



Battle of the batons



Photo: TOM LENANE

DAVID SOLOMON

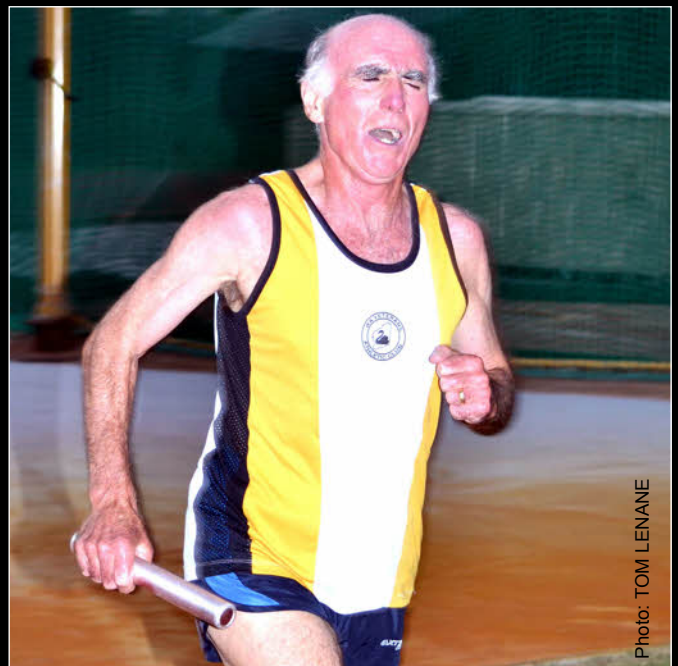


Photo: TOM LENANE

BOB SCHICKERT



Photo: TOM LENANE

MELISSA HYNDS



SUE BOURN and DELIA BALDOCK

Team spirit wins day

State record breakers

4x1500m

W50 25:59.0 Margaret Saunders, Peggy Macliver, Carol Bowman, Robin King

4x100m

M60 79.0 Maurice Creagh, Bob Schickert, John Oldfield, Derry Foley

W50 71.5 Lynne Choate, Bernie O'Callaghan, Carol Bowman, Gillian Young

4x800m

W40 11:40.8 Niamh Keane, Simone Solomon, Delia Daldock, Kerriann Bresser

February is the month when we pick up the coloured batons and work as a team - otherwise know as the AMA National Postal Relays month. MAWA has a natural attraction to the 4x1500 relays - who will ever forget those heady days in 2008 when ECAC was host to several world, national and dozens of state records? So we kicked off early, January 27 to be precise, with a batch of 4x1500s.

A significant number of our top athletes are currently either injured or coming back from injury, so it has been harder than usual to have our optimum teams on the track. Nevertheless, the spirit is always there on relays nights. With a large gallery cheering under floodlights, the atmosphere is electric, encouraging everybody to produce at their best. Those who took part would not accept anything less, giving their all in pursuit of team success.

No more was this evident when M80 Derry Foley was conscripted to run in the M40s team. Derry explained that he was not an 800m runner but would give it a go. At the 600m mark Derry was walking but continued and picked up the pace to allow the other three men a run.

January 27

There have been as many as twelve teams in the past; this year it was six. The six first-leg runners lined up at the start and off they flew in the 4x1500s.

The youngsters (**Ross Keane, Dante Giacomini, John Collier and Kim Thomas**) were inevitably favourites and so it turned out with Kim crossing the line in 21:33. They were given a battle in the middle two legs by an M45 team, but Ross' great first leg meant that the overall result was never in serious doubt. **Mike O'Reilly, Graeme Dahl, Trevor Scott and David Solomon** took second overall with a good time of 23:02. The third men's team, nominally M55, was led off at an excellent pace by **Paul Hughes. David Carr, Maurice Creagh and Bob Schickert** completed the quartet, finishing in 24:30.

The W50 women set the first state record of this relay season. Speedster **Margaret Saunders** led the team off with **Peggy Macliver** and **Carol Bowman** retaining momentum. **Robin King** brought the baton home to set a state mark of 25:59. **Gillian Young** anchored the W30 team which included her daughter **Mel Hynds**, plus **Lorraine MacLennan** and **Bernie O'Callaghan**. The final team comprised mainly W60s and 70s, but the inclusion of W40 **Regina Crouch** meant that this was their designated age-group. **Sarah Ladwig** led the team off, with **Lynne Schickert, Regina and Lorraine Lopes** (fresh from her 400m state record) anchoring the squad.



