

Mark Donahoo

1987	Racewalking World Cup	New York	50 km	64 th	4:29:49
1989	Racewalking World Cup	Barcelona	50 km	73 rd	4:37:19
1993	Racewalking World Cup	Monterey	20 km	58 th	1:35.06
1995	Racewalking World Cup	Beijing	50 km	DNF	

Mark Donahoo, born 27th May 1958, has been a member of the Victorian Race Walking Club since the late 1970s when he first joined as a junior member and he has been both a strong competitor and an able administrator, often mixing the two.

Although he started racewalking at 16 years of age, it was not until the 1984 season that he finally started to blossom and produced a **2:29:56** to finish 3rd in the Victorian 30 km title.

In 1985, he walked his first 50 km in the Victorian Championship. Although he was walking in 5th place for much of the race, he was overtaken by Harry Summers and so missed selection in the 1985 Lugano Cup.



A young Mark Donahoo races alongside Clarrie Jack at Albert Park in 1986

Mark won the bronze in the 1986 Victorian 20 km title (**1:34:55**) and won the 1986 Victorian 50 km title (**4:30:14**). In 1987, his improvement continued with fine second places in the Victorian 15 km title (**1:09:27**) and in the Australian 20 km title in Hobart (**1:31:34**). He also experienced his first international race and came 64th in the Lugano Cup 50 km event in New York in a PB time of **4:29:49**. He then finished off the season in fine style with a great win in the Australian Federation 20 km event in Adelaide on August 29 in a time of **1:34:41**

By this stage he was knocking on the door with best times of **12:42** for 3000m, **21:25** for 5000m and **43:28** for the 10 km. In fact, during the 1987 season, he broke 45 minutes for the 10 km distance on 5 occasions.

It was not surprising then when, in May 1988, he was 2nd in the 50 km Australian title and Olympic trial at Fisherman's Bend with a huge PB of **4:11:10**. Unfortunately this time was not sufficient to gain Olympic selection. The time had to rank against those of Willi Sawall, Mike Harvey, Simon Baker and Andrew Jachno and they were further along their career paths than Mark.

In February 1989, he was 2nd in the Racewalking World Cup 50 km trial in **4:19:41**, thus gaining a second international vest. He followed this a month later with 4th in the Australian Track 5000m title in **21:05**. Unfortunately, in the heat of Barcelona, and because of a slight hip injury he faded to finish 73rd in **4:37:19**.



Mark leads Mark Blackwood and Brad Malcolm in a Victorian Track Championship

In June 1990, he finished 3rd in the Canberra 20 mile in **2:34:12** and then took 2nd in a VRWC 20 km roadwalk at Albert Park in **1:28:40**, a time which qualified him for the 1991 Racewalking World Cup. Throughout the next summer, he continued to perform well with highlights being 4th in the Victorian 10,000m track walk in **43:28** and 6th in the Australian 5000m title in **21:39**. However, he failed to feature in either the 20 km or 50 km Racewalking World Cup trials due to a pelvic/back injury and he stayed at home as others went to San Jose.

The injury proved to be a severe overuse injury that was to stay with Mark for the rest of his walking career. But with various treatments he was able to manage the injury and continue his walking.

He was the third Australian to finish in the 1992 Australian 20 km road title (**1:36:59**) and finished the year with 4th place in the 50 km trial for the Racewalking World Championships with **4:22**. He chose to do the 20 km event in the 1993 Racewalking World Cup and in Monterey his 58th place out of 107 starters (**1:35:06**) was good given the horrendously hot Mexican conditions.

In April 1994, he narrowly missed selection for the upcoming Commonwealth Games. With Nick A'hern winning the 30 km trial in 2:12:23, the second place was fought out between Mark and Simon Baker with Simon getting up by a mere 2 secs. Simon recorded 2:15:50 for 2nd and Mark was 3rd in **2:15:52**, a big PB. In an effort to improve his case, he won the Victorian 20 km title in May in **1:26:33**, another PB and well ahead of second place AIS walker Dion Russell. Mark even went overseas in an attempt to sway the selectors but to no avail – only 2 male walkers went to Victoria in Canada.

Mark bounced back in 1995 and made the 50 km team for the Racewalking World Cup that was held in Beijing. He had to postpone the trip as his mother died suddenly and he arrived in Beijing two days before the race. Due to this unfortunate delay and a reoccurrence of the pelvic/hip injury that kept him out of the 1991 World Cup race, he was unable to finish the race. He reached the 33 km mark but, after some treatment by the team doctor, he decided the injury was too severe and he withdrew from the race.

This marked the end of his international career in the Open ranks but he continues to race and to maintain a high standard. An example of this was in February 1997 when he finished 6th in the Australian 20 km race in Melbourne in **1:27:32**.

At the WAVA Championships in England in 1999, he gained 2 silver medals (5000m track walk in **21:56** and 20 km road in **1:37:44**) in the 40-44 age group and at the WAVA Championships in Brisbane in July 2001, he gained a further 2 silver medals in the same age group (5000m Track Walk in **22:34** and 20 km Road Walk in **1:40:43**).

He has also been active on a number of fronts on the Australian race walking scene. These include

- Two stints as secretary of the Australian Federation of Race Walking Clubs
- Membership of the A.A. Racewalking Commission
- A.V. Selector
- A.V. Schools Committee membership
- Handicapper, Vice President, Club Coach and Selector for the VRWC
- Ongoing involvement in school sport and the organisation of inter-school sporting competitions

He was awarded life membership of VRWC in November 2000.

He continues to contribute to race walking at all levels with an enthusiasm that shows no signs of slowing and his list of personal best times gives an indication of his prowess as a walker and cements his place as one of our top competitors.

3 km	12.00		
5 km	20.38	Melbourne	22/11/90
10 km	42.20	Melbourne	2/4/88
15 km	1.06.26	Bendigo	22/5/93
20 km	1.26.33	Melbourne	22/5/94
30 km	2.15.52	Queensland	24/4/94
50 km	4.11.10	Melbourne	8/5/88