

I am hooked says

THE first thing to know about Christine Schelfhout is that she has a marvellous sense of humour! In the interests of journalistic integrity, the second thing I thought I should know is the correct pronunciation of her surname. It is a Belgian name which, in its anglicised form, is pronounced Shelf-out.

Chris is a Perth girl who grew up in the Mundaring hills. She is married and has three teenagers, one girl and two boys aged 19, 16 and 14 respectively. Chris says she has always been into sport and this led her into a career as a primary school PE teacher. As a child, netball was her number one sport and she also took part in athletics at school.

As so often happens with Masters competitors, Chris was re-acquainted with athletics 11 years ago when her children joined Little Athletics. As their centre is a small one it was a "roll your sleeves up" situation so Chris and her family have been heavily involved ever since; undertaking various committee, coaching, officiating and admin duties.

Three years ago Chris' boys started competing in Throws at the

Strive competition and it was there that she saw some Masters athletes competing. Chris says a year later



In focus

With Carmel Meyer

she decided that standing at the fence watching wasn't much fun so she started training with her sons' coach and started competing; the result? "Now I'm hooked!" she says. Chris' boys have achieved success in throws at a national level and are willing helpers when they come along to support her at Masters evenings. Chris comments wryly that they offer her throwing tips, whether she asks for them or not!

I asked Chris what her favourite throws event is: 'Hmm...*anyone when it actually works!*' As you can see Chris enjoys competing and doesn't take herself too seriously! She enjoys all the throws and, for this reason, her favourite event is the Throws Pentathlon which she competed in at this year's State Championships. Chris says 'I only had to beat myself to win gold' but, in addition, she had a really enjoyable day with the ladies from the other age groups.

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Chris describes throws coach Lindsey Glass as the 'guru' and says he is very patient. Any of us who have been coached by Lindsey will agree with that. Chris has found the throwers to be a great group of athletes who have made her feel very welcome and supported.

A highlight of Chris' short athletics career has been breaking the W45 State record for Hammer in December 2014. This was previously held by the great Eileen Hindle and set way back in 1999. Tongue firmly in cheek, Chris has sent out a warning to Kate Glass that in a few years she will be chasing Kate's W50 Hammer record! "*I'm dreaming*", says Chris. Thus far Chris hasn't ventured much past the circles/runways of throwing but she is tempted by the jumps and maybe a sprint or two. Any further than that and Chris is happy to cheer others on!

And what of her future aspirations? Like many of us, Chris has the World Masters Championships in her sights. She says that the dedication, talent and drive of the athletes she trains and competes with are big motivators and all the encouragement she needs to try World Masters. She is also keen to experience the Australian championships but only if she can fit it around her sons' competition calendar. In the short term, she aims to remain injury free and achieve as many PB's as possible. I asked Chris if she had any advice to pass on to those who may be considering a return to throws competition with the World Championships in mind. She replied that you can't see yourself throwing so if you don't train with a coach, become a YouTube junkie, see how it's "meant to look" and then have someone video you. This is a great way to check out your technique and is advice that really can be applied to any event.

I asked Chris if there was anything else readers might like to know about her...

"I have no plans at this stage to run for the US Presidency!"