GILLIAN YOUNG

Analysis of relays

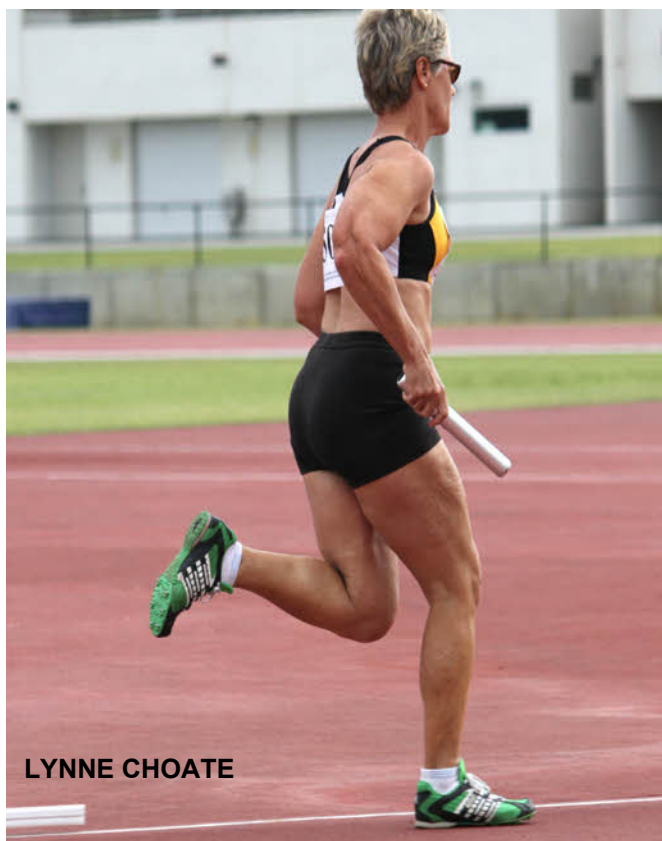
February 3

The first of the National Relays took place in the hammer cage! No, the field events are not relays in the true sense of the word, but team events. Three athletes have three attempts, be it a throw or a jump, and the three individual best attempts are added together to produce a total for the team. Only one hammer team participated, **Matt Staunton, Paul Foley and Lajos Joni** producing a total of 98.97m.

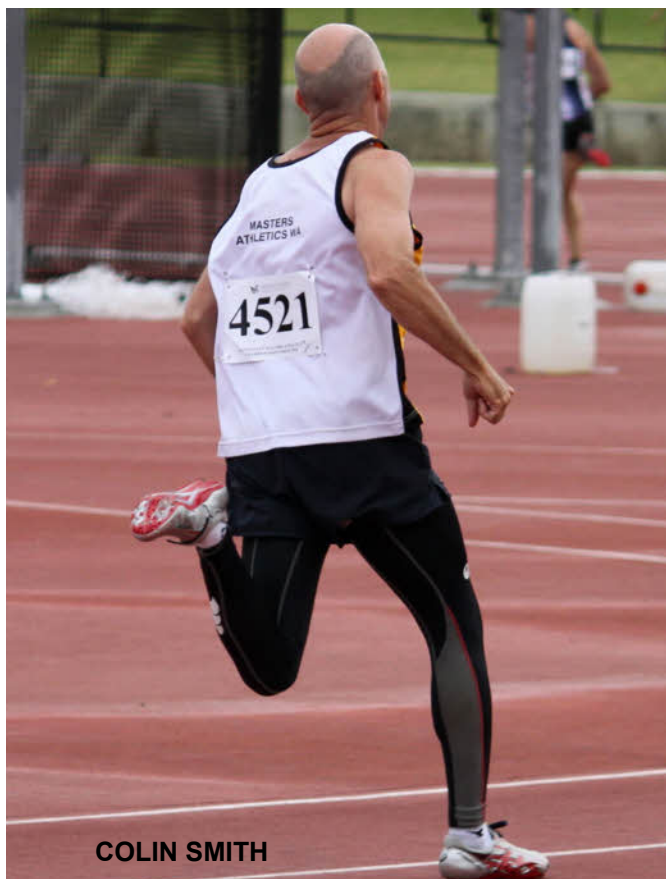
Tonight's other relay event was the 4x800m walk. There were scheduled to be three teams, W40, W50 and M60, but the W50 had a couple of no-shows so it was replaced by a non-championship mixed team, walking (!!) just for fun. The men (**Stan Jones, Peter Hopper, John Smith and Tom Lenane**) took the bragging rights with a 40-second victory over the younger women (**Sarah Ladwig, Regina Crouch, Lesley Romeo and Lynne Schickert**).

February 10

It was down to very serious business tonight with the first of the running relays. Seven 4x100 teams raced in two separate heats. The ladies were first off under the lights. W40s, led by **Delia Baldock** were matched by the W50s' lead runner **Lynne Choate** round the top bend. But the younger ladies raced into a commanding lead after that with **Regina Crouch, Kerriann Bresser** and anchor **Sue Bourn** bringing them across the line in 63.6s. **Bernie O'Callaghan, Carol Bowman and Gillian Young** ran good legs and so the W50s still recorded a creditable 71.5s. They were even more pleased when they found



LYNNE CHOATE



COLIN SMITH

out that this is an inaugural state record. The W60s (**Sarah Ladwig, Lorraine Lopes, Lynne Schickert** and anchor **Peggy Macliver**) clocked 80.5s.

