

MAIN PHOTO:
Dave Wyatt
plays with his
band. **INSET:**
Dave in a 400m
race when he
was 18.

Dave Wyatt just



Keeps on rocking

BORN in England to the owner of the local hardware store, Dave Wyatt loved sport at school and played soccer, cricket, gymnastics, tennis and badminton. But his passion was athletics where he excelled at sprints and jumps. In 1967, at the age of sixteen, he took his school long jump and triple jump records and came third in the triple jump at the County Schools Championship. He also gained the qualifications to take him on to tertiary education in London where he gained membership to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

In London he met Gay, an Australian whose father was on secondment to the British Army. To be with her, Dave became one of the last 'Ten-Pound Poms' and within a couple of years they were married and settled in Perth. They have two daughters and their first grandchild is due (in Canada) round about Christmas. Dave retired in 2007 after thirty five years in construction where he was associated with many major civil engineering projects in WA.

After leaving school, athletics opportunities were limited and it was not until his daughters left Little Athletics that he found the urge to compete again. That was in 1993, the year the Australian Masters Games were in Perth. So he went along to the athletics and was so impressed by the organisation and the abilities of the athletes that he vowed to become involved at the earliest opportunity – and he joined WAVAC.

His first competitive 100m race for 25 years was a chastening experience as he chose to run in the last heat against a couple of the "older blokes". He was soundly beaten by two of the fastest sprinters in the club – Keith Martin and Norm Richards. This was the trigger he needed to train harder and get faster.

High jump is Dave's passion and he has held State records in all age groups from M40 to M60, the last four of which are still current. Although he would like to have held on to them all he is happy for others to enjoy the elation that goes with the success.

Dave loves athletics and will always compete in the WA State Championships because it provides a focus for all the hard work during the season. That hard work has brought him more than a hundred state medals. He admits to often being overcome with pre-event jitters but did compete in the World Masters Championships in Brisbane in 2001 in the three jump events. In national championships, he has won twelve medals, seven of them gold. He is looking forward to competing in the World Championships in Perth in 2016 when he will have just entered the M65 age group. His goal each year is to chase the best age-graded percentages in his favourite events. He generally achieves between 80% and 90% but is always striving for the elusive 90 plus per cent..

As an Australian accredited Level 3 coach, qualified in several disciplines, Dave has been passing on his enthusiasm, knowledge and expertise to many athletes, young and old, for about twenty years.

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In 1995, when Lynne Choate and Norm Richards were preparing for the World Championships in Buffalo, it was Dave they approached for assistance. This trio was the nucleus of what has now become a larger group who work together regularly. They target the next National or World Championships aiming at bringing home a significant number of medals. He also introduced the high jump to some mid week T&F sessions where he has a regular following. And, since retiring from full-time work, Dave has been passing on skills and techniques at the other end of the age spectrum at a Perth private girls' school.

As a well rounded person, Dave also has a passion for music and plays guitar, bass guitar, mandolin and a little bit of keyboards. For twelve years he has played bass guitar in a band with a group of "Old Rockers". He says "*Like Masters Athletes, our bodies grow old but the desire to play over-rules the pain of arthritic fingers or the self-induced deafness as a result of overly loud amplification in our youth*".

Dave succinctly sums up what many of us feel when he says: "*I cannot imagine life without Masters Athletics. It is the friendship and the camaraderie that exists in MAWA that brings me back each year. It is the encouragement that everyone gets without necessarily being the best. For me, it is not about winning against others, it is about winning against yourself.*"



On a
mission