

A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

A Detailed Study
By Gloria Seymon

A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

Tables of Contents

FORWARD	II
APPRECIATIONS	III
REVISIONS	IV
INTRODUCTION	1
ABSTRACT OF THE HISTORY OF THE VETERAN MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA	1
METHODOLOGY OF COLLECTING INFORMATION	2
ARTICLES	2
HISTORY OF THE VETERAN MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD	3
STATES HISTORY	5
<i>South Australia</i>	5
<i>New South Wales</i>	6
N.S.W. State Track and Field Championships.....	7
<i>Victoria</i>	8
<i>Queensland</i>	9
<i>Western Australia</i>	10
<i>Tasmania</i>	11
A.C.T.	12
<i>Northern Territory</i>	14
VETERAN ATHLETICS PUBLICATIONS	15
NATIONAL VETERAN TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS	16
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS ATHLETIC CLUBS (AAVAC)	17
PROFILES OF SOME AUSTRALIAN VETERAN CHAMPIONS	19
<i>John Gilmour</i>	19
<i>Jack Pennington</i>	20
<i>George McGrath</i>	22
<i>Jack Ryan</i>	23
OTHER NOTABLE COMPETITIONS	24
<i>City to Surf</i>	24
<i>Oceania Games</i>	24
<i>New Zealand Meetings</i>	24
WORLD DEVELOPMENT OF VETERAN TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS.....	25
TIME-LINE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN VETERAN TRACK AND FIELD MOVEMENT	33
TIME-LINE FOR THE WORLD VETERAN TRACK AND FIELD MOVEMENT	35
PROFESSIONAL ATHLETICS IN AUSTRALIA	37

A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

<i>The Early Beginnings</i>	37
<i>Australian Professional Running</i>	38
<i>Australian Veterans</i>	41
<i>Professionals Versus Amateur</i>	43
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	45

This book has been dedicated to the author.

Gloria Seymon

30th June 1937 - 17th December 1997

A person whose passion, dedication and love has been reflected in
this work.

Forward

Since time immemorial life has been full of *"Joys and Sorrows"*

The *"Joy"* in Gloria Seymons detailed study, is in the overcoming of the pangs of birth for the Australian Veterans' Athletics Movement, as outlined in her book.

The *"Sorrow"* is that Gloria was to barely outlive the completion of AAVAC's definitive history.

This forward, then, is a tribute to a staunch friend, dedicated athlete, warm human being and a loyal and loving partner to Jim, her husband.

It is my hope that when these pages are read by present or future veteran athletes, Gloria's abilities and memory will be kept alive through them.

Len Childs
AAVAC President
April 13th 1998
Canberra

I'm sure that Gloria and Jim would wish recognition be duly given to those persons named in this book who with effort, enthusiasm and struggle managed to develop a sovereign organisation for the fleet and not so fleet, in this wide and wonderful land.

Appreciations

I was very pleased to read Gloria's completed work on the History of the Veterans Athletic Movement in Australia.

I consider it to be an accurate and informative account.

I sincerely hope that **AAVAC** will continue recording the ongoing achievements of the Veterans Athletic Movement in Australia.

