



Half the fun of rogaining is laughing at your partner's nav. // DARREN OSMOND



Racing in to finish // ANDREW COOKSLEY



Busy at the waterdrop // ANDREW COOKSLEY



Join a race or support team // ANDREW COOKSLEY



nav on the run

Rogaining may be a sport you haven't even heard of, but for those who love the outdoors, it's a brilliant way to add extra excitement, socialisation and a touch of competition to a bushwalk. Iain Curry grabs his compass and guides you through the basics.

WORDS: Iain Curry

It has been described as anything from cross-country navigation on foot, to a giant Easter-egg hunt for grown-ups. To please the patriotic amongst you, it was established right here in Australia and is now exported worldwide. Best of all, it's a sport that can be as relaxing or competitive as you desire. Its name is Rogaining; it has helpful and supportive associations in each Australian state, and is cheap and simple to get started in.

The name Rogaine is made up of the names of its three founders: ROd, GAI and NEil, but has also lately been termed a Rugged Outdoor Group Activity Involving Navigation and Endurance, which better describes what's involved. In a nutshell, teams of two to five members venture into the bush and visit as many checkpoints as possible in an allocated time frame, with

these checkpoints worth differing points (usually 20-100) depending on the level of difficulty in reaching them. At the end of the time period, the team with the most points is deemed the winner.

While it may sound competitive, the real beauty of the sport is how relaxed and easy it can be if desired. It is at least as much recreation as it is competition. Rogaines in their purest form last for 24 hours, but that doesn't mean you'll be out tromping in the wilds for the duration unless you are planning to be among the elite.

"I've a couple of friends who've managed a solid second- or third-last place in each event for the last two years, and that's just the way they like it," explains Andrew Cooksley from the Queensland Rogaine Association. "But they always have the fullest table of empty red wine bottles and are always the last to bed once the

campfire burns down."

The most common misconception about rogaining is that you need to spend every waking minute in a 24-hour event chasing those points. In reality, the vast majority of competitors make good use of the Hash House: a central base camp providing hot meals throughout the event where teams may return at any time to eat, rest, socialise or sleep. It is easy to understand that this social and relaxed side of rogaining is of great appeal, ensuring it is attractive to both sexes and any age group.

Rogaines commonly take place in bushland, and at times on private land where walkers would not usually be permitted access: a great opportunity to see and explore new areas. There are many other types of rogaine that take place on bikes, water or in urban areas for example, which may prove more appealing to some. On

the day of the rogaine, you and your team mate(s) arrive at the base camp, are given a map with all the checkpoints marked, and then you have a few hours to plan the route you deem most suitable (time and distance-wise) for your team's ability.

From there, it is off to collect your points (the checkpoints have punches for you to mark your team's card), using your map and compass. If you consider yourself useless with such navigational aids, fear not. The map you are given is a topographic one (using contour lines to suggest the land features), and with a bit of practice, the subtle features of such map reading are soon picked up. These are practically the only skills you'll need as the rest is walking (or running if you're particularly keen) between the checkpoints, and knowing your limits to allow rest stops back at the Hash House.

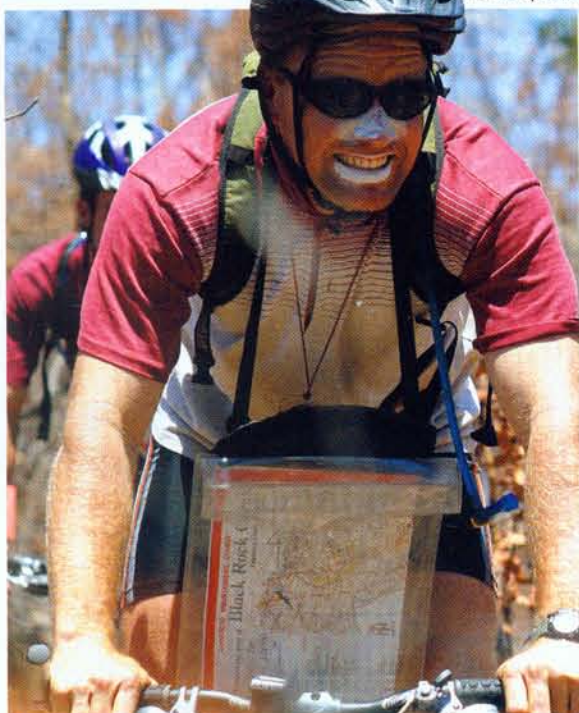
DID YOU KNOW?

