

CLUB NEWS and RESULTS

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http://www.facebook.com/pages/Runners-World/235649459888840

## \* WINTER SEASON OPENER – SUNDAY 1 MAY, BALLARAT \* AV 10km & Country c'ships entries open on AV portal now

As you'll be aware, this year we are breaking with tradition somewhat with our opening Winter race meeting – normally held at our home base at Middle Park – and are holding it instead at **Victoria Park** in **Ballarat**. We will thus work in partnership with the Ballarat Race Walking Club to conduct the AV Open & Country 10km championships, the AV Country Underage championships, VRWC Club Underage championships and VRWC Open races.

The event schedule is as follows:

10.00am	<ul> <li>10km AV Championship</li> <li>(C.H. 'Bert' Gardiner Medal)</li> <li>10km AV Country Championship</li> <li>10km AV Championship</li> <li>10km AV Country Championship</li> <li>10km non-c'ship</li> </ul>	Open, 40+, 50+ Men Open Men Open, 40+, 50+ Women Open Women Open Men/Women
10.30am	5km AV Country Championship 5km VRWC Championship 5km AV Country Championship 5km VRWC Championship 5km non-c'ship	U20 Men/Women U20 Men/Women U18 Men/Women U18 Men/Women Open
11.00am	3km AV Country Championship 3km VRWC Championship 3km AV Country Championship 3km VRWC Championship 3km non-c'ship	<b>U16 Men/Women</b> U16 Men/Women <b>U14 Men/Women</b> U14 Men/Women Open
11.15am	1km VRWC Championship 1km VRWC Championship 1km non-c'ship	U10 Boys/Girls U12 Boys/Girls Open
11.30	Presentations	

\*\* NOTE: Entry for all AV Championships must be done through the AV portal at https://www.revolutionise.com.au/athleticsvic/events/138813/ Registration for this event closes at *Thurs 28 Apr 2022 at 11:59pm*.

After so much lockdown, travel restriction and uncertainty, the prospect of getting out into the country for our season opener is an exciting one. So, if you can, why not make a weekend of it – venture up to Ballarat, overnight there, attend the races and visit some of the many attractions this famous goldmining city has to offer? There's no question that local businesses will welcome your custom (not to mention your hard-earned) gleefully after the battering they've endured in the past two years.

Ballarat was an annual 'away ground' for the VAWC back in the 60s and early 70s, with the annual Lake Wendouree 3-lap handicap race a popular event for the hardy among us – particularly in midwinter weather. Other races were held in country centres, such as the yearly Traralgon 10 Miles and various one-off meets in Geelong, Bendigo and elsewhere.

Sadly, increasing time constraints on members would spell the end of such excursions. However, with the BRWC enthusiastic about attracting a major walking event back to Ballarat – and with two current internationals (Alanna Peart and Fraser Saunder) and a Masters world record holder (Kelly Ruddick) among their ranks – we at the VRWC are also keen to make the meeting a big success. Put it in your diaries now!





• Kyle's sister EMILY SWAN, who walked several seasons as a junior and is currently based in the ACT, had a notable achievement of her own last Sunday in finishing her first-ever marathon. Emily was the 22<sup>nd</sup> female to finish the Canberra Times Marathon (5<sup>th</sup> in the 18-29yo age group) in a time of 3h 36m 52s. Kyle, needless to say, was there to support her throughout the race.

"We are so happy for her," says dad Terry. "She has trained for the last 2 years for this, was entered to compete in 2020, but COVID destroyed those plans." We're happy for you too, Emily. Congratulations on your fine result.



