

Ivan strives to keep



Ivan Brown was born in Melbourne in 1944. His birth was six weeks premature which in those days meant you needed extra strength to survive. That inner strength has remained and helped him in both athletics and his working life. Growing up in Bendigo Ivan played footy, cricket and tennis. After finishing school he worked in Melbourne for six years and then in Port Moresby (1968-1973). During this time he took up the challenge of a four day Kokoda trail hike with friends. Ivan was in Aussie rules premiership teams in Melbourne and Port Moresby, switching to hockey and tennis when re-settled in Perth. He married Penny in 1970 and their children are Matthew, Marcus and Sarah.

Ivan was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor in 1979, aged 35. He worked for the Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions until age 43, when he was appointed a Magistrate. Ivan said he would often run around the bridges during his lunch break;

"Running always helps to clarify your thoughts." After 17 years of dealing with mining matters, civil claims, coronial inquests, restraining orders and offenders as varied as Alan Bond, Brian Burke and John Kizon, he chose to retire in 2006.

While living on a bush block in Wanneroo Ivan discovered his sons could beat him over 3 km around the block. They all joined the Marathon Club in 1990 and Marcus joined coach Margaret Saunders at Swan Districts Athletics. Initially a spectator at training, Ivan eventually jumped the fence and joined the squad. Marg has coached Ivan for 25 years. He joined Masters (no. 194) in 1993 – the same day as Milt Maverick. With Marg's help, Ivan set new targets – at age 50 he ran his first marathon in 3hrs30 and after nine attempts got down to 3hrs20. He also aimed to break 40 mins for 10 km and eventually ran a couple of sub 40min track races at Coker Park (ECAC), aged 54. Ivan said it was thanks to Marg and her training group that at M50 his 10km time dropped from 46 mins to a PB of 39.48.

"That month was my peak, at age 54, and I achieved PB's for 3000m (10:58) and 5000m (18:57). I built up to a PB in the club 25km event in June 1999 (1:46:30) at an average of 4:12 per km."

A tip from Ivan – *"400-500m reps are the best way to increase your leg speed."* Doing the Pentathlon at State and National level has also given Ivan much pleasure – *"... a few medals, lots of laughs and good companionship."*

In April 2000 Ivan joined one hundred other runners from WA who travelled to Sydney to run a marathon on the Sydney Olympic course – again he ran 3hrs30 despite having an emergency pit stop. He won't elaborate on this misadventure and said it is a story only known by his closest friends!

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In focus

With Carmel Meyer

up his enthusiasm

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Ivan considers David Carr to be the most inspiring 'vet' he has known and he is grateful for the encouragement he has received from fellow masters such as Bob Schickert and Brian Foley, who encouraged him to enter the Brisbane World Championships in 2001. Ivan competed in every M55 event from 800m to the marathon. His marathon time was again 3hrs30! *"Thanks to Robin King who dragged me over the line!"*. Also, not the first time Robin has been an inspiration – *"I will never forget the John Gilmour 10,000m at Coker on November 26, in 1998, when Robin and I splashed our way around 25 laps in heavy rain to both go under 40 mins."*

For his 60th birthday, Ivan's mates presented him with a pair of runners with a handful of six-inch nails poking through the soles!

"They went straight to the pool room for display". In 2005 Ivan and Penny travelled to San Sebastian in Spain for the WMA Championships. In the M60 cohort, Ivan competed in all track events from 800m to 10 km, usually ranked midfield. Then at the 2016 Perth Worlds, Ivan was thrilled to make the final of the M70 1500m, running 6 min 7 secs to finish eleventh out of fifteen finalists.

Not only is Ivan a generous helper at weekly track competitions, but he was also MAWA club President in 2006/07 and was director of the Cliff Bould run for twenty years. The proud grandad has brought grandchildren Georgia and Harrison to compete with him at WAAS. He recalls being *"thrashed"* over 800m by 11-year-old Harrison who finished in 2.38.

Throughout his athletics career, Ivan has kept performance goals and achievements diary which helps him maintain focus and enthusiasm. He joins a gym for six months every summer to avoid the heat but admits, *"I have given up any ambitions to develop muscles like Nick Miletic!"* Ivan wrote a very interesting article in TFNL (April 2019). In it, he acknowledges that his diaries show the inevitable decline in performance over the years, but he urges all athletes to invest in their longevity by having a heart stress test as he was encouraged to do by Marg Saunders. This can detect any potential issues. Then, with a clean bill of health, the athlete can continue striving to maximise their potential whatever their age.

2020 Brisbane Nationals are Ivan's immediate target as he enters a new age group, M75. After that, it seems clear that he isn't intending to slow down. What's in his sights?

"...more golf, tennis and maybe bowls," Ivan said.