The second heat was also competitive for a while, but the young M30s and 40s were a cast-iron cert to win, and so it proved. **Kim Thomas, Colin Smith and Matt Staunton** gave them a clear lead at the final change-over, and with **Chris Neale** taking the baton up the home straight it was no surprise when the stop watch showed a very swift 51.2s. Second and third places were close for some distance, but the M50s pulled gradually away from the M70s. **Dave Wyatt, Nick Miletic, John Dennehy** and last minute stand-in **Tony Heppener** stopped the watch at 59s flat. 4.7s behind them, with a good contende for the national M70 title, came **Norm Richards, Mike O'Reilly, Barrie Kernaghan and Tom Crossen**. The M60s only had one of the original squad on the track, **Bob Schickert**. Nevertheless, the three late substitutes were rewarded with an inaugural state record! **Maurice Creagh**, 81 year-old **Derry Foley** and your analyst **John Oldfield** were all delighted, if somewhat dumbstruck, when they realised. Maurice and John are certainly not sprinters, and Derry is certainly not an M60 these days.

Three discus teams also represented MAWA in the National Relays this evening. The best result, not surprisingly was a massive 102m from the M30s. **Mark Hamilton** led the team with a season's best throw of 37.54m. He was ably supported by **Matt Staunton** (36m) and **Lajos Joni** (28.40 in probably his weakest event). The M60s (an injured **Keith Martin, Mike O'Reilly** and another injured **Greg Wilson**) managed just under 70m. The W60s (**Stella Truner, Bev Hamilton and Lynne Schickert**) totalled 43m.

Analysis of relays

February 17

The ladies (W60) shot put team got things under way this evening represented by **Bev Hamilton**, **Lynne Schickert** and **Stella Turner**. A total distance of just under 20m, led by Bev's 8.50, is submitted to the scrutineers over east.

The climax of the evening's track session saw five gallant teams fighting it out over the 4x400 distance under lights. **Chris Neale** took it out from the gun, leading at the first change-over by a good 10 seconds. **Mark Elms**, **Kim Thomas** and anchor-man **Colin Smith** brought the M30s home in a smidgeon outside 4 minutes. That's going to take some beating.

Next team home was the M60s (**Duncan McAuley**, **David Carr**, **Mike O'Reilly** and anchor **Bob Schickert**) with a solid 5:01 – and that with two 70+ year-olds. The top ladies team was the W40s. New member **Fiona Leonard** stormed the first leg, well supported by two 50+ ladies **Carol Bowman** and **Margaret Saunders**, before **Sue Bourn** took the baton and stopped the watch at 5:09. The W30s (originally a 40s team but **Toni Phillips** stepped in at the last minute to bring them down to the 30s) found that pace hard to match. **Regina Crouch** led them out, but despite the efforts of speedsters **Kerriann Bresser**, **Delia Baldock** and **Toni Phillips** they finished 5 seconds behind their elders. The gallant W60s took all of this in their stride, trying to remember what it used to be like when they were mere youngsters. It started well enough, with **Peggy Macliver** setting a lively pace. The supporting cast **Sarah Ladwig**, **Lynne Schickert** and **Gillian Young** ran well, but were never going to match their younger counterparts.

February 24

The climax of the relays for another year involved no less than 31 MAWA members spread around the 10 teams: 7 quartets running the 4x800m and three long jump teams competing in the pit.



The long jump took place at the beginning of the evening and two teams had already been set up in advance, with a W30 team added on the night. The W30s were led by **Melissa Foster**, no mean jumper, and her 5m-plus leap set them on their way to a total of 11.60m. She was ably supported by **Regina Crouch** and **Jacqui Sanders**. The more mature ladies – **Lynne Schickert**, **Sarah Ladwig** and ever-improving **Pat Carr** – jumped beyond expectation to a total of 8.07m. This included an SB for Lynne and a PBA for Sarah. The men were able to match these achievements, with a team total of almost 15m. **Chris Neale** and **Dave Wyatt** jumped close to their season's bests, but **John Dennehy** was the undoubted star of the team with a big PBA of over 4m.

An so to the finale – a single heat of 4x800m, with seven first-leg runners toeing the line, clutching nervously that important metallic cylinder. The floodlights at ECAC always add to the atmosphere created by a relays night, and this one was no exception. Seven hopefuls set off to the gun – **Kim Thomas** (M30s), **Niamh Keane** (W40s), **Bob Schickert** (M60s) – he's seen it all before so many times, but the nerves are still always on edge, **Hilary Beck** (W50), her first relay season, **Derry Foley**, surprisingly finding himself a late replacement in the M40s, **Regina Crouch** (W30s) and **Sarah Ladwig** (the ever-present W60s, missing their injured talis-lady the injured **Peggy Macliver**).

Inevitably on a relay that lasts eight laps the field soon spread out all over the track, making it difficult at times to determine at what stage the teams were. Two highlights stand out from what was an enjoyable race for all. The ladies 40 team of **Niamh Keane**, late-replacement **Simone Solomon**, **Delia Baldock** and **Kerriann Bresser** broke the state record. The M30s team led off by **Kim Thomas**, ably backed up by **John Collier**, **Colin Smith** and anchor **Chris Neale** came very close to the M35 state record, to finish in 9:54.6.