

CLUB SPOTLIGHT ON: METROPOLITAN

MOUNTIES ATHLETICS CLUB

by Darren Hughes

Mounties is a friendly, supportive club that values, promotes and administers both social and NSW competitions. We cater for junior, open and masters athletes. During the Athletics season, members can enjoy a more relaxed social competition every Wednesday night at Rosford St Reserve. However, members can also enter NSW events on the weekend, paid by the club, including; the Treloar Shield, State Relays, Allcomer events, State and National titles as well as international titles.

The heart and soul of our club is our committee. Our club is blessed to have the services of such a hardworking, dedicated group of people. No club can survive without the extraordinary commitment of these people, giving their time and energy to make it possible for us to enjoy participating in our much loved sport, whether on a social level or competitively. I would like to acknowledge our president, Giuseppe Sacca, Vice President and Publicity officer, Fiona Byrnes, Secretary, Ralph Burkhardt and his lovely wife and our Registrar, Darlene Burkhardt, Treasurer, Paul Howcroft, Club Captain, Brad Linton, Athlete Liaison, Sameer Kunwar and General Officers, Christopher Bartimote and Robert Cassilles.

I'd also like to acknowledge our life members who have provided our great club with over 20 years of service; Ralph and Darlene Burkhardt, Robert Cassilles, Paul Howcroft and Giuseppe Sacca. We have talented and knowledgeable coaches, who also support our athletes and do a tremendous job in Billy Spliadis and Robyn Suttor.

Mounties Athletics Club was formed after a public meeting on the 30th October, 1999. The club's initial participation involved Wednesday night social competitions in the summer and cross country in the winter months. The first ground used by the club was Lehman's Oval, in Green Valley and in 2003, we moved to Bosnjak Oval at Edensor Park. In 2013, the club moved its mid-week competitions to Rosford St Reserve, Smithfield, which is grass track with excellent facilities.

Mounties Club have been represented for nominations in various NSW award categories at the NSW Awards night:

2014: Nomination for Administrator of the Year, Runner up- Darlene Burkhardt

2015: Nomination for Nick Winter memorial award for an aspiring Triple Jumper, Winner - Frederick Adutwum. Nomination for sprint/hurdles in the Masters category, Winner - Darren Hughes

2016: Nomination for Metropolitan Club of the Year: Runner up- Mounties

Our 'golden age' in State Relays was between 2013 and 2016, where we won no less than 21 gold medals. This is a challenge for our club to get back to that level high standards, one I personally look forward to embracing along with all of our athletes, coaches and administration. Based on the number of quality young juniors coming through the club, I am sure it will not be long before we once again secure a bag of medals at State relays.

Our club has many talented athletes, at junior level, open level and within the Masters ranks. Our most talented junior is Fredrick Adutwum, who has won a gold medal at the Junior National Championships in the Triple Jump. Our highest profile male open athlete is Vinjay Karamil, who recently won the open 100m at a Treloar Shield and continues to improve under the watchful eye of Billy Spliadis.

Our most talented athlete is Christine Wearne. Apart from winning the Bronze Medal in the 100m, Australian Championships 2016, her international record is outstanding. Bronze 100m Melbourne World Challenge 2015, Silver 100m & 4 x 100m Australian Team Relay: Oceania Area Championships, Silver 100m Potts Track Classic NZ 2016, 100m Team Ledger Bayleys Capital Classic. Gold in the 100m Hunter Classic, Newcastle 2018. She has competed and won many 'gift' races nationally as well, including the Lithgow Flash and Ballarat Gifts. Christine comes from a very talented family who all run for our club. Bradley and Shaun are her siblings,

competing in the Treloar Shield and at State and National Masters championships, whilst Christine's mum, Sylvette, is a talented athlete in her own right, having won numerous medals at State and national championships in hurdle events.

Our highest profile masters athlete is Robyn Suttor. Robyn won the Mounties Sports person of the year in 2018, following her outstanding achievements on the track. Apart from the multitude of national titles, her international record since 2015 has been nothing short of outstanding; Bronze medal World Masters Championships Lyon 2015, Silver 4 x 200m Relay, Bronze 60m Hurdles World Masters Indoor Daegu Japan 2017, and Silver 60m Hurdles World Masters Indoor Torun 2019. We are very proud to call her our own.

I've been extremely fortunate to have been involved in athletics for over 12 years at Masters comps, including 7 years at Mounties. I've competed at State and National level, humbly appreciating the support and guidance along the way. My personal highlights, include competing in four world championships including, Turino in Italy, Lyon in France and Malaga in Spain. Winning Champions of Champions male sprint event at the Australian Championships at Bankstown in 2015 and being awarded the ANSW masters Sprinter of the year in the same year have been my most treasured achievements on the track.

I congratulate all our mentioned masters athletes who have represented our club this year. I would also like to acknowledge Andy Lee, Christopher Martin and Jane Davie who have also represented our club at ANSW events with distinction, always striving to do their personal best. I apologise for those I have not mentioned. There are so many faces that define this club. They are all valued and respected.

Every time we step foot out on the track, we wear our uniform (which the club pays for), with pride and passion. I would like to conclude with thanking two people who support, encourage and promote us all: Darlene Burkhardt can be seen cheering in the stands, whilst her husband Ralph walks around the track taking photos that capture those special moments. They are so respectful, gracious and humble. You will never meet two finer people in our world. They are the life blood of our club and we would not be where we are today without them.

Go Mounties!!

Photos supplied by Darren Hughes

