

Official Newsletter of NSW
Masters Athletics

The Waratah



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April 2018

NSW State Masters Championships 3-4 March 2018 Blacktown



M80 100m. David Morris, NSWMA and Michael Johnson, UTS Norths.

photo M Walker



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NOTICE NSWMA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Sunday 24 June from 2pm Bankstown Sports Club 8 Greenfield Parade Bankstown

The agenda will include confirmation of previous minutes, presentation of the annual reports, declaring all committee positions vacant and election of a new committee. Changes to the constitution and any matters raised by members will also be dealt with.

Nominations for positions on the committee should be sent to the secretary via email at: secretary@nswmastersathletics.org.au at least 14 days prior to the meeting. If there are no written nominations for a position then they may be taken from the floor. Any notices of motion should preferably be in writing and sent to the secretary prior to the meeting.

The Presidential Address

It's already April and it's been a busy few months for the committee. One of the major undertakings has been revising our annual awards guidelines, taking into account feedback from members and what other state bodies are doing. Updated guidelines will appear on the website very soon, if not already by the time you read this. Devising guidelines or criteria can be challenging as there are many different views as to how it could be done. We have tried to achieve a mix of objective and some subjective aspects to the process.

As many of you would know, we also give input into the AMA Annual Awards and usually have some input into ANSW awards. This year we are putting extra effort into our annual awards luncheon on 20th May, you should have received email notification of this recently. I hope as many members as possible can attend this event to celebrate the achievements of members in 2017.

The Club also has representation on other bodies such as the ANSW Competition Advisory Panel where we are currently pushing for a pre-departure meet prior to the WMA Championships later in the year.

Another body is the Joint Working Party (JWP) with ANSW and Little Athletics NSW. Many of you would have likely heard something about OneSport a movement towards a single coordinated approach to athletics. The JWP was set up to facilitate this and a number of strategies have been identified. One of these, the Participation & Growth Strategy has had significant work done on it already.

The Membership Strategy is another we are keen to see work done on and to that end we have applied to the AMA/Perth 2016 Trust Fund for monies to contribute towards development of this strategy. We await notification as to the success of our bid.

A major event on our calendar is the Masters State Titles which were held at Blacktown recently. Prior to the titles we carried out an inspection of the facility which resulted in a number of issues being fixed. Unfortunately we were not able to secure the running of the pole vault at the venue which was a disappointment, particularly for the vaulters.

Due to Commonwealth Games pressure the number of officials available was extremely limited. There was a real danger that some other events might have to be run elsewhere at other times but fortunately this was avoided. It was very pleasing to see members pitch in a help. In an ideal world, competitors ought not to be obliged to officiate but the reality is that sometimes this is necessary.

Especially in these situations we must remember that officials are a vital part of this sport and we should not only appreciate and value their efforts but make that known to them.

When there are trying circumstances it's natural for frustration to rear its head and tempers can sometimes grow short. Being courteous and cooperative with officials and volunteers is an important part of being a good sportsperson and club member.

This issue of The Waratah will be the last for editor Margaret Walker who has done an excellent job over the past few years. Editing and producing publications is no five minute job and we thank her for her enthusiasm and willingness to take on the job. As a consequence of her resignation we will be looking for a new editor for the next season.

Yours in Sport,
Mark



Congratulations, Kelly Hunter

Sydney Grand Prix SOPAC

17 March 2018



Photo above: Sarah Moss



Photo: courtesy of Jade Lally.

Photo below: M Walker



Congratulations to Kelly Hunter, second from right, who was chosen to compete with Commonwealth Games team members, Dani Stevens, far right, and Jade Lally (UK) far left, at the Sydney Grand Prix Saturday 17 March. Nearly at her record-breaking best, Kelly threw 42.42m to take sixth place.

Welcome, Jeanette Flynn

NSW Masters Athletics welcomes Jeanette Flynn.