- While on the subject of big annual events, **TERRY** and **KARYN O'NEILL** carried the race walking message out to the roads of the Melbourne CBD by participating in the annual **'Run4TheKids'** charity fundraiser. "Karyn was having a run while I walked," says Terry. "Karyn kept pace with me till about 8km mark before she started feeling lack of distance work. I was vey happy with my walk, considering the Bolte Bridge and tunnel. Overall I walked 14.8km in 1hr 37min, I covered 10km in 1hr 05min. Karyn continued to run-walk after 8km and completed the distance in 1hr 47. Overall we were both happy to get a bit of distance done."
- News of **PETER VYSMA's** and **ROSS REID's** health progress has been encouraging. **Peter** is continuing his physical therapy with steady gains and is conversing happily just as if nothing's happened. He is back on solid food and is regaining his appetite, which can only aid his recovery further. With assistance, Peter is now using Siri to make phone calls. He did this to call me last week, noting that the planned Judging seminar date might have a clash with the yet-to-be announced Federal election (thankfully this didn't eventuate) so it hasn't taken him long to re-engage in Judging coordination business! Peter also had a dig at me regarding an earlier report I'd written, in which I stated that he was now lifting weights of up to 2km!! (Cut me some slack, Pete, it's been at least five years since I taught maths!)

**Ross** contacted me this week to say that, after so much concern about complications following his heart surgery, he's now been given the go-ahead to resume race walk training! It seems Ross has been on the pointy end of some mixed messaging, of the 'glass half empty/half full' kind. We hope that there is now consensus among his medicos, and that he can now return to his sport and life with confidence.







Sharon, Justin, David, Andrew and Remy - just holding each other up!

Despite summer race walking competition (apart from the yet-to-be-held national Little Athletics titles) having finished around the country, we didn't have to look far for worthy candidates for WOTW. Our focus went to Coburg athletics track, where the annual Australian Centurions qualifying event was held over April 9-10.

The event was highly successful, harvesting two new Centurions from overseas, as well as and three returning members – five WOTWs in all. Congratulations to:

- **Remy Van Den Brand** (NED) who became C83 with his time of 21:04:52;
- Andrew Titley (GBR-Isle Of Man), C84 in 22:48:59.

Remy and Andrew are joined by multiple Centurions **Justin Scholz** (C61), who finished his 19<sup>th</sup> 100 miler, wife **Sharon Scholz** (C63, 22:53:06), her 9<sup>th</sup>, and **David Billett** (C50, 22:33:38), his 5<sup>th</sup>.

I did a brief stint as a support person trackside on Saturday night, and it was inspirational to watch all five of these tough, focused athletes forging into the night, lap upon

lap, on top of their race planning and intent on attaining their goals. Congratulations to all five Centurions – and welcome, Remy and Andrew, to the Australian Honour board!

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# AROUND THE COUNTRY

## 'BIRDMAN' DANE RETIRES

After a stellar career which saw him represent Australia no fewer than 14 times, **Dane Bird-Smith** has called it a day. Among his many achievements, he can look back on an Olympic bronze medal, plus Commonwealth and World University golds.

With studies, work and recent fatherhood (not to mention the impact of COVID lockdowns) making it harder to focus on top-level racing, Dane has decided it's time to commit to other directions. He'll be remembered as an exemplary ambassador for his country and the sport, not just as an athlete, but as a humble and engaging young man, appreciative of the blessings and talent bestowed on him and committed to making the most of them. Who could forget his joyous roadside interview in Rio 2016, moments after crossing for 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 20km?: "They'll be so proud of me back home!"

We were, Dane ... and are. We at the VRWC thank you for what you gave our sport, and we wish you all the best for the future.



(See Athletics Australia's report on Dane's announcement below.)

## **OLYMPIC BRONZE MEDALLIST DANE BIRD-SMITH ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT**

by Sascha Ryner - reprinted from the Athletics Australia website

Renowned race walker Dane Bird-Smith has clocked over 100,000km in training, with every step taken just as important as the next in reaching his goals. Today, he takes a step in a new direction, with the Olympic bronze medallist officially announcing his retirement from international competition.

