

6 FOOT TRACK NOTES - 2008

1. Approaching the 6 foot Event in SECTIONS

Race has 4 sections – on page 2 onwards below [in blue font] are notes to accompany Sean’s race description. Also included:

- 6 Foot Course profile with Sections set out.
- Excel file with last 4 NRG years results – provides a good overview of how to plan your times for each section [refer TAB PLAN].

SECTIONS

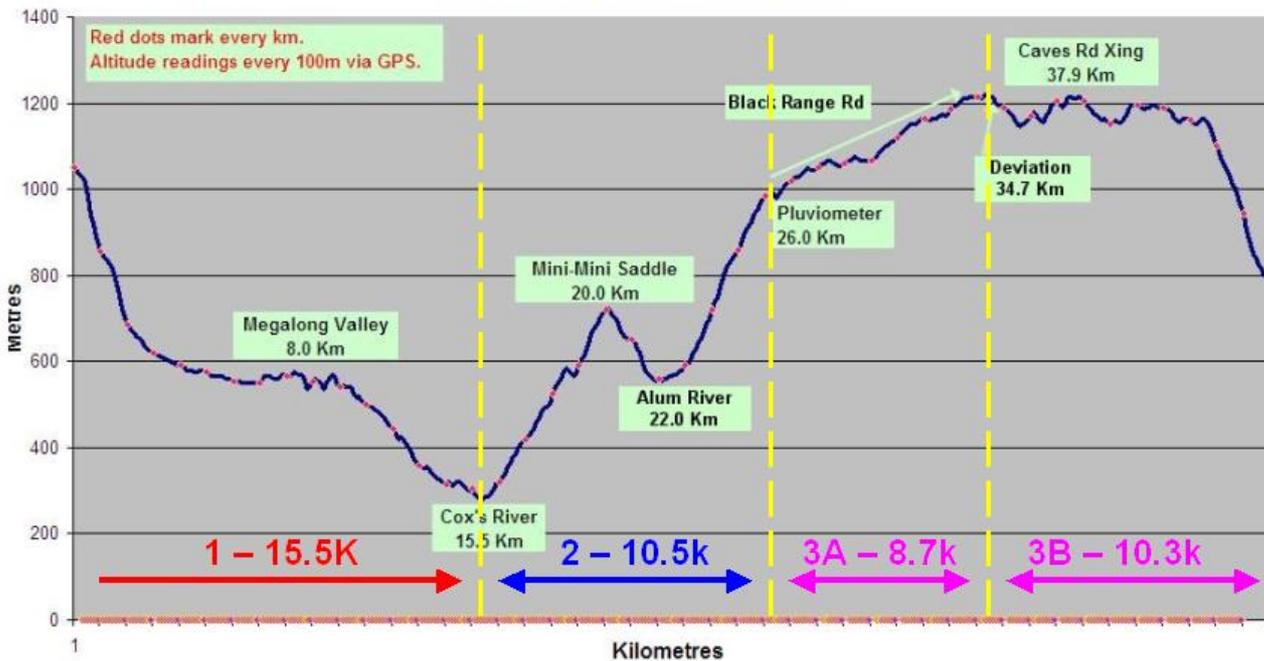
Section 1 – 15km to Coxes River [downhill]

Section 2 – 10.5km to the top of Pluviometer [steep uphill]

Section 3A – 8.7km the Black range road [uphill slope]

Section 3B – 10.3km [up & down – esp at end]

Six Foot Track Course Profile



Example plan for sections below.