Jeanette, who has recently moved to New South Wales from Queensland, is a world class middle distance athlete. She holds many State and Australian records from the 400m to 5000m and holds the World Record for W55 800m of 2:21.98 set in Brisbane in 2007.

Jeanette has recently added the shorter sprints, and competed in the W65 60, 100, 200 and 400m at our State Championships.

Queensland Masters will miss having Jenny around but wish her all the best and look forward to catching up with her at Nationals and World Championships.

INAUGURAL MASTERS WOMEN'S HEPTATHLON

NSW Combined Championships SOPAC 2-3 December 2017

Article, Margaret Walker

Photo, Barebel Karibolski

The world briefly stopped turning while Vicki Townsend and I competed in the inaugural Masters Women's Heptathlon held by Athletics NSW in the Combined Events Championships at SOPAC. After the javelin on Sunday, I even raced home to pick up my husband and the dog who, before going on holidays, had to wait in the multi-storey car park while I ran the 800m. Then I turned up at the holiday cabins still wearing my uniform and bib numbers.

This shows dedication.

Legend has it that the Masters Men's Decathlon was established some years ago by a Masters Decathlete who was working for ANSW, but the women have had to wait for theirs until I asked 'could we do it?' With politeness, patience and persistence good things can happen and I am grateful for the support of Mark Johnston and Janet Naylon who spoke to the new competition manager, Ben Offereins, on our behalf.

We spent two pleasant days trailing around SOPAC with the U16 and U18 women in the field events and ran both the 200m and 800m with them. In fact, only our short hurdles was individually arranged for us and even this need not have been done had there been any U14's competing.

Although Australian Masters Athletics presently runs the Masters Multi's in Bendigo, I was eating my way around Eastern Europe at the time and my argument for competing in Sydney had been that it was no extra trouble for us to simply join in events which were already there. Masters Women over 50 have the same implement specifications as U16 and U18 Women. Under 50's are the same as Open Women except for the short hurdles.

Six NSWMA women competed in the heptathlon at Perth in 2016 and we believe that interstate Masters women were interested in competing in the event in Sydney and would have come had we had more notice.



Vicki and I are in different age groups but the competition panned out like this:

Won by Vicki: high jump, long jump, shot put, 200m.

Won by Margaret: short hurdles, javelin, 800m.

Things might have been different had Vicki not also competed in the Club Championships that weekend, which brought her total events to twenty-one.

I enjoyed my second ever heptathlon. It is much more relaxing doing the events in a group rather than competing in each one individually. My high jump and shot put were my best performances in several years. I even managed a sprint at the end of the 800m due to an optical illusion on the track that convinced me Vicki was right behind me. (She says she wasn't, but I think she was.) Observing the high standard of the junior women was another plus. There are some up and coming heptathletes in NSW but, quite honestly, I didn't see anyone struggling. Clearly a lot of hard work and sacrifice had gone into the performances over the weekend. I think I beat one of the girls in shot put, and that was about it. Thanks go to ANSW who also inscribed our medals as a memento of the event.

NSW STATE MASTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Blacktown Olympic Park 3-4 March 2018

Margaret Walker, Gabi Watts, Robert Hanbury-Brown

Where was everybody? This year's State Master Championships, whilst as enjoyable as ever, was a bit down in numbers and memorable by the lack of numerous familiar faces.

A variety of reasons accounted for this. The usual things: injury, returning from injury, don't want to make the injury worse, how's-the-hamstring-it's-better-but-the-other-one's-no-good. But when I asked, where was so-and-so, I discovered that many people actually had lives outside athletics and were caught up with them: family engagements, decamping to other towns, hanging out for the cross country season, etc. Unfortunately a notable absence was Peter Crombie who is making a long recovery. He was there in body (and spirit), just not competing.

Writing an article like this comes down to events I actually saw. The full results are found at: <http://www.nswathletics.org.au/Portals/18/Competition/Summer%202017-18/Championships/NSW%20Masters/nsw%20masters%20championships%20full%20results.pdf>

If I were you I'd simply go to the ANSW site and click on 'Results'.

