

Trans-Am, Part II: A Game With New Rules

by Jesse Dale Riley

In organizing the Trans-America Footrace for the first time last year, Michael Kenney and I thought we had seen it all. The athletes and crew who came along for the ride were tossed straightaway into a maelstrom of conflict and deprivation that only a few were prepared for. We learned the hard way that enthusiasm and confidence run out long before you reach any physical limit, and that personality problems, money problems, and lack of leadership can undermine and eventually destroy the purely competitive aspects of the race. So we were a little surprised when the second edition sought out a far happier destiny, and our underlying fear of dangers ahead never materialized. There were plenty of times when we stood by, apologetic and brain-dead, while runners and crews doctored each other's injuries, unloaded the truck, called the media, brought us food, and offered helpful advice on organizing the daily stages. It was the only thing we were totally unprepared for.

June 19 (Day 1): It's always strange to look back on the first day once you know how the race turned out. Ed Kelley won in 8:27:37 for 52.05 miles, his fastest stage of the whole event and the only one where he finished higher than third. He had acquired a sponsoring charity (Children's Aid International), a motorhome, and a therapist to crew for him from a bicycle because he felt, as did many of last year's runners, that lack of support had held him back. It went for nothing, however, as he faded badly from lack of training and persistent blisters. He ran an hour a day slower than last year for the whole event. Second in 9:21 was Jay Birmingham, who continued in second the next two days, finished third the following three days, and withdrew on the seventh day with an Achilles problem while standing second overall. It was just too fast a start.

Running together for that first day were Mike Sandlin and Ray Bell, who had become good friends while rooming together at Dave Covey's house in Orange County before the start. These two runners of similar ability would take widely divergent paths, however, in the days to come. For Mike this would be his best stage; for Ray, it would be his third slowest. Dick Rozier, at 63 the oldest of our starters, finished just in front of Pat Farmer both this day and the next, but a muscular imbalance that caused him to lean badly to one side was already quite noticeable by the third day, and he withdrew because of it on Day 10. Pat Farmer, in sixth, hardly looked a world-beater. Like most of the runners that day, he complained of stomach problems and looked very ill at ease: the

first-day blues.

Tomoya "Tommy" Takaiski, the Japanese musician, was Mr. Rhythm — he rarely showed signs of pain or stress, in keeping with his deeply-held belief in the power of relaxation and a positive attitude. Rudiger Dittman in eighth was an enigma. A triathlete with plenty of speed but little experience (his longest run was the 78.6 miles he had run in two Triple Ironman events), we thought he would make a move to the front once he felt comfortable, but it never happened. Lorna Michael (formerly Richey) in ninth would run with the leaders late in the race, but for now she accepted the conservative strategy of her handler, Alan Firth. The final four finishers that first day would eventually withdraw, although Gutdayzke and Serge Girard of France stayed long

running stages if they had to withdraw from the coast-to-coast event. A major windstorm blew down all the tents of those who chose to sleep outside on the lawn rather than indoors at the gymnasium we had organized. High winds dogged us at the finish line of almost every stage this year.

A Two-Man Race

June 22 (Day 4): Ray sprinted away from a tired Pat Farmer in the last 100 yards to take his third straight stage in 8:16:55 for 51.75 miles, the first of what would soon be a daily battle between them. From this point forward it was a two-man race, with the others fighting for the remaining places or just to survive.

June 23 (Day 5): I made the mistake of telling the runners this would be a relatively easy stage, only 28.4 miles and a lot of downhill, but the descent into the brutally hot valley at Amboy proved quite difficult. Ray took 26 minutes from Patrick with a shockingly fast 3:54:23, then helped unload the baggage in the shimmering heat.

June 24 (Day 6): One of the toughest

Jesse Dale Riley



Ray Bell crossing the dry lake bed into Nevada, somewhat dwarfed by the wide-open spaces.

enough to make a lasting impression on the six who finished the race in New York.

Instead of last year's 11th-hour diversion to the Veteran's Hall in Rancho Cucamonga, we finished at the Best Western Heritage Inn, where we had donated rooms, so already things were looking up as we bailed gratefully into our beds and tried not to think much of the next 63 days.

June 20 (Day 2): Ray broke away at 4,200-foot Cajon Pass and gained 28 minutes on Jay Birmingham with a 7:31:53 for 44.25 miles. Ed Kelley, already working very hard, barely retained the overall lead with an 8:38. Just as happened last year, only one runner (Ray) ran Day 2 faster than Day 1.