Jean O'Neill,

Delegate: **WAVA** Championships. Hanover, Federal Republic Germany, June 1979.

~~~~~

Due praise should be given to Gloria for her application to the formidable task of collating so much information from the limited available sources, particularly in the cases of the early years of the Australian Veterans movement.

The section on **WAV As** development and information as to the happenings at the World Championships are, perhaps, the most interesting part of the work.

It is wonderful that Gloria has been able to leave such a detailed account and one which can but benefit all veteran athletes.

*Keith Routley,*

VVAC Secretary (1972-76).

How pleased I am that Gloria has researched the history of the veterans athletic movement in Australia.

I wish to thank Gloria for an excellent account of the movement's development, and to note that so many of the persons mentioned in this with, including Gloria, have died so young.

*Jack Pennington,*

Editor, The Veteran Athlete (1971-79).

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

### Revisions

|               |                            |               |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Gloria Seymon | Original document          | December 1997 |
| Russ Haines   | For tti g.a.nd read bility | October 2000  |

In the manuscript copies that I have received from two people, reference has been made in the text to a number of appendices, but these were not found in the document. The only course of action was either to either reconstruct them from the original sources of information or to delete any references to them. I have chosen the later option.

If you have any queries or corrections to the manuscript please contact:-

Russ Haines,  
11 Ripley Court,  
Ringwood, 3134,  
Victoria,  
Australia.  
(03) 9876-4367

---

# **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

---

## **Introduction**

This study, of the early history of the veteran track and field athletic movement in Australia and in the world, is divided into four sections:

- **A** brief outline of from where the information was collected
- Detailed outline of the history itself
- Some information on the history of professional athletics in Australia.
- References and bibliography

## **Abstract of the History of the Veteran Movement in Australia**

The history of the movement in Australia is followed in this study. Veteran track and field athletics was first introduced into Australia by a few veteran athletes mainly from Western Australia who heard that U.S.A. competitors were competing in veteran age groups of ten years. The first U.S.A. Masters track and field competition was held in San Diego in 1968. In 1973 the first Australian track and field championships were held in Melbourne with a team also competing from the U.S.A. The International Veteran Track and Field Championships were first held in 1972. The first state to officially form a veteran track and field athletics club was South Australia on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1971 with the inaugural meeting of New South Wales being held on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1971. In 1973, the Victorian veteran club was officially formed as was the Queensland veterans club (which was for men only). By 1974 the inaugural meeting of the Australian Association of Veteran Athletics Clubs was held, while Western Australia was also formed in 1974 (men only). In 1977 women were admitted to the Western Australian club. Tasmania veterans athletic club was formed in June, 1979, and in July the Australian Capital Territory veterans club was also formed. In 1983 Queensland women were given full membership to their state body and the first Australian Grand Prix was held in 1995. In 1996 the national membership numbers are 3,692 athletes. Veteran track and field athletics is an association which encourages people to physically, socially and psychologically to enjoy a better life as they age.

The history of the World Veteran Association is similar in some ways to the Australian history with the 1<sup>st</sup> World Association of Veteran Championships being held in Toronto, Canada, in 1975.

---



## **Methodology of Collecting Information**

Letters were written to each state secretary seeking information on the history of individual states. The secretary forwarded the request to the persons who were formative members within their state. A letter was also written to the national body of the Australian Association of Veteran Athletic Clubs.

Primary sources were used for the collection of data for the history. This data included original letters, programs, minutes from state meetings and annual general meeting minutes. Other documents used included personal communications from original founding members. Interview outlines were also sent to founding members from the different states.

Secondary sources of information used included published reports such as newsletters from both states and national bodies. Overseas magazines and newsletters from the world body were also used.

## **Articles**

Many articles were obtained from the late Mike O'Neill's papers and were supplied by his wife, Jean O'Neill. The O'Neills have been involved with active participation since the 1<sup>st</sup> International Veterans Championships in 1972. Other articles have been supplied by John Gilmour and further information by Royce Foley. An almost complete set of the *Veteran Athlete* newsletters were also supplied by Jean O'Neill. All of this information is related to both the National and World Veteran histories.

### **History of the Veteran Movement in Australia and the World**

Modern competition started about 1720<sup>67</sup> because it was about this time when the gentry wagered on their footmen. The estimated distance run in challenge matches was about four miles. In 1764, *"the m,Je was run in 4 minutes 30 seconds. The two miles in JO minutes and the ten miles in 57 minutes."* It is considered that the watches used to time these races were reliable.

Professional "foot-running" commenced in Australia about 1810. This is the oldest form of recognised sport in Australia<sup>24</sup>. The dominant state for "foot-running" was N.S.W. but moved to Victoria about 1880 due to athletes not running true and gamblers losing money on these races. During this time and up to about the 1980s there was a major division between professional and amateur status of track and field athletics. Any person with professional ties regardless of the sport was disallowed from competing at any amateur track and field events.

*"Masters, Veterans or mature-age persons have been competing in athletics for a long time but except for a few exceptions were not organised":* writes Shippen<sup>78</sup>. He goes on to say, *"their numbers were small but they were outstanding in performance."*

The history of the Australian Veteran movement is closely linked to the World Veteran movement especially within the United States and Canada. Several men travelled to the US and Canada to compete in those championships. However, on the east coast of Australia research being carried out by Dr. **A.P.** Millar at the Institute of Sports Medicine, Lewisham, was a stimulus to Logan Irwin to form a Veteran Athletic Club.

In March, 1971, writes Pennington<sup>67</sup>, *"Randwick-Botany organised an athletic meeting for over-40 members of NSW clubs (thanks to Logan Irwin) and a few weeks later Al Digance in Adelaide 'got the message' and formed a bona fide Veterans Club."*

Prior to this time in Australia, there was a 50 year-old Englishman still running in inter-club competition at Perry Lakes Stadium in Perth. Cliff Bould was still receiving his "Athletics Weekly" from the United Kingdom and noticed a brief report about the United States Masters Championships. Cliff was determined that he would go and prove that he was the best distance runner of his age, and got in touch with Dave Pain and in turn was invited to run in San Diego. In 1968 this Australian won the U.S.A. Masters 2 miles, 3 miles and 6 miles. Meanwhile a Sydney veteran Frank McCaffery had been put in touch with the Association of Veteran Long Distance Runners of Germany, and a little earlier, in 1968, ran in the World Veteran Marathon.

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

Dr. Millar in his article for the Australian Journal of Sports Medicine<sup>26</sup> states, *"There has been an increasing awareness of physical fitness in the community in recent years, due principally to the expanding number of fun runs and media publicity. Increasing weekend child sport participation has stimulated some parents to renew their contact with exercise. The growing number of people running around the streets and parks bears witness to the responses to these stimuli. Men from both groups formed the Wirrinum Veterans Athletic Club in 1971 in which the sole criteria for membership was to have reached 40 years of age and to have a continuing interest in athletics. The numbers have slowly grown and in recent years, state and national championships have been initiated"*(short report).

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

### **States History**

Not only was professional running alive and well but many veterans were involved with cross country running in most states. While some states had groups of mature age competitors, there were no recognised veteran athletic clubs as such.

#### **South Australia**

This was the first state to officially form a Veteran Athletic's Club. The formation of this group and its first official meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1971. The *Veteran Athlete*<sup>37</sup> had a report from S.A. Veteran Amateur Athletics Club (SAVAAC). This was written by Al Digance which stated the following:

*"We congratulate NS. W. for the formation of a Veteran Club. Our club was formed on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1971. Will Victoria take up the challenge and form a third force ? How about an Annual Inter-Club competition ?"*

# A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

## **New South Wales**

At a meeting held in April, 1971, the N.S.W. veterans athletics club was formed under the name of "The Wirrinum Veteran Athletic Club". Logan Irwin was the instigator of this meeting which was held at the Randwick-Botany club rooms. By November, 1971, the following statement was made<sup>37</sup>:

*"The Wirrinum Veteran Athletic Club is now affiliated as a specialist club of the Amateur Athletics Association of New South Wales (AAANSW). They will conduct a mid-week track competition plus an annual championships in March, 1972. The club badge is an 'hour-glass with wings'. The secretary is Logan Irwin."*

In a copy of the first annual report and financial statement of the Wirrinum Veterans Amateur Athletic Club the following paragraph is taken from the President's report. This was written by Denis Wilson and dated Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1972.

*"On the occasion of our first annual report, I think it is worth while to record the major milestones we have passed since the inaugural meeting called by Logan Irwin on 2<sup>d</sup> April, 1971. The interim committee of Messrs Irwin, Wilson, Hassal, Daly and Steward, as instructed, drafted a constitution for the club which was accepted with minor amendments at a special general meeting held on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1971." Constitution was approved by AAANSW on the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1971. It was pointed out to the Association that, "we as a Club would be self sufficient in providing our own competition, awards, and finance for our teams. Also as a specialist Club we cannot compete as a Club in Association Competitions."*

The objectives of the club as written in the constitution were *"to encourage and promote all amateur athletics, including jogging, for persons over 35 years of age, and provide sufficient competition and training for its members within the area of the jurisdiction of the AAA of NSW."*<sup>42</sup>

Pennington wrote in his Veteran Athlete<sup>47</sup> editorial, *"there is a new tartan track at the Hensley Field, home of the NSW Veteran Club, and there will be an International Match NSW vs USA Veterans (Masters) at 6pm, Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>".*

Wal Sheppard wrote in the *Veteran Athlete*<sup>3</sup> *"The Wirrinum Club (Sydney Veterans) have advised a change in name, to the NSW Veteran Amateur Athletics Club (NSWVAAC)."*

Pennington in his editorial<sup>61</sup> comments that the NSW VAAC will use 5-year age groups for their championships.

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

### **N.S.W. State Track and Field Championships**

Jack Pennington<sup>30</sup> in his first issue of *The Veteran Athlete* wrote an article called "NSW Sets the Pace". He goes on to write, "*Logan Irwin organised the first full-scale track and field championships for age groups 35 years and upward. The inspiration came from the Lewisham Sports Medical Clinic, who wished to obtain information about the medical effects of endurance running in relation to age.*"

The first N.S.W. State Track and Field Championships were held at Hensley track during March 1971. These championships were held prior to the inaugural meeting to form a NSW Veteran Athletic Club. The program covered the following events: 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5000m, 110m hurdles, 3000m walk, LJ, TJ, HJ, PV, HT, DT, JT, SP (TJ, PV, HT and hurdles were for men only). These championships were assisted by the Randwick-Botany club.

The second N.S.W. State Track and Field Championships were held at the Hensley track on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March 1972. These championships were held in conjunction with Little Athletics. Ten Victorians and three South Australians attended. The program covered, as above and included a medley relay.

Since this time the N.S.W. State Track and Field Championships have been held annually in March. Following many years at Hensley track, these championships have also been held at Sydney Athletic Field, Anzac Parade and in 1993 were held for the first time at the Sydney International Athletic Centre which is the 2000 Olympic site, at Homebush.

By 1973, NSW was having its third state track and field championships, South Australia its third also, while Victoria was having its first.

The first Grand Prix circuit for Veteran Athletes was held in January-February in 1995. This was organised and run by Alf Lakin Promotions and was conducted in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra, Wollongong and Sydney.

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

---

