostly bearable for me. I was worried about possible infection but my foot was ok. Fortunately, I was still walking but it was getting harder and harder for me to force myself to move. I had only 10 hours to go but it felt like an eternity. Because nothing was pushing me, I started to walk only about 5.7-6.0 km/h – much slower than the first 6 days. But I was moving and I still had to pass the world record. I found three clocks in direct proximity off the course and time was crawling so slow. I wanted to be done, I tried to make time go faster. Each lap was around 9 minutes. 9 hours to go, 8 hours to go, 7 hours to go, 6 hours to go. And here we go. At 5:54 am on the last day I finished my 812th lap, 752.578 km, so I broke the current world record held by Dominique Bunel from 2015. I was happy and I still had 6 hours to go. That was not a bad margin. I received congratulations from Jaroslav, Rosta, Peter and some runners. That was pleasant. 5 hours to go. 4 hours –

that is my long weekend workout. At 8am I took 20+ minute break to have a soup for breakfast. 3 hours to go – that is my normal workout, 2.5 hours, 2 hours... The time was crawling so slow but I believed that I can finish the race successfully after all. The temperature was rising but my hat with neck cover cooled by water would do it. At this moment almost all the racers were either on the course or around. It was getting busy again. At 10:10am I crossed 775km mark and I still had almost 2 hours to go. Yes, I could stop, relax, enjoy and wait but I was moving fine (still almost 6 km/h) and recalling that whoever wants to take my record from me will have to walk these steps, too. Good luck and enjoy!

I completed 780km with one hour to go. My speed was over 6 km/h now. Only minutes were remaining from this long race. Some racers dressed up for the last hour to make it more entertaining. For the last 20 minutes, 2-meter tall Peter Prokop Tuma showed up in a black business suit. On hot sunny day. Wow. I saw sweat dripping off his neck. But he received a huge applause around the track.

Last laps

Most racers had their national flag. The Swedish, Japanese and French were walking and running together (each country). I was still cruising with my pace, still logging an extra lap or two. For the last lap, I removed my hat, received a bottle of water with my bib number 61 from the organizers and walked into the last lap. I was close to the finish line again when I heard the gun. The race was over. 144 hours. I dropped my already half empty bottle on the ground, marking my last step of this incredible race. Luckily, I found a chair nearby and sat down, very exhausted. I was so tired and done that tears came to my eyes for a moment. After a few minutes I walked only about 50 meters back to our cabin, set on a chair and called the race done. I ate some food, took a shower while sitting (it was too much for me to be standing,) and had a 2-hour nap before the final ceremony.



Daily walking distance

day	hour	total km	daily km
1	24	133.1	133.1
2	48	291.6	158.5
3	72	428.2	136.6
4	96	554.0	125.8
5	120	676.1	122.1
6	144	786.7	110.6

Sleeping statistics (breaks over 40 minutes, subtracted 9 minutes for the lap):

km	time	date time	break
65.8	8:17	1d 20:17	0:40
78.8	10:45	1d 22:45	2:16 first nap to deal with my stomach problem
80.6	13:25	2d 01:25	3:44 second nap to deal with my stomach, want to quit the race
251.2	41:10	3d 05:10	1:08
304.0	50:05	3d 14:05	1:17 afternoon sleep break to escape the heat
357.8	59:14	3d 23:14	2:38
453.2	75:49	4d 15:49	0:43
501.4	84:01	5d 00:01	4:30
555.2	96:02	5d 12:02	1:36 afternoon sleep break to escape the heat
603.4	105:22	5d 21:22	0:38
626.5	109:49	6d 01:49	2:48
683.1	121:02	6d 13:02	0:35
720.1	127:34	6d 19:34	0:49
728.5	129:43	6d 21:43	3:50 physically, I did not need it so long but mentally, I wanted it!
27:16 total time spent on breaks with sleeping			
I also took about 8 additional breaks longer than 10 minutes – usually a hot/cold shower with food			

After the race

The recovery from the race was interesting. I got one blister on my left heel and little toe on my left foot did not have skin. That's it. Right foot was ok. For about a week, I was really exhausted, constantly hungry and sleepy. I had a problem to stand still because my muscles were so tired. About 10 days after the race, I was fine for normal life and ready for short workouts. 14 days after the race I took my first short walk – 7km. I was ok, but my legs could not move. I believe that I recovered from the race rather fast and easy. Can I do better? Yes. I lost about 35-40 km on the first night when my stomach was on strike and I slept for a long 6 hours. On the last day, I took it a bit easier. I gave up 15-20km when I took a nice 4-hour sleep (2 hours would have been enough), and I walked slower so as not to make any silly mistakes. At the end, I spent over 27 hours on sleeping breaks, which was about 10 hours more than Dominique Bunel took during his world record walk. I believe that I could push a bit harder during the race in order to get a better result, but who knows?

