

## CROSSING TO THE DARK SIDE

There have been many walkers/runners who have shown the ability to both run and walk at a high standard. A run/walk double is obviously just that – add up the run time and the walk time over comparable distances to see who has the lowest total time. Comparable distances might be

5000m run / 5000m walk  
 10 km run / 10 km walk  
 half marathon / 20 km walk  
 marathon / 50 km walk  
 100 km run / 100 km walk  
 100 mile run / 100 mile walk  
 24 hour run / 24 hour walk

This list is by no means definitive but simply highlights various talented athletes who have successfully bridged the divide between running and walking.

First to the men:

Athlete	Run / Walk	Total Time
<b>Nick A'Hern (AUS)</b>	Nick was not only one of our best ever walkers but he was a very good runner as well. His 5km and 10km doubles make for impressive reading  5 km run in 14 mins / 5000m walk in 18:51.39 10 km run in 29 mins / 10 km walk in 39:10	32:52 58:10
<b>David Smith (AUS)</b>	But if you reckon that Nick had great doubles, consider Dave Smith, the father of Dane Bird-Smith and the newly appointed Korean National Coach. While his walk times are amazing (especially since they were done in the early 80's), his running prowess is also very impressive. His run PBs stood at 49.7 (400m), 1:52 (800m), 3:54 (1500m), 13:42 (5000m), 29:29 (10km) and 64:26 (half marathon). Doubles for him include  5000m run 13:42 / 5000m walk 18:52 10 km run in 29:29 / 10 km walk in 38:06 half marathon 1:04.26 / 20 km walk 1:19:22	32:34 57:35 2:23:48
<b>Dane Bird-Smith (AUS)</b>	Dave Smith's son Dane seems to be following in dad's footsteps in terms of his run/walk capability. At age 16, he boasts the following run and walk PBs and will soon be challenging some of his older walking rivals with this sort of talent  Run: 400m (48.4), 4:03 (1500m) Walk: 1500m (5:45), 3000m 12:03, 5000m 20:22, 10km 43:47	
<b>Willi Sawall (AUS)</b>	Willi is best known as one of our greatest ever walkers but actually started his racewalking career late, at the age of 32, after persistent achilles problems. His best marathon was in the Victorian Marathon championship on 13/9/68 where he placed 5 <sup>th</sup> in the time of 2:35:04. His best 50km walk of 3:46:34 came 12 years later in 1980, at 38 years of age!  Marathon run 2:35:04 / 50 km walk 3:46:34	6:21:38
<b>Ross Haywood (AUS)</b>	Ross, who represented Australia in the 1974 Comm Games and 1976 Olympics in the walk, was, in his younger days, the Australian Junior 3000m steeple chase record holder and only missed out by the narrowest of margins in representing Australia in the steeple in the 1970 Comm Games. He remained a superb runner throughout his career and could always mix it with the top blokes in any of the big runs. I don't have his run PBs but when I get them from him, he will make a worthy addition to this list.	

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Run / Walk</b>	<b>Total Time</b>
<b>Tim Erickson (AUS)</b>	While not in the same league as the blokes above as either a runner or a walker, I did perform reasonably on both fronts as the following stats show  10 km run / 10 km walk : 31:19 / 42:32 ½ marathon run / 20 km walk: 1:08:40 / 1:27:12 marathon run / 50 km walk : 2:29:27 / 4:03:17	1:13:51 2:35:52 6:32:44
<b>Rhydian Cowley (VIC)</b>	Another talented young runner/walker, Rhydian Cowley, who represented us in the 2007 World Racewalking Cup, regularly mixes running and walking. Still only aged 19, his run/walk doubles are  5000m run 15:38 / 5000m walk 21:41 10km run 34:03 / 10km walk 44:47 Half Marathon 1:20:14 / 20km walk 1:36:14	37:29 1:18:52 2:56:28
<b>Aigars Fadejevs (LAT)</b>	The 2000 Olympic 50 km walk medallist has become a very solid marathon runner in his post-walking career. His marathon / 50km double is very impressive  marathon in 2:18:19 / 50 km walk in 3:43:18.	06:01:39
<b>Andi Drake (UK)</b>	Andi Drake, new Director of Race Walking at Leeds University in England, was a British international walker in his heyday (10 km 41:18, 20 km 1:24:04) but was also a pretty slick runner with a 10km PB of 30:59  10 km run 30.59 / 10 km walk 41:18	1:12:17

I was also pointed to some other possible names which I reproduce here for completeness

**Bo Gustafson**, born 1954 in Sweden, 1984 Olympic 50 km silver medallist, 50 km PB 3.44:49, marathon PB approx 2:30

**Hartwig Gauder**: born 1954 in GDR, one of the most successful 50 km walkers of all time with Olympic and World championship gold medals and a PB of 3.39.45. After he finished his career as a sportsman, he fell ill with myocarditis and deteriorated so much that he had to be implanted with an artificial heart while waiting for a new donor heart. He was transplanted in January 1997 and, in November 1998, he took part in the New York marathon. He is now the General Secretary of the association "Sportsmen for donation of an organ". Not exactly a top run/walk double but an interesting story!

**Francisco Fernandez**, born 1977 in Spain, is best known as one of the world's current top 20 km walkers, regularly winning events around the world and with a 20 km walk PB 1:17:22. I am advised he has also run a half marathon in 1.10-1.11.