SECTION	1	2	1 + 2	3A + 3B	
Middy Times	To Coxes River (15km)	Time from Coxes to Pluvio (10.5km)	Total Time to Top of Pluviometer (26km)	Time from Pluviometer to END (19km)	Total Time
Strong - outperform	1H 30M	1H 30M	3H 10M	2H 20M	5H 20M
AOK	1H 35M	1H 30M	3H 15M	2H 25M	5H 30M
Good Middy Time	1H 40M	1H 35M	3H 25M	2H 30M	5H 50M
Outside perfect	1H 45M	1H 40M	3H 25M	2H 35M	6H 00M

- For those that like to “know how they are going” [who doesn’t!!!] take a printed copy or write on your forearm your target times for each section. Its great to see your on track.
- Each year I know how long I plan to do Section 1 + 2. After that I see how the day is going – so I don’t stress out past the top of the Pluviometer
- Each runner with the overall NRG training should by now be able to forecast times for Sections 1 + 2.

- On the event day itself if you are behind where you thought you would be / then DON'T GIVE UP for the day. The event is long enough that you have ups and downs. Girls especially have a tendency to "come good" over **Section 3B**. Men have a tendency to get tired in **Section 2** and let it impact their whole run.
- Each year runners 6 foot virgins + veterans in the Middy to Shorty range esp get to **Section 2** and allow the hills to take a "mental toll". So prepare for very steep hills – that you will power walk up – with a smile at the top.

A Detailed Course Description

by Sean Greenhill (January 2003) – the blue paragraphs were added in by Chris Johnson [6 Ft = 6 Hours] for NRG 6 Foot Virgins 2008.

PART 1 – To Coxes River

The first few hundred metres are wide, steepish downhill fire trail. There are quite a few waterbars to step over and some sections are rutted from erosion. The field usually sprints here to get into best position for the stairs.

- If this is your first 6 Foot its not a bad idea to line up a couple of rows behind other runners – make sure you pay attention from 30 minutes before your wave – its easy to chat away and not focus – if in Wave 4 this should provide for a reasonable start to the steps.
- Warm up – use the road where the bus drops runners off to warm up and stretch
- If you are in Wave 1, 2, 3 – it is a sprint to the top of the steps. It's a long race caution is suggested – but its not unrealistic to get a good start. Note Quads don't like a hammering early.
- Suggested approach middies upwards – get towards the front of your wave [that means being ready when called] – you should be able to keep pace with the runners as they head towards right hand turn – eg you keep up with the flow of runners.
- If you're a shorty take similar approach and keep up with the flow of runners. But take it easy and keep eyes LOOKING DOWN 😊

At a hard right hand turn, pass a wooden barrier and the trail narrows to the Nellies Glen staircase. No matter what the weather, water is always dripping down the rock face on the right, making the footing slippery. At first the stairs are demarcated by wooden boards, further down they become less regular in structure and are cut out of the rock.

Cross over the small creek coming in from the left at a rocky section, then the steps end and the trail improves considerably. At first a narrow, well graded singletrack, it broadens out into a dirt road (Nellies Glen Rd) descending into farmland. Again, there are a number of waterbars to step over early on- be careful. The bottom of the stairs is the 1.7K mark.

- Once down the stairs and to Megalong Rd its 8km of pretty flat running – so get into the swing of things, **DO NOT RUN OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE** – its best to find someone your pace and run along.
- Each year runners run "away from me" on this stretch and I see them finish a long way behind – you don't get a good time by going fast here!!!

As you enter the farming land, it's safe to look up to the left and admire the cliffs of the Narrow Neck plateau. On the right Megalong Creek has cut a gully the trail runs parallel with. At one point the track divides in two- a vehicle track branches away to the right while the "correct" trail cuts through some vegetation straight on, but both trails meet up again a hundred metres or so further on. It's reasonably flat here- certainly all runnable, anyway.

Nellies Glen Rd is the race course until about the 6K mark when it bears hard right at a ford while the runners cross the ford (you shouldn't get your feet wet) and run across a paddock. The route has been worn into the

grass by countless pairs of feet- it climbs a small rise into a stand of trees and becomes a narrowish but good quality singletrack cutting through scrubby bush. Runners climb a few stiles over fences and emerge from the bush at Megalong Valley Rd, the 8K mark.

