



HEEL AND TOE ONLINE

The official organ of the Victorian Race Walking Club
2007/2008 Number 16
14 January 2009



ATHLETICS VICTORIA SHIELD COMPETITION RETURNS

Athletics Victoria Shield competition resumed last weekend after the Christmas break with all 6 venues in action. With a number of our top walkers in Canberra and some walkers obviously showing the effects of a top Christmas (!), the overall times were down a bit on form but we can expect to see things fire up soon with the Victorian championships in the offing.

North West Region, Round 9, Aberfeldie Athletics Track, Saturday 10 January 2009

Tom Barnes had a hard 3000m hitout at the Aberfeldie Track with a fast 12:10, ahead of Melbourne Uni teammate Paul Kennedy. Justi Roseman, now resident in Melbourne, was the top woman with 16:03. Aaron Gardner (8:17) and Lauren Gelov (8:56) won the U14 1500m walks. A total of 20 walkers were in action including Danny Hawksworth. We don't see Danny walk too much these days as he normally focuses on his running but his time of 15:19 showed that he is still able to walk pretty well when required.

3000m Walk

1.	Barnes, Thomas	MUU	MOP	12:10.71
2.	Kennedy, Paul	MUU	MOP	14:28.45
3.	Donahoo, Mark	ATE	MOP	15:00.64
4.	Hawksworth, Danny	ATE	MOP	15:19.04
5.	Hawkins, Trenton	PTN	MOP	15:25.12
6.	Roseman, Justijana	ATE	FOP	16:03.80
7.	Knox, Duncan	ATE	MOP	16:21.43
8.	Hammond, Nardene	ATE	FOP	16:22.67
9.	Elms, Damien	PTN	M18	19:07.43
10.	Elms, Donna	PTN	FOP	19:11.59
11.	Wallace, Anna	ATE	FOP	19:20.00
12.	Millane, Ash	KSB	MOP	21:17.31
13.	Long, David	PTN	MOP	21:39.46
14.	Ireland, Roslyn	BWK	FOP	23:01.23

1500m Walk

1.	Gardner, Aaron	PTN	M14	8:17.49
2.	McShanag, Connor	ATE	M14	8:56.95
3.	Gelov, Lauren	PTN	F14	9:38.90
4.	McGougan, Tracy	MUU	F14	10:31.00
5.	Saliba, Liam	PTN	M14	11:49.14
6.	Arnold, Madison	PTN	F16	11:49.37

Eastern Region, Box Hill, Saturday 10 January 2009

Box Hill was our biggest walks venue with 32 competitors in action. In the 3000m walk, Andrew Jamieson (13:44) was first ahead of Stuart Kollmorgen (14:15) and Ross Reid (15:19) while Kylie Irshad showed that she has been training over Christmas with a very good 14:56. In the Under 14 1500m walk, Stephanie George (7:51) and Andrew Hogan (8:27) were the fastest.

3000m Walk

1.	Jamieson, Andrew	OSC	MOP	13:44.70
2.	Kollmorgen, Stuart	COL	MOP	14:15.00
3.	Irshad, Kylie	SCA		14:56.50
4.	Reid, Ross	COL	MOP	15:19.90
5.	Cochrane, Andrew	OSC	MOP	16:04.80
6.	Dickenson, Russ	MOP		16:19.80
7.	Keirl, Bernie	DIV	M40+	16:20.90
8.	Walsh, Robert	ANW	MOP	16:31.90
9.	Armstrong, David	DIV	MOP	16:42.30
10.	Hammitt, Gary	DIV	M40+	17:08.60
11.	Brazel, Hilary	ANW	F18	17:09.00
12.	Dyer, Chelsea	BOH	F16	17:38.20
13.	Feldman, Liz			17:41.00
14.	Benke, Geza	OLM	MOP	17:43.00
15.	Olden, Graeme	BOH	MOP	18:33.60
16.	Noonan, Patrick	STK	MOP	18:38.20
17.	Worsnop, Christopher	OLX	MOP	18:54.80
18.	Sofianos, Gerald	STK	MOP	18:55.30
19.	Cooper, Stuart	SSH	MOP	19:04.20
20.	Cowell, Jacqueline	DIV	F16	19:28.90
21.	Ellis, Bob	RIC	MOP	21:46.40
22.	Percy, Luke	RIC	M16	23:01.40
23.	Percy, Nathan	RIC	M16	23:19.40
24.	Mah, Lincoln	STK	MOP	23:53.10