Rogaining is now well established in the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Ireland, Estonia and Russia as well as Australia.

hot tip: Are you the only one you know interested in giving rogaining a bash? Log on to your home state's website and look for a partner-finding link. From there, you'll be teamed up with those of similar age, seriousness or fitness level. Alternatively, just give the friendly organisers a call or email.



PFDs are provided at multi-discipline rogaines // DARREN OSMOND



Cyclogaining // DARREN OSMOND

STEP 01: GETTING STARTED

Getting started in rogaining couldn't be easier. The entry fee for a 24-hour event, including your meals at the Hash House, is normally around \$50. All the associations I spoke with were incredibly helpful, and are always looking for new people to take up the sport. Some offer training days, but the best way to learn is to sign up for an event and then get out there and try it. Novice instruction is usually included in the pre-event formalities, and there is the opportunity to go out with an experienced competitor if desired. Most of the associations offer a partner or team-finding service through their websites, where you can be matched with others of similar age or ability.

Events can last six, eight, 12 or 24 hours, but no matter how long you're planning to be out,

it is a good plan to pitch your tent near the Hash House and enjoy the social side of the sport. This is just one of the many reasons so many enjoy rogaining. As well as experiencing the new and exciting bushland, you have the opportunity and challenge of navigating by torchlight, sharing experiences around the Hash House campfire, and the joy of seeing dawn after a tough night in the bush, or in the tent!

While rogaining can clearly appeal to those who enjoy the relaxing side of the sport, for those of a more competitive ilk, it can also be a huge test for both body and brain. The elite rogainers will be out for the duration of the event, be it 24 hours or otherwise, and are prepared to run between checkpoints to maximise point

scoring. To win an event you do need to be pretty fit, but navigational skills and the ability to concentrate for long periods are also just as important.

Prizes are awarded to the winning teams in different groups: usually Mens, Womens, Youths, Mixed, Veterans, Super Veterans, and Ultra Veterans.

Interestingly, rogaining is a sport where women often compete on equal terms with the men; last year's winner of the Australian Championship event was a mixed team. Speaking of which, there aren't many World Championships you can enter by just getting your entry form in on time, but with rogaining it is all possible. It is certainly something to work up to, and with a little hard work anyone could be a future champion.

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

Over the years plenty of other types of rogaime have emerged and have proved very popular. These can be suited to different outdoor activities, weather conditions or choice of location. If bushwalking isn't

quite your thing, why not try one of these checkpoint-visiting variations?

✦ **Metrogaime:** Held in urban areas and usually lasting about six hours.

✦ **Cyclogaime:** Normally run on trails suitable for mountain biking and lasting six hours.

✦ **Paddlogaime:** A rogaime on a water-covered area (usually a set of inter-connected lakes),

where competitors can generally use any human-powered watercraft.

✦ **Pubgaime:** One for the real socialites! Held in urban areas where pubs are usually the

checkpoints. Surely just an excuse for a pub crawl!?

✦ **Snogaime:** Ideal for the winter months where participants may either snowshoe or ski to reach the checkpoints.

PRO TIPS



// ANDREW COOKSLEY

❑ Plan your route well before taking to the course. Choose one that is in keeping with your team's fitness level, and their desire to spend time back at the Hash House during the event.

❑ Make sure you get back to base within the allotted time as you will lose 10 points for every minute you are late. This will hurt more than the climb to the top of a hill to bag that 90 pointer.

❑ Don't be afraid to use the Hash House regularly; it is amazing how a bit of hot food and rest can lift spirits and improve performance.