A notable feature this year was a swelling of the women's age groups. Ten years ago when I first started masters athletics, women ran from W35 and faded out shortly after W50. Now we have sprints from W30 to W80, all well represented and growing. Fine performances in the older age groups came from Kathleen Cook UTS Norths W80, Sandra Mercer Athletics Wollongong W65 and an excellent 15.31s for 100m from Jeanette Flynn, NSWMA, in the same age group. For the first time we had seven in the W60 100m. The race was run by Ellena Cubban from Epping in 15.68s.

The fastest female 100m runner was Natasha Hughes of Illawong – 12.62s W35. Following her performance was Monique Perry of UTS Norths – 12.90 W40 and Kylie Strong of UTS Norths – 13.11 W50. Julie Forster won the W55 in 13.73 and the W45 was won by Richelle Ingram of Mingara in 14.12.

I also watched two terrific tussles in the M80 60m and 100m sprints between David Morris from NSWMA and Michael Johnson from UTS Norths. They battled it out to a tenth of a second in both cases. David won the 100m in 18.05 and the 60m in 11.42. Michael was a hair's breadth behind in 0.12 and 0.09 respectively. Great racing. Well done, guys.

The fastest man of the meet was Ashley McMahon from UTS Norths who ran the M40 100m in 11.18s. Next came Ben Griffiths, Sydney Pacific M30 11.31s and after him Ernest Leseberg from Mingara M45 in 11.53. M35 Ruwan Cooper from Armidale ran 12.35, closely followed by Herman Izzo from Sydney Pacific M55 in 12.39. The M50 was won by David McCann from Illawarra Blue Stars in 12.67m, then M60 David Shearsby UTS 13.10, M65 Antony Morphis Sydney Pacific 13.84, M70 John Wall from Mingara in 14.10 and M75 Bruce Green NSWMA 15.55.

It's hard not to look at excellent times like these and observe the good form on the track and field and not be convinced that age has little to do with excellence at sport. And you really can't beat State Masters Championships for camaraderie. Joie de vivre and encouragement flow like wine and you get heaps of help with your technique as you progress. (We're not allowed to coach on the field, but everybody does it.) For the people like me who rolled up in a casual condition from our overseas holidays, it was just a really pleasant two days.

(Oh, and BTW, did I mention my PB in the javelin? 23.92m! Previous PB 22.50. It happened like this, having thrown 17, 19 and 18m, as I was standing on the tartan for my fourth throw, I suddenly remembered my physics.

Horizontal Displacement = $ut + \frac{1}{2}at^2$

where u = initial velocity = distance/time and 'a' is acceleration due to gravity.

Increase the 'u' I said to myself. This means throw from a straight arm, lead with the elbow and deliver through as far as you can, as fast as you can, and don't forget that whip at the end. Thanks to our new coach at Epping, Allan Sadul.)

I watched races from 60m to 1500m but my favourite to photograph is the 400m. The runners come around the 300m curve gracefully; they lean into it which looks lovely. It has a certain motion to it that the shorter sprints lack, and the middle distance races can't create the rhythm that the speed and centripetal force of the 400m can. And nothing beats it for sheer pain on faces. Congratulations to all the brave men and women who competed.

(Post script: My own 400m occurred at the Bankstown Allcomers 24 March.)

First, second and third fastest times in the women go to Kimberley Fletcher from Maitland W35 60.88s, Lenore Lambert from Sydney Pacific W45 61.22s, and Erin Smart from Nowra W35 62.99. The fastest man was Jay Stone from Armidale M35 50.29, then Andrew Kidd also from Armidale M30 55.34 and third Andrew Heil from Sydney University M40 56.87s.

Some very fast times indeed.