June 21 (Day 3): All 13 starters completed the first three stages, which under the new rules this year allowed them to continue

days of the race. Heat-induced stomach problems affected most of the runners. Paul Soyka made 20 pit stops in just the first three miles. In the month since Michael Kenney had last scouted the course, the road over Granite Pass had been paved, and today an accident on I-15 diverted a lot of the traffic onto our usually isolated (and shoulderless) road. Plus it was hotter than last year. For those who made it into the railroad stop of Kelso, California, there were still problems. We had to move the finish line away from the only shady spot in town and the abandoned railroad depot where we camped last year was being renovated.

For Serge Girard and Paul Soyka, stomach problems and the difficult conditions persuaded them to withdraw during the stage. Paul, who finished the first 11 stages last year, seemed less fit than before and

was disappointed by the change in rules that required all the athletes to stay in similar accommodations, since he had planned on taking motels each night. Serge continued as crew for a while, built up to running parts of many stages, then returned to the race full-time at Denver and finished all the stages to New York.

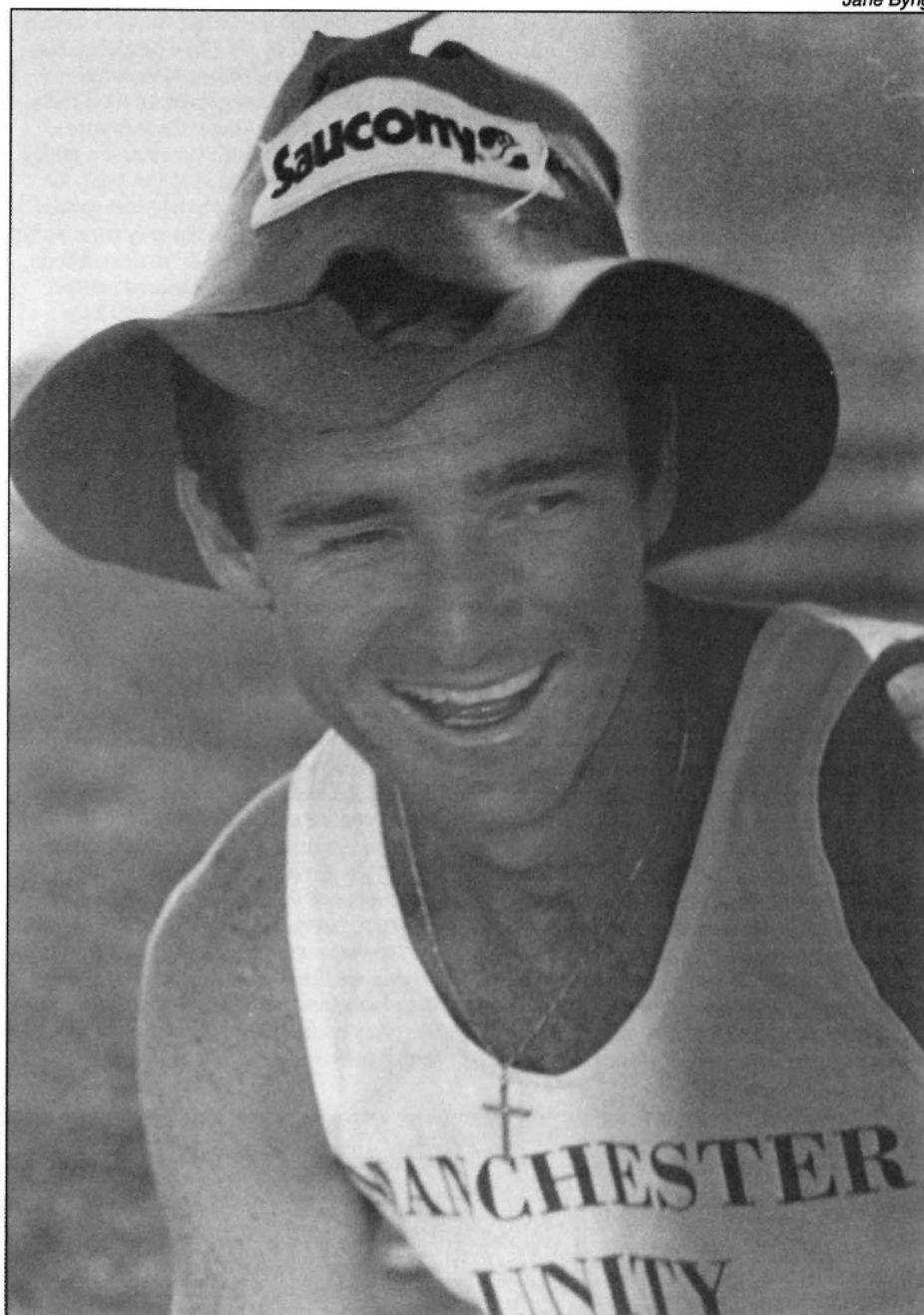
June 25 (Day 7): Jay Birmingham and Diane Dakan withdrew during the 48 miles into the Primadonna Casino/Hotel at Stateline, Nevada. It was a sad scene when Diane met Lorna at the finish. It had been their dream to be the first women to finish a Trans-America event (the Bunion Derbies in 1928 and 1929 hadn't allowed women), but now Lorna would carry the torch alone. It was a much different feeling this year when runners withdrew, because they were all good, well-prepared athletes who very much supported the event. Lorna, by the way, stood eighth of the nine remaining runners at this time, but she had a lot left and would overtake everyone but Ray and Patrick by New York.

