

FOCUS ON LLOYD NICHOLS

Lloyd Nichols has been a member of the Victorian Race Walking Club for over 30 years but his career in athletics goes back much further than that.

Now aged 68, Lloyd took up athletics aged 16, in 1957, competing initially with Geelong Guild as a sprinter and middle distance runner. After a few years, he swapped clubs to Dandenong and saw out his competitive career with that club. Dandenong eventually became Springvale which became the Waverley Athletics Club and he only missed 2 days of summer competition in 20 years. He also served as secretary of the club for some years.

He was made a Life Member of Waverley Little Athletics in 2007 for his contributions as judge and coach there over many years.

From ages 16 to 25, he concentrated on running, specialising in the 880 yards. His best time stood at 1:59 but he found that his performance leveled out in his mid twenties and, whether he ran from the front, the back or mid field, he could not improve his best time any further. Consequently, he swapped to racewalking at the age of 25 and spent the next 10 years competing in our wonderful sport. In that context, his name can be seen in the results for various Victorian championship walks in the late 1960s.

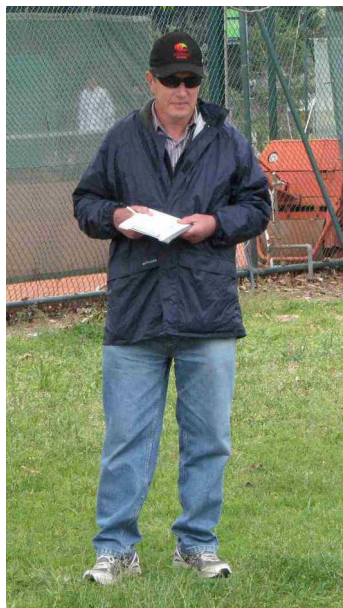
I don't think many people, especially sprinters, did long distance training in the early '60s, but Lloyd frequently ran home from work in the city all the way to Dandenong. Athletics has been a way of life to him.

He took up judging some 30 years ago when involved in Little Athletics and has been a regular at the Victorian Race Walking Club ever since. His son and daughter were both very good racewalkers.

He has had a walking group every Monday morning at Jells Park for many years and has coached walkers like Jean Knox, Brenda Riley, Shirley Coppock and Janet Holmes at different times.

It was some 16 years ago now that Lloyd suffered a major stroke but, to his credit, he fought back and resumed his judging and coaching activities as soon as possible. Even now, he runs in 2 or 3 races at East Burwood Masters each week and has done for over 20 years, both before and after his stroke.

It is fair to say that he has been, for many years, one of our most committed VRWC judges, doing just about all club races and regularly putting up his hand for any and all Victorian championships. He also judges every summer in the AV Shield competition and has also judged at Masters Nationals and Oceania Games.



Lloyd judging at Albert Park recently

Peter Vysma has extracted the following for me about Lloyd's club judging service over the past few winter seasons:

2009 - 14 club races

2008 - 16 club races
2007 - 18 club races
2006 - 14 club races

This is indicative of his ongoing contributions over many years.

The final words from Janet Holmes whom Lloyd has coached for the past 10 years

As a coach he never shouts or carries on but lets it be known that training has to be taken seriously. He is very patient and always finds something positive and encouraging even after a disappointing race or training times.

and from fellow judge and coach Alan Johnson

With the health problem Lloyd has carried for the past 16 years, many would have lacked the desire, the courage and the determination to continue facing the walking family in the capacity of a walk judge – always a task requiring those qualities in large amounts!

Tim Erickson
15 October 2009