

King of the Peds

By P. S. Marshall

PRESS RELEASE

Did you know that in the late 1800s athletes competed in foot races of up to 100 miles per day? *For six straight days?*

P. S. Marshall's new book, *King of the Peds* ([published by AuthorHouse](#)), is a fascinating historical account of this hugely popular 19th century sport and the professional pedestrians, or "peds," who made it the "must see" spectator event of the time.

Few are aware that during the 1870s and 1880s, peds (as they were fondly referred to) competed against each other in gruelling races for up to six days and nights on indoor sawdust tracks. Getting just a few hours of rest per day in makeshift huts and literally "eating on the trot," the peds underwent tremendous hardships, all in the name of sport.

Often referred to as "walking matches," or "go-as-you-please races," these events took place in the US, the UK and Australasia. The best of the peds were assured of massive amounts of prize money, a share of the gate receipts and dazzling ornamental gold belts – rewards from ruthless promoters who made lucrative livings from droves of spectators who flocked to these races.

King of the Peds journeys into a world where courageous men competed in appalling conditions testing the limits of human endurance – a world that attracted thousands of screaming fans cheering for the likes of Black Dan, "Blower" Brown, the Brooklyn Cobbler, the Cambridge Wonder, the Flying Collier, the Sharp Sheffield Blade and the Wily Wobbler.

"Before writing the book, I had only ever heard about one of the candidates for the title of **King of the Peds**," Marshall explains. "As I delved deeper into his career, and as I researched the history of the sport of professional pedestrianism, I quickly realised that this was a story that had to be told in as much detail as possible. Consequently, and in the last four years, I have devoted much of my time in unravelling the facts and revealing the faces behind them to tell what I believe to be an incredible story."

King of the Peds, Marshall's first book, will appeal to anyone interested in the history of sport as well as those intrigued by fact that is stranger-than-fiction.

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