Bird-Smith ends a 15-year representative career having won Olympic bronze, as well as Commonwealth Games gold, World Universiade gold and 11 Australian national championships. The 29-year-old will also retire as a former three-time Australian record holder, as well as the current Commonwealth Games record holder in the 20km race walk.

"The Olympic dream I had as a kid took me on an amazing worldwide journey. I wanted to be the best and my competitive nature served me so well, session after session, year after year. I worked harder and harder with no fear of failure and with dreams of medals," Bird-Smith said.

"As 2022 rolled in with a multitude of challenges, I decided I would take a break from competition but continue to train for enjoyment until I had the chance to return. Unfortunately, that competitive spirit has been a tough adversary as I found it incredibly hard to not work until exhaustion or to simply forgo a session with a number of other things going on in my life."

Bird-Smith last competed on the world stage in 2019 at the World Athletics Championships, and although he was selected to compete at his second Olympic Games, he withdrew from the Tokyo team, due to family reasons.

"I was fully committed to the Tokyo Games, even with the entire athletics calendar falling to Covid, 2021 was the goal. However, life for my family took an amazing turn with the birth of our beautiful daughter Astrid and all the fantastic new challenges of being a Dad," he said.

"I had hoped I could ride out a period of time just training at home but instead I've made the return to work out of necessity and I look forward to my new career path."

Bird-Smith credits his involvement for athletics in shaping his values and his work ethic.

"When I was a kid, I never saw the opportunity to start my Olympic dream, I was just trying my best at every race and training session, doing something I loved. It was all the little steps that made my journey. Every big moment or win was the culmination of a series of little steps that were a ton of hard work that nobody else saw," he said.

"Even after narrowly missing a spot on the London 2012 team I set a goal to be the fastest Australian at an Olympics ever. For nearly four years, I wrote 1.19.35, a time that was three minutes faster than my personal best, just about everywhere and anywhere. Each and every day, I pushed myself to exhaustion pursuing that dream and the rest is history."

While he admits he didn't get the fairytale send-off he had hoped for, Bird-Smith is proud of all the decisions he has made along the way and credits his team for buoying him up through the journey.

"It's weird looking back at what I've achieved. I'm so humbled and so proud of these highlights that history will remember, but it's only part of the story that I will cherish as I move to the next challenge in my life," he said.

"I want to thank my fantastic team; firstly my Dad (David Smith) who is my coach, a dual Olympian himself. He was there for just about every session. He was the wisdom and encouragement that made me never doubt that I was capable of becoming a champion.

"Also, my physio, James Thompson, the team at the QAS, my wife, my family and my mates. To my athletics family, both in Australia and worldwide. We are nuts to have chosen such a tough sport that forces us to bare our truest strengths and self to the world, but I have relished every moment of fear, excitement, pain and glory. It is a dream come true to be an Olympian. I am so honoured to have shared a uniform, a start line and a dream with you all."

Athletics Australia General Manager, High Performance Andrew Faichney congratulated Bird-Smith on his career. "On behalf of Athletics Australia, I'd like to congratulate Dane on is achievements and thank him for his contribution to race walking and the sport as a whole," Faichney said.

"Dane is an incredible athlete, with a great appetite to be the best he can possibly be on the world stage. His grit and determination saw him achieve Olympic bronze and Commonwealth Games gold and saw him etch his name into the Australian history books countless times. We wish Dane all the very best for this next chapter."

Bird-Smith will now focus his attention on finishing his education degree as well as his work as a Sport Coordinator and coach at various primary schools.