1500m Walk

1.	George, Stephanie	SCA	F14	7:51.80
2.	Hogan, Andrew	MAL	M14	8:27.60
3.	Taylor, Lucas	SCA	M14	8:29.80
4.	Irshad, Jasmine	SCA	M14	8:33.20
5.	Mc Nicol-Davidson, Chloe	BOH	F14	9:27.40
6.	Garganis, Adam	COL	M14	9:31.80
7.	McNicol-Davison, Cody		M14	9:46.20
8.	Neale, Jessica	COL	F14	9:49.80

Athletics Victoria also used the opportunity to present some awards for outstanding service and some great supporters of racewalking were amongst the recipients. Merit awards went to

- **Judy Mason** – senior walks judge, former VAWC competition manager and senior AV official
- **Harry Mason** – senior AV official and regular recorder/timekeeper at Albert Park on prime race days
- **Kevin Wigmore** – senior AV/AA official and AA appointee for most of our Melbourne based Aust walk championships
- **John Boas** – top international coach (with a wide portfolio that included a stint as Australian racewalking national coach)

and an AV Life Membership award went to

- **Tony Williams** - senior AV/AA official and AA appointee for most of our Melbourne based Aust walk championships

Thanks to VRWC Life Member Ray Smith for the following photos



Kevin Wigmore is congratulated on his Merit Award



Judy and Harry Mason are awarded their AV Merit Awards



Tony Williams is awarded his AV Life Membership and John Boas is awarded his AV Merit Award

Bendigo Region, La Trobe University Track, Bendigo, Saturday 10 January 2009

Only one walk was contested in Bendigo and it was a 1500m. Ebony Whiley and Amanda Heard had a great battle with Ebony getting up by 3 seconds with a fast 7:35. Jeremiah Jones was the fastest boy but his time indicates that he just had a pretty easy stroll on this occasion.

1500m Walk

1.	Whiley, Ebony	EAG	F14	7:35.74
2.	Heard, Amanda	EAG	F14	7:38.95
3.	Major, Annette	EAG		8:19.54
4.	Jones, Jeremiah	EAG	M14	9:24.22
5.	Savage, Joshua	EAG	M14	9:30.23
6.	Major, Geoffrey	EAG		9:51.15
7.	Wellard, Ian	BYM		10:00.28
8.	Watson, John	BYM		10:19.77
9.	Curtis, Annette	SBE		10:42.53
10.	Jones, Ebony - Jade	EAG		10:42.88
11.	Green, Chloe			12:32.31

Geelong Region, Landy Field, Geelong, Saturday 10 January 2009

Former NZ International Scott Nelson was the only 3000m walker in action in Geelong but he made up for the lack of numbers with a good 13:37. Lewis Clarke won out over Joshua Dillon in the 1500m walk with 7:11 to 7:13 while Jmara Hockley-Samon was the fastest girl with 8:13.

3000m Walk

1.	Nelson, Scott	GLG	MOP	13:37.70
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1500m Walk

1.	Clark, Lewis	CHI	M16	7:11.80
2.	Dillon, Joshua	COR	M16	7:13.90
3.	Hockley Samon, Jmara	CHI	F14	8:13.00
4.	Dillon, Lachlan	COR	M14	8:18.00
5.	Walker, Megan	COR	F14	8:39.80
6.	Brockenshire, Briggette		F14	8:41.30
7.	Larkins, Eloise	COR	F16	9:09.00
8.	Dillon, Nathan		M14	10:33.00
9.	Lockwood, Jade	COR	F14	11:34.10
10.	Dillon, James		M14	11:36.50

South East Region, Glenhuntly, Saturday 10 January 2009

Glenhuntly was another strong venue with 20 walkers in action. This venue includes the Victorian Masters Team so always sees a lot of our Masters walkers in action and M65 champion Ralph Bennett was the first over the line in the 3000m walk (16:09) ahead of U16 walker Brad Simpson (16:33). Gayle McIntyre was the fastest woman with 16:41. In the 1500m walk, Joshua Kaiser finished with 8:32, just ahead of Bianca Attard and Lauren Stadus who were only separated by 0.3 secs, each recording 8:35.