### Victoria

According to Royce Foley<sup>16</sup>, *„prior to 1970 a meeting was held in the Richmond Harriers Club gym room to discuss the formation of a veteran movement. Present were Wal Sheppard, George Simpson, Keith Routley and, possibly, Arthur Lonnquist. ”*

It would appear from *The Veteran Athlete*<sup>38</sup> that a Victorian Veteran Club was formed in 1972.

In a letter from the steering committee, that was formed at a meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1971, interested people were informed of a meeting to be held at the Walker's Club, Robinson Hall, Albert Park Lake on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1972, to discuss the proposed Club constitution. It would appear that the Victorian Veterans Athletic Club was formed at this meeting<sup>4</sup>. The jogging boom of the mid-1970s, under the secretary Peter Colthup, saw many new members attracted to the Victorian club.

The first Victorian Veteran Winter Championships were held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1977. It was held in 5-year age groups for men and women. The events held were 60m, 150m, 600m, 1000m, 3 mile run, shot put, javelin, discus, triple jump and standing long jump.

The *Veteran Athlete*<sup>38</sup> showed that, *„the President of the Victorian Veteran Club as Mike Porter and the secretary/treasurer as Keith Routley. The hope was to compete in graded inter-club. ”*

The first Victorian Track and Field Championships will be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1973<sup>45</sup> at the Box Hill track. Entries are open to all amateur veterans. Age Groups are 35-39 years, 40-49 years, 50-59 years, and 60 years and over. The events are:- Discus, Shot, Javelin, Hammer, Long Jump, High Jump, Pole Vault, Triple Jump, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m, 5,000m, 3,000 Steeplechase, 110m Hurdles, 1500m and 3000m Walks.

The fourth Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Veteran Amateur Athletics Club was held on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 and showed the state membership growth over that time.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1972/3      | 61            |
| 1973/4      | 105           |
| 1974/5      | 130           |
| 1975/6      | 165           |

**Table 1: Growth of Victoria Membership 1972-75**

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

### Queensland

The Queensland Veteran Athletic Club had its foundation day<sup>69</sup> on the 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1973. The inaugural meeting to form the club was held at the R.S.L Club, Toowong, and was attended by nine men. Election of officers duly took place and the first track and field meeting took place one month later. The first Queensland competition was held on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1973. Twenty-five members took part in these championships.

Pennington wrote in his editorial<sup>48</sup>, "**Yes, at last, Queensland have formed a veteran amateur athletics club.**"<sup>9</sup>

In April, 1974, a team of eight competitors from Queensland attended the second Australian Veteran Titles in Sydney. There were no women's events.

Additions to the constitution took place at the conclusion of the 1975/76 season. Women were not accepted as equals but they did have their "foot in the door". Women in Queensland were to be admitted as Associate Members and their subscription was to be half that of ordinary members. Thus women were officially able to compete in the 1977 season<sup>69</sup>.

Women became official members in the 1977/78 season, competing in official events and setting Queensland records. The season started with two members and finished with twelve members. Women competed in four events at the Queensland state championships. During the 1978/79 season, women's membership rose to nineteen and six events for women were held at the state championships. However, in Queensland, it was not until 1983 that women were given full membership rights and paid the full membership fee.



---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

### Western Australia

The information on the history of the formation of the Western Australia Veteran Amateur Athletics Club is adapted from work by Rob Shand with the information also supplied from John Gilmour, Dick Horsley and Cliff Bould<sup>3</sup>.

The idea of forming a **W.A.** Veterans Athletic Club was discussed by Cliff Bould and John Gilmour on the return flight from the U.S.A. where they had competed in the 1971 U.S. National Masters Championships. In 1972 a small group formed but did not consolidate into a Club until some time later.

The Club's first Newsletter, dated 1st July, 1974, listed performances of Club members at McCallum Oval on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, indicating that the Club was formed about April, 1974. Written correspondence with Dick Horsley (1992) states, "*April, 1974, saw the inaugural meeting to form the WA. Veterans with 7 people turning up. These were Cliff Bould, David Carr, Jack Collins, John Gilmour, Jim Smith and Dick Horsley*"<sup>021</sup>. Keith MacDonald was elected as President, John Gilmour, Jack Collins and David Carr as Vice Presidents and Cliff Bould as Secretary/Treasurer assisted by Tony Morton. The beginnings of the Veteran movement however, commenced some six years previously with Cliff Bould's participation in inter-club meetings in Perth. *The Veteran Athlett?*<sup>2</sup> comments:

*"Cliff Bould is one of the 'odd individuals who continue to compete well into middle age and was well over 50 when competing in inter-club meetings in Perth, apparently much to the annoyance of the local officials - the more they complained, the more events Cliff ran in. He had a fair idea that for his age he must be running World class times, so he wrote to 'Athletics Weekly' in the U.K. to find out how he stood. They sent him the results of the U.S.A. Masters meet in San Diego of 1967 and as the result of a letter he wrote to the organiser, David Pain, to see if he would be permitted to run in their championship, he was invited to take a team over to compete in 1967."*

The objectives of the Club were to provide a club atmosphere for people of veteran age. It was realised that some members would be competitive, that others would enjoy becoming fit and taking part in events without being too serious, and there was plenty of room for non-ambitious members who liked exercise without training too hard and also enjoyed the company of people of similar age. In 1977 it was realised that lady members should be admitted to the Club and from then on women have been an integral part of the Club activities. By 1993 **W.A.** Veterans Athletics Club has 138 female members.

---

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

### Tasmania

The following information was supplied by A. Slater<sup>81</sup> in 1991.

Clive Roper perceived that there was a need to involve mature aged people in sport at their own level. A series of "come and try" events were held in February, 1979. An open meeting (the inaugural meeting ) of all interested people was held in June, 1979 at Rosny College, Rosny Point, Hobart. The main object of the Club was to provide enjoyable, satisfying activity in the company of similar minded pleasant people. Apart from the "come and see" meeting in February, 1979, the first "official" event was held 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1979. Because it was a day program it was shortened to:-

| <b>Event</b>  | <b>Male Competitors</b> | <b>Female Competitors</b> |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 200 Metres    | 4                       | 1                         |
| 400 Metres    | 4                       | 3                         |
| 800 Metres    | 10                      | 0                         |
| 3,000 Metres  | 17                      | 2                         |
| Short Hurdles | 2                       | 1                         |
| High Jump     | 1                       | 0                         |
| Shot Put      | 6                       | 3                         |

**Table 2 : Attendance at First Tasmanian Competition**

The "come and try" events in February, 1979 were conducted under the "Life Be In It" program, they also attracted some sponsorship from the Commercial Bank of Australia. Clive Roper was employed at the time with the Department of Sport and Recreation and it is believed there may have been a form of sponsorship from the Department of Sport and Recreation, but this is not confirmed. Women members joined at the commencement of the Tasmania Veteran Athletic Club. Since 1980 Club membership on average has been 250 - 280 members from all parts of Tasmania.

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

### A.C.T.

The following was extracted from information obtained from Ken Daniels<sup>8</sup>, in 1994.

Ken Daniels had competed at inter-club in Canberra for a couple of years and was in Sydney in 1978 competing in the N.S.W. Decathlon Championships. It was here he met Logan Irwin and learned about the N.S.W. Veterans Athletic Club. The A.C.T. Veteran Athletic Club was formed by Ken Daniels who was at the time a member of the N.S.W. Veterans Athletic Club.

He did this by putting an advertisement in the Public Notices section of the Canberra Times. The response was positive. Following this a meeting was held in Watson at the home of an interested person on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1979 and attended by Ken Daniels, Peter Frylink, Nigel Crew, Jack Pennington, Terry Munro and several other people. A steering committee was formed and this committee set up the first Annual General Meeting of the A.C.T. Veterans Athletic Club. The meeting was held at East Canberra Rugby Union Club in the Canberra suburb of Kingston on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1979, at 8pm, the meeting was Chaired by 1956 Olympic Games Shot Putter, Peter Hanlin. Patron of the newly formed club was Sir William McMahon. Peter Frylink was nominated and elected President, Nigel Crew was nominated and elected Vice President. Ken Daniels was nominated and elected Secretary. Terry Munro was nominated and elected Treasurer. Other committee members elected were Mike Adler, Rod Moore and Brian Paxman.

The objectives of the club were to promote athletics competition for males and females over the age of 35 for men and 30 for women. At the first general meeting of the club a constitution was accepted which was modelled on the constitution of the NSW Veterans Athletic Club which in turn was modelled on the constitution of the Randwick Botany Club.

The first run the Club held was a pack cross-country run in Stromlo Forest in May, 1979, there were 14 males and 3 females.

It was decided that although some members wanted to take part in track and field events there was no equipment or a suitable venue. The best way to build up membership was through distance running, those people who were able and wanted to, competed with the Amateur Athletics Association (AAA) at interclub. The Club President's philosophy was 'Fitness Through Fellowship' (which was then adopted as the Club's motto), and not on serious competition. Some members who had been banned for life as professionals were soon able to compete with a local club as the IAAF ruled that people over 40 who were professionals could apply for reinstatement, and pay to the AAA a percentage of their earnings as a professional,

The Club did not in the early days receive any sponsorship of any kind, except a gift voucher for a pair of running shoes. The first time it received sponsorship was in 1984 for the holding of the Australian Championships combined with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Oceania Games.

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

To give new members a feel for track events a sprinters club was organised on Bruce Stadium. Their first meeting was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1979, and the second on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1979.

The first track competition was held at the Holder High School oval, on Wednesday evening 6<sup>th</sup> February, 1980, on a 400m grass track. There were 6 men and no women competitors, The events held were 60m, 100m, 800m and 1500m. A long jump was also held but no distances were recorded.

By the end of the 1979/80 financial year the Club had 53 members made up of 44 males and 9 females, an increase of 150% mainly through word of mouth (Daniels, 1994).

1980 was the first time the Club competed in Nationals which were held in Adelaide.

*"At the present time": (1994<sup>8</sup>), "registrations have increased to 450 members* The first local championships held by the Club were on Woden Athletic Track. A full range of events were conducted except for Pole Vault and Hammer. Sponsorship was not sought as the hire of the ground was about \$7.00. Handicap events proved popular and a good source of boosting membership.

Nine members of the Club took part in the World Veterans Championships in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1981.

Since this time the Club has steadily increased in membership and is now known as the 'throwing centre' of Australia. The first National Weight Pentathlon (W.P.) was held in Canberra at Easter, 1995. Interestingly enough there were as many female athletes as male athletes competing in this event.

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

### Northern Territory

There appears to be a small veteran club in Northern Territory but information about the time that it was formed appears to be unattainable. Pennington wrote<sup>45</sup>, prior to the visit of the USA team to compete in the first Australian veterans championships at Box Hill, *Bryan Verhoef (Northern Territory) writes he has a group training, but it is still mighty hot even at night, however, a few will try their luck when the Yanks come over.*

### Veteran Athletics Publications

In 1971 a small group of veteran runners were keen to get in touch with other veterans and Jack Pennington was encouraged to produce the *Veteran Athlete*. "In 1971 the circulation ran to 60 and by issue number 32 in 1977 it had reached 560"<sup>7</sup>.

The first issue of the *Veteran Athlete* was produced in July, 1971, by Jack Pennington. In his first editorial he states, "*We are concerned primarily to promote running, which we consider is every man's birthright. Not to be able to run is, in our opinion, an unfortunate condition and usually due to man's own neglect of an ability he was born with.*"

The Editorial (No.3) of the *Veteran Athlete* Nov., 1971, states, "*This issue contains suggestion that the ten year age divisions are too large. It is clear that it has some merit; our numbers are not yet strong enough to warrant a reduction to five years. However, at a World Championships, in track events, it would be necessary to conduct heats; a division of five years would reduce heats but double the number of finals and therefore also double the awards.*"