### Dane Bird-Smith – A Career Snapshot:

- Olympic bronze medallist (Rio 2016, 20km race walk)
- Commonwealth Games gold medallist and record holder (Gold Coast 2018)
- World Universiade Champion (Gwangju 2015)
- 11 x Australian 20km race walk champion
- 3 x former Australian record holder

(EDITOR's NOTE: Nicola Maggio has provided a detailed news post on Dane's retirement on the Marcia dal Mondo site – see the link below. It contains essential stats of Dane's international career, times progression, action photos, plus a letter from Dane himself. And if you haven't seen – or have forgotten – his bronze-winning finish in Rio, there's a link to that too! Well worth the re-visit.)

http://www.marciadalmondo.com/eng/dettagli\_news.aspx?id=4339&fbclid=IwAR2t0VJ-cZIDXdaJ2c\_go7FV9\_ROqt6dwt93IeoQmz7T3K2QXpuEo6HKq8

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As part of the AA 35km Road Championship on Sunday 15 May, notice is given that a **Teams Challenge** will take place over the 35km distance. Details of this event are as follows:

## Race Walking Australia 35km Team Challenge

- Athletes must enter and meet the entry rules (including entry standard) for the Australian and Oceania 35km Race Walking Championships before entering the RWA 35km Team Challenge. You cannot enter the team challenge unless you have entered individually before the close off date.
- Teams of 3 or more athletes, up to five, points are awarded for the best 3 performances and the team with highest (or lowest) wins, same as WWTC. All Team members will be awarded RWA medals/trophy, regardless of finish status.
- Teams can be mixed.
- Teams can be geographically based, coach-based, state-based, beer flavor-based, dog breed, colour...... anything.
- Entries must be made on the AA portal, teams are self-organising after event entry.
- Race Walking Australia will collate and advertise teams via its website, each team should nominate a manager and communication will be between RWA and the team. Teams must advise secretary@rwa.org.au before 8<sup>th</sup> May
- Team placing will have no bearing on the individual placing and there is NO correlation between them.
- Individual entries do not have to join a team.
- Questions to secretary@rwa.org.au

See https://www.athletics.com.au/events/139081/ for further details.

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## **EDINBURGH 1970 – BILL SUTHERLAND REMEMBERS**

With the Commonwealth Games returning to the British Isles this year, it's timely that **Chris Maddocks** has provided this item from the 'Race Walking Group' Facebook page. It gives an interesting account of the Edinburgh Games 20 miles race from the recollection of its bronze medallist, **Bill Sutherland** (SCO).

Remembering the men's 20 mile race walk at the Commonwealth Games 1970 in Edinburgh. Photos show the early stages, and race winner, Australian **Noel Freeman** in **2.33.33** sportingly applauding bronze medallist, Scotland's **Bill Sutherland** 

across the line - whose birthday it is today (6 April). Two years ago, Bill and I exchanged emails and in his reply he told me about that special race:

"It seems unbelievable that it will be so long ago. It was a really fast race throughout with times for me 37.21 - 5 miles; 37.29 - 10 miles (74.50) then 39.31 - 15 miles 1.54.21 and then 43.03 for the final 5 miles into strong head on gusting North Sea winds and rain with much of the roadway through Portobello on cobble stones. Time for 20 kms was 93.49 really fast for a distance race, eh?

"I still can't believe how things turned out as England had 3 very good walkers lead by Ron Wallwork - Champion in CG in 1966 in Kingston, Jamaica. Also there was Noel Freeman, Olympic 20Kms Walk Silver Medallist in Rome in 1960 and Bob Gardiner, 5th in the 50Kms Walk in the Olympics who had set a World Record for 20 Miles in the lead up of 2.29, and Bachan Singh (India) who had done 90.40 for 20 Kms in 1969. Don't forget Len Duquemin (Guernsey) who finished 6th at age 42 and clocked the fastest last 5 miles on route.

"It was an unforgettable Major Championship Race Walk in so many ways with a multi-nation field of 21. In the Trial some 6 weeks earlier I was 9th in 2.47 and had to take 10 minutes off the time to gain my coveted Bronze Medal. I firmly believe if there is a way. If you believe in yourself on the day, that matters most."



Start of the Edinburgh 20 miles. (You'd hope for the sake of No.9's lower back that it's just a camera distortion!)