3000m Walk

1.	Bennett, Ralph	VMA	MOP	16:09.00
2.	Simpson, Bradley	KNA	M16	16:33.90
3.	McIntyre, Gayle	VMA	FOP	16:41.80
4.	O'Neill, Terry	GPA	MOP	17:07.60
5.	Holmes, Janet	VMA	FOP	17:17.80
6.	O'Mahony, Michael	KNA	M16	17:40.40
7.	Steed, Gwen	VMA	FOP	17:43.00
8.	Barrow, Geoffrey	MEN	MOP	17:52.50

9.	Osmand, Kym	OAK	FOP	19:27.90
10.	Morrison, John	SAN	MOP	20:00.80
11.	Wright, Jeffrey	KNA	MOP	20:03.90
12.	Maudsley, Fiona	AWA	F18	20:35.90
13.	Goodings, Liana	AWA	F18	21:47.20
14.	Harrison, Lindsay	AWA	MOP	22:38.40

1500m Walk

1.	Kaiser, Joshua	FKN		8:32.00
2.	Attard, Bianca	KNA	F14	8:35.20
3.	Stadus, Lauren	KNA	F14	8:35.50
4.	Prime, Samantha	KNA	F14	9:02.30
5.	Callaway, Amy	KNA		9:04.30
6.	Mann, Stephanie	KNA	F14	9:45.10

The final venue, Ballarat, has not pushed its results through to the AV website yet so I can't report on Daryl's latest walk time!

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH OLYMPICS KICKS OFF THIS WEEK

The fifth edition of the Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF) will be held this week in Sydney with events running from today Wednesday 14 January (today) to Sunday 18 January. The AYOF is organised by the Australian Olympic Committee and provides future Olympic athletes with an environment reminiscent of an Olympic Games and promotes the ideals of friendship, solidarity and fair play. Young athletes get an insight into what the Olympics are all about with Opening and Closing ceremonies, drug testing, medal ceremonies and tough competition. The 2009 AYOF will feature some of the best athletes from around the world and is sure to set Sydney Olympic Park alight with fierce competition.

The inaugural Festival was held in January 2001 and has since been held biennially. Read all about AYOF at website <http://corporate.olympics.com.au/index.cfm?p=35>. See also the official 2009 AYOF website at <http://www.olympics.com.au>.

The Festival is for athletes aged between 13-19 years. 5000m walks are on offer for boys and girls and Athletics Australia has selected 6 of our most promising U18 walkers to represent us. They are [Blake Steele \(SA\)](#), [Dean Fitzsimons \(WA\)](#), [Dane Bird-Smith \(QLD\)](#), [Paige Hooper \(SA\)](#), [Kristie Gosnik \(SA\)](#) and [Shannon Jennings \(NSW\)](#). These six walkers have just finished a 10 day training camp at the AIS and should be primed for some top performances. The walks are to be held on Saturday evening and I am looking forward to reading the results.

And talking of our AIS camp, here is a great photo which has captured most of the U20 walkers and coaching staff at the AIS a few days ago.



Back: Tim Erickson, Brent Vallance (AIS), Derek Mulhearn, Claire Xian, Melissa Hayes, Daniel Payne, Blake Steele, Brook Keys, Kristie Goznik, Simon and Elliot Baker
Front: Alison Baker, Lauren Harrington, Beth Alexander, Shannon Jennings, Rachel Tallent, Natalie Laurie, Paige Hooper, Kyle Malone and Sam Buchanan
Missing: Rhydian Cowley, Dean Fitzsimons, Dane Bird-Smith, Regan Lamble

Talking of the AIS walks camp, the Canberra Times newspaper, a great supporter of local ACT sport, has published a nice article on Irish walker Jamie Costin who is one of a number of overseas walkers participating in the month long senior camp. See <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/sport/other/costin-decides-to-get-even/1402340.aspx?storypage=0>



Jamie (right) completes a 30 km session earlier this week with Adam Rutter (obscured), Luke Adams and Chris Erickson

Costin decides to get even

Canberra Times, Thursday 8 January 2009

When Irishman Jamie Costin crossed the finish line in the 50km race walk at Beijing last year his first thought was relief.

Almost exactly four years before the Beijing Games, Costin was just nine days out from competing in his second Olympics, at Athens, when hit by a truck which was driving on the wrong side of the road.

He broke two vertebrae in his back, fractured several other bones and there were fears he would never walk again. But he did, and soon after the Beijing race where he had to be carried from the track due to exhaustion after finishing 44th out of 48 athletes he started to get angry.

Now he's getting even and starting his comeback in Canberra.