Pennington<sup>30</sup> mentions there are now Veteran Clubs in Adelaide and Sydney. However, the strongest distance running centre is in Melbourne. They have regular midweek competitions which will improve standards and greater participation. Given the right publicity, it may be possible to influence the community so that in the long run, national fitness will improve.

By August/September, 1973, the newsletter, *The Veteran Athlete*, was being distributed to N.S.W, SA., VIC., NT., and **W.A.**

In the editorial of the No. 4 of the *Veteran Athlete* Pennington stated that the magazine "*was being distributed to all states and territory, and to Germany, U.S.A. and the U.K.*"

## National Veteran Track and Field Championships

The first Australian Veteran Track and Field Championships were held at Box Hill in Victoria in 1973. *"A team of 150-200 from the U.S.A. will compete on 22<sup>d</sup>/23<sup>d</sup> December"*<sup>43</sup>

The USA team prior to this meet competed against N.S.W. Following the Australian championships they then went on to New Zealand for further competition. This was in response to a group of Australians who had competed in the U.S.A. and other European countries in 1969, and 1970.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Track and Field Championships were held on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of April, 1974 at Hensley Athletic track in New South Wales. *"If: states Pennington<sup>50</sup>, "entries permit these events w,II be held in 5 year age groups. "*

Pennington<sup>42</sup> gives notice of the first Australian Championships for distance veteran runners to be held on the Queen's Birthday Holiday week-end in June, 1973 at Centennial Park, Sydney. The events to be held will be 10km cross-country, and a 25km road race.

### **Australian Association of Veterans Athletic Clubs (AAVAC)**

The inaugural meeting of the Australian Association of Veterans Athletic Clubs was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1974.<sup>29</sup> The first point covered was that *"a National Body be formed and known as the "Australian Association of Veteran Athletic Clubs"* The first meeting of this body was held in Adelaide on the 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1974.

An article written by Ron O'Neill called "The N/A vac" appeared in the *Veteran Athlete*.<sup>2</sup> He writes, *"the first National Executive comprised men who have been among the foundation members, all are recognised for their leadership on our behalf"* He goes on to say *the needs for a National Association are many, it will give us a means of establishing uniformity in Age Groups, Standards, implements, Australian Title rotation and the many facets of Veteran Athletics which must be uniform if we are to recognise our own Australian Age Records."*

The foundation stones for a national body include such people as Jack Pennington, Wally Sheppard, Logan Irwin, helped along by such men as Cliff Bould, and Frank McCaffery.

Pennington<sup>54</sup> in his editorial, writes about the need to set fairly tough standards for the World Games saying that, *"there is a need to obtain national recognition and financial support for a team which will be worthy of representing Australia at The World Veteran Games in Toronto, August, 1975."*

*"Failure to be named in the team will not prevent anyone competing, because the Canadian organisers have deliberately set low athletic standards, so that any fit person should be able to participate. We envisage a team of 100. There is no guarantee of financial aid but we believe we are eligible for a Federal Government grant towards our team expenses."*

Shippen<sup>77</sup> writes in his article titled World News and Results that, *"the Australian National Veteran Association's selectors Jack Pennington (Canberra), Wal Sheppard (Melbourne), and Logan Irwin (Sydney) have set a surprisingly tough set of standards for their World Games team. It appears that a quality team will be more likely to obtain a Federal Government grant towards team expenses - recent indications suggest a travel subsidy in the region of 30% to 50%."*

However, by January, 1975, it appeared unlikely there would be any Federal Government sponsorship and Pennington commented in *Veteran Athlete*<sup>55</sup> that all members who exceed the standards that have been set will be eligible for the Australian team. However, they will need to raise their own finance, which has been estimated to be approximately \$1,500.

Pennington<sup>58</sup> in his editorial states, *"The sponsors of the World Veteran Games (the Canadian Exhibition) have sent \$300 to our six top athletes, in addition the Federal*



---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

*Government has allocated \$209 to each of the top 20 athletes."*

An acknowledgement also appeared in the *Veteran Athlete*<sup>41</sup> as follows, "The team manager, Wally Sheppard wishes to thank Ron Clarke and Arthur Hodson for their valued help and advice, and on behalf of the team we tender a special thank you to Adidas Ltd for the donation of a high quality Australian Track Suit to every team member."

*"Many other sponsors have helped the team and to them we are indebted, and for all of them we have a very warm regard"*

Women officially competed in the Australian Titles in Sydney in 1979. The Australian Women's Records started officially from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1978.

## Profiles of Some Australian Veteran Champions

John Gilmour

Taken from the Veteran Athlete<sup>34</sup> by Jack Pennington. - Editor.

*"John started athletics in 1937, but soon after found himself in Changi Jail, and later in Kobe Prison camp, Japan. John suffered among other unpleasant things, permanent damage to both optic nerves due to ma/nutrition. His rehabilitation followed the pattern of many others in our ranks, and as early as 1946, he gained selection for WA. at cross-country, and despite poor eye-sight, ran for WA. in '48-'50-'52 and '54. He has won the WA. 10 miles and 15 m.,Jes twice, and in 1956, after winning the State Marathon, decided to rest on his laurels and retire. However, the 1962 Commonwealth Games in Perth revived his interest to the extent that he was able to place g-d in the WA. Marathon of '62 and then retain a place in the first four in all distance events until finally retiring at the age of 47 in 1966."*

*"However, the exploits of Cliff Bow/d and Col Junner prised him loose from his arm chair, and within a few months he was fit enough to challenge all corners of the over-50 titles."*

*"At the age of 52, John's winning U.S.A. times were:*

*5,000111      17:09 and      10,000111      35:42."*

An article from the U.S.A. Track and Field News states, *"John Gilmour, at 52, would be the world's best, and Wally Sheppard, at 49, would be likewise at 800m/1,500m. Col Junner would be second only to the great Mimoun over 10,000111. As can be seen from the U.S.A. Masters results of 1971 it seems clear that there are no over 65 year olds asgood as Syd Hesketh and Fred Wrightson of Sydney, Australia."*

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

### Jack Pennington

By Mick Sheehan.<sup>71</sup>

*"In the late 1950's a small group of athletic types were trying to establish Athletics in Canberra as a year round sport, not just something sandwiched between "footy" and cricket. It was tough going and seldom did we have more than six runners during the cross-country season."*

*"But in 1958 Jack Pennington arrived from England: in fact, he burst upon the scene /,ke a shot in the arm, his energy and enthusiasm "put a tiger in our tanks" Jack was born in 1922 and it seems he had run ever since. At the age of 12 he enjoyed a 3 miles run home from school He was then living in the backwoods of Ireland and it was not until he joined the Irish rifles that he found out how good he was at cross-country running, winning Battalion and Regimental races (Royal Ulster Rifles). He admits to being last in 60 mile route marches."*

*In 1941 he met his ,do/ Sydney Wooderson; they were both in the team which met the Canadian forces, and at 19 he was somewhat over-awed by sudden limelight and was accused of finishing well down the field in much too fresh a condition. (Now in his 50th year Jack's track times for 800m., 1,500m and 5,000m are identical with his times at the age of 18-19 years).*

*However, he soon found himself involved in the War against the Japanese, and for three years found Burma an unsuitable venue for training, particularly as he suffered, /,ke his fellows, the effects of malnutrition and dysentery due both to the climate and the meagre rations depending on an irregular air drop. Nevertheless at the V.J. celebrations in Rangoon, Jack was able to make the final of the S.E.A.C. mile, and in fact was the only European to make it, finishing 5'h behind his comrades in arms, West Africans and Sikhs. His memory of that race is that it was /,ke running in a sauna.*

*In 1947 Jack resumed running with "The Polytechnic Harriers" He was the odd man out because he ran every day, and was advised by the grand old man of distance running, Arthur Newton. Speed work was not allowed and therefore little progress was made. He was consistent in placing in the first 20 in the Middlesex cross-country Championship, for ten years. He won many minor races and won the Middlesex 6 miles and placed in the Middlesex 20 miles in 1950.*

*Since his arrival in Canberra 14 years ago, he has been the "King Pin" of cross-country and middle distance running. He is concentrating on creating a strong 800m. group. However, he has "produced" such stayers as Julian Scott and the current N S. W 3,000m steeple champion Dave Mcinnes.*

*You can't get within five yards of Jack without being infected by his enthusiasm, and you*

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

*can't talk to him for five minutes without taking a pledge to get out there and run, run, run.*

In 1951 Jack first heard of Percy Cerutti. They "crossed pens" in the "Athletic Review" - Jack said fitness come first and Percy was adamant that style came first, in the training of a novice. Possibly because of his open mind approach to running, Jack became a disciple of Cerutti, although NEVER accepting the sand hill and the weight training as a physiological aid to running faster.

*Jack accepts Percy as the first "Philosopher of Running" on which to base Lydiard's methods. There has been a great deal of correspondence between Portsea and Canberra, and both Cerutti and Lydiard have been to see Jack.*

*Jack says he has a warm regard of the "old man of running": but he is not "blinded by the light which comes forth"*

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

George McGrath

The following information was written by George McGrath in an article titled "An Ancient Ambler".<sup>25</sup>

*My introduction to the world of runners occurred in a fairly gradual way and also at a time when the majority of men tend to contemplate the purchase of a rocking chair rather than a pair of jogging shoes.*

*For more than 40 years I have been a year-round swimmer and, during the lunch hour or on week days, I follow a game of handball with a 400 metre swim, or longer, depending on the clock. My other sporting interests have included rugby (I played for 31 seasons), cricket, boxing and golf, but at none of these did I ever display more than average ability. For the record, I was born in Melbourne on December, 21st, 1919, and, except for the war years, have been a clerk in the NSW Public Service since 1936. I am 1.81 metres tall and weigh 64 kgs.*

*By chance, I agreed to accompany my friend, John Collins, when he lined up in the inaugural "City-Surf" race in August, 1971, hoping that I could complete the course of 15 kms. Without a great deal of preparation and, surprisingly, very minor after-effects, we took just over 58 minutes for the journey. We returned to our swimming and handball and did not race again until the second and third "City-Surfs" although, in winter months of each year, we had increased our road training to about 50 miles a week. Of course, in the process the sheer joy of an early morning training run was revealed to me and I am completely 'hooked' on this routine.*

*At the conclusion of the 1973 run, Jack Pennington introduced himself to me at Bond( complimented me on my performance (a shade under 53 minutes) and encouraged me to join the NSW Veterans Club, emphasizing that my life style would change greatly, as a result. I could never have dreamed how true his prediction was to become.*

*I made my debut in the NSW Marathon in July, 1974, at the ripe old age of 54. My 2:43.11 was all I needed to make me a mainline marathoner for as long as I can raise a trot.*

*The first World Masters track and field championships were conducted in Toronto, Canada, in August, 1975, and I managed to win two gold medals and a bronze. Gothenburg, Sweden, was the venue of the second Games and there I was successful in a 10 kilometres cross-country and got a silver for a second in a 10kms track the following day. Both meets provided wonderful opportunities for competition against and fraternization with veterans from countries all over the world and were memorable occasions.*

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

### Jack Ryan

By Jack Pennington<sup>56</sup>

*At the time of writing, Jack Ryan is the current World best, 1,500m and 5,000m man, in the over 50 years. He was born at Romsey, Victoria, on 3(fh April, 1922.*

*Jack has no history in athletics, he did not even bother to attend the Melbourne Olympics, he has been a sportsman all his life. Early he was keen on football and cricket, but in 1968 he read Dr. Cooper's "Aerobics" and was completely sold on the Idea. that man was in need of a daily jogging session. He, his wife and five youngsters joined a bush-walking club and later took up cross-country skiing. There was still no interest in athletics, until he ran into our number one sprinter (over 60 years), lhc Pye, llk was impressed by Jack's fitness and "conned" him into trying a Veteran race, since then Jack has forged ahead to the top. He is still experimenting, but has so far based his training on Arthur lydiard's "Run to the top He says anyone will find a training program to suit his ability. Here's Jack's progress, first season 1973, 1,500m 4m48s, 5000m 17m36s, 1974 4m22s and 17m08s, at the beginning of 1974-75 season he ran as follows-; 4m23, 4m19, 4m17, 4m14.6s, 4m18, 4m235s the latter won the National Veteran title {2A} and for 5,000 he ran 16m47s, 16m14s, 15m54s, he also ran an 800m in2m07. 8.*

