

Mark Dossetor

1989	Racewalking World Cup	Barcelona	50 km	75 th	4:37:55
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Mark Dossetor, born 19th April 1964, started athletics by running the 1979 Melbourne marathon at 15 but only joined a club as an Under 17 athlete in the 1980/81 season. With only 4 in the Club's age group, Mark started doing the racewalk as a warm up and ended up qualifying for the Australian Junior titles in Brisbane in 1982. There as the only Under 18 in the field, he finished 9th. He also came 2nd to Mike Harvey in the Victorian Junior 10 km track title before spending 18 months overseas. Taking up racewalking seriously in 1984, he was disqualified during the 1984 Australian Junior track titles race for the first and only time in his career whilst vying for the medals. He bounced back a few days later in the Open Track title when he came 6th and beat all the other Junior competitors.

With that race behind him, he moved into the senior ranks and had immediate success over the longer distances. He won the 1984 Victorian 30 km title in **2:28:08** on his first attempt and followed this up with a fine 2:49 in the Walker's Club 35 km Club Championship around Albert Park.

1985 was a big year for Mark. In the Australian 5000m track race, he came 7th in **22:30** (having taken the bus overnight from Melbourne). Then, after another good winter season, he won his first National title, the Australian 50 km, in **4:29:54**. But this achievement was countered by a big disappointment. A month before, he had been unable to compete in the Racewalking World Cup 50 km trial, being sidelined with a hamstring injury. His 4:29 would easily have qualified for team selection but all he could do was watch from the sidelines. Finally he finished the year in fine style by winning the Australian Universities Games walk in record time. He was also mixing running with walking at this stage and recorded a number of good running performances.

Over the next few years, Mark concentrated on the 50 km event, realising that this was where his best chances lay. In 1987 he contested his second Australian 50 km title, placing 2nd in **4:33:07** despite tearing a hamstring with 8km to go. He also showed good versatility, finishing 3rd in the Victorian 15 km that year in **1:09:47**.

1988 was a year of hard training with the focus being on the 1989 Racewalking World Cup. The training recipe proved correct and, in February 1989 in the 50 km Trial in Melbourne, he came 4th in **4:27:05**. He was duly selected to represent Australia in Barcelona. In early May he showed good form to come 4th in the Victorian 20 km in **1:33:20** and then he headed overseas. In the heat of Spain, he walked honestly to finish 75th in **4:37:55**. His finishing place did not truly reflect his fighting spirit. He was well up until the 32 km mark and then had to force his way through a tough 10 km before coming home in what was a case of mind over matter.



Mark rounds the turn at Fishermans Bend in the 1990 Victorian 15 km title race.

Over the next couple of years, Mark continued to improve and impress with fast times and good performances. The 1989/1990 summer saw him finish 6th in the Victorian title in **21:28** and then improve his time to finish 6th in the Australian 5000m track title in **21:16**.

That winter he finished 3rd in the 1990 Victorian 30 km in a PB **2:22:06**, and was 4th in the Canberra 20 mile walk in **2:38:00**, his first sub 2:40 performance. He also won the Australian Universities championship again and managed to add a sporting Blue from Monash University to the one he already held from the University of Melbourne.

In the early 1990's, Mark shifted to Canberra and has raced for the ACT since then. The move and marriage seemed to give his career a new lease of life and for a number of years he continued to produce good performances.

In fact, in 1995, he was back into serious training with Simon Baker and walking better than ever when he was sidelined once again by injury.

Unfortunately, this sort of thing plagued Mark throughout his walking career. In late 1984, just coming out of Junior ranks, he had his first serious operation, an anterior compartment syndrome operation for the right shin. This was followed by a work accident at Christmas in 1986, severely damaging tendons in an ankle. Then followed a cycling accident in 1987, a soft tissue foot problem in 1989, a cold and flu syndrome over 1990-92, an immune response problem in 1993, double hamstring compartment syndrome in 1995 (yet another operation) and finally a chronic scar tissue injury in 1996.

While this spelled the end of his career as an elite walker, he continued to race as much as his legs would allow and overall, he won some 19 ACT titles between 1992 and 2001. During this time he managed to maintain a good standard. For instance, he won the 1500m and 5000m in near Australian age record time and the 10000m in under 48 minutes in the 30-34 Age Category walks in the Australian Masters Games in late 1997 and in 1998 he won the ACT 10000m track title in **47:47**, the 5000m track title in **23:42** and completed the LBG 20 mile walk in around 2:52.

Apart from competing, Mark also held a range of executive positions over the period from 1986 to 2002. Organizations that benefited from his organizational skills included Melbourne University Athletics Club, ACT Walkers Club, ACT Athletics Association, and ACT Society of Sports Administrators. He was also involved with the Olympic movement, representing Australia at the International Olympic Academy in Greece in 1993 and helping organise the inaugural 1991 Victorian and 1994 ACT Olympic Academies. Over the next few years, he has turned his interests to archery and won his first ACT title in 2002.

In 2004 Mark returned to Melbourne with his family and is now seen at Albert Park when his son Ryan races in the younger age groups.

Mark's list of PBs shows his versatility as a walker. They include

1500m	6:05	1988
2000m	7:58	1990
3000m	12:16	1990
5000m	21:16	1990
10000m	44:41	1994
20 km	1:33:20	1988
30 km	2:22:08	1990
50 km	4:27:05	1989