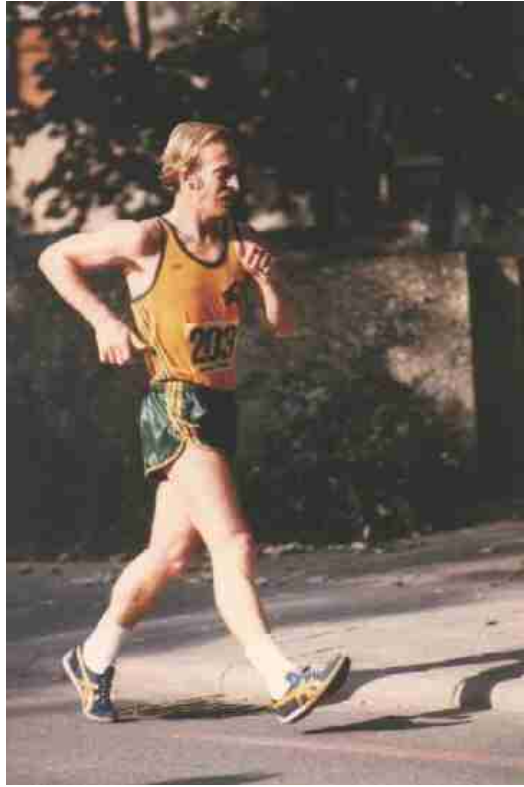


John Sheard

1979	Racewalking World Cup	Eschborn	50 km	36 th	4:13:55
1981	Racewalking World Cup	Valencia	50 km	33 rd	4:38:48

Born in 1948, John Sheard started walking in 1964 and had a promising Junior career with the Box Hill club. However, his first real success did not come until, at 30 years of age, he won the 1978 Victorian 50 km in **4:28:39**. He followed this up with a good third behind Willi Sawall and Tim Erickson in the 1979 Lugano Cup 50 km trial (**4:25:27**) and was duly selected for his first international race.



John walking in the 50 km event at the 1979 Racewalking World Cup in Eschborn

He did not disappoint, slashing his personal best to **4:13:55** for 36th place, the third best ever by an Australian. It ranked him ahead of Bob Gardiner, Ted Allsopp, Peter Fullager and Frank Clark and behind only Sawall and Erickson.

This performance proved a real stimulus to John who started to excel over all distances. In 1980, he was 3rd in the 1980 Federation 10 km at Monash University in **45:37**, 2nd in the prestigious LBG 20 miles in **2:35:17**, 2nd in the National 20 km road title in **1:35:13** and won his second Victorian 50 km title in **4:27:12**. He also gained bronze medals in the Victorian 30 km and 15 km titles.

In 1981, he was 2nd in the Australian 50 km (**4:29:16**) and 3rd in the Victorian 30 km title and won his second International selection – for the Racewalking World Cup in Valencia. Unfortunately any hope of a good time was ruined by hot humid conditions and he finished 33rd in **4:38:48**. He was the first Australian to finish (Willi Sawall retired and Peter Fullager was disqualified).



The 1981 Lugano Cup Team

Back Row: Peter Fullager, John Sheard, Harry Summers (Captain), Willi Sawall
Centre Row: Sally Pierson, Sue Cook, John Boas (Mgr), Anne Ryan, Lorraine Young
Front Row: Keith Knox, Michael Harvey, Dave Smith, Bill Dyer

John retired from serious competition soon after this. It was an unfortunate loss to the sport. I have no doubt there was further improvement to come but, as with many of our competitors, there are other things to be done in life, and family and work commitments must be eventually honoured.