

## IN FOCUS

### The Dynamic Duo - Norm Richards and Barrie Kernaghan



These two 'old-timers' have done so much in their lives (some of it unprintable!) that these profiles are necessarily just small snapshots of some of those things that have made them what they are today.

When they run on Tuesday and Friday nights they still

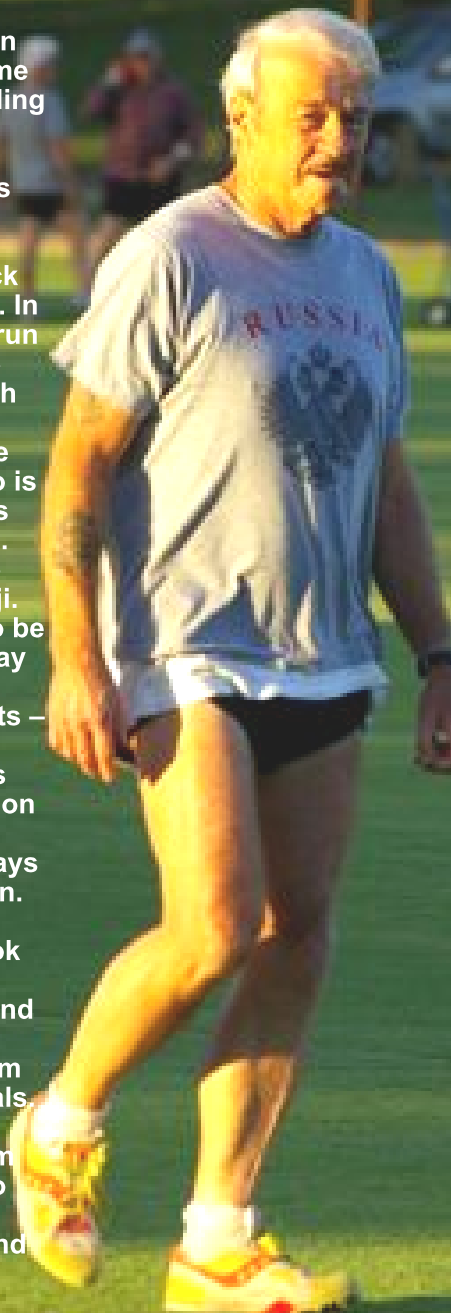
astound younger runners with their fitness and turn of speed. They have both achieved several sprint performances over 90% in recent months and AWA have even used a photograph of the two of them on the Events Archive section of their website.

## Norm ... Mr nice guy

Born in 1937 in a country town in Victoria, Norm went on to become an Agricultural Inspector, travelling widely to check up on farming practices. His main sports as a youngster were Australian Rules football, boxing and cycling – which he did professionally. He won the Dandenong Junior Track Cycling Championships in 1955. In the late seventies he started to run with Victoria's Springvale/Noble Park vets club and came to Perth in 1982 for the Australian Championships. This was where he first encountered Barrie, who is a few years younger, and, to this day, he is still trying to beat him. That same year, Norm ran in the first Oceanic Games in Suva, Fiji.

In 1984 he moved to Perth to be closer to family and straight away joined our vets club. He now concentrates on the short sprints – and is notorious for his flying starts. In the past, however, he's run every distance up to marathon and also the Mundaring to York ultra-marathon. Nowadays he says that 400m seems like a marathon. He's competed in the Oceanic Games in Auckland and the Cook Islands and in World Games in America, England, Spain, Italy and Finland. He usually makes the semi-finals in the 100m and 200m and has won several relay medals.

For the last twenty years he has also run professionally, from Dandanup to Mullew, Subiaco to Kalgoorlie, achieving second place in one of the York Gifts and winning a few races – like the



Mandurah Gift. His most recent professional outing was this season's Wanneroo Gift.

One of his abiding athletics memories is from the National Championships in Perth In 1989. In the 100m he dead-heated with three other runners and the next day the same four runners dead-heated in the 200m. It couldn't happen with photo finish!