Bill Sutherland (SCO) takes bronze, while winner Noel Freeman (AUS) commends him.

(Photos: Race Walking Group)

### FRANCE: Regional championships, Sunday 10 April - Conflans, Sainte Honorine (Paris)

Emmanuel Tardi reports from the northern suburbs of Paris:

I was one of the judges this Sunday in Conflans, Sainte Honorine, in the north suburbs of Paris. It was the regional championship of 20k. Only a small pack of starters gathered (less than 20).

There was 1 kilometer on the track, then 19 loops (1k for each.) Start time was at 9.15am, temperature was cold (around  $5^{\circ}$ C).

**Raouf Drissi** (who was in the national team of Tunisia ) was the leader from the beginning to the end. **Justin Bournier** was 2nd but was disqualified after 10k.

In the women's 20k, it was an easy victory for **Dorothée Delaunay** despite 2 minutes in the Penalty area.

	20km Marche			10km	20km
1	Raouf Drissi	SEM/95	Athlé 91	47'07"	1h37'48''
2	Benoit Berchebru	M0M/84	Ca Montreuil	51'37"	1h51'22''
3	Jocelyn Beurier	M0M/85	Athlé 78	55'41''	1h56'44''
4	Dorothée Delaunay	SEF/98	SCUF	55'15''	1h57'06''
5	Celia Franchin	M0F/87	Vernouillet Athlé	58'43''	1h59'41"
6	Florent Brou	SEM/93	Ac Paris-Joinville	58'39''	1h59'48''
7	Sylvie Sevellec	M4F/64	Ac Cesson	59'53''	2h00'30''
8	David Stefanelly	M2M/76	As Mantes	1h00'14''	2h04'59''
9	Nathalie Steinville	M4F/64	Asfi Villejuif	1h07'01''	2h13'01"
10	Emmanuelle Jaeger	M4F/67	Ao Charenton	1h07'01''	2h13'31''
11	Loic Lemogne	M6M/55	CC Taverny	1h07'30''	2h15'38''
12	Renaud Vandenberghe	M3M/70	Ac Pays de Meaux	1h10'25''	2h23'23''
13	Sophie Dore	M2F/77	Uai Nogent	1h08'54''	2h24'33''
14	Marie-Christine Galtier	M2F/73	Ac Pays de Meaux	1h10'32''	2h24'43''
15	Claudie Bizard	M5F/59	Thiais Ac	1h13'21''	2h28'48''
-	Justin Bournier	SEM/99	Dole Ac		DQ
-	Eric Toutain	M4M/63	Us Ivry		DNF
	10km Marche				

1	Louis Dumoulin	JUM/03	Beauvais Oise	54'23''
2	Lilian Rottier	JUM/03	La Postillonne Longjumeau	55'08''
3	David Blondin	M3M/69	Ea Cergy	56'12"



Drissi, the easy winner



Underway at Conflans ... not much warmth in that morning sun.



Dumoulin and Delaunay



Berchebru, 2<sup>nd</sup>

(Photos: Emmanuel Tardi)

## MARCIADALMONDO & O MARCHADOR ROUNDUP

The Italian walking website **Marcia Dal Mondo** has a list of new reports in its news section, covering local and international races and other items of interest.

- 09/04/2022 Dane Bird-Smith announces his retirement. <u>http://www.marciadalmondo.com/eng/dettagli\_news.aspx?id=4339</u> (In case you missed it the first time ...
- 06/04/2022 World Athletics world lists updated to after Podebrady. <u>http://www.marciadalmondo.com/eng/dettagli\_news.aspx?id=4337</u> Jemima currently ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> (20km), Olivia ranked 7<sup>th</sup> (10km U20).

The Portuguese race walking blog **O Marchador** contains reports on many of the same races as Marcia Dal Mondo. The page has dozens of links to articles on race walking, featuring both domestic events and those from abroad.