Costin and his partner Zuzana Malikova, from Slovakia, are two of four international athletes at the month-long race walking camp in Canberra that also includes Australia's Beijing dual Olympic medallist Jared Tallent.

And while for pretty much all of the 35 athletes involved it's an intensive training camp, Costin is also interested in the science behind a heat acclimatisation study that is happening at the same time.

The study involves three groups, each comprised of seven athletes, on different diets. Its aim is to research a number of factors including nutrition and physiology in the way the body best deals with heat.

Given that major athletics event are often held in hot summer weather in places like Osaka and Beijing and in the height of the European summer Costin is keen to learn from the research.

"My first reaction [after the Beijing race] was relief," Costin said. "But very soon after I started getting angry with the performance, and anger is all well and good but if you aren't

going to do something about correcting what happened, well this is why we are here for this study.

"First and foremost we are here to train, but for me this camp is a very important opportunity to manage how I react to heat. In Beijing, with the heat and humidity combined, my body really just didn't work properly."

Australian Institute of Sport race walking coach Brent Vallance hopes that the study will not only benefit his sport, but help all disciplines in preparing athletes for events in high heat and humidity.

The heat sessions the AIS, which will run over the next month, will be inside, with heaters around treadmills set at 32 degrees in a controlled environment of 60 per cent humidity.

The study also means that Australian athletes could spend more time preparing at home for overseas campaigns.

"Our most successful athletes at the Olympics trained most of their time at home," Vallance said.

"Sally McLennan was injured and came home, Steve Hooker spent most of his time at home because he had a few injuries and in June and July, Jared Tallent was basically all that time in Canberra.

"There are so many benefits to doing prep at home, access to physio, recovery, nutrition is right here."

Leading up to Beijing, Tallent did a six-week stint of one heat session a week and lived in the altitude cabin at the AIS.

He thinks it worked.

However, Vallance thinks there is still room for improvement. "The way we prepared for Beijing was good, but it could still be tweaked a little."

And the good publicity continues for Australian walking with Chris Erickson being a featured athlete on the IAAF website last week (Thursday 8th January). See <http://www.iaaf.org/WRC08/news/kind=103/newsid=48866.html>



Erickson looks to make his mark in 2009

Providing welcome pre-Christmas news for its race walkers, the Australian Federation named a maximum possible four man team for the 50km race walk at the Berlin World Championship. Chris Erickson was the one who ensured the team is known nice and early by gaining automatic qualification in winning in an 'A' standard time at the national championships two weeks earlier.

Flushed with success from Nathan Deakes's victory in Osaka and Jared Tallent's double silver in Beijing, the squad is bolstered by the inclusion of Luke Adams (sixth at 20km and tenth over 50km in Beijing).

Despite driving rain at Fawkner Park, Melbourne, Erickson sliced nearly three minutes from his personal best to record 3:55:28. The 27-year-old, originally a local now living in Canberra, may not yet be a medal prospect, but his inclusion demonstrates the current depth of talent in Australian race walking.

"I was very happy with an early selection for a change and excited about the prospect of having four on the start line!" said Erickson after the announcement. "We always have that race in December, and in the last couple of years it hasn't gone so well for me. This year I turned it round so it was a nice Christmas present."

Son of a race walker

To those unfamiliar with race walking it would seem that dedication to the event of race walking must require some unusual introduction and singular motivation. Not so in the Erickson household, as Chris's father also represented Australia as a walker, and, like Chris, is a Commonwealth medallist. Tim Erickson, now known as a historian of the event, won bronze at Edmonton in 1978, 18 years before his son repeated the feat in Melbourne three years ago.

"I've got three brothers and we all grew up watching dad race - and I would have been nine or ten months old at the Commonwealth Games in 1982 up at Brisbane," said Chris Erickson. "We always travelled round to watch him race. We'd

have all these walkers around our house (like Simon Baker, Andrew Jackno and Dave Smith) devouring big amounts of pasta and then going out training."

"Then when I was eight I started in little athletics and I suppose I'd seen so much of it I pretty much had the style of race walking imprinted in the brain. Right from the start all us brothers were pretty handy as juniors although I was the only one who went on with walking."

Further the better...

Erickson's first national title came over 50km in 2004, and he was runner-up the next year. In contrast, in six attempts at 20km he hasn't been close to a title.

