

Death jolts interest

Olympics inspires
Campbell Till
to take up athletics

Campbell Till was born in Perth in 1957 and spent his primary school years in Northam. He works in the surveying industry and he and his wife have two teenage children.

He says that the TV coverage of the 1968 Mexico Olympics “piqued his interest” in athletics and prompted him, in the second season ever of Little Athletics, to join Karrinyup LAC. He remembers running on cinders at Perry Lakes warm-up track and enjoyed “a modicum of success” in High School athletics and cross country. He also joined Scarborough Surf Club and, in 1974, was a member of the junior Beach Relay Team which won the state title and competed in the nationals. Some will remember the dog-chewed 1974 T-shirt with which he won Barrie Kernaghan’s *Oldest T-shirt Competition* at WAAS on Tuesday, January 24.

Then he “lapsed into many years of golf and other gentle pastimes” until, when he was about forty, a lifelong friend died suddenly. This jolted him “to pursue some unfinished business” in athletics in which he had always maintained an interest. He decided to get fit again and, having never done a great deal of training, he wanted to see what he could achieve. Soon after, he sought out and joined MAWA. He tried many events and came to realise that his forte was the 400m – a surprise since it wasn’t a distance he had run when he was younger. He also enjoyed the challenge of the pentathlon and occasionally the 400m hurdles.

Campbell is a good all round athlete. In 2009 he did the unthinkable and beat David Carr to win the Patron’s Trophy. This season he came third, with four of his performances gaining points in the mid eighties. He regularly features in the Club Tops and has a stack of medals from State Championships.

He has also competed in four National Championships. He says he “had the good fortune to win two 400m titles” – it must also have involved a lot of hard training.

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But he found it very rewarding, having never thought he would be able to reach that level. The second title, in Sydney 2008, was particularly memorable, against good competition: “I was still leading at 350m but being run down by the reigning champion. I gave it absolutely everything and hung on by one centimetre – but then slammed to the track with my next stride and received bruised ribs and a broken collarbone for my trouble. A strange mix of exhaustion, pain and elation.”

Campbell’s contribution to MAWA has been immense. He willingly volunteers his help at the regular track and field sessions – holding a watch, recording finishers, firing the gun or raking the pit. But early on in his masters’ membership he was identified as a bit of a ‘statistics tragic’ (*his words, not mine. CO*) and it seemed natural that he would fill the vacant club statistician’s role

some nine years ago. So his main input has been keeping track of all your top performances and records. It is he who makes sure that you all have the certificates you have earned, whether it be for State, National or World records. He says that he finds it time consuming on occasions but enjoys the job, seeing the best of the club’s athletes achieving their goals.

At present he is focussing on a full recovery from injury (and progressing well) after losing a lot of fitness. Later this year he will enter a new age bracket (M55) and new challenges will be presented. He claims “One of the ‘pleasures’ of Masters – it pays to get older.” Campbell has long enjoyed the competition and friendships that masters athletics affords and foresees that continuing. If events work out he would like to have at least one run in a World Championships. Perth 2016 will surely be his opportunity.