I didn't see a lot of throws, jumps or walks. Just flipping through the results, I noticed that the eternally inspiring Nick Moroney from Macquarie Hunter jumped 1.95m in the M45 high jump. Only a week or so ago Nick jumped 2.00m at the NSW Open Titles. Yesterday, June Lowe achieved a new pb in the W60 high jump and found herself contemplating 1.20m for the first time after years of competing. I am finding high jumping easier as I get older. We're taking Nick as our inspiration.

I also noticed some merging of disciplines. I knew that Jamie Muscat was a World Class thrower. Last year I noticed him long jumping and this year he ran a respectable 9.05 in the 60m and jumped 1.35m in the high jump.

I so admire EJ Davies, who competes in many different events so consistently. I wish I had his energy.

I saw Felikss Jekabsons NSWMA M90 several times during the weekend. I believe he is our oldest athlete. He competed in the hammer throw, weight throw, javelin, discus, and shot put all with good results. His wife, Margarita competed in the W80 weight throw, hammer throw on Sunday achieving the excellent results of 5.14m and 12.83m respectively.

Our registrar, Gabi Watts reported on the women's throws.

Sharyn Dickson dominated the W30, and that age group had a great showing by relative newcomer, Katie Pilkington, who threw a stunning 32.05m in the javelin. Melissa Holohan dominated the W35, but was pushed to minor placings in shot put, javelin and discus by newcomers Angela Jones from Mingara and Lauren South from Nepean. Maria Cimino continues to improve and excel, giving solid performances in hammer and weight throws, 34.88m and 10.80m (which is a long way to hurl 9kg).

The W50 is a strong field with lots of competitors. Caroline Layt threw the hammer 42.69m (wow!). Congratulations to Wendy Hord in the W55 for a massive PB, also in hammer throw, 38.58m. The W60 was a close contest between June Lowe, Jill Taylor and Ellena Cubban, Jill recording a new PB in the weight throw of 14.17m. Adriana Van Bockel is on the mend but still produced some good performances along with Kate Clarke. The wonderful Mary Thomas inspired us all again with her technique and world class performances and in the W-80+ Margarita Jekabsons is going strong at 83!

Congratulations to Gavin Murray who picked up four golds in the M60 throws: hammer, weight, shot put and discus with strong performances in each (which should put him in box position for next months throws pentathlon) over Robert Hanbury-Brown who bagged four silvers. Thanks to Andrew Atkinson for much officiating in the javelin and the backing-up as a competitor to win his 11th title!

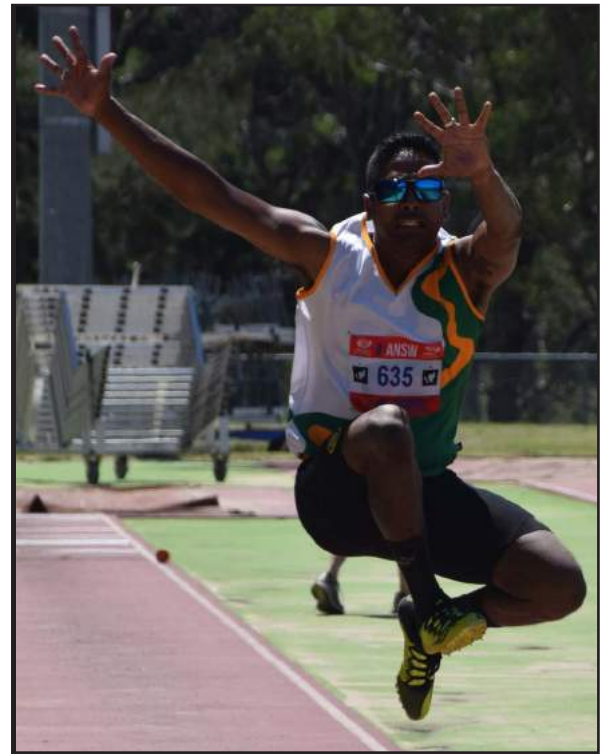
Javelin seems to be the buzz word in this article so, on that subject, let's have a look at some spectacular men's throws: M45 Brian Sped, first, 42.04m. Second was David Bignall, 40.58m. M60 was won by Andrew Atkinson-Howatt with 39.13m. Robert Hanbury-Brown took out second with a throw of 37.46m. In the M50 Alan Provenzano threw 40.33m, second was Stephen Liggins with 38.29m. The M55 was a tight contest with all three place getters throwing over 35 m, Tim McGrath, Peter Murrar and Kevin Fisher with 37.39m, 35.89m and 35.58m respectively. Ryan Dowling threw 38.70 in the M35.