June 26 (Day 8): Ray, running alone as he would for every succeeding Saturday of this race, blitzed the first time trial (5:38:06 for 33.55 mi) and picked up over a minute per mile on Patrick on another sweltering day. Once again we had rooms donated by Hank Nolte at the Vacation Village Resort on the near (western) edge of Las Vegas, so that we could run through the city at 5:00 a.m. the next morning.

June 27 (Day 9): Ray and Patrick were together at 60 km when Ray took off and left Patrick, suddenly sick and dizzy, far behind, taking 84 minutes from him with a 10:22:54 for 55.6 miles. When no one else had come in for a long time after Ray finished, we drove back out on the course and found a very beat-up Patrick with a towel over his head, sitting on the bumper of a crew vehicle. Pat said, "You're not getting rid of me that easy. Every dog has his day." I was very impressed that Patrick never seemed to give up, even under the worst conditions.

Continuing back along the course we found the other seven within sight of one another about five miles behind Patrick. This was the longest of the desert stages and they all looked pretty rough except for Lorna, who'd had plenty of time to pick wildflowers for her hair and seemed unaffected by the heat. As tough as it was, though, our hosts at the Moose Lodge in Moapa, Nevada, commented, as did everyone who'd seen the race both years, about how much more relaxed this year's athletes were. And in fact six runners last year took longer to complete this stage than the last runner into Moapa this year.

June 28 (Day 10): Dick Rozier withdrew midway through today's stage, and he and his wife Gaynor immediately took on the job of handling Ray, who like Patrick came without support. Again Patrick was sick and Ray took another 82-minute advantage to lead by more than ten hours. Ray



Patrick Farmer from Sydney, Australia; he had a terrific run, but Ray Bell was a little better.

also passed the splits of last year's leaders on this day and never looked back.

Into the Hills

June 29 (Day 11): Patrick's one advantage over Ray was that he was an excellent climber — he always hammered the uphill. Pat went out hard on the long climb up Utah Hill, across the extreme northwest corner of Arizona, and made some room for himself by the top, but Ray caught him easily on the descent and put another 21 minutes on Pat by St. George, Utah. Ray was breathing hard at that pace and we were sure his front-running ways were leading to imminent disaster, but he was crazy like a fox and didn't back down.

June 30 (Day 12): After a record ten straight stage wins by Ray, Patrick pulled

back a single second on Ray's slowest stage of the race, a 52.15-mile climber into the high country of Utah that Pat did in 10:22:22. Just like last year, only two runners quit the race once it left the desert for the final 2,500 miles of mountains, plains, and eastern cities.

July 1 (Day 13): Ray took over two hours from Pat with a 9:12:43 for the 54.8 miles into Beaver, Utah, then went wandering around town on foot to buy things.

July 2 (Day 14): Pat set the pace and Ray dogged him for 50 miles, the third straight 50-miler at altitude. The Roziers were crewing for them both, and Dick was worried that they would injure themselves by trying to beat one another. When he met them at the last aid station at 48 miles he offered a bit of grandfatherly advice: "OK,

fellas, there's a really tough hill coming up. You've been running together all day, no one's going to gain any time today. Just call it even, run in together, and don't hurt yourselves."

