

History of Rogaining: The Beginning

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Rogaining evolved from a number of sources: the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club 24 hour walk which started in 1947, the Adelaide University Mountaineering Club 24 hour from 1961, Intervarsity 24 hour orienteering from 1964, and the Paddy Pallin orienteering contest from 1965. The sport in its present form was codified in 1968 by David Hogg and the first official event was on 31 May 1969.

The MUMC 24 hour walk began in 1947 when Bill Bewsher and Ian Leslie challenged Peter Crohn and John MacAndrew in a bushwalking/navigation competition from Warburton to Hurstbridge via Mt Donna Buang, Healesville and Steeles Creek. The map was a regular 1:63,360 (1 inch to one mile) topographic map. Checkpoints were a series of pre-determined hilltops or obvious features where the teams left notes for each other in order to monitor progress. They carried food but no tents and travelled cross country.

The 24 hour walk caught on within the club and the next year, in mid-winter, teams of two or more tackled the course from Glen Waverley to Christmas Hills via Silvan Reservoir and Yarra Glen. The first 'hash house' was introduced, serving hot stew and cocoa at Briarty's Hill.

In 1956 the raffle ticket checking-in system was first used. A piece of white cheesecloth around a tree marked the location whilst a raffle ticket book was stored in a jam jar below. Participants signed the stub and kept the tab as proof of visiting the checkpoint. Being a 'line' event (controls to be visited in given order), teams immediately knew their current placing in the competition.

Only one class of competition was used, but all-women teams gained a 12 mile advantage and mixed teams had a course 6 miles shorter. In 1963 an all-womens team won the event. Competitiveness was disdained and in the late 1950's the previous year's winners were handicapped by starting off the map or running extra distance at the end.

The MUMC 24 hour walk was the brainchild of Bill Bewsher who also won the first event. It might have been influenced by orienteering which started in 1897 in Norway (but was not well known in the English speaking world in the 1940's). The 'line' type course, as used in orienteering, is a clue, but the concept is no different from any typical bushwalking expedition. It may have been derived from army training exercises, since 1947 was just after the war and many conscripts returned to university at that time. In any case, the 24 hour walk ranks number one in importance in Australian orienteering history according to MUMC historian David Hogg.

The New Zealand TWALKS (Twenty four hour WALKS) which began in the 1960's closely followed the MUMC format, even down to bingo controls and hidden jam jars. TWALKS were run by the Canterbury University Tramping Club in Christchurch and the Southland Tramping Club, based in Invercargill, with the Canterbury event continuing to the present. Entrants left from the city by bus, destination unknown. TWALKS are a line event usually conducted in a cloverleaf format with 7-10 controls per loop.

When Ted Lovegrove moved from Melbourne to Adelaide in 1961 he founded the Adelaide University Mountaineering Club and the annual 24 Hour Walk. The score course format was pioneered in Adelaide in 1961 at Arkaba near Wilpena Pound, and may be due to a desire to reduce following in the more open terrain encountered there and in other parts of South Australia.

The name Paddy Pallin is well known in Australia through the bushwalking/skiing gear business he founded in the 1930's. Paddy was concerned that the navigational skills of bushwalkers were lacking, thus leading to inconvenience or unnecessary search parties. When Paddy organised the first Australian 'orienteering contest' in the Blue Mountains near Sydney in 1965 he had read about orienteering, but did not know exactly what it was. He ran a 3 hour line event for teams. Difficulties with teams following each other lead the competition to evolve into an event where all controls must be

visited in any order, and later a fixed duration score event with a mass start. This event has evolved to become the Paddy Pallin rogaine (6 hour score event for teams) which is being promoted by the NSW Rogaining Association as a major competitive event on the rogaining calendar.
Intersarsity

The intersarsity 24 hour walk began in 1964 as a means to gain MUMC some political credibility (and funding) as an organiser of 'sport' in the Melbourne University sports union. But without a national body to administer competition rules, the event remained unofficial. These competitions were held on a rotating basis in subsequent years with Monash, Adelaide and Newcastle universities competing in and hosting the event.

The most significant moment for rogaining's history occurred in 1968 when David Hogg obtained the last copy of John Disley's book *Orienteering*, which included the rules of the recently formed English Orienteering Association. David used this book to draft the rules for the '24 Hour Orienteering Contest', so that it could become an official intersarsity sport. The first official intersarsity event was held on 31 May 1969 in the Blackwood-Daylesford area. It was a score event, following the style of South Australian 24 hour walks and the NSW Paddy Pallin event. It was the first to use orienteering markers.

The first officially recognised orienteering event was in 1969 in Victoria. The founders of conventional orienteering in Australia gained their first exposure to the sport through the Paddy Pallin and MUMC events, whilst the universities which had a background in 24 hour navigation provided ready support for orienteering in the early days.
Victorian Rogaining Association

In the mid 1970's Rod and Neil Phillips recognised the wide appeal and potential of the existing 24 hour orienteering events. In 1976, they coined the word 'Rogaine' to give the sport an identifiable name. The origin of the name was kept secret for more than 10 years, with Rod Phillips mischievously suggesting it had aboriginal or Swedish origins. The acronym Rugged Outdoor Group Activity Involving Navigation and Endurance gained popularity in Western Australia, but the name Rogaining originates from the names Rod, Gail and Neil Phillips.

The Victorian Rogaining Association (VRA) was formalised in August 1976 with the goal to coordinate and publicise twenty four hour orienteering events as a sport in their own right. The idea of low cost compulsory membership was a masterstroke by Rod Phillips, with regular newsletters keeping members involved and informed. In 1978, Sue Grice designed the now familiar rogaining logo featuring a mountain, sun and moon, night and day.

One of the first tasks of the Victorian Rogaining Association was to run the state rogaining championship, commencing in December 1976 in conjunction with Surrey Thomas Rovers. The second state championship followed in May 1977 in conjunction with Monash University Bushwalking Club. In September 1977, the VRA ran the first 12 hour event whose popularity together with 6 and 8 hour variants has grown to outshine the traditional 24 hour.

Photographs of the early days of orienteering in Sweden and Czechoslovakia show teams of people wearing boots, packs, sitting at the roadside reading their maps. The same photos could pass as from the MUMC 24 hour or (ignoring the dated clothing) a rogaine today. Rogaining seems to be what orienteering used to be.

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