Norm has three daughters and a son, nine grandchildren and one great grand child - and a vast quantity of medals. Many of his medals have been given away to family and other children, in the hope that it might encourage them to participate in athletics. But he has a cabinet for those medals with special significance, which include some for one of his other passions - ballroom dancing. And if there were medals for joke telling, Norm would always get gold. But don't listen to his jokes if you are of a prudish disposition!

Without running Norm wouldn't have had the opportunity to see so many places. His travel highlight was a trip to Russia, Turkey and Europe from Lahti in 2009. He enjoys the company of like minded people who, even as they age, don't appear to be old – and are great to have a few (or many) beers with. He'll continue to run as long as he can and will always make sure it is still fun.



Barrie Kernaghan sets up his starting blocks in preparation for another clash with Norm Richards. INSERT: Barrie in action.

# Barrie's running affair

Barrie was born in Perth in 1940 and, as a child, his only sport was surfing. Having become his surf club's beach sprint champion, he joined Nedlands Amateur athletic club in 1959 (competing on grass at the Leederville Oval) and ran in the 3 mile, 6 mile and steeplechase for club points. He was club champion and in winter cross country he came 6th in the state 10 mile road race championships and 4th in the state 15 mile.

During the time he was working for the Commonwealth Bank in Katanning he turned professional. He won every gift from Mullewa to Lake Grace and every state title from 75yds to a mile, initially running bare foot. In 1969, at age 29, he ran in the Australian Professional Foot Running Championships in Toowoomba, Queensland and was proud to compete against Billy Howard, possibly Australia's greatest pro athlete.

Back in Perth after 11 years country service, he wasn't allowed to compete against amateurs at Perry Lakes. So he took up coaching at Karrinyup Little Athletics and had such success that thereafter he had an input into almost every aspect and level of athletics in WA. Amongst other things he has been chairman, many times, of Karrinyup,

both the LA and senior clubs, Chairman of the senior athletics association, state Coaching and Education Officer for LA, treasurer of the Perry Lakes Rekotan Track Fund Raising committee and inaugural chairman of the WA Institute of Technology (WAIT) now Curtin, Regional Athletic Centre. Here he instigated weekly competition for blind and disabled athletes and acted as coach and guide to totally blind runner, Murray Buck.

Whilst training Murray he came across Bob Fergie who suggested that he nominate for the Veterans Championships being held in Perth in 1982. Although he was short on training, he did enter and won gold, silver and bronze in the 100m, 200m and 400m. In later Championships, with better preparation, he won all three golds. In 1985, at his first world championships in Rome, he won a 400m relay gold medal. In subsequent World Championships he has won individual medals of each colour as well as 8 relay medals.

As a vet he was allowed to run at Perry Lakes and has competed there for Karrinyup ever since. He has attended seven World Games and won over fifty state and national gold medals - mainly in relays, but also individual gold in the

400m. In 2000 he was proud to be selected to carry the Olympic torch through Triggs and was awarded the Queen's Australian Sports Medal for his contribution to the sport of athletics over a forty year period. He says that none of it could have been achieved without the full support of Coral, his wife of 47 years.

Perhaps surprisingly, he has managed to make time for a life outside athletics. He grows orchids (Cymbidiums, which he kindly hands out to all and sundry) and is heavily into genealogy. He has a valuable Australian stamp collection and still performs as a magician at the occasional birthday party. He says that if you want someone to disappear, just give him a ring - he still has a garage full of tricks.

Athletics has kept him healthy, fit and sane and has helped him make many friends throughout the world. It has also given him the opportunity to travel extensively after each world championships. Both his children were also athletics champions so, for many years, the family almost lived at Perry Lakes. Now that it is being pulled down they have a problem - they had always planned to scatter Barrie's ashes there! As Barrie says "You might as well die doing something you love."