Patrick drained a cup of soda and hit the gas with Ray in tow. "I just want to see what he's got," said Ray.

"You know, that's exactly what he says about you," I told him.

"Yeah, but I'm not 12 hours behind."

Pat gained ground on the uphill, but Ray reeled him in going down and tried to pass before Patrick blitzed the last mile in under seven minutes to win by 61 seconds.

Meanwhile our unlikely sponsor, President Okada of Moonbat Company of Japan, had flown into Salt Lake City from Tokyo and was driving into tiny, mountain-ringed Monroe, Utah, to check up on his friend, Tomoya Takaishi, and volunteer for a week for our once orphaned event. We hardly knew what to expect from the man who had called one day in May and offered to make a donation to our race, after Tommy had declined a similar offer because he felt that the race needed the support more than he. It was hard for us to believe our good fortune, especially when he blended in so well with our meager caravan as it was about to head into the most isolated part of the route.

I can tell you, if Mr. Okada is typical, then all the good things you've heard about Japanese business are true. This executive in a women's apparel company and a part-time ultrarunner, who for sure had never camped out before, seemed to enjoy the pioneer life and wasn't afraid to carry his own bags, sleep on hard floors, and pick up all the leftover aid stations for us after the runners had cleared the course. He thanked us for the experience and complimented our organizational ability, though we hardly deserved it. The shocking thing was, he was really no different than the rest of the group — they were determined to make the most of the race and enjoy it when they could. Michael and I were out there waiting for Ray to explode, waiting for a mutiny, waiting for something, anything to go wrong, but it just didn't happen.

July 3 (Day 15): Another Saturday time trial, another great solo run by Ray. Pat, starting with the group an hour after Ray, came sprinting in with a 4:32 for 28.55 miles, confident he had buried his rival. So he was pretty pissed off to find that Ray had run 3:55:16, finishing his day's work before 9:00 a.m., and was having a rest after taking over half an hour from Pat.

July 4 (Day 16): Only Ray could make six miles an hour on this 33-mile climber to an I-70

rest area at 8,000 feet. Mike Sandlin wore a tie and carried a flag for Independence Day, and at the finish the others trotted out their national flags and hung them on their tents. The Japanese fixed dinner for everyone, fresh broccoli and beef over rice, something we never dreamed of having last year, although they had difficulty with the special rice they had shipped all the way from home — water boils at about 140° at this altitude.

July 5 (Day 17): Ray scored another 31-minute advantage with a 4:26:12 for 29.55 miles into the I-70 rest area at Eagle Canyon. The view from the finish line is one of the best in the entire 3,000 miles and we took a lot of mountaineer-style photos standing on the rocks overlooking the incredible canyons below. This stop has no facilities except two tiny latrines, but we had lots of water and food, a generator and lights, and many of the runners slept more soundly here than at any other time.

July 6 (Day 18): "That's a good idea," Patrick was telling me, "having the runners always carry \$10 in case we have to buy something. I think I'll pop into this rest area and get an ice block (Popsicle)." He was making fun of the seemingly endless wasteland — rest areas were the closest thing to civilization we'd seen in three days. "You know, you've got all these nuclear weapons here, just in case the Russians try to take over." He spread his arms around. For 360° there was nothing but the starkly beautiful canyons. "I say, let 'em have it!" Here, too, the Japanese understood why the cellular phones wouldn't work; there was no place in their homeland that was this deserted.

Ray ended a spectacular series of stages with a 6:41:47 for 44.7 miles to take another

half-hour from Pat. He showed some signs of burnout during the next week with some relatively slow stages, but he got better by Denver without losing much time. Patrick was still rounding into condition himself and couldn't take advantage. After the mountains they were both very fit, and the duel continued on more even terms at a faster pace.

July 7 (Day 19): "Cisco, Utah, changed my life," Mike Sandlin was saying, a couple of days after we had left this stopover at the abandoned gas station of another dying town, bypassed by the interstate.

"Never again will I complain about television commercials," Ray chimed in, "I'm going to tape all the commercials when I get home, so I can see the ones I missed." At the meeting that night, Cisco was officially voted "The Worst Stopover of the Race" by a three-to-two margin over Kelso, California.