The weather in Balatonfured was sunny and hot every day. I am sure that the high daily temperatures took a toll on the performance of all the racers, including me.

What if there was competition of the ultra-walkers from the golden years of 1990-2000 when the top walkers regularly walked 200km under 22 hours? I estimate that on 200km walk I am about 4 hours slower than I was in those golden years. (My personal best for 200km from 1991 is 21:25 hours.)

Anyway, yes, there is possibility to walk significantly more than 800km in 6 days. Is it possible now? Would even 900km be reachable for a walker? Who will take this challenge?

Paris-Colmar vs. 6-day race

This was my question before this race. I participated in the Paris-Colmar race four times (and Paris-Alsace 2016, but that is a different race). It was about 20 years ago so I was 20 years younger. Paris-Colmar is a race of lonely walkers each with their own huge support team based in motor-home “pushing” walker forward. The race goes through country side and cities so it is a bit more interesting but it is more hilly as well. Because there is no exact measurement, you do not know your current speed, immediate relative speed to your competitors and you cannot set your own break and sleep strategy. Average speed at Paris-Colmar is a bit higher than at the 6-day race but I am not sure why. Maybe it is due to the bigger dedicated support teams, maybe more selective walkers, maybe because scheduled break time is excluded from the final time or just because the 6-day race is more than twice as long.

Thank you

Of course, I would not be able to finish this race without help of other people. I cannot name all of them but let me list just a few:

- My wife Laura who was my mental support, let me practice early weekend mornings and held the fort at home for 22 days while I was in Europe for this race.
- Jaroslav Pruckner who helped me with the race preparation, shared a lot of his experience from multi-day races and encouraged me during the race when I needed it
- Rostislav Kovar who served me food, drinks and other necessities throughout the long 144 hours, encouraged me at the times when I was down, and took nice pictures from the race.
- The organizers who had prepared a wonderful race with some of the best support I have ever experienced.

Two final notes.

- Firstly, to the 6 Day Walk ranking lists that I reproduced in the newsletter. They were in fact a mixture of official and unofficial results and do contain performances similar to Ivo's, which were done without official walk status or monitoring. Sorry about the confusion there!
- Secondly, Ivo has talked to organisers about a possible walking category in the Hungary 6 Day race next year, but he needs to have some idea on possible numbers. So if any of our readers are keen on participating in an official 6 Day walk in Hungary next May, get in touch with me and I will pass you onto Ivo.

CENTURION PROFILES

I hope you had time to read the profiles of our newest centurions, as advertised in our May newsletter.

Colin Heywood (C75): <http://centurions.org.au/centprofiles/75%20colin%20heywood.pdf>
Chris Burn (C72): <http://centurions.org.au/centprofiles/72%20chris%20burn.pdf>

Those for Jantinus Meints (C73) and Arie Ros (C74) are not far away. I just need more time in my day!!!!

FINANCIAL NEWS

I am very pleased to announce that a number of our centurions and supporters have come to our rescue since our last newsletter, digging deep to give us donations and bring our bank balance up to a healthy mark. In particular, I must acknowledge the enormous donation by Dutch based club member **Bertus van Ginkel (C70)**. After conversion to Australian dollars, it came out at \$1510.45. His donation, and those of Peter Crump, Lachlan Wilkinson, Michelle Thompson and Justin Scholz, are much appreciated.

Incoming:	Donation – Bertus van Ginkel (C70)	1510.45
	Donation – Peter Crump (C66)	50.00
	Donation – Lachlan Wilkinson	50.00
	Donation – Deryck Skinner (C51)	100.00
	Donation – Michelle Thompson (C58)	200.00
	Donation – Justin Scholz (C61)	100.00
	Bank Interest	0.31
Outgoing:	Postage and Photocopying	20.00
Balance:		\$2200.79

We do not charge an annual fee for membership but rely on the generosity of our members and supporters to keep us afloat. If you have not given lately, now is the time! Our bank details are

Bank: Westpac
BSB Number: 033003
Acct Name: Australian Centurions Walkers Inc.
Acct Number: 123947

UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Another bumper addition of the newsletter, the fifth for this year, and it is only June! I find more and more to write about each issue and each year. Our sport is indeed a 'growth sport' in so many ways.

It is mid winter here in Melbourne and it is cold and intermittently wet, but I have been out for my walk today. Some things can't wait.

I wish you all the best for the next month or so. On the walking front, we only one week away from the Parish Walk on the Isle of Man and only 2 weeks away from the Fotrally in Sweden. Lots more action to come!

Yours in Centurion walking

Tim Erickson (C13), 1 Avoca Cres, Pascoe Vale, Victoria, Australia, 3044