Thanks again to our wonderful officials. Always helpful, always good natured. Where would be without you? Thank you also to the several school children who helped them.



Brave 400m runners. The excellent times reflect their pain.
*Clockwise from top left: Erin Smart, 62.99s. Fiona Stuart, 66.37s.
 David Shearsby, 67.57s. John Morrison, 74.74s.*

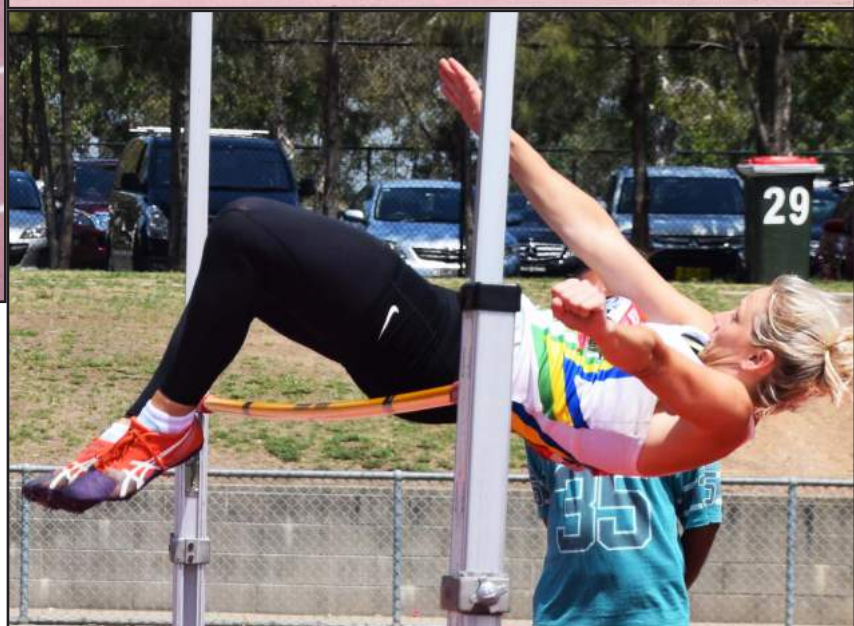
photo M Walker



Andrew Atkinson and Robert Hanbury-Brown picked up silver and bronze in the men's 60 discus and wasted no time in practising their Mardi Gras routine for the Ryde float!

photo courtesy of Robert H-B





Clockwise from top: M40 100m, M50 javelin Alan Provanzo, W35 high jump Leah Kennedy, W60 Ellena Cubban.

Previous page from top: M35 long jump Ruwen Cooper, W80 weight throw Margarita Jekabson, W60 800m Patricia Stallard

photos M Walker

NSW COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

26-28 January 2018 Wollongong

Thanks to Geoff Crumpton and Valmai Loomes

Photos Mingara, Michael Horvath, Illawarra Blue Stars, Valmai Loomes

Twenty clubs competed in this year's Country Championships. In alphabetical order they were: Armidale, Blue Mountains, Cobar, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo Athletics, Gosford, IBS, Kembla Joggers, Koorlingal - Wagga Athletics, Kotara South Amateur Athletics, Macquarie Hunter Athletics, Mid North Coast Athletics Club, Mingara, NSWMA, Nowra, Orange Runners Club, Toukley, Wallsend, Wollongong Athletics, Woolgoolga.