Back to Civilization

July 8 (Day 20): We made our much-anticipated return to civilization today at Fruita, Colorado, a suburb of Grand Junction. Australian TV came out to film Patrick, footage that made quite a name for him back home. Ray had won 16 of the last 18 stages since Ed Kelley's victory on Day 1, but Pat now started a string of 37 wins in the final 45 stages, with what proved to be a typical three-second margin into Fruita.

July 9 (Day 21): Ed Kelley crashed Ray and Patrick's party, running with them while the Aussie cameramen filmed it all in the pre-dawn darkness. This was the one stage Ed won last year and he was yelling and swearing all the things he was going to do.

Bobby Porter



Making it across the USA required an organized crew — Tommy Takaishi's van at the end of the day.

The two leaders, who didn't much like each other, but at least let their feet do all the boasting, really resented Ed's presence. Ed was already 42 hours out of first place (he had only lost 23 hours to Dave Warady in the whole event last year), and Ray and Pat didn't feel he belonged, but it was 26 miles before they were able to dump him and concentrate on their own battle. Mike Sandlin, whose insides were all chewed up from a steady diet of ibuprofen pills, drank half a gallon of milk to coat his stomach and then puked and retched all the rest of the way into Parachute, Colorado.

July 10 (Day 22): Ray won another time trial while his good friend Mike was withdrawing from the race, his stomach still kaput. Like almost every other entrant in this event without multi-day experience, Mike had a great fear of injuries and was never able to concentrate or relax during the long hours on the road.

Mike's exit left Lorna Michael suddenly in fourth, within range of Ed Kelley in third. She had passed Tommy, who like Dick Rozier before him was hesitant to let her get in front, on Day 16, and Rudi on Day 21. Rudi also had no multi-day experience and had faded badly once his girlfriend Miriam, who had crewed for him for the first 13 days had to go back to work. Now we waited for Lorna to go after Ed Kelley, but that wouldn't happen for another two weeks.

July 11 (Day 23): This year the bike path alongside the supermodern freeway in Glenwood Canyon was nearly complete, and we took the direct route to Eagle along the Colorado River, saving seven miles and the hardest hills of last year's race.

July 12 (Day 24): Patrick sprinted away from the line and past the 1,000-mile mark just two miles into the stage, intent on losing Ray on the 45-mile slow climb to Vail Pass. Ray never mounted a challenge and Pat won by 35 minutes, while all the others beat the cut-off on this 57-mile by at least two and one-half hours.

July 13 (Day 25): Once again Pat took off, sure he could lose his rival by the top of Loveland Pass (11,992 ft) at 20 miles. The altitude makes this a dangerous place to force the pace, but Pat broke free before the climb and pressed hard. The eight miles of serious uphill seemed to take forever, and by all accounts both men were devastated by it. Patrick was badly winded, fighting back the tears, and said his legs felt like jelly for miles after the summit. Ray was reportedly dizzy and wandering back and forth across the road. Neither managed to make time on the mostly downhill finish into Idaho Springs because of the energy they'd spent climbing, but Pat took another 32 minutes off Ray. Up until now the trend was clear: Ray's vast superiority at the start had been gradually eroded and then reversed by Patrick, but there were no more mountain passes left, and Ray proved a master of every other condition.

July 14 (Day 26): After last year's

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traffic hassles, we took a motel on the near side of Denver so we could run through the city at 5:00 a.m., making this the shortest stage of the race so far, 27.65 miles.

A Force of Two

After Denver the scenery didn't change much, and neither did the standings. Ray and Pat, often a dozen miles in front of third place, went about the business of breaking one another, but the only thing that got broken were all the records set last year. By Denver, Ray was nine hours ahead of Dave's pace in 1992, Pat six hours behind, and they both had a lot left. On the notoriously fast, gently downhill 31-miler into Joes, Colorado, a time trial where Ray and Pat ran separately, both men broke eight minutes per mile, the only time in either Trans-Am this happened. Ray won by three minutes in 4:03:14, 23 seconds per mile better than the fastest stage of 1992.

They ran so close that every pit stop had to be timed to avoid giving an opening, and often they couldn't eat much for 20 or 30 miles at a stretch if the pace was really fast and it was hot. Pepsi, hard candy, water, and a couple of pretzels had to last them until they caught their breath. On Day 31 into Atwood, Kansas, Patrick lagged after a pit stop, feeling Ray couldn't break away with 12 miles to go, and Ray made him pay with a few six-and seven-minute miles, taking 20 minutes from him. Patrick went quickly from shock to anger, vowing to bury Ray by hours the next day, but despite starting at eight minutes a mile he couldn't lose his rival, and they jogged in together, their only tie of the race, after 61 hilly miles into Norton, Kansas.

