

Sunday runner

Lorraine Lopes – The black caviar of distance running



Lorraine Lopes leads fellow Australian Anne Stobus and American Jean Daprano.

Described thus by Campbell Till (in *Vetrun*) earlier this year, it is hard to believe that Lorraine only began running when she was sixty five. Born in Melbourne in 1940 into a sporty family, the young Lorraine played tennis, netball and squash but her only experience in running was in the annual school relay race. It was whilst playing competition squash in Geraldton in her late thirties that her competitive nature began to emerge. The youngest of her three children, Trish Knox, is also a MAWA member.

In later life, Brian Bennett persuaded Lorraine to go to a Sunday run and, although she walked, she found it very enjoyable. She began race walking but after a foot injury discovered that running was less painful. She joined the Friday morning group but any suggestion that she should do some training was rejected because she was “running just for exercise and fun”.

In 2007 she broke her hip so it was 2008 before she began to run again, mainly 10km and upwards. In 2010, having just turned 70, she was begged to run in the postal relay races for the W65 team. To prepare for the short distances she decided to try some track sessions – and got the shock of her life when she set an Australian record for the 3000m. And this was just the start of an amazing haul of records. The club statistician calculated in June this year that she had “now racked up an amazing twenty one state records and six Australian records in less than eighteen months as a W70.” (*Vetrun*, June). She had also achieved three relay Ars.

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ALEX G. SPANOS SPORTS COMPLEX			
W70	800	Meter	Run
Daprano	1	3	03.13
Stobaus	2	3	03.04
Lopes	3	3	03.54
Chen	4	3	03.50
Garcia: M	5	3	03.15
Espinosa	6	3	03.00
Mendibur	7	3	03.00
Stoll	8	4	03.38

ALEX G. SPANOS SPORTS COMPLEX			
W70	1500	Meter	Run
Daprano	1	6	30.07
Lopes	2	6	31.36
Stoll	3	6	48.96
Carlson	4	7	05.19
Espinosa	5	7	20.76
Mendibur	6	7	35.81
Bustaman	7	8	04.09
Chen	NS		

Just for the cuppa

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In her first Australian Championships, Perth 2010, she won the 800m and the 10000m but was disappointed with the lack of competition in her age group. A couple of months later she joined the Tuesday morning group, quite unaware of what awaited her. She says that after the first session “David had run me ragged with all his reps etc”. But not being a quitter she went a couple more times – mainly for the cuppa afterwards. Then a long bike tour was an excuse to drop out and it wasn’t until this year’s postal relays that she started again. David both challenged and encouraged her and she attributes all the credit/blame for her performances to him.

At the AMA Championships in Brisbane this year Lorraine came away with gold medals in the 800m, 1500m and



Lorraine shares her medal win with David Carr

5000m but, again, lacked competition. However, things were to be different at the World Championships. Lorraine

says “Sacramento was a very exciting time for me. I went with a lot of doubts, apprehension and nerves as to whether I

would be competitive enough. When I finished second in the 5000m I was stunned. Although I had an enormous smile on my face, I couldn’t really believe it was true. It was a bit like a dream and I still have that smile on my face when I think of it. It was an amazing feeling”. Bronze and SR in the 800m and silver and AR in the 1500m brought “great feelings of joy, elation and happiness, mixed with relief”. There was no shortage of competition in these races so she was truly tested

At the time of writing, Lorraine is the current holder of state records in every distance from 400m to 10,000m and of Australian records at 1500m, 1 mile and 3000m. But, despite enjoying the experience and her great success on the track, Lorraine still feels a lot more comfortable running longer distances on the road.