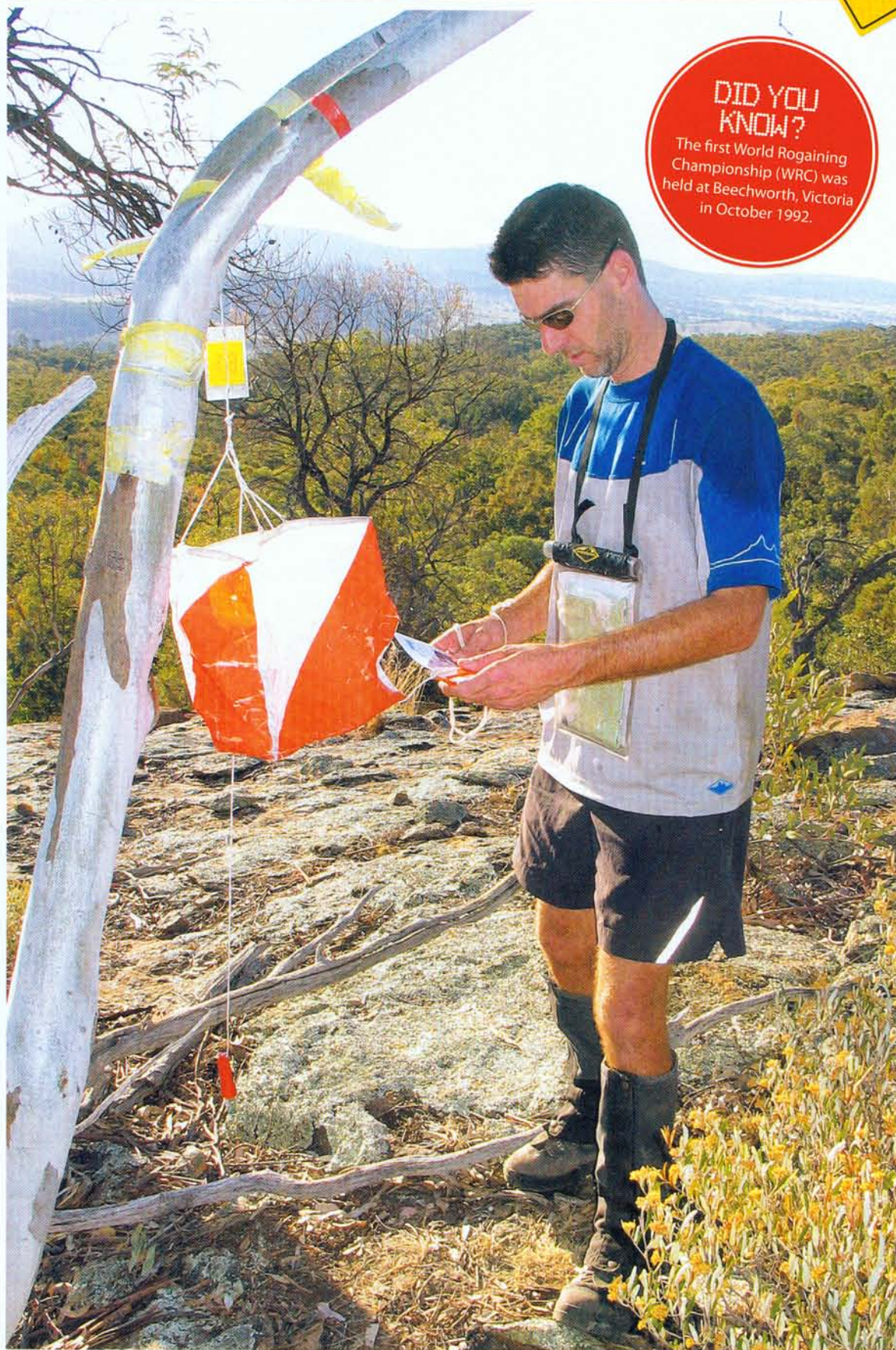
❑ Leave the steep country for the night and the flat country for the day. It seems counter-intuitive at first but you are slower at night anyway, so the hills make less impact on your average speed. More importantly, steeper terrain is relatively easier to navigate on than the flat when it is dark.

❑ Choose the right socks and wrap your feet to prevent blisters. Have blister plasters in your first aid kit.

❑ Try a local event rather than a major one at first – there will nearly always be a beginners' course and someone to give advice on map reading and navigation.

❑ Have a read through Neil and Rod Phillips's book *Rogaining – Cross Country Navigation*. It is usually for sale through the Australian associations and at rogaining events.