The Flood

Days 31-36 we had hard rainstorms all but one day as we neared the flooded areas of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, but the rest of the stages were pretty dry. Floods cut 12 miles from the course at each river and forced 175-mile drives to the nearest bridges. It drove the crews to distraction having to make six-hour caravans on Days 38 and 43, but the runners didn't mind — they got to spend the time sleeping instead

of running. Day 40 was a split stage. A bridge near Chillicothe, Missouri, opened up after we had arranged to drive around it, but the runners ran extra hard thinking they would have a break in the middle of the day and so we stopped for two hours.

Change Partners and Dance

Pat wouldn't let Ray pass him, but he couldn't always force the pace himself, so the stage was set for the other four survivors to realize the two leaders were vulnerable. Gutdayzke left the race on Day 34 with back problems, but the rest seemed fit enough to challenge. Lorna, 16 hours behind Ed but in excellent condition, moved forward on the first day in Missouri and won the stage, taking over half an hour from Ed to the cheers of everyone. The next day on the split stage the whole group stayed together at the start of each half, and Ray and Pat realized belatedly that they enjoyed the aura of invincibility that they'd cultivated, and so they picked up the pace again to lose the others.

Lorna could use the boys to pace her through hard stages and get ahead of Ed, whose blisters were rapidly deteriorating (he insisted on cutting off all the blistered skin, leaving the tender skin underneath open to infection), so she continued to run with them much of the time. Like Ed Kelley before her, though, Ray and Pat didn't accept her presence up front and worked hard to avoid being shown up.

Maximum Overdrive

For Pat and Ray the fatigue was deep-seated now. Days 44-55 were the longest of the race and Pat was determined to break away again. They warmed up on Day 42 with 7:11 for 49.45 miles into Hannibal, Missouri, then 8:16 for 55.9 miles into Decatur, Illinois, on Day 43, and a string of sub-ten-minute-miles, day after day. On Day 44, Ray had passed under a ten-minute average for the whole race, a pace 1992's leaders could hold only until Las Vegas, and despite that had enough left to take another 32 minutes from Pat on the seventh time trial (Day 50). Through it all, Ray dogged Pat, giving him the stages but precious little time, until on Day 54 Pat could no longer hold the

pace. Only twice in the final 11 days was Pat able to lead the field through sub-ten-minute-splits. The scales had finally fallen from Pat's eyes and he could see that Ray was the better man; only a freak accident could reverse Ray's magnificent title run.

That last week and a half, Ray had no interest in forcing the pace — it was easier to follow Pat — so Pat continued to pile on the stage wins with Ray and Lorna nearby. Lorna passed Ed Kelley on Day 52 and was taking two hours a day from him, so soon she had few worries about her own standing and began to eye another stage win as a nice way to finish the race.

"Nothing's changed," Pat said one day after I related a similar situation in the 1929 Bunion Derby. Back then, Pete Gavuzzi, an Englishman, and Johnny Salo, an American, duelled it out for 2,000 miles into Los Angeles. In third was Italian Giusto Umek, a master of the long stage but no competitive threat to the two leaders. During a series of long stages Umek made the other two look bad, as they saw it, by leaving them far behind. Gavuzzi in the lead had too much to lose and was willing to let Umek go, but Salo was proud and regarded Umek as an amateur. Gavuzzi couldn't afford to let Salo go, so they agreed to save their strength by beating Umek on alternate days. Salo passed Umek early the next day, cranked it up and put miles and miles on the Italian while

Gavuzzi laid back in third. The following day Gavuzzi trounced Umek while Salo lay back. Umek got the message and declined to challenge the leaders after that.

Likewise Lorna and Pat were no longer on speaking terms by the time we reached Pennsylvania. Pat wanted all the remaining stages but Lorna felt he was too tired to challenge her on her best days. When Dave Obelkevich, a longtime friend of Lorna's, showed up in New Oxford, Pennsylvania, and encouraged her to go for the win on Day 60 into Lancaster the following morning, the stage was set.