*He now believes athletics is a great sport, because it is every man for himself, you get out what you put into training, Jack has been putting in a bit too much, and is now worried about injuries. Some of his sessions are suitable for men 30 years younger, he runs 70 miles per week in two daily runs, the morning run is a brisk 4 miles, but the evening session, reads like the Jim Ryun story.*

*We have not yet seen the best of Jack Ryan, and I am sure when he finds we mortals have only just so much energy to give to training, and some must be saved for the racing he will be number one for a long time ahead.*

## Other Notable Competitions

### City to Surf

Pennington wrote<sup>34</sup> the following article in 1971 about the City to Surf.

*What an amazing sight it was as 2,000 runners formed up in Sydney for the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual "City to Surf" race on Sept. 5. It was 10am and the weather was cool and sunny. Sydney's lord Mayor raised the starting gun and as the report echoed, there was a great stampede as people of all ages, men and women, boys and girls, "took off" on the run of 9.4 mJ/es to Bondi Beach. Those of us who had lined up near the rear of the field were marking time, unable to walk, let alone run: but the huge pack got away, we thinned out a bit and the race was on.<sup>o</sup> The winner was Ken Moore, the U.S.A. Marathon champion, in a time of 44m 28s*

*The City to Surf race of 1971 will long be remembered as the greatest, most enjoyable, most publicised, most watched, most commented about race in this city's history. There are now well over 40,000 competitors who run, jog and walk the city to surf.*

### Oceania Games

The 1<sup>st</sup> OCEANIA GAMES (Pacific Basin) were held in Fiji in 1982. These games draw a large number of competitors from the larger nations, namely Australia and New Zealand, plus smaller countries like Fiji, New Calendonias and Noumea. They are held every second year on a rotating basis amongst the competing nations.

### New Zealand Meetings

The inaugural NEW ZEALAND TRACK AND FIELD meeting for veteran athletes was held in January, 1974. Each event was conducted in 5 year age groups. There were 164 competitors in total, with 27 Australians participating.

## World Development of Veteran Track and Field Championships

The Beginning of Veteran Athletics started with middle aged men and women striving to relive the enjoyment and good health found from physical fitness.

Since before the turn of the century and throughout many parts of the world<sup>10</sup> older athletes have always taken part in track and field activities to some extent.

Organised athletics began in England in the Army and in the Public Schools (used by the upper classes of the day) in the year 1820, and by the year 1863 the first Athletic club became established in London, having the name of The London Athletic Club, the first National Track and Field championships were held in 1866. There were Veterans competing by the turn of the century. *In 1931, Pennington<sup>66</sup> continues, the Veteran membership of the London A. C. was 20 strong and they therefore decided to break away and form the Veteran Athletic Club, on the 12th September, 1931. The first club organised solely as a veteran movement was the Veteran Athletic Club of England in 1932. This club flourished alone for many years and today is one of the strongest veteran clubs in the world*

Farquharson<sup>10</sup> states, *in the early 1960s, in response to the exhortations of men like His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, and President Kennedy, and later nurtured by the example of others such as Canada's Governor General Roland Mitchener, men and women all over the world started running as the best means of promoting fitness and good health. Amongst some of these runners germinated the seed of competition.*

The earliest veteran competitors were mainly roadrunners perhaps because an older runner could enjoy competition away from the glare of publicity attendant at track meets. This was not entirely true, as some very long standing Veteran records were set by sprinter, jumpers and throwers, but it was generally true, especially at more modest levels of achievement.

The World Championship Distance Runs were held on 15-16<sup>th</sup> of September, 1972. The following age groups apply.

| Class | Birth Date                                                      | Age Group   |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| One   | 15 <sup>th</sup> September 1932 to 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1923 | 40-49 Years |
| Two   | 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1922 to 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1913  | 50-59 Years |
| Three | 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1912 to 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1903  | 60-69 Years |
| Four  | Before 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1902                           | 70+ Years   |

**Table 3 : 1972 World Distance Championship Age Groups**



---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

All competitors had to submit a clearance from their Athletic Association and a medical certificate of good health.

Since then, the story has centred around these enthusiasts organizing their efforts internationally within two distinct bodies which progressed independently, each for the advancement of these Veteran Athletes. Happily for this sport the Interessens-Gemeinschaft Alterer Langstreckenläufer (I.G.A.L.), which translates into "World Best Veteran Long Distance Runners", and the World Association of Veteran Athletes (**WAVA**) decided to unite to better continue their efforts<sup>13</sup>.

To recognize the desire of the increasing numbers of runners to compete at their own age levels, the I.G.A.L. was formed in 1968 and held its inaugural marathon championships that year in Holland. International competition was a reality.

Meantime, however, apparently quite independent of the road runners movement, veteran athletes in many countries were forming organizations to measure their fitness and skills against each other. In New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain, Sweden, Canada and many other countries a great spirit was abroad. In some cases it was an outgrowth of the fitness movement, in other cases a rekindling of the retired athletes' desire to return to the track. In 1965, a leading USA track coach, Bill Bowerman, upon a visit to New Zealand, was invited by a group of "over 40" runners to take part in a local "jog". To his horror, he found that every man in the field, even 70-year-olds, left him standing - this led to his discovery that running was a way of life in New Zealand.

Upon his return<sup>13</sup>, his published revelations led *"to the formation of the USA Master Track and Field Team, by San Diego Attorney, David Pain, which has held National Championships, in five-year age groups from 40 to 85, every year since its inception."* (The term "Masters" and "Veteran" are used synonymously).

David Pain (USA) promoted the annual track and field championships in San-Diego. These championships commenced in 1967.<sup>38</sup> The first annual USA Masters track and field championships were held at San Diego in 1968.

David Pain of the San Diego Track Club, was the inspiration behind the annual Masters Track and Field Championships.

Pain, a lawyer, is also a fighter.<sup>38</sup> He won the right in the Courts for joggers to run on the Public Golf Course.

*"His brush with authorities led him to be arrested by the cops while out running with his dog. The dog then bit the cop and was also arrested and incarcerated in the City Pound It took David 5 hours to get out of the 'Poky'. Nobody sympathized with him, but his dog hit the headlines, complete with a pictorial account of why the DOG got itself arrested"*<sup>38</sup>

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

He is now the centre of a controversy. He has been called a "pirate" because he and his track club committee are going ahead with a take-over bid for the biggest indoor Games, and the promoter is squealing like a "stuck pig". Pain says profits from this meet will go into the sport.

He is now 49 (in 1972) and is looking forward to his 50th birthday, because then perhaps he can get up the front in Veteran races instead of bringing up the rear.

David is well known to the Aussie team which went to the San Diego Meet last year, and when asked why does he put all his energy into Veteran Athletics, his quick reply would be "National Fitness".

The long and short of it, says Dave, is:

*People are learning to respect their bodies, to be concerned with exercise:*

*because health is part of our ecology, it is becoming a way of life to counteract the sedentary way of life.*

*Running is a natural activity rather than a skill.*

In 1971, David and Helen Pain travelled to Europe and proposed that after viewing the 1972 Olympics at Munich, a group of American Masters would compete against their European counterparts. This idea subsequently proved so popular that viewing the Olympics became a much less attraction and a large party of Americans accompanied by groups from Australia and Canada, after a **Cross** Country warm-up match, competed in the first truly international veteran Track and Field meet at Crystal Place, London. Following this, the group visited Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany. Everywhere, the tour touched off tremendous enthusiasm and lasting fellowship.

In 1972 the **West** Germans, because of the influx of Veterans to watch the Munich Olympics, decided to go a step further and promote an International Track and Field meeting at Cologne. This resulted in teams being picked from the U.S.A., Australia and Britain. Britain not to be left out, decided to put on the first International meet at Crystal Palace in London prior to the Olympics. These two meetings brought many ex-champions out of retirement and even 80 year olds contested not only the sprints but the marathon.

Following the Olympic Games in Germany the first International Track and Field Championships were held for veterans at Cologne in Aug/Sept., 1972. All program events were held in 10-year age groups. Prior to this meeting the Australian team of 35 competitors had competed at USA and at Crystal Place in London. The meeting in Cologne had 130 USA competitors, 35 Canadians, 100 competitors from the United Kingdom, and the 35 Australians.<sup>40</sup>

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

In the editorial<sup>39</sup> of the *Veteran Athlete* written by Jack Pennington, he comments that *"there is much talk of the Olympics becoming too big, too commercial, too this, and too that. It is wishful thinking to hope that it may revert to the good old days of athletics. Whatever happens, this is an historic year for us, because in the week following the 1972 Olympics, there will be held the first International Track, Field and Road championships for veterans.*

The Australian contingent will be part of the history making. Two men will see the culmination of their dreams and deserve honourable mention. They are David Pain of San Diego USA who promoted the Annual Track and Field championships in San Diego since 1967; and Meinrad Nagele, of Cologne, Germany, who had promoted the "Association of veteran long distance runners, which has become an International movement."

Jack Pennington<sup>41</sup> comments Veteran Athletics came of age this year - if "coming of age" is the right sort of expression to use about veterans! *This year saw the first inter-continental, international competition, and these were due to the vision and energy of men /,ke Meinrad Nagele, David Pain and Wally Sheppard. Veteran sport is here to stay and will grow in strength.*

Veteran athletics exists for a different reason than normal sub-veteran sport. To be sure, some athletes keep on competing without a break until they reach the veteran level of age, but others make a come-back, or take up athletics for the first time, for the purpose of regaining fitness.

In 1974 an international veterans track and field championships was held in New Zealand for 35 years and over. These championships were held on 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> January. This meeting was attended by the USA team following the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Nationals in Melbourne in 1973.

In 1975 the first World Veteran Track and Field Championships were held in Toronto, Canada, in August. Competition was held in five-year age classes for men and ten-year age classes for women. Pennington<sup>49</sup>, states in the *Veteran Athlete* *the standards will permit a 99% entry from the Australian entrants.*

Now that international contact had been made<sup>13</sup>, a World Championships was to be held and the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) in Toronto, Canada, agreed to sponsor such an event, to take place in August, 1975. Although subsequently the CNE role diminished, they kept their financial promises and the Canadian Masters, headed by Don Farquharson, carried the enormous meet in style. Men and women from thirty-two countries participated in five days of exciting competition. Sweden successfully bid to host a second Championships in 1977 and, perhaps most important, a meeting was held in Convocation Hall, University of Toronto, to which all participants were invited to offer their views on the formation of a World Veterans (Masters) Track and Field body.

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

Farquharson<sup>13</sup>, continues, *this body would, henceforth, regulate and further international activities. The desire to form this world body was unanimous and after much discussion an elected Steering Committee was formed with the task of proposing 'the scope and structure of the association. The Committee comprised Chairman - Jack Fitzgerald, (England), Secretary/Treasurer - Don Farquharson, (Canada), Committee Members: David Pain (USA), Wal Sheppard (Australia), Maeve Kyle (Northern Ireland), Jacques Serruys (Belgium), Bob Fine (USA), Ian Hume (Canada), and Kinrad Herne/ind (Sweden). The name "World Association of Veteran Athletes"(WAVA) was proposed by Clem Green of New Zealand*

At the first international championships meeting itself, many outstanding performances made it difficult to decide who were the best athletes. Certainly Theo Orr (Australia) and Al Guidet (USA) each with four gold and silver stood out but were closely followed by Anne MacKenzie (South Africa) and Jack Greenwood (USA) four gold each.

Hayward<sup>18</sup>, writes *veteran championships in which women's events were included for the first time (p.5) were held at Toronto in 1975.*