If places were given for distance travelled it would be a narrow margin between Cobar, first, Woolgoolga, second and Coffs Harbour, third: 570, 549 and 523 km respectively.

Results are found at: <http://www.nswathletics.org.au/Results/2018-nsw-country-championships-5>

For an example of the popularity of Masters athletics in the country you have only to look the numbers competing in all ages of shot put, 27 men, 25 women 25. For the 100m, the most popular sprint, the numbers were 30 and 26.

I asked a few clubs to send photos and information. Thank you to Geoff Crumpton and Valmai Loomes who replied. Editor



The Hooper Cup went to the club with the most points scored by registered athletics. Congratulations to Mingara, who took the Cup home for the fourth year in a row. Second was Illawarra Blue Stars.



Newcomers to Masters, Mark Mathews and his partner, Jodie Redmond share their wins with talented daughter, Emma Mathews. At country for the first time and all the family competing together!



Back on track, girl! Dianne O'toole shares her success with her grandson at country titles, giving her a chance to compete alongside her grandchildren at the same athletic meet.

Dianne has made a comeback to the track after some time out and will be a force in her age bracket over the sprints.

Leith Baidon (photo right) was the surprise of country winning, most events from 100m right through to the 5km, with excellent times in all events.

Gianna continued her winning way of never-been-beaten-at-country, winning the 100m, 200, 400, 800, whilst Colin Clarson (also right) was well-placed in 200m, 400m, 800m in an excellent all round performance .

June Lowe was excellent again showing why she is one the best all round athletes. The Masters of Blue Stars helped the club gain a great 2nd placing in the overall point score.

Mary Thomas missed her first country titles to take part in Oceania.

The club also had some newcomers to the masters group, Mark Mathews shining as was his partner, Jodie Redmond

Valmai Loomes



M70+ 100m. First, John Wall, second, Neville McIntyre, third, Ken Stubbs.



Newcomer Leith Baidon shares time out with sprinter Gianna Mogentale and middle distance man Colin Clarson.

NSW LIFE MEMBERS

Jill Taylor is collecting information on our Life Members.
This issue we begin with our President, Mark Johnston.

MARK JOHNSTON – AWARDED 2010

Mark Johnston joined the NSW Masters committee in 1994, coming on board as assistant editor of The Waratah newsletter. In this role he introduced Desktop Publishing to present a more attractive format.

In 1995 he moved to the position of registrar, where he introduced the use of a database MS Access to store membership records. That year, in collaboration with Keith James, the first Weight Pentathlon championships were organised in NSW. Later in 1998, he put the club on the internet with its first website. In that same year he designed the structure of Club Merit Awards, based on similar schemes in the USA.

For the 2001 Sydney Nationals, results were available live on the website, a first for a national championship of this type. He became President in 2001, and presided over the change of name from Veterans to NSW Masters Athletics. Later he initiated the position of NSW Team Manager for the NSW team attending the national championships. He also inaugurated the first electronic newsletter for club members.

In 2008 he was convenor of the AMA National Championships, which offered athletes on-line entry for the first time. Later that year he was awarded an AMA Merit Award for services to Masters Athletics in NSW. Also in that year, he restarted an annual awards function which had lapsed for a number of years. Life membership of the NSWMA club was conferred on him in 2010.

As a competitor Mark has held NSW masters records in the discus, shot put, weight throw, and weight pentathlon events. At National Championships he has won 25 titles in discus, shot put, weight throw, hammer throw and weight pentathlon.