- At Megalong Rd you should be happy fine and waving [at someone you know]
- There is an aid station here

Cross the road, step over a cattle grid, then follow a broad dirt road downhill. The old Megalong Cemetery is on your left immediately after leaving Megalong Valley Rd behind but it's hard to notice any details with all the overgrowth in there. The road enters farmland, bottoms out and commences a gradual uphill, quite runnable. Megalong Creek is still wending its way on your right hand side, downslope.

The farm road winds away to the left whilst runners take a signposted singletrack straight on. It drops to a dry creek bed then climbs steeply for a minute or two (you'll probably walk this). A couple more dry creek beds are negotiated as the trail climbs towards Pinnacle Hill.

- Pinnacle Hill is the first [short hill] good for a power walk – good open views too – you should be able to spot other NRG runners ahead and just behind.
- Make SURE at this point in the event you have “some space” or are **NOT BEHIND A GROUP OF SLOWER RUNNERS**. The reason is that after this drinks stop its mainly single file track to Coxes River.
- Its an idea to get a **BIG DRINK** here as at the next check point the other side of Coxes River you will be taking off you shoes and socks [wringing these out dry] – so that’s where a lot of your time will go there. Hence drink up here.
- Conversely some runners “get stuck” in a Congo line of faster runners and run outside their comfort zone to “keep up”. This approach does **NO FAVOURS** as you are using valuable fuel by going outside your zone!!!!

At Pinnacle Hill (approx 10K), you'll climb another stile, plunge into the bush and commence the long technical downhill to the Coxes River. The Coxes is down a steep slope on your right. the trail is at its worst early on- lots of rocks scattered across and embedded in the trail and quite a lot of loose earth and uncertain footing. In a few places there have been attempts to mitigate the erosion and loose footing by putting in wooden steps. There are several nasty falls in this section every year, so concentration is paramount. Due to the narrowness of the trail, queues of several runners can easily form when it's impossible to pass a slower or more uncertain runner. The conditions improve a little as the trail drops closer to the river but there's still plenty of rocks and winding in and out of trees. When the swing bridge appears over the river on the right, there's about a kilometre to the waterline- this is the 14.4K mark.

- If you want to pass a slower runner say “passing on right” where practical – if you are slowing a group of runners that are behind you then step off track where practical and resume once they are past.
- NOTE – It's the power walking the hills and being able to run most of Section 3A + 3B where you make up a lot of time – not sprinting to Coxes River.

Head straight down a grassy bank to reach the sandy rivers bank. A stand of trees grows by the waters edge; walk through them and plunge in. Usually there's a chain or rope across the water to follow straight across, but if the waterline is low enough it's possible to scramble across the rocks on the right and not get your feet wet. I've kept my feet dry a couple of times, but the water had also come up to my waist, and I'm six foot three. I have seen people reduced to swimming if the water is up!

- At Coxes River – find where the rope is and wade / swim across – last year the river was up – This year I understand its then only option again – so mentally prepare to get wet.

Walk up a sandy bank to the Coxes River campground and the first cutoff point. 15.5K have elapsed. There's plenty of grass to sit on if you need to empty your shoes or change your socks. There's fair chance your shoes will get some gravel in them during the crossing.

- DO stop / with drink or something to eat in hand from aid station – take off your Shoes and socks – wring dry and proceed [this can be done in less than 2 minutes and yes you can & SHOULD **[PRACTICE THIS AT HOME]** – or next time at the end of a run. Yes there are also more creek crossings and your feet will get wet again – but not SOAKED – so you should not have to take your shoes and socks off again.
- Taping of heels & feet. Naturally run on the day as you have trained – but if you are susceptible to getting blisters on your heels you can apply the night before. Fixomull stretch tape and glue it in place with Leuko spray adhesive [best to sleep in socks] and keep feet dry in morning too.

PART 2 – Coxes River to top of Pluviometer

A dirt road leaves the campground. Pretty quickly, this starts climbing towards Mini Mini Saddle.

