



Rob Shand shows his javelin style.

Photos: Vic Waters

Rob loves a challenge

Rob Shand was born in 1932 in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia. At Milton School, he started athletics at age 12 and continued with middle distance at university in Cape Town. Here he added cross country and road racing to his repertoire and as well as a Bachelor of Architecture he also gained his Athletics blue.

He competed in the South African Junior Championships in 1952 coming second in the 880yds in 2m1.3s. In the same year he set a national record for the mile in Rhodesia. During the following two years he ran 52.3s for the 440yds, 1:57.8 for the 880yds and 4:19.6 for the mile (still PBs for those distances) and competed in the South African Open Championships.

He worked as an architect in Northern Rhodesia and the UK and migrated to Perth in 1961. He continued working here, with a term off to do his Master's degree in Melbourne (where he ended up lecturing the course since he "knew more than the people running it?!), then started up on his own in 1980.

After a lay-off in the UK, Rob started exercising again when he came to Perth,

playing squash and running on the treadmill. He joined the Vets in 1975 and proudly wears No.9. With Vets and Masters he has run everything from 800m to marathon, clocking up some impressive times. In a glorious period from age 45 to 47 he set PBs for a dozen different distances most of which were State Records. His 16.248km for the one hour race in 1977 still stands today. He ran five marathons, his fastest being 2:52.07 and his slowest, and last, 3:05.12. He extended his participation to field events and, suffering from a worn out knee, his last run was in the pentathlon 1500m race at the Australian Vets Championships in 2003.

In Singapore's 1982 SE Asian Championships he took gold in the 5km, 1500m and 10km, the last two being all-comers' records, and also bronze in the javelin. Rob has also competed in several Australian Vets/Masters Championships. In Perth 1977 he picked up two golds and a silver in the 800m, 1500m and 10km respectively. When Perth 2003 came around he was a field athlete and took two golds and a bronze in the pentathlon, javelin and discus. In 2010, he broke the

state record in winning the javelin silver medal and bronze in the shot.

This is surely sufficient achievement for one man but Rob likes challenges. In 2000, at age 68, no longer able to run distance, he took up swimming. Every year until suffering a heart attack in 2009 he figured in state and/or national top ten rankings in a variety of distances. In 2003 he was No.1 in the state 1 hour race.

Rob's talents also stretch to the admin side of athletics. For five years from 1976 to 1981 he was the secretary of WAVAC as well as editor and distributor of the newsletter – forerunner of *Vetrun*. So issues from No.40 to No.103 were delivered in the Cottesloe, Nedlands, Dalkeith and Mosman Park areas by a man on the run – that's dedication.

Rob is married with two children and two grandchildren and hopes to continue throwing and maintaining current standards; but the two exclamation marks he placed after this last comment suggest he has no false hopes. However, he will be working towards competing in the State Championships in 2011 and hoping for results which do him justice. Good luck!