"I was a fairly good junior but never won a national title - Troy Sundstrom was a really talented junior at that time, but gradually I found in my training that the further I went the better I was. I was handy at 20km but a much better 50km walker. Because Australia was so strong at 20km - with Nathan Deakes and Luke Adams and younger guys like Jared Tallent that in 2006 - I saw an opportunity to make the World Race Walking Cup at 50km and that was the road that I went down. I do feel I'm a better 50km walker."

Erickson's coaching was handled by his father but Australian Institute of Sport Walks Coach Brent Vallance has had an increasing influence and is now his main coach.

"I moved to the AIS in May last year. Up until that point I worked with my dad and most of what we did was to aim for 50km. Once I made the move Brent said 'If you want to be good at 50km you have to be good at 20km' so I've worked at getting the speed up - walking faster, more often and getting better economy. But even today I speak to dad almost every day going over what I'm doing. He's a great extra ear to have."

Erickson fits his training around part time administrative work in the offices in the AIS. "My degree was in Sport Administration and Business Management so I also do a little sports coaching in schools, like cricket and soccer and playing with the kids, but only 15 hours or so a week - most of the time

I'm focused on training.”

Speedier in 2008

Erickson competed in the 2004 and 2006 IAAF World Race Walking Cups at 50km, improving from 31st to a 26th placing, and in 2006 won a Commonwealth Games bronze medal in a time of 3:58:22, his best he last race.

In the heat of the Osaka 2007 World Championships he finished 24th in 4:13:00 but from last year he found his speedier 20km colleagues were edging him out over his preferred distance.

“My original hope was to do the 50km at the Olympics but with the strength at the event in Australia I only managed fifth place in the trial and that was without Nathan racing - he was pre-selected having won the World Championship, effectively meaning I was sixth on the rung. So, I had one more chance - to chase for the 20km place for Beijing.”

The speed work paid off with fourth place in the Australian Championships earning World Cup selection. He then improved to a 1:22:55 time in Russia, and Beijing selection, only to suffer disqualification in the Olympic Games.

Reflecting on the positive he said, “Even though I'd probably have preferred to race the 50km at the Olympics, looking at the long term picture it probably worked out for the better through learning to race at 20km and getting that speed.”

Benefiting from a large group of walkers

In his build-up to Berlin, Erickson feels he will continue to benefit in being part of a quality group in Canberra - currently swelled to about 30 world class walkers.

“Under Brent Vallence we've got Jared Tallent who won two medals at the Olympics and Adam Rutter as well. We also have Claire Tallent (Jared's wife) training with us and Kellie Wapshot and we do occasional sessions with Luke and Nathan. So we've got these really good core group of guys to train with

that pushes us all really well.”

“Actually, we have a training camp on up here at the moment - pretty much all the top guys in Australia are in Canberra for a month. Also, Jamie Costin's here and Zusana Malikova from Slovakia, Johanna Jackson from the UK and a couple of Mexicans are due to come. Generally we have a group of 5 or 6 throughout the year and it's really really good.”

“Hopefully it's something that will grow with more athletes coming in the colder months overseas. The Australian Institute of Sports is probably one of the best places in the world to train as a walker - the facilities are second to none.”

A mini-tour for the IAAF Challenge

“At this stage we're planning, but we'll definitely be doing the Chinese event (Wuxi - 18/19 April) and probably Rio Maior, Portugal (4 April) as part of a mini-tour in late March and April. Then we'll come back to Australia to knuckle down for some training before an altitude camp in St. Moritz, Switzerland, for a month - then head for Germany all guns blazing, and hopefully have a really good performance there.”

“For me it's one of the first times I've had selection wrapped up several months out rather than having to chase it so I can really hit my peak in August.”

Trademark flaming ankles

Certainly, Erickson's ready laughter and distinctive flaming ankle tattoos will add something unique to the Australian squad.

“It's a little bit of a trademark and I do love tattoos. I get a lot of comments about it but I would have said up until Beijing they hadn't got me into any trouble - I don't think they did get me into trouble in Beijing - at least I hope not. It's something unique and brings me some notoriety - but not too much hopefully!

