

Washie 100 Miler

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One of the annual events which have ensured the Buffs a significant place in the history of road running in the sub-continent is.... The Washie 100!

It was first run on July 12, 1977 and was a monumental undertaking by a young club with a relatively small membership, to consider organising an awesome ultra marathon over 100 miles, or 160km, of a rugged coastline road between Port Alfred and East London.

The 12 runners who finished the race within the stipulated 27 hours could hardly have imagined they were the first of many super athletes who would test themselves over a distance almost twice the distance of the Comrades.

The 12 were the trailblazers of other 100-milers that followed in their footsteps. The Washie is held annually, from Port Alfred to East London, with the prize-giving - at the Buffs' club on the Sunday morning after the completion of the race - considered an ultimate in spirit, achievement and camaraderie.

There are no money prizes, but everyone who has completed the Washie wears with great pride the coveted very special tracksuit top, and ensures that the handmade trophy given to all finishers has a prime place in the trophy cabinet. The founder chairman of Buffs, Vyf Rex, said the first Washie was "a fantastic success - it is here to stay." How right he was.

But perhaps not even the far-seeing Vyf could envisage that the Buffs marathon and the Washie ultra marathon would become truly quality events of growing significance, attracting international entries. Their importance in the enhancement of the city of East London, and the attendant economic and social benefits, have yet to be fully realized.

The great traditions of the Buffs have also been enhanced by the many splendid performances at all distances, both regionally and nationally by their men and women athletes. And not to be discounted is the enduring and stirring Buffs' own song, "Hallelujah I'm a Buffalo" . . . which has always been a highlight of any club event and gathering. The motto "Once a Buff always a Buff" is a truism rather than a boast.

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