❑ Participate at rogaining at your own pace and level of complexity. It is there to be enjoyed and is a fantastic opportunity to appreciate the beautiful land around you.



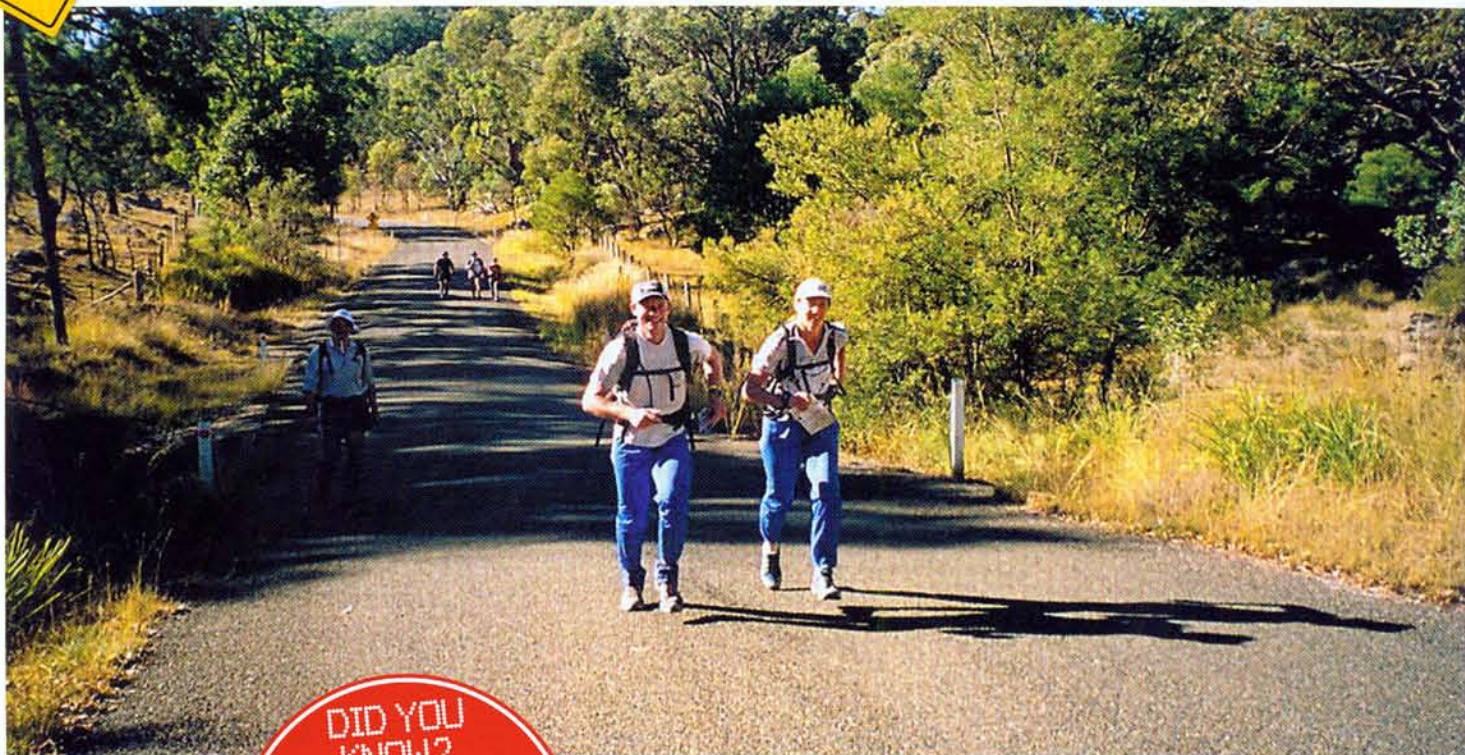
DID YOU KNOW?

The first World Rogaining Championship (WRC) was held at Beechworth, Victoria in October 1992.

A map case is a good investment for rogaining (see p.85) // GARY TISCHER



the next step | ROGAINING



Still smiling. 24 Hour Championship Rogaining
// ANDREW COOKSLEY

DID YOU KNOW?

Rogaining's origins can be traced back to 1947 when two pairs of students from the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club challenged each other to a 24-hour bushwalking/navigation competition.