Tim Watt for the IAAF

MORE FROM THE IAAF WEBSITE- KJERSTI PLATZER



2008 Olympic 20 km walk medallists Elisa Rigauo (ITA), Olga Kaniskina (RUS) and Kjersti Platzer (NOR)

And the positive walking publicity continued on the IAAF website with another feature article on Friday 9 January, this time on 2008 Olympic Silver medallist Kjersti Plätzer. See <http://www.iaaf.org/WRC08/news/kind=103/newsid=48873.html>

Plätzer planning the climax to her race walking saga

Approaching the age of thirty seven (on 18 January), and having seemingly achieved neat enough symmetry to her Olympic career in Beijing by winning a silver medal in what will be her last Games to match her achievement in the first Olympic outing in Sydney back in 2000, you'd have been forgiven for expecting Norway's Kjersti Plätzer to be planning a quieter 2009.

Yet Plätzer has decided that for one more year she will juggle motherhood, business life and elite athletics; braving hard training along the dark and icy roads around Softeland.

But, why not, when in 2008 she also became the IAAF World Race Walking Challenge winner and, almost injury free, walked faster than ever. The new year finds her inspired by dreams of glory to come.

Back in hard training

A long hard season left her drained and tired. In October, Plätzer returned to full time work, as Adecco's Sales Manager for the Western Region of Norway, but despite the icy conditions in Norway she's back in hard training.

"It's very tiring. Yesterday it was minus 16 degrees and today plus five which is a big change for the body to cope with. I've also been busy at work although now I'm working part time."

Secret surgery and strict coaching

With time to reflect on her successes Plätzer can now reveal the reasons for success and new lease of life that has inspired her to carry on.

"I had no choice after stopping in the 2007 Challenge final in Saransk. An MRI scan revealed the cause of my recurring hamstring injuries to be in my back. It showed I had two prolapses. If I wanted to go the Olympics I had to fix my back - although I could only fix the one that affected my walking, not the one that was just sometimes painful."

"So without much time to decide I had back surgery on 19 October 2007".

Keen to avoid disruptive attention from the Norwegian press she decided to keep it as low profile a surgery as possible.

"I decided it was important to keep it secret from the media after seeing all the coverage of Andreas Thorkildsen's back problems in 2007. They kept asking him about that so in the end one of the team leaders in Osaka made him a T-shirt that he wore with the slogan "My back? My back? My back is OK!"

"There were not many people who knew so it was easier to keep it in the team - the national team doctor, the Olympic Committee and the Federation, my family and of course Sabine Zimmer (the German race walker). The surgery was carried out not far from her home so I actually recovered at her place. I stayed on her sofa for four days!"

"I think that keeping it secret was the right decision because I had the surgery but while I was recovering it wasn't a question of 'how's your back?' and it wouldn't have been Olympic silver unless my back was OK!"

Chihuahua the biggest surprise of the 2008 Challenge

It was the start of the recovery that was more surprising to Plätzer than the end result.

"Especially after surgery, winning in the first challenge race in Mexico in March was the biggest surprise of the season. Sabine and Susana Feitor had already raced well. I hadn't even done any speed work and came from Flagstaff with just three weeks of altitude training before Chihuahua. My only goal was to score some points by getting an A standard."

"I controlled my pace to get that time. It was a hard course, it was hot and dry and at altitude so I focused on myself but near

the end the instinct for competing warmed up in me and I started catching them. I had to push really hard in the last 2km to be able to do the standard and get my 10 points but I was very surprised I could win a Challenge race then."

Kjersti started full race walking training at the end December 2007 building up slowly having missed two months. Her coach, and husband, Stephan Plätzer, insisted on maintaining her training through of the season without allowing any let up for races, right until just before the Olympics.

"I felt strong through the year but not exactly in full fitness - just tired from the training. I was able to train from January until the Olympics with no breaks and no injuries."

The best behind Kaniskina in Beijing

"My goal for the season was a medal at the Olympics. After arriving in China every day I felt better and felt my fitness coming. I was confident that I had been strong through the year but felt now I'm in shape. That was Stephan's work - he was holding me back all season by putting on that training load. He told me 'Kjersti, you need to have ice in your stomach, be patient and you will be in shape when you're supposed to be', and he was right!"

"In Beijing we saw a lot of personal bests - we were lucky we had the rain and it was 23 degrees so it was perfect. I focused on what I had to do and that was the main reason I was the best behind (Olga) Kaniskina."

Inspired by finish at the Brandenburg Gate

Looking ahead to 2009 imagines a German operatic theme to the climax of her race walking career.

"The main reason to carry on is I feel I still have the chance to do well for another season."