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1994 Joined committee of NSW Veterans Athletics
1994 Won first state veterans title and set first state record
1995 Appointed Registrar, organised first NSW weight pentathlon
1996 Won first national veterans title
2001 Became president of NSW Veterans Athletics
2002 Presided over club change of name to NSW Masters Athletics
2008 Awarded AMA Merit Award
2010 Made Life Member NSWMA



2018 Perth, Apr 26 – 29
 2019 Melbourne
 2020 Brisbane
 2021 Canberra
 2022 Hobart
 2023 Sydney
 2024 Adelaide
 2025 Darwin

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS SCHEDULE

2018 NSWMA Throws Pentathlon Championships

Results: <https://assets.sportstg.com/assets/console/document/documents/401A19B0-5056-BD57-97F223882C54A89F.pdf>

M35	Anatoly Kirievsky	2035		W30	Sharyn Dickson	2605
M50	Stephen Liggins	2985		W35	Melisa Holahan	3094
M60	Gavin Murray	3505		W40	Trudie Barton	2031
	Robert Han-bury-Brown	3168		W45	Maria Cimino	3012
M65	Tim Needham	2580			Daina Sander	2004
	Dave Ross	2478		W50	Alison White	2160
	Douglas Schorr- S Afric	900		W55	Wendy Hord	2871
M70	Raminder Singh	2147			Deborah Engeler	2470
	Ken Stubbs	2323			Diana Dickson	2286
M75	Noel Donohoe	2025			Anne Weekes	1863
	Brian Rix	1920		W60	Jill Taylor	3480
					Ellena Cubban	3012
					Kerrie Jones	2298
				W65	Denise Palmer	3113
				W70	Mary Thomas	3552

IT'S OFFICIAL

Tracey Grozdanis, Janine Mladin and Janet Naylor.

Photo supplied by Janine Mladin



Tracey Grozdanis and Janine Mladin

On Tuesday 12 February 2013, a group of NSW masters members gathered at the Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club apprehensive and with IAAF rulebooks in hand (see *The Waratah*, June 2013) to learn about officiating and take the first step in becoming qualified by sitting an open book exam. After the marking was complete, 17 NSWMA members were qualified as Athletics Australia C Grade officials.

Four years on, our qualifications have been transferred to the OneSport system and more than half the group have continued to officiate at a level that fits in with their competition and other commitments.

The exciting thing for me as a facilitator of that workshop back in 2013, is that one member of this group took her officiating to the next level and has been appointed on the track team for the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in April 2018. Congratulations, Tracey!

Tracey's had this to say about her experience as an official:

"I am not sure if I will be able to convey all the reasons why I love being an official, because it is something you need to experience to really understand. It never crossed my mind to be an official, nor did I even know how to become one, until the day Janet spoke to me about it. I had thought about it as a great thing to do much later in life, but when Janet spoke about the opportunity to represent at the Commonwealth Games, I was there!

I, like most athletes, have always wanted to represent my country at an international event and I felt this was my chance. My first officiating experience was as a track umpire at the 2013 NSW State Masters Championship and I officiated and competed during the event. I absolutely loved it. I learned so much from other officials and I also learned a lot about our sport. Just when you think you know all the rules, it's amazing, when you stand back and watch the event for yourself, that you realise there is so much more to learn. This has made me a better athlete and a better mentor to the athletes in my team.

Officiating allows me to be part of a great group of people who make me laugh, encourage me and will give up their days just to dedicate to athletes. It gives me a great sense of purpose and I feel proud that each time I officiate I am helping an athlete to achieve their dreams. Everyone has their own reasons for becoming an official and mine is not only to have an opportunity to represent my country but simply because I love athletics and I think it's the best sport and I want to be part of its future."

Footnote – NSWMA representative in Darwin, Janine Mladin, has also been appointed to the Commonwealth Games and will be working in post event control.

Janine has also shared her journey to becoming an official:

“After having my own personal issue in life, of being diagnosed with having brain tumour in 2012, I certainly learned how important it is to appreciate every day! So, for the 2013/14 season, I entered the Masters Athletics in the 35-39 age group. Previous to that year, my last athletics membership was 1993/94. Being there at the athletic track, I really loved competing again! But I also felt like I'd love to help the officials, instead of just sitting in the grandstand all day, waiting for my next event. So early in 2014, at SOPAC for Nationals, it was my first time as a volunteer. I certainly loved being there, helping out wherever I could. The Officials that I was placed with were absolutely amazing teachers. They certainly had many, many years of experience to pass-on!