*Veteran athletics is not yet established in the women's ranks to the same extent as the men's. Perhaps the acknowledgement of advancing age is harder for a woman to accept than a man or perhaps family commitments make it too difficult.*

*Age-group competition had come to stay, and the surge of interest by mature athletes meant that at bigger meets the ten-year classes were split into five-year divisions<sup>77</sup> Shippen goes on to say that the 'too old at forty' brigade will not only be showing their mettle to the rest of the world but will be demonstrating how to compete and enjoy it.*

*During the following year, writes Farquharson<sup>13</sup>, the committee corresponded and met again at Coventry City Hall, England during the 1976 IGAL Championships to discuss the problems which might be caused by the Swedish requests for the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) sanction for the next Championships at Gothenburg (1977). One problem in particular threatened to cause a split even before WAVA was formed The IAAF would not allow competition by any athlete who had lost his amateur status, no matter how long ago that might have been. See section on Professional versus Amateur.*

One group favoured an effort to have **IAAF** approve a "dual status" for veteran competitors (i.e. portion of Rule 53 would not have to be adhered to in purely veteran competition but only when a veteran competed with younger athletes). Others favoured no connection with the **IAAF** whatsoever<sup>80</sup>.

In 1977, the second Championships welcomed 2,750 competitors to Gothenburg who enjoyed the fine job done by Roland Jerneryd in leading the Swedish organizers. The women "came of age" in this Championships. They were more numerous and more competitive, inspired perhaps by the veteran debut of the great Miki Gormann from the USA.<sup>13</sup> The amazing blind runner from Germany Fritz Assmy was an inspiration. Other new stars were the Australian 800 metre duo Tony Blue and Noel Clough. Wal Sheppard reported, in *The Veteran Athlete*<sup>62</sup>, *about the Gothenburg Tour. The team will be of 76 men and 5 women.*

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

---

Pennington<sup>63</sup>, reports *Despite this event being the largest track and field gathering of all time, the media largely ignored it - a serious coverage could have done so much good for middle-aged mankind and could also have set an example to our disoriented youth.*

A number of well-known professionals turned up at these championships with amateur accreditation and won gold medals which of course caused many problems for other competitors and organizers.

Shippen<sup>74</sup>, in his editorial in *Veteris*, writes *The professional/amateur question in relation to veteran athletics is being increasingly discussed. Indeed in some quarters discussion is fast bordering on confrontation with the national amateur bodies, and unless the problems are soon resolved serious rifts are likely to occur within our movement. What is the problem?*

*Few will deny that the current boom in veteran activity is not only desirable but should be positively encouraged. As the gospel is spread an ever-widening range of men and women join the ranks. They cover the whole spectrum of mankind, and for a similarly wide range of reasons they end up joining a club which furthers their quest for health, companionship, travel, exercise and competition. Included amongst them are ex-professionals from other sports, former world-class athletes who lost their amateur status many years earlier, professional coaches and others who would not know what an amateur declaration meant, let alone feel qualified to sign one. All are welcomed. But when it comes to competition, it is decreed that not all are welcomed, and it is here that the difficulties begin.*

He goes on to say, *international rules have been framed to provide uniformity and stability to the world of athletics and there is an undoubted need for the IAAF to frame those rules. Rule 52 and 53 specifically exclude the groups of athletes mentioned above. So the real question is "What relevance do these rules have at veteran level"*

Adrian Paulen, President of the **IAAF** viewed the meet and commented that *the competitors obviously enjoyed themselves so much that something should be done about a special status*<sup>3</sup>. Some months later the newly formed **WAVA** was given the right by the IAAF to decide who would take part in its events, provided these events were confined to men 40 years and over and women 35 years and over.

During the General Assembly Gothenburg, the first **WAVA** Executive was elected. Don Farquharson (Canada) President, Jacques Serruys (Belgium) Vice-President, Roland Jerneryd (Sweden) Secretary, Harm Hendricks (Holland), Treasurer, Hazel Rider (Great Britain) Women's Representative. The addition of Continental representatives enlarged it to an Executive Council - Hideo Okada (Japan, for Asia, Cesare Becalli (Italy), for Europe, Wal Sheppard (Australia), for Oceania, Robert Fine (USA), for North America, Jose Tejeiro Santos (Venezuela), for South America and Dr. Danie Burger (South Africa), for Africa.

In addition, a constitution was approved. At the Assembly, West Germany successfully bid for the 3rd Championships, to be held in Hanover in July, 1979.

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

Up to 1979 **WAVA** had no income whatsoever. All communication and travel costs were met from the pockets of the Executive and the increasing amounts involved proved an irksome problem. At Hanover, and at all Championships since each competitor has paid a levy to help provide administration expenses and enable **WA VA** to spread the news of veteran fitness and competition throughout the world.

In 1979 the meet in Hanover, Germany, with the finest facilities in use, brought even higher standards of efficiency which, of course, were necessary when almost 3,400 athletes from 57 countries competed. The entries in the throws, jumps, and pentathlon events were so large that they exceeded the numbers ever experienced before in any International competition.

*While all this was happening<sup>3</sup>, the IGAL too, were very active. Under the leadership of their first President, Arthur Lambert, they had held successful road racing championships each and every year at 10kms and at the same venues alternating 25kms and marathons. At first these venues were European, 1968 Baarn, Netherlands; 1969 Bensburg, West Germany; 1970 Skvode, Sweden; 1971 Karlovy-Vary, Czechoslovakia; 1972 Bensgurg, West Germany; 1973 Douglas, Isle of Man, GB and 1974 Dra veil-Paris, France. In 1975 however, they leapt continental boundaries and moved half a world away to Japan where events were masterminded by Vice-President<sup>7</sup> Hideo Okada. In 1976 they were held at Coventry (England) to be followed by Brugge, Belgium, 1977, Berlin, FRG, 1978 and Bolton, England, 1979.*

The first newsletter of **WAVA** was produced in May, 1980. It was established to form a link between the growing legions of men and women, over the age of 40 and 35 respectively who enjoy competition in Running and Field events the world over.<sup>11</sup>

Planning the **WAVA** New Zealand World track and field meeting for 1981 went forward with some trepidation. Would competitors, paying their own expenses, find it possible to travel so far in sufficient numbers to bring about a real world championships? The **WA VA** executive was concerned with this when they met in Glasgow, Scotland, in August, 1980. To the delight of everyone concerned, 2,400 veterans competed in New Zealand, half of them from outside Oceania. Competitors from 51 countries took part, some for the first time. John McDonald and his enthusiasts not only put on a fine meet but the New Zealand people showed themselves sincere and wonderful hosts to so many men and women who never dreamt they would visit this beautiful far-flung corner of the world.<sup>13</sup>

In 1983 the **IAAF** decided to form a Veteran Wing, and recognizing the role that **WAVA** has played in the development of veteran competition approached the organization to continue its activities under their auspices. To determine the practicality of this suggestion, a committee was formed comprising three IAAF members and nine veterans. This committee, under the chairmanship of Hans Slaset (Norway) of the IAAF would meet as often as was necessary between November, 1984, and March 1985.

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

At Rome, IGAL President, Jacques Serruys informed the **WAVA** Executive that at the IGAL General Assembly in Blackpool, England, two weeks earlier, it was agreed that unity with **WAVA** was desirable and should take place in stages over a three-year period 1986-1989. Following discussions between the two organizations and the IAAF it was decided that the 1986 marathon in Vancouver, Canada, would be the last under IGAL name alone. 1987 and 1988 events (in Israel and Korea respectively) would be held under joint IGAL and **WAVA** names. The 1989 event and all subsequent events would take place under the **WAVA** name alone. To facilitate this union the **IAAF** veteran committee would be enlarged immediately to include two more IGAL members and the 1987-1991 IMF committee would include two IGAL members.

In 1987 the **WAVA** Melbourne championships were conducted by the 7th World Veterans' Athletic Games Organizing Committee and the tremendous enthusiasm with which the project had been tackled was repaid by the appearance of even more veteran competitors than ever at the meet.<sup>13</sup> More than 4,800 took part and, despite very bad weather during three days, they enjoyed a triumphant success. If the size and quality of previous championships had made it difficult to select the stars, the Australian meet made it even more so.

The General Assembly held in Melbourne City Hall, also produced more than its share of surprises. It was the end of an era politically. President Don Farquharson had led **WAVA** from the time of formation and during this time **WAVA** had progressed from groups of unconnected enthusiasts around the world to an organization capable of staging the largest athletics championships in the world. Now by Constitution, he must step down. Jacques Serruys of Belgium who had also served since **WAVA's** inauguration as Vice-President Road and Country, would contest European Veterans' President, Cesare Beccalli of Italy for the Presidency of **WAVA**. Cesare proved the winner after an exciting and close election.

*It is a matter of pride, writes Farquharson<sup>13</sup>, that both **WAVA** and IGAL histories have become one. With a single world body representative of veteran athletics, we can look forward to continued success as a unit. More importantly it can provide better opportunities for lasting friendships between men and women from all parts of the world who come together because of veteran track and field athletics.*

*The executive council of WAVA work with 6 regional council/s {one for each continental area} to maximize representation of respective continents.<sup>80</sup>*

### **Time-Line For The Australian Veteran Track And Field Movement**

- 1810 Professional "Footrunning" commenced around the gold mining fields.
- 1968 Cliff Bould went to USA Masters Competition.
- 1969 Bould, Sheppard, Gilmour and Junner went to the US.
- 1970 During these two years several Australian - mainly from Western Australia competed in the USA and European Championships.
- 1971 1<sup>st</sup> March. NSW Championships for veterans.  
14<sup>th</sup> April. South Australian Veteran's Athletics Club officially formed.  
20<sup>th</sup> April. New South Wales Veteran inaugural meeting was held.  
Victorian Veterans Athletics Club officially formed.
- 1972 35 Australians competed at Crystal Palace for 2 days, previously to San Diego, London and Cologne.  
2<sup>nd</sup> S A Track and Field Championships.  
2<sup>nd</sup> NSW Track and Field Championships.
- 1973 3<sup>rd</sup> S.A. Track and Field Championships.  
3<sup>rd</sup> NSW Track and Field Championships.  
1<sup>st</sup> Victorian Track and Field Championships.  
24<sup>th</sup> Sept. Queensland Veteran Athletics Club formed officially - for men only.  
1<sup>st</sup> Veteran National Championships held in December, at Box Hill, Victoria.
- 1974 21<sup>st</sup> April. The inaugural meeting of the Australian Association of Veteran Athletic Clubs.  
April. Western Australia Veteran Athletics Club was officially formed - 21 men competed.
- 1977 Women were admitted to the W.A. Vets Club.  
2<sup>nd</sup> July. Victorian Veterans 1<sup>st</sup> Winter Championships.
- 1979 June Tasmania Veterans Athletics Club was officially formed.  
July A.C.T. Veterans Athletics Club was officially formed.  
Women were officially allowed to compete at the Nationals.



## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

- 1980 ACT 1<sup>st</sup> track and field championships were held and the ACT club competed for the first time in the national championships.
- 1981 1<sup>st</sup> Australian attempt at the Australian World Record for the 100 x 1-mile relay.
- 1983 Women in Queensland were given full membership rights.
- 1995 1<sup>st</sup> Veteran Grand Prix Circuit - held in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra, Wollongong, and Sydney. This Grand Prix was organized by Alf Lakin of Sydney.

### **Time-Line For The World Veteran Track. and Field Movement**

- 1720 The beginning of open competition, see Pennington in **WAVA** Newsletter 2, 1980.
- 1810 Professional foot-running commenced in Australia.
- 1932 Veteran Athletics Club of England - officially formed. "London A.C."
- 1967 Formation of the U.S.A. Masters Track Club in San Diego.
- 1968 1<sup>st</sup> USA Masters Track & Field Championships held in San Diego.  
IGAL International Road Racing was held.
- 1972 1<sup>st</sup> International Veterans Track and Field Competition was held in Cologne, the "World Best Veteran Championships". Thirty-five Australians competed at this meet. They also met at London after competing in the USA at San Diego. Participants also came from USA, UK, NZ, Japan, Canada and Europe.
- 1973 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Veterans Track and Field Championships were held in Melbourne. A team from the USA also competed.
- 1974 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Masters Track and Field championships were held at Toronto (26th June).  
Inaugural meeting (April) of the Australian Association of Veteran Athletics Clubs (AAVAC).  
New Zealand inaugural meeting for Track and Field Championships.
