

What am I doing?



In focus

With Carmel Meyer

Lisa Limonas joined MAWA in late 2013 and has since managed to hone her Masters skills despite training and competing often having to take a backseat while she supports the athletic pursuits of her two 'awesome' teenagers Madi and Jake. Lisa would not have it any other way. She is a self-described Proud Mum and says 'I am so lucky and proud to have Madi and Jake excel, and share my love of athletics and sport in general.' Lisa is great fun to have around at the track, able to compete seriously but also able to match the inimitable John Dennehy at trackside banter.

Lisa started in Little Athletics U10's for Inglewood, back in the day when competitors ran barefoot. She recalls '*...running as fast as we could to deflect the prickles, doubleleees and swooping magpies.*' Lisa's favourite events were the 100m, 200m, high jump and long jump. She also had a love/hate relationship with the 400m which she still has to this day. It's true, – prior to the start of a recent 400m Lisa was heard to mutter '*why am I doing this?*' She went on to Little A's U13's and then one year of juniors. However, as Lisa readily admits, when the teenage years kicked in, she took a short break '*...for about 35 years!*'

Around five years ago Lisa was thrown '*...a bit of a curve ball...*' and during that time she realised she had to make some changes, look after herself a bit more and do some things that made her happy. However, she then did what generous people often do – she saw a need and stepped up to help. At that time Madi and Jake were part of Baldivis Little A's. When their club Settlers Hills needed a new president, Lisa put up her hand and took over the position. As she also had her level 1 coaching accreditation she suddenly found herself '*El Presidente*' and coach of a Little Athletics club.

When Lisa's daughter Madi was training middle distance with her previous coach Shane Ellis, he suggested Lisa take up masters athletics. '*He suggested I train for middle distance but I had other ideas and went for the shorter option of sprints and jumps!*' Lisa now trains with Dave Wyatt's '*amazing*' group on Saturdays – a.k.a 'Dave's Girls, and Norm'. During the week, in between work and mum duties, Lisa joins her kids' training group 'Team Purser'.

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She lights up track



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The group was originally coached by Steven Purser who has since returned to the UK. He now coaches long distance, setting goals and coaching program, which are ably implemented by local coach James McCoeey. Lisa says she finds training with the youngsters is a challenge, to say the least... *'...my brain is telling me I can still run like a 15-year-old and my body is telling me to act my age!'* Tongue very firmly in cheek Lisa says she especially loves the days when the training regime is 8 x 400's. The 6 x 150m and 4 x 80's with walk back recovery sessions are her favourites; certainly a challenge for a masters athlete but I am guessing Lisa rises to the challenge every time! With her usual great sense of humour Lisa says *'...but when 800s are mentioned I practise my block starts, which need a lot of attention!'* However, she goes on to say *'... the kids are so encouraging as a lot of the parents join in, and fellow masters athlete Chris Neale is right up there, running with the best of them.'*

Competing in Parkrun at Rockingham, Bibra Lake or Applecross, has become a more regular occurrence for Lisa especially since son Jake has developed an interest in middle distance running. With a wry smile Lisa comments, *"As I want to set an example I will join them but unfortunately, by the time I have finished, they have cooled down and are sitting patiently in the car, hence the reason I love sprinting!"*

About 18 months ago at high jump training Lisa felt a niggle in her left knee.

A diagnosis of patellar tendonitis followed. After many visits to the physio and gym, she is slowly getting it to a stage where she can jump without any discomfort, but it has been a long process. Lisa feels lucky that her running has not been compromised by this injury.

I asked Lisa what the highlight of her masters' career to date was and like many others, she quickly replied that it was competing at the 2016 World Championships in Perth. Lisa says she went in hoping for a PB in at least one event but surprised herself with a Gold medal in the W40 4x100m relay (other teammates were Ranell Hobson, Karen Long and MAWA's Wendy Seegers).

Lisa was originally named as a reserve for the event but was surprised and delighted to find out that being reserve can sometimes lead to bigger and better things! Lisa says *'...my knee often complains, "What are you trying to do to me?"* but on triple jump day it gave her a reprieve and she won a bronze medal in the event. PB's in both the 100m and 200m, *'... thanks to that wonderful wind down the straight!'*, completed Lisa's successful championships.

Lisa was absent from the track recently as she spent a week at the Australian Junior Athletics Championships cheering on Madison who, in her best Nationals performance so far, ran PB's in the 800m (2.17.70) and 1500m. (4.43.88). Not to be outdone thirteen-year-old Jake ran a PB at a recent Parkrun (19.12min.)

Proud Mum Lisa laughs and says, *'... I could go on and on about them!'*

Though only a recent arrival compared to many MAWA members, Lisa has had many career highlights already including a State record for W45 High Jump, a win plus State record in the 4 x 400m relay at the 2017 Darwin Nationals (with Sharon Davis, Jody Brownley, and Cathy McCloskey) and a 4 x 100m State record (with Anne-Marie O'Donovan replacing Jody). Another thrill for Lisa was finding herself up on a banner at the WAAS entrance last year. (Colin Smith is the 2018 Masters banner athlete). Lisa says this was a very proud moment for her but she gets just as much of a thrill running a PB at the regular Tuesday evening competition. Lisa is looking forward to taking part in the Nationals here in Perth in April this year. She is training for her pet events – sprints and jumps and says with a big grin *'...and I have bravely signed up for the 400m!'*

Lisa's thoughts on where the last five years have taken her: *'It has been life-changing for me and I have met so many wonderful and inspirational athletes who are my Masters Family. I will be a part of Masters Athletics until my body decides otherwise. Every Masters athlete has inspired me to give it a go, have fun with a lot of laughs along the way... and for that, I say thank you.'*