- As soon as you have put sneakers back on – and start again – a long slow hill starts = **power** walking if targeting 6 Hrs. So as you approach Coxes start focusing on the change in style that will be required!!!
- The best runners will run this hill. In my experience most average runners [eg around 6 Hrs to 6 Hrs 20min] who do run the hill after Coxes River & or attempt to run this hill – I have found they are still near me [within eye sight] at the top of Pluviometer!!!!

Again, there's a watercourse (Murdering Creek) on the right and bush on all sides. The first two kilometres consist of mostly 10-15% uphill grades of dirt road with flat sections of a few metres spliced in here and there. All but the top guys will mix up running and walking. The road winds around the side of the escarpment, switchbacking several times before taking a left turn and emerging into clear.

- When you emerge in the clearing you can see an aid station behind a big tree [not too far away] and lots of runners ahead [and behind].

A direct uphill takes you into farmland, bears right around a farmhouse then drops to a gully, turns left and starts climbing again. Unlike before, this dirt road is no longer switchbacking but climbs more or less right up the slope, so by definition is steeper than before,

- This is the steepest section of the course!!!

There are a few deep erosion marks and it can get pretty warm here on sunny days as there are no trees to shelter you.

Until the top of Mini Mini Saddle, that is (20K) when the trail enters trees, and starts to drop again.

- OK so its your first down hill after climbing Mini Mini – **DO NOT** try and sprint it as your Quads will be shot and NOT like you in **Section 3B.**

The elevation gain from the Coxes River is about 480m. There's one notable long switchback as the trail drops into cattle yards (there's a large ALUM CREEK CAMPING GROUNDS sign on your right as you come off the switchback and the trail levels out). Say hello to the cows if you can muster the enthusiasm. The trail crosses Little River and its tributary, Alum Creek. three times. You may get your feet wet, but these are not major or deep waterways- there are rocks to stand on, and you can get over in two or three long strides.

- The Little River aid station normally has a “shower” you can walk under. By this stage of the race you should still be feeling relaxed and in control.
- Straight after Little River aid station is the second major Climb of Section 2 – so keep at it – to the top of Pluviometer – which is @ 26KM NOT BEFORE!!!

About a kilometre after starting the descent from Mini Mini Saddle, the trail starts climbing again, towards Pluviometer. This is about 420m total elevation gain. As with the "first half" of the haul up Mini Mini Saddle, the dirt road switchbacks around the side of the escarpment and the climbs are punctuated with flat sections of a few metres of flat. The grade is not quite as steep as earlier but is a longer haul. About halfway up a vehicle

track drops away to the right, you stick to the hillside. Around a left turn, Black Range comes into view for the first time, heading off into the distance on the right and climbing higher still. You'll be up there soon.

- At the top of Pluviometer many veterans say this is where the “event starts”.
- As you have “mapped out your run” by reading this and planning you would have broken your event into Sections. Treat the top of the Pluviometer as a TRANSITION ZONE – a new **Section 3A** is about to begin.

The final approach to Pluviometer is pretty direct with little switchbacking, and comes into a T junction. On the left is the big aid station marquee and the Cronje Mountain trail heads away behind it, you turn right and keep climbing, but the grade is not as relentless as before. You'll climb another 250m or so in the next 9K- sub 5.20 runners will probably run the whole thing, otherwise there are a few bits where walking may be required. The real race is just beginning.

There's a short steep climb out of Pluviometer aid station then the going is a very gradual uphill for a while.