- 1975 1<sup>st</sup> World Veteran Athletics Track and Field Championships held in Toronto Canada. 27 Countries entered with 1,400 participants. Australian team manager was Wal. Sheppard, and team captain was Logan Irwin. South Africans competed as "Rhodesians".  
World Association of Veteran Athletes (**WAVA**) was formed.
- 1976 1<sup>st</sup> South African Veteran Track and Field Championships.
- 1977 2<sup>nd</sup> World Veterans Track and Field Championships were held in Gothenburg, Sweden. 44 countries entered with 2,654 participants with 241 women.  
1<sup>st</sup> Pan American Master Track and Field Championships.
- 1978 September 1<sup>st</sup>, European Track and Field Championships were held at Viareggio, Italy.

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

- 1979      1<sup>st</sup> Indian National Track and Field Championships.  
            2<sup>nd</sup> European Veterans Championships.  
            3<sup>rd</sup> World Association of Veteran Athletes Track and Field Championships held  
            in Hanover, Germany. 42 countries entered with 3,126 participants.
- 1980      1<sup>st</sup> Singapore Association Veteran Athletics Track and Field Championships.  
            1<sup>st</sup> All Japanese Masters Track and Field Championships (**WAVA** Newsletter  
            No.4 March, 1981).  
            1<sup>st</sup> Scandinavian Veteran Track And Field Athletics Championships.  
            1<sup>st</sup> Puerto Rico Masters Track and Field Championships (**WAVA** Newsletter  
            No.3 Dec. 1980).  
            1<sup>st</sup> **WAVA** Newsletter produced in May.
- 1981      4<sup>th</sup> World Association of Veteran Athletics Track and Field Championships held  
            in Christchurch New Zealand. Women competed. 44 countries entered with  
            2,400 participants.
- 1982      Inaugural Meeting of Athletic Veterans of Hong Kong (**WAVA** Newsletter No.7  
            April, 1982).  
            1<sup>st</sup> Oceania Games held in Fiji.
- 1983      5<sup>th</sup> World Association of Veteran Athletics Track and Field Championships  
            were held in Puerto Rico. 48 countries entered with 1,935 participants (1,513  
            men and 359 women or 23.8% women).
- 1985      6<sup>th</sup> World Association of Veteran Athletics Track and Field Championships  
            were held in Rome Italy. 48 countries entered with 4,330 participants (3,659  
            men and 671 women or 18.3% women).
- 1987      7<sup>th</sup> World Association of Veteran Athletes Track and Field Championships were  
            held in Melbourne, Australia. 52 countries entered with 4,817 participants  
            (3,747 men and 1,070 women or 28.5% women).
- 1989      8<sup>th</sup> World Association of Veteran Athletes Track and Field Championships were  
            held in Eugene America. 57 countries entered with 4,754 participants.
- 1991      9<sup>th</sup> World Association of Veteran Athletes Track and Field Championships were  
            held in Turku, Finland. 56 Countries entered with 4,802 participants.
- 1993      10<sup>th</sup> World Association of Veteran Athletes Track and Field Championships  
            were held in Miyazaki, Japan. 78 countries entered with 12,163 participants  
            (9,893 men and 2,270 women or 23% women).

### **Professional Athletics In Australia**

*The son of Peleus then offered prizes for speed in running - a mixing bowl beautifully wrought of pure silver.*

Homer, The Iliad.<sup>24</sup>

#### **The Early Beginnings**

The purpose of athletics - to run, jump, and throw is a natural human response. The actual movements in the different events of track and field sport have their beginnings in the efforts of primitive man to survive. With no real effective weapons available, earliest man had to develop speed of foot, muscular power, dexterity of motion and the ability to jump and leap in order to take game for food and to escape from his habitual enemies. When not doing this i.e. - hunting or saving his life - it is assumed that he practised with his peers in order to improve his abilities.<sup>24</sup>

About the 5th Century BC. there was a demarcation between athletes who competed for intimate glory and professionals who used their athletic expertise as a means of earning a living. The preparation of an athlete in ancient Greece involved both physical and spiritual preparation. Competition consisted of running, jumping and throwing the discus and javelin. Women were barred from the games even as patrons. During competition the athletes were naked and their bodies smeared with oil. At Olympia the oldest event was traditionally the *Stadia, which is roughly equivalent to the modern 220 yards race.*<sup>24</sup>

The approach of the Industrial Revolution in mid-eighteenth century and the later introduction of sports as a regular extra-curriculum activity in English public schools provided an impetus which led to the great expansion of sports, especially in England.

*In 1808 a Captain Barley accepted a wager to walk 1,000 miles in a thousand successive hours. The sum wagered was 1,000 guineas.*<sup>24</sup>

Organized foot-racing arrived in America in 1835. For a brief decade 1875-1885 the professional sport of pedestrianism (foot-racing) reached amazing heights of extreme interest in several of the leading cities in the USA, GB and Australia.

Professional foot-racing, according to Mason<sup>24</sup>, is said to have commenced in Australia in the gold-mining days. The miners raced each other on a handicap basis for the reward of a gold nugget donated by the local publican or the mine owner. The miners wagered their precious gold dust on the outcome of a race. In this manner the present day "Gift" races originated<sup>24</sup>. *The miners raced over various distances, but the main race was - and still is - a distance of 130 yards. With modification, the distance has now become the slightly longer 120 metres. This distance is regarded as the true test for professional sprinters.*

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

---

### Australian Professional Running

Australia's first-known established athlete was Dick Doling who by 1810 was the dominant runner. He outraced everyone in the colony over varying distances. By 1860 and 1870 money encouraged great New Zealand runners to cross the Tasman and try their luck here. Sydney's Sir Joseph Banks ground at Botany, which was the first professional running track in Australia and the Carrington ground, also in Sydney, soon attracted many overseas champions.

The year 1890 proved a bad one for NSW - runners ran "dead" - bets were reduced and the public lost interest and the racing suffered. International and NSW runners moved to Victoria, which became the heart of professional running <sup>24</sup> About this time walking events were introduced. *In January, 1878, Stawell Athletics Club {SAC} was launched and the first professional meet was held on Easter Saturday of that year. The amount allotted for prizes was 110 pounds. The program consisted of the Easter Gift, of 130 yards, with the other races being, 150 yards, 600 yards, 220 yards, 3-mile walking race and a 600-yard hurdle race. This was followed by 150-yard sack hurdle race, vaulting with a pole, and a running high jump. The first Stowell Easter Gift was watched by nearly 2,000 people. The SAC convened a meeting of all professional clubs and in 1895 the formation of the Victorian Athletic league occurred*

Amateur running was introduced at this meeting in 1896 under the rules of Victoria Amateur Athletics Association. However, only one event was held for the amateur runners<sup>24</sup>, that being the half-mile handicap.

Mason<sup>24</sup> states in his preface *Professional foot running is the oldest form of any recognized sport in Australia It is also the richest sport - any athlete can earn \$15,000 for an effort taking around 12 seconds.*

There were no events for women at the Olympics until 1928. However, the first professional women's racing was held in 1908 with 50, 100 and 150 yards being held.

*The word amateur, from the Latin word amateur (lover) means 'one who is fond of something'. When first recorded in Britain in 1784, it referred to one who appreciated the polite art or painting and music. The earliest sporting connotation is in references to ringside prize-fight spectators as gentlemen amateurs, as they were known in 1801.<sup>24</sup>*

It is in the domain of athletics, where both amateur and professionals co-exist, that the definition of the word amateur often comes into question.

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

The amateur athletic associations of the western countries define an amateur as<sup>24</sup> *one who engages in sport solely for the pleasure and physical, mental and social benefits he derives therefrom and to whom sport is nothing more than a vocation. One who has never competed for a money prize or monetary consideration in any athletic sport or game - one who has never engaged in, assisted in or taught any athletic exercise for pecuniary consideration, or in any way exploited his athletic ability for profit.*

Don Chipp in his forward to Mason's book<sup>24</sup> states *with boundless conceit which accompanies our youth I decided I would set myself for the 100 or 200 m at the Olympic Games. In attempting to register with the Victorian Amateur Athletics Association I received a rude shock I was informed that because I was a professional footballer (I was with Fitzroy at the time) I could not be admitted as an athlete. I stoutly complained that I had deliberately maintained my amateur status and not taken any money for my games with the club. The amateur official quickly retorted that that did not matter.*

*The principal acts by which an athlete may render himself ineligible for amateur competition include:*

1. *Competing, coaching, or officiating for money.*
2. *Demanding or receiving excessive or improper expenses.*
3. *Fraud or grossly unstatesmanlike conduct in any competition.*
4. *Selling or pawning of prizes.*
5. *Permitting one's name to be used for advertising of any specific professional competition.*
6. *Knowingly competing with or against ineligible persons, without permission.*
7. *Capitalization of athletic fame as publicity in employment.*
8. *Permitting use of one's name or photograph for advertising any product.*
9. *Participating in radio or TV for advertising of any product, without permission.*
10. *Selling or soliciting sale of sporting goods, prizes and trophies.<sup>24</sup>*

Open athletics has been an aberrant issue for nearly 88 years. <sup>24</sup> *Surely competition between professionals and amateurs will be with us before the end of the century. An approach has been made to the International Amateur Athletic Federation {IAAF} through the Amateur Athletic Union of Australia (AAUA) for special consideration regarding rules relating to constraints placed on athletes in Australia by the AAUA of amateur eligibility rules as applicable to intra-state, national, and international competitions.*

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

*A professional athlete not only is never eligible to participate in amateur competition in his own sport but is ineligible for amateur competition in any other sport.*

For many years the rule of professional as opposed to amateur was strictly followed and the professional was not allowed to compete, under any conditions, as an amateur. *A rigid application of the ineligibility conditions hit Jim Thorpe, an American Indian and winner of the pentathlon and decathlon events at the 1912 Olympic Games at Stockholm. When it was revealed that Thorpe had played semi-professional baseball in 1911 and transgressed amateur rules for acceptance of payment, his name was struck off the Roll of Champions and his two gold medals taken away from him. In 1973, twenty years after his death, Jim Thorpe's name was reinstated.*

Some of the reasons why many people joined the professional groups were because one's fellow athletes were usually incredibly fit young men. The camaraderie was remarkable and the friendships solid. Many of the athletes were exciting, good-natured people and an unbelievable moment of tension existed between the *get-set* and the *bang* of the starting gun.

*The athletes who are brilliant and find running easy are few and far between.*<sup>24</sup> Many will compete for years and never know success. It is their effort to succeed which encourages them to continue. If it were not for these athletes who try hard and yet finish well back, no sport would ever continue. They know there is no disgrace in losing but great pleasure and satisfaction in participating and performing to the best of one's ability.

In the last fifteen to twenty years (prior to 1985) prize money has increased enormously, attracting the best sprinters in the world to the professional ranks. The reason professional runners perform well is the tough competition they have to endure. For nearly five months every year they have competitions every weekend, and with the system at every Gift meeting of only the heat winners going to the semifinal, there is no consolation for running second. The enormous talent of sprinters around the country pitted against a smart contingent of overseas runners from Scotland and the United States not only gives each meeting an international flavour but produces an enthralling spectacle for the large number of fans.

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

---

### Australian Veterans

The two most famous veterans of Australia seen sprinting all over the world are Reg Austin and Bernie Hogan. To call Austin a veteran is misleading. *Forty years of age at the time of writing, Austin from New South Wales, is capable of beating anyone on his day. He made it to the Stawe/IGift final in 1970 and was back-marker then off 7 yards. He has been in the Tasmanian Latrobe Gift final an incredible eight times. In the Burnie Gift he has been placed second three times*<sup>24</sup>

It was in 1961, when Austin left Sydney to play Rugby League with Cootamundra, that he became a professional runner. Since then he has toured all over Australia and the World, winning the big money at Gift meetings. In 1975 he won the World Veterans Professional Championship in Canada, for the age group thirty to forty years. The following year he won the forty to forty-five years world championship title in South Africa. In 1978 he retained his title against 2,654 runners in Sweden. At the Pan American Masters Games in Los Angeles in 1978 he won the 100 and 200 metres titles. A year later he added the 400 metres title to his name. He still holds the World record for the 200 metres for men in the age group of 40-44years. This 200m was run in 21.0 seconds.

Today, 1995, Reg is still a force to be reckoned with at world level in the 100 metres, 200 metres and 400 metres. He competed in the 100 and 200 metres in 1995 at the World Veteran Championships at Buffalo in the USA, winning the 100m in 11.71, and the 200m in 24.86.