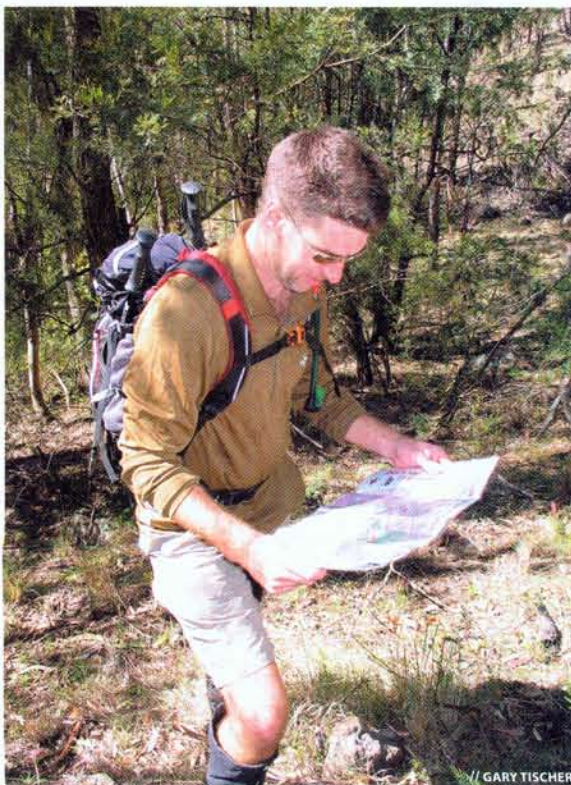
STEP 02: GET INTO IT!

If you enjoy the walk or are a serious runner looking for a different form of competition, rogaining is certainly worth a try. Age, fitness and mapreading skills should be of no concern to the beginner. Find a team (of two to five members) of similar ability, either through your friends and family or by signing up on the rogaining websites, and get your name down for a local event. Prepare to enjoy the challenge of bush navigation and the unique and rewarding social atmosphere at the Hash House in this most Australian of sports.

➤ Upcoming 2007 rogaining events


| Date | Event | State |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|
| 15-16 September | 36 Hour | Qld |
| 22 September | Nightgaine | ACT |
| 22-23 September | 6/12 Hour | Vic |
| 21-22 October | 24 Hour State Champ | NSW |
| 27 October | Spring 12 Hour | SA |
| 27 October | Spring 12 Hour | WA |
| 27-28 October | 24 Hour State Champ | Vic |
| 28 October | Metrogaine | Qld |
| 17 November | 3 Hour Minigaine | SA |
| 24-25 November | 8/24 Hour State Champ | Tas |
| 25 November | Cyclogaine | Vic |

See state websites for more details.



// GARY TISCHER

ROGUE GEAR

Rogaining equipment is basically common sense: a good pair of walking shoes or runners, comfy socks, warm- and cool-weather clothes depending on conditions, and a good waterproof. You'll also need a few bits of mandatory safety gear such as a first aid kit, torch and whistle, plus some food and water stored in a backpack. The likes of a compass can be rented at some events, but they're not very expensive and every bushwalker should have one anyway! 

MORE INFO

➤ **International Rogaining Federation:** Links to rogaining in other countries and worldwide events, as well as how best to get started in the sport.
 www.rogaining.com

➤ **Australian Rogaining Association:** Offers a comprehensive list of events, clubs, results, links and news from around Australia.
 www.rogaine.asn.au

➤ **SleepMonsters:** Taking things to the next level, this website offers ideas on rogaining and adventure racing worldwide.
 www.sleepmonsters.com.au

State Rogaining Clubs:

- **ACT:** ☎ (02) 6251 1741
 www.act.rogaine.asn.au
- **NSW:** ☎ (02) 4294 1363
 www.nswrogaining.org
- **NT:** ☎ (08) 8941 1059
 www.nt.rogaine.asn.au
- **Qld:** ☎ 0407 880 681
 www.qldrogaine.asn.au
- **SA:** ☎ (08) 8339 6496
 www.sa.rogaine.asn.au
- **Tas:** ☎ (03) 6225 1255
 www.rt.asn.au
- **Vic:** ☎ (03) 9560 8385
 www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
- **WA:** ☎ (08) 9387 6347
 www.wa.rogaine.asn.au