

## COLIN HEYWOOD C75: 22:46:53

**Colin Heywood** (C75) was one of 4 walkers to qualify as an Australian Centurion in our 2018 qualifying event at the Harold Stevens Athletics Track in Coburg, his time a creditable 22:46:53.

It was Colin's second attempt. He had made the trip down from Darwin in 2017 to attempt the Australian Centurion challenge on the recommendation of a Centurion friend. On that occasion, he was frustrated by ankle soreness and was forced to stop with 100.773km to his credit. His pace had been good (100km in 13:53:28) but his race was over. In 2018, he was nearly an hour faster through the 100km mark (12:53:08) and his finish was never really in doubt. Over to Colin for his thoughts on the two walks.

*I only managed to complete 100km in 2017 due to ankle soreness that arose from training. My early training went well with a 50km at 7 min pace. However with the wet season storms, heat and humidity, training became interrupted and I developed ankle soreness possibly from insufficient recovery time between long efforts.*

*The ankle soreness turned out to be arthritis, for which I was advised to reduce long distance training. Since I had already planned to attempt the Australian Centurion again, I decided to limit the weekly long walk to 30km at 7min pace. The training went well, with no severe ankle problems. Fortunately, during the 2018 Coburg 24 Hour Challenge, the weather conditions were great and I had no ankle problems. Although I tired from limited training preparation and had many rest stops, I was able to pace myself to achieve the 100 miles within the 24 hours. I am very proud to become the 75<sup>th</sup> Australian Centurion and hope my endeavours will encourage others to become members of this esteemed group of walkers.*

Colin's qualification was no surprise to those of us who knew him. He was no stranger to the sport of athletics, having competed initially as a runner and then switching to racewalking in the early 2000's.



*Colin competing at Coburg in 2017 (left) and 2018 (right)*

Colin, born 8<sup>th</sup> July 1954, was 63 years of age when he earned his centurion badge and became the first Northern Territorian to qualify. But he is not a native to northern Australia, having been born and bred in Melbourne.

*Apart from school sport, where I enjoyed soccer and cross country, I spent my teenage years in the Scouts and doing morning and afternoon paper deliveries around the Montmorency/Eltham area in NE Melbourne. In my mid 20's, I took up Aussie Rules Football with Collingwood Districts in the YCW Competition.*

*From the mid 1980's to 2000, I worked as an Accountant with the Australian Wheat Board. During this period, I competed in the Melbourne Corporate Cup, running my first Melbourne marathon in 1989. I have run about 25 marathons with a best time of 2:45 and am a proud member of the Melbourne Marathon Spartans Club.*

*While my two children Richard and Kristyn were growing up in Hoppers Crossing, I joined the Williamstown Seagulls Athletics Club, competing mainly in the winter cross country season as a second pack runner.*

*Moving to Watsonia in 2000, I joined the Diamond Valley Athletics Club and started doing the summer track season. It was there that I first started race walking. I was also a member of Collingwood Veterans, competing in their Magpie Marathon multi event competitions, as well as doing a stint of Aussie Rules umpiring.*

I remember when I first met Colin at the Tan track in inner Melbourne around the year 2000. I had been asked by the Corporate Cup organisers to walk a lap of the Tan (just under 4km) with any prospective walkers. Colin was amongst the group, and my plans for a pleasant stroll were soon dashed as we both zoomed around in under 20 minutes.

With his endurance and stamina already highly tuned from distance running, he quickly made his mark in the local racewalking scene, competing in the Athletics Victoria State League track competition with Ivanhoe/Yarra Athletics Club. During this time he also joined the VRWC and, with regular racing and coaching sessions, his technique improved.

The first walk result I can find for him is in the Victorian Veterans 20km Roadwalk Championships on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2000, when he won his age group with a time of 1:46:21.

Over the next 4 years, he regularly competed, reducing his times year by year. From my records, I have his PBs recorded as 2:41:39 (30km), 1:42:42 (20km), 1:14:44 (15km), 47:50 (10km), 23:04 (5000m) and 13:18 (3000m).



*Colin competing at Middle Park in Melbourne in August 2003*

In 2005 Colin moved to Canberra, joining the ACT Race Walkers Club and completing a number of memorable Lake Burley Griffin 20 Miles and 10 Miles races over the subsequent years.

Colin re-married in 2012 and moved to Darwin with his Department of Defence job in 2014. He has certainly found it much more demanding from a sporting perspective, with the tropical hot climate.

*Walk training is quite a challenge during the wet season from October to April. Racing opportunities are also limited, with NT Athletics meetings generally only held once a month. By way of compensation, living in Darwin city close to the waterfront and training along the beach and nature reserve paths is wonderful.*

Colin has made his mark in Darwin since his move there, with a number of awards

- NT Government Sports & Recreation Masters Sportsperson 2015 & Finalist 2016
- NT Athletics Male Masters Athlete of the Year 2015, 2016 and 2017
- NT Athletics Male Athlete of the Year 2017

He completed a Level 2 Intermediate Coaching Accreditation last year and now provides walk coaching to local clubs and at NT combined athletics meetings, working to promote walk racing for fitness and as a competitive sport. He is also a member of the Mature Athletes Darwin (MAD Frogs). A full plate indeed!

My profile would be incomplete if I did not mention Colin's appearances at the various international Masters Games. His first World Veterans Assn appearance was in Brisbane in 2001 when he came from behind to place 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 20 km road walk. He has attended a number of World Masters Championships since, with bronze medals in Sacramento (2011)

and Lyon (2015) in the 20km and an unlucky DQ in San Sebastian (2005) at the 18km mark, while challenging for the lead. He also competed in the WMAC Non Stadia in Auckland in 2004, winning the 30km and taking 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 10km road walks. In the Perth WMAC in 2016, he came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 5000m track walk and 1<sup>st</sup> in 10m and 20 km road walks. He has also won a number of team medals from the various Games, which he especially cherishes.



*Colin competing in the 20km event in the World Masters Championships in Perth in 2016*

After competing at the WMAC in Lyon, his wife Ana and he were blessed with a beautiful boy Darcy. “*They have inspired and motivated me to keep fit and continue race walking.*”

I asked Colin for his goals, now that he has his centurion badge.

*I am now training for the 2018 World Masters Athletics Championships in Malaga in September and then the Australian Masters Athletics Championships in Melbourne in 2019. I also plan to attend the next WMAC games in Toronto in 2020. I enjoy competing in team road races and, while I'm not planning another Centurion effort just yet, I liked the RWA 100km championship and will consider it again next year. I believe an ultra-distance walk early in the year is a good base preparation for Championships in the latter part of the year. I did the Wangaratta Marathon in Feb 2016 in 3:31 and I believe this assisted in my success in the Perth WMAC.*

Welcome aboard Colin!