PART 3A – Pluviometer to Deviation

- This Section is 8.7km long – MOST strong runners run this all. 6 Foot virgins esp virgins targeting about 6Hrs 20mins run + power walk approach is good here. If you run most of this section you should end up with running under 5Hrs 40min.
- A good option is to try and “keep up” with another runner.
- If you are feeling knackered suddenly – hang in there. If you are feeling strong see immediate text in red below.
- Therefore from the top of Pluviometer a consistent effort of running / **power walking @ your RELEVANT CAPABILITY** will result in 20 – 50 minutes faster time. So be happy and keep moving

Again, it's good, broad dirt road all the way along Black Range. Dense bush is on either side but there are a few glimpses of views now and then, especially on the left, if you feel good enough to look around. Two large fire trails (large enough to be signposted) coming in from the left split the Black Range up into rough thirds- first the Moorara Boss Fire trail, then the Mount Warlock Fire Trail. Between these two the going is gradual up and down, but approaching the Mount Warlock trail the climb is more noticeable. Pass a KANANGRA BOYD NATIONAL PARK sign on the left and know there's only about 10 minutes of the Black Range left.

A short uphill and come into the glare of the sun again. On the left is open ground, on the right is Jenolan State Forest.

PART 3B – Deviation to Finish

At 34.4K turn left and head down towards Black Range Campground.

- There are 2 aid stations close together here + supporters are located here too.

The trail has a very light covering of loose gravel here. 300m down the hill, bear hard left and onto the "New Section". This is a rougher 4WD track through rich bush and starts by passing some cabins on the right, then dropping down. In the next 3K there are three notable uphill (with matching downhill)- not long, but quite steep- probably not runnable unless you are very fast and fit. The second really is an insult, but the third takes you up to a flat section in light forest. Bear hard right, then left and emerge at the Caves Road crossing. On the other side the trail is a narrow but good quality singletrack (footing is not much of an issue).

- The paragraph above is highlighted as this is where it GETS HARD. Men tend to cramp here [women less so]. Really focus on this section.
- If you are like me an average runner your calves will be tight / quads sore. Strong Middies [5 Hrs 20 min approx] will still be running most of this bit – the downhill + **powerwalking** anything else.

- From Caves Rd crossing to the end a consistent effort to the end will result in 10 – 20 minutes faster time.

It runs just below the level of the road, then climbs a few wooden steps to the shoulder of the road, drops down again, then up a shortish climb (still runnable if fresh) and down to a gravel clearing. Binda Cabins are on the far side. This is about the 40K mark. Turn right, run down a good dirt road until at junction. In front is a grassy paddock with some big cabins- kangaroos often graze here. Turn left and follow a rolling dirt road for 3km. It swings around to the right again and a scenic mountainous view can be seen a couple of times on the left.

The final 2km down the Mt George firetrail is quite steep and the footing isn't great- there are a lot of loose rocks and gravel which makes a few sections feel like rollercoasters.

- If you are MALE its HIGHLY likely you WILL get cramps here. If you do get cramps it will be the quads / calves or both. If you have a fall it will be because you just got cramps or you fall and then get cramps from fall. NO DRAMAS – simply get a try or similar to stretch for a minute or two. The cramps tend to go as you get moving again so powerwalk first then jog / run.

There have been a few bad falls here. The Jenolan River is several hundred metres almost directly below you on the right but is out of sight. You may be able to hear it.

The trail divides- on the left the firetrail heads uphill to Mt George (signposted) while runners take the right fork, which is now a narrow singletrack continuing downhill. The footing is a little better but low grass around your ankles can cover the trail. The roof of Caves House is visible on the right briefly. A short, steeper downhill and the dirt track meets a concrete path. On the left is the spectacular Carlottas Arch but your priorities are elsewhere. It's a short, steep climb uphill on the concrete for a few metres before starting to switchback to the finish, less than 500m away. There are usually day walkers on this dirt path- watch out for them. The final switchback takes you running a dozen metres above the finish area. Down a flight of steps, u turn to the left, and the finish chute is in front of you. A final finishing sprint over twenty metres gives you enough time to tidy yourself for the finish line photo, and you cross into another place.

Immediately on the right is the verandah of Caves Tavern, where your fellow Six Foot Trackers will be cheering your finish. The Tavern sells James Boag- go get a congratulatory drink, shower, cheer in the final few finishers and then the awards ceremony is not to be missed.