After seven years in Cootamundra, Austin returned to Sydney and set up his own business in the world of finance, specializing in superannuation funds, insurance, taxation and retirement benefits. The question of his own retirement from sport is one he still avoids. He has competed at sports all over the world. It is said only two things keep him going - *sport and cabernet sauvignon, which helps him mature, year after year.*<sup>24</sup>

The other veteran, Brisbane businessman Bernie Hogan, competes regularly in the amateur World Veterans' Athletics Championships. In 1977, at the age of fifty-five, Bernie won the 100 metres world championship in Sweden for athletes between fifty-five and sixty years. His time was 11.8 seconds. *With that time, he deserved to win the gold medal.*<sup>24</sup> He has continued to compete at the world level in the 100 metres and 200 metres being present at the world championships in Buffalo, USA, in 1995. Bernie Hogan still holds the world records in the men's 65-69 years 100 and 200 metres. He ran the 100m in 12.5s and the 200m in 25.5 seconds.



## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

*Hogan has a tremendous professional background He is a leading pro athletics administrator and a former champion pro runner. His first appearance at Stowell was in 1946, when he ran second in the half-mile, in 1949 he was placed second in the 75 yards sprint. His pro background has at times interfered with his running in the veteran class; the Australian official body has objected to his participation. Bernie has time and again got around the hurdle. He once gained selection in the United States team by winning the United States veteran 100 and 200 metre championships in Chicago. He has also won the South African 100 and 200 metres titles.<sup>24</sup>*

*In Victoria, states Pennington<sup>48 50</sup>, there was a flourishing and ancient Professional Organization, which has the opposite aims to the Olympic Ideal. It exists purely for the 'betting' with the athletes regarded as dogs or horses, any amateur who foolishly competes in this competition, soon finds his athletic career is finished, never may he run a time which represents his true capability, he was a star amateur, he is handicapped out of winning. By comparison with amateur athletics, it is sub-standard and bent.*

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

---

### Professionals Versus Amateur

The problem of professionals and amateur competing together has been solved<sup>24</sup> in the United States. Professional runners have been reinstated in amateur ranks after *surrendering one-tenth of their earnings*. For example Warren Edmondson, the professional world sprint champion, was more than delighted to receive this penalty. As an amateur he is confident of earning five times the amount he would make as a successful pro runner, through endorsements and sponsorship.

The second annual U.S. Masters track and field championships were held in July, 1969, in San Diego. A letter was sent to the Hon. Secretary-Treasurer of the Amateur Athletic Union of Australia from the Track and Field Administrator of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States. A copy of the program was included with the letter. The question of the professional athlete was raised and addressed by the Americans in the following manner. *However, an amendment was made in our rules permitting people who had been professionalized to be reinstated at the age of 40 for competitions of this type.*<sup>7</sup>

Shippen<sup>74</sup> in his editorial wrote, *the professional/amateur question in relation to veteran athletics is being increasingly discussed. Indeed in some quarters discussion is fast bordering on confrontation with the national amateur bodies, and unless the problems are soon resolved serious rifts are likely to occur within our movement.*

The IAAF needs to consider rule 11 and rules 52,53 in the light of the veteran athlete. The proposed changes are for instance, associated with rule 53, which accepts all professional activities prior to the age of 16. This rule could be amended to read *or after 40, with certain safeguards*<sup>4</sup>. He goes on to write *Similarly, the reinstatement rule No. 11 could be amended to give automatic reinstatement at the age of 40. If neither of these can be carried then the dual-status solution could be considered. This would exempt veterans from the amateur code only when competing against other veterans and provided that the rule of competition complies in all other respects. So there are several ways out if all parties are prepared to find them.*

Pennington in his editorial<sup>59</sup> made the following comment. *There is a serious decline in support for athletics, and the Australian Athletic Union will investigate, but persons aged over 40 years may apply for re-instatement as amateurs, providing they have not competed as professionals in the previous five years.*

Pennington further discusses the amateur-professional question. He also states<sup>64</sup>, *the IAAF proposes to add to the amateur rule 53 the following words 'the rule does not apply to competitions conducted solely for the age groups over 40 years for men and over 35 years for women. The purpose of this clause is to ensure that amateur Veterans may compete against professionals and yet retain the right to compete in amateur competitions.*

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

Pennington in his article titled "Professional may Compete"<sup>65</sup> writes: *The IAAF has now made the addition to rule 53. This means that at Hanover, 1979, the organizers w/J/1 not need amateur accreditation. It also means "Veteran Clubs" may not need amateur declarations, but entry to any Veteran event run by a state amateur athletic association on any program in which there are age group events younger than veteran ages, only amateur veterans are eligible to compete.*

After many years of deliberations the National Australia Athletic Confederation succeeded in achieving dual registration for amateur and professional athletes. *Under new AAUA rules, the 1985 Victorian Amateur Athletic Championships saw pro runners compete with their amateur counterparts for the first time. In the world of veteran championships there is now no distinction between professional and amateur competitors.*<sup>24</sup>

### References and Bibliography

1. Austin, R. (1995) Professional Running. Personal Communications.
2. Barrett, E. (1978) Ed. Germans want Vets at 35. Veteris. Vol.1(2) June p. 19.
3. Bould, C. (1993) A Brief History of the Western Australian Veterans Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.
4. Browne, C. (1994) History of the Victorian Veterans Athletic Club. Personal Communication
5. (1996) Australian Records and World Records for the World Veterans Athletic Association. Personal Communications.
6. Cartwright, R. (1992) Information on the New South Wales Veterans Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.
7. Cassell, O.C. (1969) Letter from Amateur Athletic Union of the United States. April, 7<sup>th</sup> \_
8. Daniels, K. (1994) Brief History of Canberra Veteran Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.
9. Digance, A. (1971) in Pennington, J., (Ed.) **S.A.** Results. The Veteran Athlete. No.3 Nov. p. 11.
10. Farquharson, D. (1975) The World Masters Track and Field. in Luther, W., (Ed.) The Masters of Track and Field Colban. Toronto.
11. (1980) (Ed.) Editorial. World Association of Veteran Athletics Newsletters No. 1 May. p.1.
12. (1981) (Ed.) Partial Results of the Fourth World Veteran Championships. World Association of Veteran Athletics Newsletters No. 4 March. p1-37.
13. (1989) **A** Brief History of World Veteran Track and Field Athletics Movement. Personal Communications.
14. Fitzgerald, J. (1979) Letter to the Editor in Barrett, Ed. Veteris. Vol.5 (12) April p.6&8.
15. Foley, R. (1993) Information on Australian Veteran Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.
16. (1993) History of the Victorian Veterans Athletic Club. Personal Communications.
17. Gilmour, J. (1994) Information on Australian Veteran Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.

---

## **A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia**

---

18. Hayward, J. (1980) .The World Veteran All-time Ranking Lists. in - Farquharson, D., (Ed.) The World Association of Veteran Athletes. Newsletter No. 3 December. p.5.
19. Hishon, T. (1996) The Australian Association of Veteran's Athletic Clubs Ltd .. Combined Membership Figures, by State, for the Years 1990-1995. Personal Communications.
20. Hogan, B. (1995). Professional Running. Personal Communications.
21. Horsley, D. (1992) Information on Western Australian Veterans Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.
22. Lakin, A. (1995) First Australian Veterans Grand Prix Circuit. Personal Communications.
23. Luther, W. (1975) Edit. The Masters of Track and Field Colban of Canada Inc. Toronto.
24. Mason, P. (1985) History of Professional Athletics in Australia. Rigby Pub. Adelaide.
25. McGrath, G. (1979) An Ancient Ambler in Barrett, E., Ed. Veteris. Vol.5 (12) April p.19.
26. Millar, A.P. (1978) Profile of Veteran Athletes - A Short Report. Australian Journal of Sports Medicine, July/Aug/Sept.
27. O'Neill, J. (1979) Australian Delegate to the World Association of Veteran Athletes Minutes of the Women's Competitors at Hanover FR of Germany. 30th July, p.3.
28. (1993) Brief History on the Australian & World Veteran Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.
29. (1993) The Inaugural Meeting of the Australian Association of Veteran Athletic Clubs. Personal Communications.
30. Pennington, J. (1971) Ed. The Editorial The Veteran Athlete No. 1 June p. 3
31. (1971) Ed. "NSW Sets the Pace. The Veteran Athlete No. 1. June p.4.
32. (1971) Ed. Aussies Venture Overseas. The Veteran Athlete No. 1 June p.16.
33. (1971) Ed. The Editorial The Veteran Athlete No.2 Sept. p.2.
34. (1971) Ed. The Australian Veteran of the Year. The Veteran Athlete No.2 Sept. p.7.
35. (1971) Ed. City to Surf. The Veteran Athlete No.2 Sept. p.13.
36. (1971) Ed. The Editorial. The Veteran Athlete No. 3 Nov. p.1.
37. (1971) Ed. NSW Results The Veteran Athlete No. 3 Nov. p.10.

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

38. 1972) Ed. Victorian Veterans The Veteran Athlete No.4 Feb/Mar. p.16.
39. (1972) Ed. San Diego's David Pain. The Veteran Athlete No.5 April/May p. 3.
40. (1972) Ed. The Editorial. The Veteran Athlete No. 6 July/Sep. p.2.
41. (1972) Ed. Acknowledgement The Veteran Athlete No. 6 July/Sep. p.2.
42. (1972) Ed. The Editorial. The Veteran Athlete No.7 Oct/Dec. p.1.
43. 1972) Ed. 1st Australian Veteran Titles. The Veteran Athlete No.7 Oct./Dec. p.2.
44. (1972) Ed. NSW Vet. AAC Dates. The Veteran Athlete No.7 Oct/Dec. p.14.
45. (1973) Ed. Darwin. The Veteran Athlete No.8 Jan./Feb. p.12.
46. (1973) Ed. 1st Victorian Championships. The Veteran Athlete. No.9 Apr/May. p. 12-15.
47. (1973) Ed. The Editorial The Veteran Athlete No.11 Aug./Sept. p.1.
48. (1973) Ed. Queensland Veteran Club The Veteran Athlete No 12 Dec p 8.
49. (1974) Ed. The Editorial and Results. The Veteran Athlete No.13 Feb/Mar. p.2, 5-15
50. (1974) Ed. Contents. The Veteran Athlete No. 14 April. P.1.
51. (1974) Ed. Letters to Editor. The Veteran Athlete No. 14 April p.4.
52. (1974) Ed. 'The N/A of Voe'. The Veteran Athlete No. 15 June/July p.5-6.
53. (1974) Ed. Report from **AAVAC**. The Veteran Athlete No. 16 Sept. p.6.
54. (1974) Ed. The Australian International Team. The Veteran Athlete No. 17 Nov/Dec. p. 2-3.
55. (1975) Ed. The Editorial The Veteran Athlete No. 18 Jan/Feb. p. 3-4.
56. 1975) Ed. The International Team The Veteran Athlete No. 19 Apr/May p. 3-5.
57. (1975) Ed. The Jack Ryan Story. The Veteran Athlete No. 19 Apr/May p. 5.

---

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

---

58. (1975) Ed. The Editorial The Veteran Athlete No. 20 June/July p.1.
59. (1976) Ed. Live Longer The Veteran Athlete No. 23 Jan. p. 7.
60. ( 1976) Ed. The Editorial The Veteran Athlete No. 24 May/June. P. 3.
61. (1976) Ed. NSWVAC News The Veteran Athlete No.25 July p. 15.
62. (1977) Ed. USA Scene The Veteran Athlete No.29 Mar/Apr. p.21.
63. (1977) Goteborg Tour Report. The Veteran Athlete No.30 July/Aug. p. 10.
64. (1977) Ed. Getting Old The Veteran Athlete No.31 Sept. p.10,11.
65. (1978) Ed. The Editorial The Veteran Athlete No. 36 July/Aug p 1.
66. (1978) Ed. Amateur Vs Professional. The Veteran Athlete No.37 Nov. p.14.
67. (1979) The Growth of Modern Veteran Athletics - in O'Brien. J., Ed. RACE -Incorporating Veteris. Vol.6 (1) July p.71.
68. (1980) Veteran Athletics - Born 1931 - in Farquharson. D., (Ed). The World Association of Veteran Athletes. Newsletter No.2, September. P.7-8.
69. Perkins, **W.** (1993) Brief History of Women in Australia and Veteran Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.
70. Author unknown (1980) Running is Claimed to Slow Ageing and Speed up Thinking. Gilmour, J., (Ed.) WA. Veteran Newsletter. No. 98. June.
71. Shand, R. (1974) History of **W. A.** Veterans Amateur Athletics Club. Personal Communications.
72. Sheehan, **M.** Jack Pennington. The Veteran Athlete. No. 5 April/May 1972 p.12.
73. (1975) (Rel. Ed.) Results of 1st Masters Track and Field Championships in Toronto. The Veteran Athlete. No. 21 Aug/Sept. p. 3-14.
74. Sheppard, W. (1977) Annual Report of the Australian Association of Veteran Athletic Clubs. Personal Communications from Jean O'Neill in 1993.
75. Shippen,C. (1974) (Ed.) Editorial. Veteris. Vol.1(4) April. p.5.
76. (1975) (Ed.) Editorial. Veteris. Vol.2(3) Jan. p.5.
77. (1975) (Ed.) World News and Results - Australia. Veteris. Vol.2(3) Jan.p.26.
78. (1975) (Ed.) Editorial. Veteris. Vol.3(1) Aug. p. 3.

## A History of the Veterans' Athletic Movement in Australia

79. (1975) (Ed.) Success to the Veteran Athletes of the World. Veteris. Vol.3(1) Aug. p.14.
80. (1977) (Ed.) Editorial. Veteris. Vol.4(4) Dec. p.3.
81. Slater, A. (1994) Brief History of Tasmania Veterans Track and Field Athletics. Personal Communications.
82. **WAVA** (1983) Participants by Age Groups. Official Championships Programme, San Juan, Puerto Rico p.14-45.
83. (1985) Total Participants by Country. Official Championships Programme, Rome, Italy p.10.
84. (1987) Total Participants by Country. Official Championships Programme, Melbourne, Australia. p.6.
85. (1993) Total Participants by Country. Official Championships Programme, Miyazaki. Japan. p.227.
86. (1995) Total Participants by Country. Official Championships Programme, Buffalo United States p.15.
87. Wilson, D. (1972) First Annual Report of Wirrinum Veterans Amateur Athletic Club. June. p.1. Personal Communications.