**Herm Nelson**, USA Olympian 92 and 96, 3.59 for 50 km, 1.26 for 20 km. He ran a marathon in 4.10.02 at 12 years of age!

And now onto the ultra distances where three athletes seem to stand out in the run/walk scheme of things.

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Run / Walk</b>	<b>Total Time</b>
<b>Peter Tichy (SLV)</b>	Slovakian ultra runner but a very good walker in recent times. Examples include  100 km run in 7:22 / 100 km walk in 9:02	16:24:00
<b>Yiannis Kouros (AUS/GRE)</b>	Without doubt, the greatest ultra runner of all times – unbeatable since the mid 80's and still winning. Holds all run world records from 100M to 1000M. Examples of his astonishing capabilities include  100 mile run in 11:57:59 / 100 mile walk in 22:55:23 24 hour run of 303.506 km / 24 hour walk of 168.406 km	34:53:22 471.912

Athlete	Run / Walk	Total Time
		km
<b>Richard Brown (UK)</b>	<p>The husband of walk/run legend Sandra Brown, Richard is a champion in his own right with numerous British vests in walking and running and with a 100 mile walk time of 16:50 and a 48 hour run time distance of 401.208 km. He held the running record for Lands End to John o'Groats (825 miles) and walked in the Paris-Colmar 500km classic. Apart from Sandra, no one has done as much on both sides of the fence as Richard. I quote his 24 hour references</p> <p>24 hour run 233 km / 24 hour walk 221m</p>	455km

So who is the best run/walk exponent of all time over the shorter distances? Well, in my opinion (and I am probably biased here since we used to train together), it is Australia's own Dave Smith who remains the best all round athlete I have ever seen. Although only 172cm in height, his power and speed-endurance were legendary. A very successful golden gloves boxer in his younger days, he was able to turn his hand to anything sporting with immediate success. Luckily for us, he chose walking but he would have succeeded in whatever he tried. I remember on one occasion he decided to try his hand at the Mt Wycheproof King of the Mountain run. This involved running up the main street of Wycheproof (a Victorian country town), picking up a 10 stone (140 pounds or 65 kg) bag of wheat and then running up Mt Wycheproof, a hill outside the town that was designated as the world's smallest mountain. To train for this, Dave ran laps of the block carrying me on his shoulders and did huge sessions of stepups while holding a heavy weight. He eventually came third but only because, in his enthusiasm, he warmed up by winning the associated 8km fun run which was held just before the event.



**Dave Smith walking in 1980 and in his current guise as Racewalking Australia President**

And now to the women

Athlete	Run / Walk	Total Time
<b>Alina Ivanova (URS)</b>	Alina Ivanova, born 1969 in the Ukraine, is perhaps the best female example of the run/walk double, with Run bests of 1.09.32 (half marathon) and 2.25.34 (marathon) and Walk bests of 42.57 (10km) and 11.44 (3000m world indoor record, set in 1991). On the international stage, she has also been amongst the very best in both walking and running, having won the 10 km walk in the 1991 IAAF World Championships, having twice won the Prague International Marathon (2000 and 2006) and having represented internationally in world running championships on 9 occasions. See <a href="http://www.iaaf.org/athletes/biographies/letter=0/athcode=63161/index.html">http://www.iaaf.org/athletes/biographies/letter=0/athcode=63161/index.html</a>	
<b>Kerry Saxby-Junna (AUS)</b>	Kerry actually started off as a runner with aspirations of making a World Cross Country team but she ended up as Australia's best ever female walker instead. With around 30 world records over various walk distances in the 80's and 90's and multiple gold, silver and bronze in international competitions, her credentials are second to none. 10 km run/walk double: 10 km run in 36:20 / 10 km walk in 42:20	1:18:40
<b><u>Sandra Brown (UK)</u></b>	Sandra Brown is a arguably the greatest ever female long distance walker, based on a competitive record which is truly amazing for both qualify and longevity. She holds the official World Walking Records for the 100 km, 100 miles, 12 hours and 24 hours (all track) and is also a very good ultra distance runner, having represented England on many occasions in ultra distance World Championships. Amongst her best doubles are those for 24 hours: 24h run 215.056 km (1993) / 24 hour walk 200.000 km (1990).	415 km
<b><u>Sally Pierson (AUS)</u></b>	Sally was one of Australia's best ever racewalkers with 4 <sup>th</sup> in the 1983 IAAF World Racewalking Cup 5 km walk and with a number of Aust records and world best road times. Sally also won the Australian 10 km road running title (35:57) in Sydney in 1982. Her parallel running career was equally impressive. She represented Australia in the 1983 and 1985 World Cross Country Championships and at the 1984 IAAF World 10 km road running championship, won two Zatopek 10,000m classics, won a Victorian 10000m track title and the Australian 10 km road and cross country titles. Her Typical of her doubles: 10 km run 35:57 / 10 km walk 45:38	1:21:35
<b>Michelle Rohl (USA)</b>	USA racewalker with PBs of 20:56 (5000m walk), 44:06 (10 km walk). Was 15 times NAIA track and crosscountry All-American, 1987 NAIA indoor 1000 m and 2 miles champion.	



Alina Ivanova winning the 1991 World 10 km walk championship (left) and winning the 2007 Dublin Marathon (right)

Tim Erickson, 22 May 2009