

CRAIG BARRETT RETIRES – 8 NOVEMBER 2006

The outstanding walking career of Craig Barrett has come to an end with his announcement today of his retirement from the sport. Craig has had a wonderful career, spanning the period from his first major competition in the 1989 NZ Secondary Schools 3000m walk through to the 2006 World Walking Cup in La Coruna. During this time, he has crossed horns many times with our top Australian walkers and has raced many times in Australia, usually with great success. He has won the prestigious Canberra Carnival 20 Mile walk four times, in 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004 and holds the third fastest time ever with his 2:19:37.

In his long career, Craig has won an astounding 30 New Zealand Senior Titles. Overall, his NZ golds are as follows

1991 Junior Men 3000m Walk, Junior Men 10km Walk
 1993 30km Walk
 1995 30km Walk, 50km Walk
 1996 30km Walk, 50km Walk
 1997 5000m Walk, 30km Walk, 50km Walk
 1998 5000m Walk, 20km Walk
 1999 20km Walk, 50km Walk
 2000 3000m Walk, 20km Walk
 2001 3000m Walk, 10km Walk, 20km Walk, 50km Walk
 2002 3000m Walk, 20km Walk, 50km Walk
 2003 3000m Walk, 10km Walk, 20km Walk, 50km Walk
 2004 3000m Walk, 20km Walk
 2005 3000m Walk
 2006 20km Walk

He holds 3 New Zealand National records

50km Walk	3:48:04	New Plymouth	2001
20km Walk	1:22:20	Adelaide	1998
3km Walk	11:21.50	Auckland	1997

Although I am not sure if I have captured all his international representations, I have found 3 Olympic Games (96, 00, 04), 4 Commonwealth Games (94, 98, 02, 06), 6 World Cups (91, 93, 95, 97, 99, 04) and 4 World Championships (95, 97, 99 and 01). And these have all been for New Zealand which has been notoriously tough in its selection policy. What a fantastic career.

1991	World Racewalking Cup, San Jose	86 th	20 km	1:35:34
1993	World Racewalking Cup, Monterrey	DNF	20 km	
1994	Commonwealth Games, Victoria, Canada	8 th	30 km	2:14:19
1995	World Track & Field Championships Gothenburg	22 nd	50 km	4:10:26
1995	World Racewalking Cup, Beijing	71 st	20 km	1:31:52
1996	Olympic Games, Atlanta	33 rd	50 km	4:15:15
1997	World Track & Field Championships Athens	13 th	50 km	3:56:30
1997	World Racewalking Cup, Podebrady	DQ	50 km	
1998	Commonwealth Games Kuala Lumpur	DNF	50 km	
1999	World Track & Field Championships, Seville	7 th	50 km	3:54:38
1999	World Cup, Mezidon	13 th	50 km	3:48:14
2000	Olympic Games Sydney	18 th	50 km	3:55:53
2002	Commonwealth Games Manchester	2 nd	50 km	3:56:42
2003	World Track & Field Championships Paris	DQ	50 km	
2004	Olympic Games Athens	29 th	50 km	4:06:48
2005	Racewalking World Cup, Naumburg	DQ	50 km	
2005	World Track & Field Championships Helsinki	DQ	50 km	
2006	Commonwealth Games Melbourne	4 th	50 km	4:02:27

His 1999 50 km walks (7th in Seville and 13th in Mezidon) perhaps rate as his best ever international walks but who will forget his valiant failure in Kuala Lumpur in 1998 when he collapsed 500m from the finish of the 50 km walk, thus losing a certain Gold medal.

Craig says that his best time for the 50km walk of 3:48:04 in New Plymouth in June 2001 was a special performance to him. "Also my time of 3:48:14 in the 1999 world race walking cup in Deauville Mezidon was particularly pleasing." ¹

His own personal highlight was racing against arch rival Scott Nelson. "My highlight was everytime that I beat Scott Nelson. We had an awesome rivalry. I had great satisfaction in beating Scott's New Zealand 20km record by one second."

Craig said the turning point for him came at the 2003 world championships in Paris where he was disqualified in the 50km walk after just 5km. "From that point on I had diminishing returns of satisfaction. The real drive that I had prior to 2003 didn't exist anymore. It would have been nice to have done four Olympic Games and join Les Mills and Lorraine Moller in having attended four Olympics."

But Craig says it is time to move on and go back to completing his architectural degree. Barrett who turns 35 in a weeks time said he will then be brushing up his CV to get back into the workforce.

Craig paid tribute to his coaches during his career, Paul Luckie, Graham Seatter and Wang Kui from China. "I would also like to thank everyone in the sport who have supported me over the past 15 years," he said.

Craig will not be lost completely from the sport as he recently completed an IAAF measuring course. "This will keep me involved," said Barrett on signing off.

Craig Barrett will be remembered as a wonderful walker and a great ambassador for New Zealand and for our sport. Enjoy your new found freedom, Craig!



Craig powers to his 4th Canberra 20 Mile win in 2004

¹ This and other quotations are taken from an article, written on the occasion of Craig's retirement: Murray McKinnon, Communications Advisor, Athletics New Zealand, Athletics NZ Website (<http://www.athletics.org.nz>)