"We will go to training camp in Flagstaff which fits with the first Challenge race in Mexico but it depends on the organisers if they want me to come. I'm planning on doing four challenge races again plus the final but it depends on race distances - with the new regulations its possible there will be shorter races so it would be much easier to fit in more. It's fun to do 10km."

For this year's Challenge athletes can earn points in some other competitions than the eight race IAAF Race Walking Challenge events. According to Plätzer "I think it's good to have points for other smaller races and gives area competitions a greater chance to survive as it makes it easier for athletes to include these in their schedules."

However, Kjersti's main focus for the year will come in August for the IAAF World Championship 20km.

"Ending my career in Berlin will 'fulfill the ring' because my first European Junior Championships were in Cottbus, in former East Germany, in 1985; my first European Championships was in Stuttgart in 1986 and my first World Championships were in Stuttgart in 1993 - so all my initial big races were in Germany. So it will be nice to have my last big event in Germany. Then the ring cycle is complete!"

"Plus, the finish at The Brandenburg Gate is very historical. The finish to the marathon and walks in Berlin will be fantastic for all the competitors."

"After that I plan to return to normal life. I will have more than enough with working, two children and following the race walking scene - my brother Erik will continue at least to London 2012."

On Saturday (10) Plätzer will be nominated for the Norwegian Female Athlete of the Year award. "That's a big honour - and on Monday the entire Olympic team has been invited to the castle in Oslo to eat tapas with the King!"

Plätzer may have a lot to occupy herself, but training on the quiet local roads will provide ample opportunity to dream of climatic, and possibly triumphant, Wagnerian chords to mark the closure of her 24 year international race walking career. Tim Watt for the IAAF

WHAT'S COMING UP

Our Victorian Shield competition continues next Saturday at all venues. Check with your club to confirm which venues have walks this weekend. I know that at Aberfeldie, we have a 1500m invitation walk at 1:35PM.

Sat 17 Jan	AV Shield - Round 10 (SOUTH EAST REGION)	Ballam Park Athletic Track, Frankston
Sat 17 Jan	AV Shield - Round 10 (EAST REGION)	Bill Sewart Athletics Track, Burwood
Sat 17 Jan	AV Shield - Round 11 (BENDIGO REGION)	La Trobe Uni Athletics Centre, Bendigo
Sat 17 Jan	AV Shield - Round 12 (GEELONG REGION)	Landy Field, South Geelong
Sat 17 Jan	AV Shield - Round 10 (BALLARAT REGION)	Llanberris Reserv, Ballarat
Sat 17 Jan	AV Shield - Round 10 (NORTH WEST REGION)	Moonee Valley Athletics Centre, Aberfeldie

Then we have our next round of VRWC walks this Sunday. The venue is the George Knott Reserve (the Collingwood Harriers track) in Heidelberg Rd, Clifton Hill and the timetable reads as follows

Sunday 18th January 2009, RWA Summer Postal Race, George Knott Reserve, Heidelberg Rd, Clifton Hill		
9.00am	5000m walk	Open Men / Women
9.45am	3000m walk	Masters Men / Women
10:20am	3000m walk	Under 20 Men / Women
10:50am	1500m walk	Under 14 Boys / Girls

This is one of the few opportunities to compete in a 5000m walk before next month's Victorian Open and U20 T&F championships. It is also a Racewalking Australia Postal Race which all the racewalking clubs will schedule at some stage this summer. The top performances will be collated to see which club wins overall. So all VRWC members should try to support this important event.

Then next week, we have a number of mid-week AV Shield competitions as follows

Tue 20 Jan	AV Shield - Round 11 (BALLARAT REGION)	Llanberris Reserve, Ballarat
Tue 20 Jan	AV Shield - Round 11 (NORTH WEST REGION)	Moonee Valley Athletics Centre, Aberfeldie
Thu 22 Jan	AV Shield - Round 11 (SOUTH EAST REGION)	Knox Athletic Track, Knoxfield
Thu 22 Jan	AV Shield - Round 11 (EAST REGION)	Reischiek's Reserve, Doncaster

Finally a reminder that entries are now open for the various Victorian Track and Field championships

- [Victorian Open and Under 20 T&F Championships](#) 20-22 Feb 2008
- [Victorian Youth T&F Championships](#) Feb 27-Mar 1, 2009
- [AV Overage & Victorian Masters T&F Championships](#) Mar 28-29, 2009

DATES...DATES...DATES

As usual, I finish with a list of upcoming events on the local, national and international fronts.

