

The Sixth Annual Sri Chinmoy 3100 Mile Race June 16 – August 6, 2002
An Amazing and Inspiring Performance By a Legend
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The best and fastest field of the longest race in the world was primed at the start line on June 16 of 2002, ready to reach new heights if possible, and to test themselves in a way that was almost unthinkable, if not impossible in the sporting world. The Sri Chinmoy 3100 Mile Race was to begin its sixth running, and the five-man, one-woman contestants awaited the powerful moment of silent meditation from Sri Chinmoy, followed by the inevitable surge of outer energy and enthusiastic movement forward.



The four veterans of 3100 miles included five-time finisher **Suprabha Beckjord**, the female Wonder Woman, whose 1998 time of 49 days, 14 hours was fifth fastest among all runners.

Namitabha Arsic from Serbia was a three-time 3100 vet with a second place finish of 48 days four hours from 2000 that glowed with ability and promise.

Two-time winner, the Flying Finn **Ashprihanal Aalto** was aimed at getting under the current record of 46 days 17 hours. He had an easy win in the Sri Chinmoy Six Day Race just 6 weeks before this race, including running 97 miles the final day.

One-time finisher **Madhupran Wolfgang Schwerk**, the fleet-footed German, who was fresh off a sixth-place finish in the difficult Trans Australia Footrace- a 65-day stage race totaling 2656 miles from Perth to Canberra, was here. Some of the stages in that race included running in some of Australia's biggest deserts- in the heart of the summer! His 1998 3100 time was 50 days 8 hours. We all felt he was primed for a fast time. Plus, he revealed later, that to come back to this race was revealed in a dream. He was also an opera singer and instrument maker back in Solingen, Germany.

Rimas Jakelaitis, the Lithuanian-born runner living in nearby Brooklyn, was a new entry, and a real force to watch. He had set amazing records in his four year multi-day career, including 901 miles course record for 10 days; a new world best for 1300 miles, in 16 days plus 28 minutes; and a world best for 2000km- 15 days+10:06:02 (which still stands in 2021). His 1000-mile split in that race was 11:23:07:21, which is still ranked third all-time for road 1000 mile races. He had won all six of the multi-day races he had entered since 1999, against excellent competition.

The other rookie was **Andreas Puntigam**, a young man from Vienna, Austria who finished second to Rimas in the 2001 1000-mile event, and was motivated to join the ranks of 3100-mile heroes. He had all the tools for the long race.

Rimas blitzed the first day with 90.55 mile (145.7 km), as the sun was warm, and a few breezes cooled things down in the late afternoon. Ashprihanal ran 85.6 miles (137.7 km), to stay within striking distance, followed by Mr Schwerk with 82.3 miles (132.4 km). Andreas managed 81.7 miles, Namitabha reached 79 miles, and Suprabha checked in with 68.6. As they all knew, you don't finish first after one day. You win with perseverance, patience, and a little luck.



It was easy to see that the speed at the front of the group was going to help everyone get as much as possible out of their daily efforts. The distance did not intimidate them, creating the possibility of running faster than either of the group of six had ever run before, in a race so very long. Sri Chinmoy always encouraged the 3100 Mile runners to not even think beyond an hour at a time. The less the pressure on the mind, the better the effort. He said that running in the heart was so much easier, and gave joy to each day, that a runner could expect to do better- by not expecting anything at all. Rather, feel like a child, and run with enthusiasm. Don't allow the mind to belittle any effort.

The first week was a feeling-out period for the top four men, but Rimas was still putting pressure on himself. He followed the first day with outings of 75 miles, then 80 miles, 75 miles, and 80+, and finally 75.7 miles. His six-day total of 478 miles (769.2 km) was an average of 79.7 miles a day-about 12 miles per day ahead of world best pace. It was almost too much for the human body and mind to take in, when he would still have 40 more days to go to get under the record. Madhupran Schwerk had followed behind at 461 miles, looking confident, but without the pressure that Rimas was placing on himself. Ashprihanal Aalto was at 446.7 miles, which was 21 miles better than he did in the Six Day race in April, and looked smooth and effortless for long stretches of running. Andreas had 413 miles, and was developing a solid plan of laps and rest phases to keep moving. Namitabha Arsic was building on his good start, and was 10 miles behind Andreas. Suprabha was averaging almost 64 miles a day and felt pleasant in the moderate summer weather.

