

Garry loves the 60m



In my quest to profile athletes from different disciplines, I was considering our male sprinters when I noticed the photo of Garry Ralston on the MAWA website banner.

Like many athletes, Garry has always had a lot of energy and consequently, a lot of interests and I am grateful he agreed to share his story.

Garry joined MAWA about 10 years ago along with work colleague at the time and fellow speedster, Chris Neale. Garry played football and cricket for many years, but he and Chris decided they were *'getting a bit too old for combative sports'*. As a junior Garry participated in South West and State athletics teams but as a Master he soon realised that anything over about 200m was too exhausting. He decided that sprinting was the go for him, *'Love that 60m!'* Long jump and hurdles complete his repertoire.

Garry spent his formative years in Manjimup and Busselton, returning to Manjimup in Year 10 and eventually working in the Commonwealth

Bank.

Moving to Perth in 1974, Garry has worked long term as a Mortgage Broker and remains a part-owner of Select Mortgage Services. He also enjoys board positions in several public and private companies involved in mining, saw milling, hoist hire and finance. Garry says that perhaps the most interesting small business he helped start was "BlueHawk Presents" which tours international acts out of the US and Europe – Burt Bacharach, Sting and Paul Simon are personal favourites.

Toni, Garry's wife of 24 years, competed internationally in junior dance



In focus

With Carmel Meyer

and now runs Ballroom Blitz studio. However, Garry says for anyone wondering... *'I'm the original guy with two left feet!'* Their three children are pursuing diverse career paths; Megan - photography (weddings etc) with Verge Studios, Kate-Science at UWA and Matthew is studying Commerce. This variety of specialties must make for interesting dinner table conversation!

Garry says he has joined a growing band of admirers who *'...marvel at the performances of athletes including Peggy, David, Barrie and Irwin...'* Garry also has high praise for our Perth 2016 WMA committee. He says that securing the championships for Perth is *'...a great fillip for WA Athletics and a real endorsement of the committee charged with the bidding process.'*

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High flyer



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Garry is hoping to progress his times enough to maybe reach a final at 'Perth2016'.

He attended the 2007 WMA championships in Riccione Italy. Garry says he loved seeing the top athletes do their thing and came to understand better the friendly but competitive nature of Masters athletes. Garry also enjoys the camaraderie at the State Championships.

Garry credits his friend Allan Billington, a MAWA participant and Pilates instructor, with teaching him the value of a proper warm up incorporating some Pilates techniques. Coach and former champion sprinter Jayne Mitchell also provided Garry with advice and training techniques, especially for fast starts. Garry says Jayne may have been a little disappointed with his lack of work ethic in training, but he still practises the habits she taught.

Although he has not had hurdles coaching 'anyone who has seen me

do the 100m hurdles will attest to my lack of style', Garry hopes to add 300m hurdles to his repertoire. He feels an extra dose of courage will be needed. I think the Pilates stretches will definitively come in handy as well!

Garry says injuries have played a bigger than desired part in his Masters career. He comments wryly that hamstring tears tend to mend a lot more slowly as you age! To top things off, a regular checkup ended with a specialist finding *'...some interesting complications with my heart, and more particular the surrounding veins...'* Nothing to worry about so long as one stays fit, watches their alcohol intake and eats correctly. *'Well, two out of three ain't bad!'*

Garry loves watching the top athletes compete. Sitting in the stands one rainy night, he watched David Carr complete about 20 practise run-throughs of the water jump from around 40 metres away. He thought, *'that's what it takes to keep performing at the top level.'* A humble Garry

mentioned that a highlight for him personally was running well and winning 'a few' gold medals at the Melbourne 2012 AMA championships. I checked the results for more detail –6 gold, 1 silver and M55 60m Australian record. Garry also holds State records for 60m and 100m (M55) plus 100m Hurdles (M50 and M55).

Garry's favourite hobby also involves speed; he nominates his race horses as his biggest interest away from business and family. The best by far Garry says was his pacer 'I'm TheMightyQuinn' aka 'Quinnie', a three-time Interdominion winner. Of the current group with an exciting future, look out for Beaudiene Boaz.

Garry says he's not sure he can give advice to newly minted Masters athletes, but it helps him to remember a piece of sprinting wisdom uttered by a well known Masters thrower/sprinter ... *'I don't get uptight in the sprints, I just think of it as going for a run against six or seven friends...'*