

New beginning



In focus

With Christine Oldfield

WHEN asked if he would agree to having his profile written for TFNL, Steve's comment was "Why? Can't you find anyone else's to do?" Until Grant Schofield introduced him to MAWA in January last year, Steve had never been involved in athletics so didn't feel he was a worthy subject. But he's been on my prospective candidates list for some time.

Born, raised and educated in Tasmania, Steve is a mechanical engineer. He moved to Melbourne for work in 1998 and moved to Perth in 2011 to take a job in mining. He's settled here for now so we look forward to seeing his athletic talents develop.

Steve has always enjoyed a variety of common and not-so-common sports including canoe polo (in which players can use their hands or their paddle). But his activity of choice has been soccer, predominantly as a player, but also a committee member and junior coach. One of his old soccer coaches used to joke (Steve says "at least I think he was joking!") that he was so bad at soccer he should take up running instead. He obviously took this to heart and, "just for fun", did the Melbourne half marathons in 2010 and 2011. He clocked times of 1:34:31 and 1:31:59 – not bad for his first-ever organised races.

With two Perth City to Surf races under his belt as well, he had obviously caught the racing bug and in May 2012 he took a trip to China to compete in the Great Wall Half Marathon. Described by the organisers as "a tough, beautiful and definitely extraordinary experience", this race involves 2582 steps (He described his experience in December's *Vetrun*). He completed the race in a remarkable time of 1:57:43. For good measure, he then went on to run the Melbourne Marathon in October in 3:14:20.

From time to time Steve also goes to Sunday runs and, most weekends, joins Tom Lenane and Toni Phillips for their training sessions. His first ventures on to the track at WAAS were a completely new experience and he found it a bit daunting at first. But, after attending for a while and meeting more people, he found that he could take it just as seriously as he wanted to. In his first weeks, having picked up an early nigggle, he decided not to compete – but came to WAAS anyway so that he could assist with the officiating. He's now a regular watch holder. He says "Of course it's a social activity too, and the friends I have there are half the reason I attend. I always leave Masters with a smile on my face now, even if I don't arrive that way

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Flat out



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The Club Tops show him featuring in the top three in his M35 age group in several events from 800m to 5000m and also the 2000m steeplechase. At present, he is happy just to run, not 'compete'. His interest lies in middle to long distance but he recently tried a few sprints "*just out of curiosity*". He still chooses not to wear a watch while running – trying not to become a slave to the clock. But he has started keeping records of his times and is "*always happy when they improve*".

Steve ran 1:27.53, a 4 minute PB, in the Cadbury Half Marathon in January, gaining him an M35 bronze medal in the Australian Masters Half Marathon championship. And he definitely wants to try for a sub 3-hour marathon. He loves travelling, so he has his eye on a marathon in Madagascar in June this year. Perhaps he can be persuaded to do his warm up at our State Championships!

Steve Weller and Trent Harris battle to the line in an 800m.