Victorian & National Fixture – Summer 2008/2009

Jan 14-18, 2009	Australian Youth Olympic Festival, Sydney (5000m walk)
Sat 17 Jan, 2009	AV Shield Competition
Sun 18 Jan, 2009	VRWC races – RWA Summer Postal Races, Clifton Hill athletics track
Tues 20 / Thur 22 Jan	AV Shield Competition Round 11 (2000m walks)
Jan 24-26, 2009	Victorian Country Championships, Landy Field, Geelong
Thur 29 Jan, 2009	VRWC track races, Olympic Park, 6PM
Sat 31 Jan, 2009	AV Shield Competition, Round 12 (3000m/1500m walks)
Sat 7 Feb, 2009	AV Shield Competition, Region Finals (2000m walk)
Sat 7 Feb, 2009	Australia Cup GP Series Meet, Queensland (elite 5000m walks for men and women)
Sat 14 Feb, 2009	AV Shield Competition, Shield Final (2000m walk)
Sun 15 Feb, 2009	VRWC events, Albert Park
Feb 20-22, 2009	Victorian Open and U20 T&F Championships, Olympic Park, Melbourne
Feb 21-25, 2009	2009 Australian Masters Games, Geelong - http://www.AustralianMastersGames.com
Thur 26 Feb, 2009	AMA Postal Relay events (4 x 800m walk), East Burwood, 7PM
Feb 27-Mar 1, 2009	Victorian Youth T&F Championships, Olympic Park, Melbourne
Sat 7 March, 2009	2009 Australian 20 km Summer Championships, Fawkner Park, Melbourne
Sun 22 Mar, 2009	VRWC and VMA Track races, Mentone Athletics Track
Mar 28-29, 2009	AV Overage & Victorian Masters T&F Championships, Box Hill
Apr 3-5, 2009	Australian U20 All Schools, U20 & U23 Championships, SA (includes 10,000m walk)
Apr 10-13, 2009	Australian Masters T&F Championships, Adelaide

Victorian & National Fixture – Winter 2009

Sunday 7 June, 2009 Lake Burley Griffin Carnival, Canberra
July 11-12, 2009 Racewalking Australia Winter Postal Challenge
Sun Aug 30, 2009 Australian Roadwalking Championships, NSW

2009 International Fixture

May 24, 2009 EAA Race Walking Cup, Metz, France
July 1-12, 2009 **25th World Summer Universiade Games, Belgrade, Serbia** - <http://www.universiade-belgrade2009.org/en>
July 8-12, 2009 **IAAF World Youth Championships, Bressanone, Italy** - <http://www.iaaf.org/wyc09/preview.html>
July 28 – Aug 8, 2009 **XVIII World Masters Athletics Championships Stadia, Lahti, Finland** - <http://english.wma2009.org/>
Aug 15-23, 2009 **IAAF World Championships in Athletics, Berlin, Germany** - <http://www.iaaf.org/wch09/index.html>
Oct 10-18, 2009 **World Masters Games, Sydney** - <http://www.2009worldmasters.com>

2009 IAAF Race Walking Challenge

Mar 14-15, 2009 Chihuahua, Mexico
Apr 4-5, 2009 Rio Major, Portugal
Apr 18-19, 2009 Wuxi, China
May 1, 2009 Sesto S Giovanni, Italy
May 30, 2009 Krakow, Poland
June 20, 2009 La Coruna, Spain
Aug 15-23, 2009 IAAF World Championships, Berlin
Sept 19, 2009 IAAF Challenge Final, Saransk, RUS

EAA Permit Walks 2009

Mar 8, 2009 Lugano, Switzerland
Mar 28, 2009 Dudince, Slovakia
Mar 28, 2009 Ibiza, Spain
Apr 25, 2009 Podebrady, Czech Republic
June 28, 2009 Dublin, Ireland

2010 International Fixture

May 15-16, 2010 **IAAF World Race Walking Cup, Chihuahua, Mexico**
July 20-25, 2010 **World Junior Championships, Moncton, Canada**
Oct 3-14, 2010 **Commonwealth Games, Delhi, India**. See <http://www.cwgdelhi2010.com/>

2011 International Fixture

Aug 24-Sept 4, 2011 **IAAF World Championships in Athletics, Daegu, Porea**. See <http://www.iaaf.org/wch09/index.html>

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Copies of recent newsletters are kept on the VRWC website (<http://www.vrwc.org.au>)