The change in the order at the top happened on Day 12, as Madhupran Schwerk passed Rimas. The powerful running German was excelling in the race. His total for Day 12 to Day 17 was 467 miles (751.6 km)...78 miles per day. He went through the 1000 mile split in a personal best 13:05:50:18. Rimas Jakelaitis went through the split in 13:17:29:42 and went home immediately. His plan of dominating the race was falling apart. Hindsight showed that he would not get over 70 miles in one day for the rest of the race. Ashprihanal reached 1000 miles in 14:01:26:28, his third time over the distance, and a personal best. Andreas reached 1000 miles in 15:03:06:15, just a few hours off his own best time. Suprabha reached the mark in 16:02:31:48, a big smile on her face, and five hours ahead of Namitabha Arsic, who clocked in at 16:07:36:13. Mr Schwerk was the engine pulling everyone along.



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still

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The excitement started to build, as Madhupran continued applying himself to the daily task. He was starting to break world best times and distances for miles, kilometers, and day totals beyond 1400 miles, 2100 kilometers, and 18 days. Every day was another milestone. Even warmer, sunny days, and high humidity could not slow him down. He was consuming dozens of bananas and some ice cream on a daily basis, and maintaining a high standard. A few helpers who spoke German started bringing him special foods to satisfy his palate, and others searched for remedies to diminish the heat rashes on his upper torso. His attitude also striking- he absorbed whatever happened, whatever easy or difficult thing came his way. Madhupran remarked that he felt the course was 'Sacred Ground', not just because the runners were trying to

better their performances, but because Sri Chinmoy, with his constant, conscious effort to spiritually lift everyone, as well as his daily visits. Madhupran also felt that the disciple helpers and professionals were trying to create an atmosphere of perfection for the seeker-athletes who were fortunate to be there. The runners were certainly inspiring us officials to do our absolute best as far as the race was moving along.

At Day 28, Madhupran was over 100 miles ahead of second place runner Ashprihanal Aalto. What was even more striking was the fact that the German runner was nearly 3 days and 2 hours ahead of record-holder Istvan Sipos' marks at the 3400 kilometers and 2100 miles splits. He was obliterating the previous best efforts by the world-class athletes like Istvan and American Edward Kelley. It would only be a matter of two weeks or so, and his epic journey would realize its ultimate place in the ultra-long distance panorama.

The special day would be Day 43, July 28, 2002. Madhupran Wolfgang Schwerek reached 3100 miles in 42 days+13:24:03, a stunning world record, his first victory in the 3100 Mile Race. He ran four days, 3 hours and 38 minutes faster than the 1998 record set by Istvan Sipos. He conquered the course of concrete in unique fashion, averaging 72.845 miles per day (117.23 km). 30 days he went over 70 miles, including 6 days over 80 miles.



Madhupran ran with conviction, joy, enthusiasm and respect for everyone at or in the Race



The third finisher was a bit of a surprise. Andreas Puntigam had trained hard and raced well for the last five years in multiday races. He also was a good cyclist and above average racewalker, who did not lose time when in recovery mode during his circumnavigations of the sidewalk course. Even a slight injury the last week only delayed him for a few days in reaching his coveted goal. In his first attempt, Andreas Puntigam finished the 3100 Mile Race in 49 days+04:53:25, an average of 63.0 miles per day (101.4km). He was filled with joy and relief after the race. He showed tremendous potential and a solid demeanor that could project a bright future in the sport, if he wanted to do so.

The fourth finisher was Rimas Jakelaitis . The Lithuanian had been down for several weeks after his fall from the lead in front, just getting through each day, with as little pain as possible. His knee bothered him a lot, but the local professionals helped him to get through the race. Massage techniques and subtle coaching plus a determination to finish the race helped Rimas get to the line in 50 days+02:44:08. He averaged 61.86 miles per day (99.6km). He would never return to the concrete course in future races, but still competed in multiday races for the next decade and more. He was grateful for the experience, he said, and all the help given to him throughout.

Namitabha Arsic finished the 3100 in 50 days+12:04:26, grateful for his fourth straight finish, and still enthusiastic about doing better and making progress. He was famous in Serbia, and in all of the former countries who were part of Yugoslavia for his multi-day exploits. He averaged 61.385 miles per day (98.8km).

The sixth and final finisher was Suprabha Beckjord. She reached her sixth finish of the 3100 Mile race in 51 days+12:08:06. She was still the only woman courageous enough to try and indeed, finish the race, and had the respect of every competitor whom she ran with. Her presence was inspiring, considering she had spent seven straight summers running on the same .5488 of a mile course- the 2700 mile race, plus six 3100's- 21,301 miles (34,281km).



The 'father of Ultrarunning' Ted Corbitt, who had been following the adventures of the 3100 mile race every year, was present for Madhupran's finish. Sri Chinmoy directed the ceremony for Madhupran, and had Ted ask the German questions in an unrehearsed interview. A group of singers sang songs to honor the winner, and he was also greeted by his fellow competitors, who also congratulated him before returning to the grind of finishing their own race.