Then, throughout that year, I had an amazing mentor, the late Janet Munro, who helped educate me, and I was able to become an Athletics NSW Official. 2014, 2015 and 2016 are years where I have had the brain tumour return, and so I've now had 4 operations. After recovering from each op, I would get back into being an official as soon as I could.

I really feel that the more events I can attend, the more I learn each time. So I was certainly excited, when notified, that I would be going to the 2018 Commonwealth Games as an official!

Life certainly throws all of us challenges. So even though I still have 'down-days' like everyone, I certainly stay positive, and appreciate every day!”

Best wishes to Tracey and Janine for an awesome experience. We look forward to you sharing your experiences.

I'm also sure we will all recognise the names of many NSW officials selected – full list at this link - <http://athletics.com.au/Portals/56/2018%20Commonwealth%20Games%20Officials%20Appointments%20docx.pdf>

Interested in becoming an official?

Contact Ashleigh (ashleighcrook@nswathletics.org.au) at Athletics NSW and mention you are from NSW Masters or check out the website for more info www.nswathletics.org.au/official



FOR YOUR DIARY

NSW MASTERS ATHLETICS ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCH

**Sunday 20 May from 12:30pm Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club
117 Ryedale Rd, West Ryde**

**This will be a great event with extra special prizes.
Nominees for the awards will be published soon.**

Bookings:

<https://www.trybooking.com/VCIN>

Don't miss out!

A LEGEND IN THE TRUE MEANING

Valmai Loomes

Photos, Lyn Tague



The word Legend is used too loosely nowadays when we are referring to sportspeople, but this time it is truly warranted. Born to compete, Mary Thomas has now proven she is a legend in her sport by being named 2018 WORLD'S BEST THROWER by the WORLD MASTER'S ASSOCIATION.

Mary Thomas commenced her athletic career, on the road to becoming a legend, when she took on the might of former and World Record holder, the great Ilsa Conrads. Known for her strength in the pool, Conrads was considered the favourite for the Combined High Schools Javelin title, but little did she realise she was up against a person just as strong, with better technique in the javelin and a person of sheer determination and a desire to win this event. On this day a legend of our sport was born, and Mary Thomas has not looked back.

Better known for javelin as her top event, Thomas quickly established herself as one of the best, but was denied Olympic Games selection when selectors believed she was too young. The selectors in those days may have done Mary a favour, as she went on to take out more NSW and Australian titles than most athletes. In her later years, Mary has become the top masters athlete in field events.

Although she was a highly talented javelin thrower, as a junior and senior athlete she also excelled in the other throwing events such as shot, discus and hammer. In Masters competition she has also added the heavy weight and throws pentathlon to her repertoire and has out-thrown most Masters athletes regardless of her and their ages.

Her success with the javelin was the driving force behind former Commonwealth Games champion and Olympic Games silver medallist, Lousie McPaul-Currey (who was also a member of Illawarra Blue Stars), once describing Mary as her hero and truly a person to follow.

Mary has become a technical official and enjoys being out on the field assisting others but, when it comes to coaching her chosen events, she is always willing to give a helping hand to others but prefers to be competing herself.

Mary Thomas is acknowledged as "one of the very best" and this award as "the Best Masters Thrower in the World" is not only justified but an acknowledgement of the longevity of her career. From a primary school athlete with talent to a Combined High Schools athlete who beat a "legend" to a junior/senior athlete who took more State javelin titles than any other athlete, and now a masters athlete acknowledged as the BEST IN THE WORLD.

What a career! What an athlete!

Mary Thomas deserves to be classified as a legend in our sport.





State Masters Champs 2018



Clockwise from top left:

M5000, M55 Kevin Fisher, W80 100m
Kathleen Cook, M70 John Gordon.

A close finish between Virginia
Eastman and Amanda Combe
W50 800

M Walker