- Monday, April 11, 2022 Madrid March with more news. <u>http://omarchador.blogspot.com/2022/04/madrid-marcha-com-mais-novidades.html</u>
- Sunday, April 10, 2022 Chia-Wei Hsu breaks national 10,000m record in New Taipei, Taiwan. http://omarchador.blogspot.com/2022/04/chia-wei-hsu-bate-recorde-nacional-dos.html
- Saturday, April 9, 2022 CRD Penteado wins Portuguese Marching Cup (track) in Faro. http://omarchador.blogspot.com/2022/04/crd-penteado-vence-taca-de-portugal-de.html

<u>Note</u>: The O Marchador blog is written in Portuguese. To access an English version, open the page in Google Chrome – if you haven't already – at <u>https://omarchador.blogspot.com</u>, then right click on any empty space (not on text) on the page. A window will appear with the option to translate the page. Click on it, and the page should reload in English.

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# WHAT'S UP AHEAD?

### Victorian & National Key Dates – 2022

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Sat/Sun 23/24 Apr 2022	Australian Little Athletics championships – Melbourne	
Sun 24 Apr 2022	AV 'Run The Tan' – Kings Domain, Melbourne	
Sun 1 May	AV Country 10km c'ship & VRWC Winter season opener – Ballarat	
Sun 7 May	VRWC Club races Week 2 – Middle Park	
Sun 15 May 2022	<b>Oceania &amp; Australian 35km Race walking championship &amp; Team Challenge</b> – Melb (Fawkner Park)	
Sun 12 Jun 2022	56 <sup>th</sup> Annual Lake Burley Griffin Carnival & Racewalking Australia AGM – Canberra ACT	
Sun 11 Sep 2022	AA & RWA Road walking c'ships; VRWC Centenary celebration – Middle Park	

(NOTE: Full details of the VRWC 2022 Winter Road season fixture available at http://www.vrwc.org.au/vrwcw22.shtml )

### **International Dates**

Jun 26 – July 7, 2022	World University Summer Games – Chengdu, CHN (postponed from 2020)
Jun 29 – Jul 10, 2022	23 <sup>rd</sup> World Masters T&F Championships – Tampere, FIN
Jul 15 – 24, 2022	18 <sup>th</sup> World Athletics Championships – Eugene OR, USA
Jul 22 – Aug 7, 2022	XXII Commonwealth Games – Birmingham, GBR
Aug 11 – 21, 2022	European Athletics Championships – Munich, GER
TBA, 2022	19th World Athletics U20 T&F Championships – Cali, COLOMBIA
TBA, 2023	24 <sup>th</sup> World Masters T&F Championships – Gothenburg, SWE
Aug 2023 (TBC)	19 <sup>th</sup> World Athletics Championships – Budapest, HUN

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## WALK JUDGING SEMINAR



## Venue: **VRWC** Headquarters, Middle Park Bowling Club **Canterbury Rd Middle Park** Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Date :

Athletics Australia, Athletics Victoria and the Victorian Race Walking Club will be conducting a Walk Judging Seminar on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May. The Seminar will be held by Zoe Eastwood-Bryson.

It is open to those interested in becoming Walk Judges and for existing Judges to upgrade. Tea and coffee will be provided.

## AGENDA:

## Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> Mav

9.00am	Registration
10.00am	Racewalk Rules
11.30 am	Break
11.45pm	Paperwork
12.45pm	Lunch
13.30pm	Video
14.30pm	Finish
-	

## No late or on the day applications

Please bring Stationery, pencils, pens, paper and current World Athletics handbook with you.

## Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Australian 35km Walks Championships – Fawkner Park 7.00am (start)

Name:

Address:

Mobile:

Current Walks Grading (if applicable)

Attending:

Yes / No

## Please return no later than 6<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022

email: dilowden39@gmail.com Diane Lowden Glengollan Village 13/131 Forest Rd Ferntree Gully Ph 8756 4283 Mobile 0413708085