Last Tango in Lancaster

Lorna sprinted out of New Oxford in the darkness the way Ray and Pat used to do, a couple of thousand miles earlier. Dave, entered as a stage runner, followed and coached from a discreet distance. They started out at 8:10 per mile for the 41.45 miles into Lancaster and were soon clear. I only saw Patrick once early on, when I laid wheat flour arrows to mark the way around a traffic circle. He and Ray were already three minutes behind and he was fuming. "It's a set-up," he said, referring to Dave's presence, "but that's OK. That just means I'll kick 'em both in the ass."

Lorna rolled into York with a 12-minute lead and Dave couldn't even stay near her anymore at that pace. He eventually finished 90 minutes behind. "I'm going to have to earn it," Lorna would say every once in a while as she settled into nine-minute miles. When a train threatened to cut her off at a railroad crossing, she sprinted to beat it. The railman switched the gate to let her across without breaking stride and I followed on my mountain bike, missing the slow-moving locomotive by about three feet. Great stuff!

I stopped to talk to Michael Kenney beyond the halfway point and noticed for the first time that Pat and Ray were pulling Lorna back. Ray didn't want to get beat by Lorna, either, but he wasn't going to say anything. Patrick, on the other hand, sang out with laughter. "Almost like a real race," he said with a smile.

Lorna smiled a lot during this race and rarely looked tired, but she was starting to work now. Every two-mile split at the aid stations brought bad news and the possibility that the boys might catch sight of her on a straightaway for the first time in five hours. Now it was clear that Lorna would have to speed up to avoid being caught.

The pace curve showed that Ray and Pat would catch up with five miles left. Pat really cranked it up once he finally saw Lorna, but Ray held the pace and waited a little longer. Pat passed and gained half a mile, then sat on the lead. Lorna ran hard to stay ahead of Ray, but he also passed in the last mile and a half and then reeled Pat in to finish 39 seconds behind him in 6:10:06. Lorna conceded and backed off to finish six minutes later. Pat and Ray ran virtually the same pace start to finish.

A Challenge, Sort Of

Mr. Okada, our sponsor from Tokyo, had been with us for a week in Utah and had completed one of the stages before returning home. He rejoined us in Ohio for the last two weeks, finished two more stages, and always offered enthusiastic support to the hardened survivors. The day he joined us, Serge Girard, who had completed all the stages since Denver, had a toothache and was ready to give up. He was being handled by the Villa family of Southern California, who had originally come to handle Diane Dakan, and they made some inquiries about dentists.

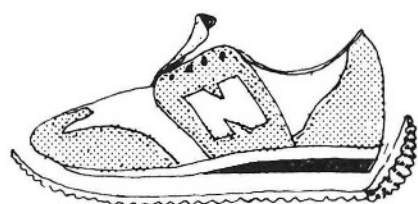
It was Sunday in Springfield, Ohio, and no dentists were working, but they found a veterinarian who could see that Serge had a hole in his tooth down to the nerve and the nerve would have to be cut: a root canal. He gave Serge some pain pills that got him to the finish in South Vienna and gave the Villas some numbers to call. After Serge made it in, the Villas called around and found a dentist who agreed to see Serge right away.

To hear Serge tell it, if your brother was a dentist back in France there was still no way he'd work on you on a Sunday in August (when everybody takes vacation), but the guy fixed Serge up and wouldn't take any money for it. A few more phone calls and they found a druggist who opened up his store to fill their prescription for more pain pills. Only in America.

Anyway, this caught Mr. Okada's attention. He could see that Serge really wanted to finish the remaining stages and eventually, after a meeting on Day 61, it was agreed that Serge would receive official recognition for completing the final 1,800 miles of the course. As if to justify this vote of confidence, Serge went out in the lead pack the next day and didn't miss a beat when Pat broke away for the final four miles into Washington, New Jersey. Ray and Lorna let them go and Pat kept notching the pace higher, only he couldn't lose Serge. Like Rudi, Serge was a good marathoner whose only fast running in this race had been Day 39, when Rudi stopped for a long time, ready to quit, then blitzed the final 30 miles with Serge right behind, vowing to withdraw as soon as he reached Hamilton, Missouri. All of a sudden now, Pat was racing the fresh, 2:52 marathoner we thought had signed up for this race. They were doing six-minute pace and then sub-five as they sprinted flat out down the long driveway of Warren Hills High School. Finally Patrick put his head down, used his last gear, and beat Serge by half a step. Lorna followed five minutes later and Ray six minutes after her.