The hardest part of the race



Sri Chinmoy's brilliant race was shining ever brightly after this sixth edition had reached its conclusion. Not only were the results impressive- all six starters finished- but the quality of the athletes, and their determination to do better, and still accept the results, good or bad, was inspiring and revealing. Humans have amazing capacities to do things great and good. It is only up to us to see the vision, accept the reality, and dream of lofty heights, above and beyond our ken. The 3100 Mile runners were pioneers of the impossible, inspiring mortal beings to give us hope for today and ultimately, forever. May we always appreciate and admire their dedication and self-offering.

2002

New Records for Distances Beyond 1300 Miles, 2000 km, and 17 days

Madhupran Wolfgang Schwerk, 47, Solingen, Germany

- 1400 miles = 18 days +16:20:30
- 1500 miles = 20 days +03:14:04
- 1600 miles = 21 days +09:32:34
- 1700 miles = 22 days +17:06:46
- 1800 miles = 24 days +07:32:40
- 1900 miles = 25 days +15:04:39
- 2000 miles = 27 days +02:16:18
- 2100 miles = 28 days +07:46:05
- 2200 miles = 29 days +14:36:44
- 2300 miles = 31 days +03:12:57
- 2400 miles = 32 days +12:30:45
- 2500 miles = 34 days +02:34:40
- 2600 miles = 35 days +10:34:33

2700 miles = 37 days +02:54:28
 2800 miles = 38 days +10:45:34
 2900 miles = 39 days +17:54:37
 3000 miles = 41 days +05:40:30
 3100 miles = 42 days +13:24:03

2100 km = 17 days +04:54:32
 2200 km = 18 days +05:30:17
 2300 km = 19 days +04:50:13
 2400 km = 20 days +01:37:35
 2500 km = 20 days +16:15:29
 2600 km = 21 days +13:51:16
 2700 km = 22 days +11:41:30
 2800 km = 23 days +10:20:57
 2900 km = 24 days +08:04:48
 3000 km = 25 days +05:40:13
 3100 km = 26 days +03:20:20
 3200 km = 27 days +00:27:35
 3300 km = 27 days +15:07:23
 3400 km = 28 days +10:58:13
 3500 km = 29 days +08:05:07
 3600 km = 30 days +05:41:19
 3700 km = 31 days +03:06:53
 3800 km = 32 days +02:04:50
 3900 km = 33 days +01:05:30

4000 km = 33 days +17:28:24
 4100 km = 34 days +15:10:05
 4200 km = 35 days +13:40:55
 4300 km = 36 days +13:11:16
 4400 km = 37 days +12:52:31
 4500 km = 38 days +09:56:29
 4600 km = 39 days +07:13:53
 4700 km = 40 days +04:24:16
 4800 km = 41 days +01:49:41
 4900 km = 41 days +17:37:47
 5000 km = 42 days +15:45:29

18 days =1343.4624 miles(2162.093 km)
 19 days =1404.9280 miles(2261.012 km)
 20 days =1483.9552 miles(2388.194 km)
 21 days =1558.0432 miles(2507.427 km)
 22 days =1631.5824 miles(2625.777 km)
 23 days =1704.0240 miles(2742.361 km)
 24 days =1766.0384 miles(2842.163 km)
 25 days =1840.1264 miles(2961.396 km)
 26 days =1910.3728 miles(3074.447 km)
 27 days =1986.6560 miles(3197.213 km)
 28 days =2063.4880 miles(3320.862 km)
 29 days =2138.6736 miles(3441.861 km)
 30 days =2212.2128 miles(3560.211 km)
 31 days =2283.0080 miles(3674.145 km)

Sixth Sri Chinmoy 3100 Mile Race June 16- August 6, 2002 Jamaica, NY USA
 .5488 of a mile / 883.2079 meters certified

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| 1. Madhupran Wolfgang Schwerk, 46, Solingen, Germany | 42 days+13:24:03 WR |
| 2. Ashprihanal Pekka Aalto, 31, Helsinki Finland | 46 days+13:27:51 NR |
| 3. Andreas Puntigam, 31, Vienna Austria | 49 days+04:53:25 NR |
| 4. Rimas Jakelaitis, 47, Brooklyn, NY (Lithuania) | 50 days+02:44:08 NR |
| 5. Namitabha Aleks Arsic, 38, Nis Serbia | 50 days+12:04:26 |
| 6. <u>Suprabha Beckjord</u> , 46, Washington, DC USA | 51 days+12:08:06 |



Willingness –eyes
 See the farthest,
 Willingness-hearts
 Feel the deepest,
 Willingness-feet
 Run the fastest.
 -Sri Chinmoy