The Finish

Fortunately not much happened after that. We hoped for a smooth finish in New York and we weren't disappointed. Fred Lebow was there again, as was Harry Abrams, the last man still living from the



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old Bunion Derbies (11th place in 1928, ninth in 1929). There was more international media than last year and a bigger crowd (200–300 people), but less U.S. media. The trophies were large, laser-cut wooden plaques and all the coast-to-coast crews got plaques as well. Almost everyone was booked into the Grand Hyatt for the weekend, so there were no hurried goodbyes like last year. The runners were bone-tired, the crew people all sleep-deprived, but there were many tears of joy that day at Columbus Circle. We had silenced for a little while the voices inside us that said we couldn't do it, and that's the reward we were really searching for.

Our Far-Flung Empire

A lot of people came out of the woodwork to help us. Keith Pippin, John Marnell, Joe Oakes, and Bobby and Thelma Porter showed up in the desert when we needed them the most. Thelma, who has a lot of connections in New York, also organized the finish for us. Dave Warady, last year's champion, came out to both coasts with his wife Kelly Babiak. Dave tried hard to look enthusiastic after Ray and Pat kicked his course record all over America, beating it by 31 and 16 hours respectively, allowing for the difference in distance.

Tommy Takaiki introduced us to a great bunch of his friends from Japan, something that totally changed the fortunes of the race. Kenji "Ken" Seki, Tommy's ninja handler, amazed us by waiting on Tommy hand and foot, then helping out everyone else. "Kuro" (Mr. Kurozumi), one of the organizers of next year's 100-km world championship in Japan, extended special invitations (airfare and hotel accommodations for a week) to Ray and Pat for the race, a wonderful prize. Bob and Tammy Julich saved us seven miles on Day 23. Sometimes I think you two, and the other race directors out there, are the only ones who really see the point of this race.

We had a staff of two this year and they did us proud. Michelle "Red" Stearns, a student at San Diego State University, was our head driver. She could take the runners' cranky attitudes and she could throw it back at them if she had to. Some of the runners,



Co-Race Director Jesse Dale Riley on patrol; he put a lot of miles on his trail bike over the summer.

Pat Farmer for instance, who had never been civil to their handlers before, learned good manners from Michelle. Louise Walker, our head cook and caterer, was our champion. If you had a problem with animals crossing the road, all you had to do was send her out there in the Grand Am and she'd clear them out.

A Game With New Rules

So here's what we learned:

1. It's a race of speed. Once again our winner was a specialist at shorter distances whose only previous multi-day (just like Dave Warady's) was a disappointment. Ray didn't train mega miles, though, like Dave had; instead he relied on his speed to build up and hold a big lead.

2. We recommend handlers for everyone entering the race, but Ray and Pat showed that good runners beat good crews, if the runners are ready for the obstacles they face.

3. It's a lot longer race if you run it slow. Most runners, if they survive the first three weeks, are capable of running much faster later on. Staying at the back, afraid of injury, and doing four miles an hour, gets pretty depressing after a couple of thousand miles.

4. Attitude does matter. Ray and Pat never worried about saving energy or avoiding injury. They were clearly a lot more tired than the other four finishers, but Ray

still jogged at 4:30 to warm up for the day's run, and Patrick still did interviews over the phone for an hour in the evenings. If you're being sensible there's no need to be a prisoner of your bed, unless you just enjoy lying down. Trying to make the race easy or painless isn't possible, but you can accept the hardships and get past them.

5. I know other race directors are going to have difficulty believing this, but with one exception, all of our runners actually read and took to heart the pre-race instructions we sent them. They benefitted greatly from what the 1992 entrants went through.

6. Rudi Dittman sounded a note of warning to next year's runners. He was only a week from New York, headed through the mountains of Pennsylvania one day, up and down, up and down. Rudi hated mountains, but he didn't like to complain. Still a man has to speak his mind sometimes. "Jesse and Michael," he said, "are crazy."

Trans-America Footrace

Huntington Beach, Calif. to New York, N.Y.
2,912.35 miles June 19 – Aug. 21, 1993

1. Ray Bell, 46, FL	486:41:08
2. Pat Farmer, 31, AUS	+15:49:15
3. Lorna Michael, 34, WI	+99:33:59
4. Ed Kelley, 35, CA	+121:22:02
5. Tomoya Takaiki, 51, JAP	+149:29:38
6. Rudi Dittman, 32, GER	+203:49:55
13 starters	