Janne Wells

In Focus
with Carmel Meyer

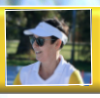

IMAGE: Graeme Dahl

I was born in Stavanger Norway in 1968 and had a happy, active childhood. I participated in school relay teams for running and swimming, and played soccer in junior high school. In my spare time I tried out handball and volleyball. I became good enough in volleyball to participate in a selection camp for the National Junior Volleyball team. I wasn't selected for the team in the end, but it was a very fun and educational weekend.

I moved to Perth 22 years ago to attend ECU Nursing studies. It was a joint program with the university in Stavanger. I completed the first year in Norway and the last two in Perth. I was supposed to go back after two years but fell in love with Perth and moved here permanently. I currently work as a Child Health Nurse in South Perth. I am married to the father of my third child; she is 19 years old now. I also have two boys from a previous marriage, and they are 29 and 27 years old,

It was my boys who got me interested in athletics when they started Little Athletics, but it wasn't until my daughter joined Little Athletics that I started with MAWA, as her training was on a Thursday just before the Masters came onto the track. I became a member of MAWA in September 2015. I have tried pretty much everything in track and field apart from Pole Vault. I have many favourite events - Hammer throw, Javelin, Steeple chase, Race-walking. Lately, my favourite has been longer running distances and especially cross country/trail running. I have been lucky to have previously received coaching from Tom Lenane, but more recently I have just trained myself.

I participated in my first Half Marathon race in Norway in November 2018. It was freezing cold, and very hilly, but I ran my best ever half marathon time. In August 2022 I broke my ankle running down the first steep hill at Mundy Parkrun. It has taken me a long time to get motivated again after that fall. It's incredible how quickly you lose form after injury, and how hard it can be to build yourself up again. I have become much more careful whilst running on the trails now.

IMAGE: Supplied

I have been plagued with a few other injuries. Niggling hamstrings, calves and shin splints, shoulder pain after the throws events and hip pain after the walking events. Nothing serious until I broke my ankle though, but I prefer running events now as those are less painful. My target for 2024 is to continue building my stamina, hopefully stay injury free, and participate in the 2025 State Championships. In the future I hope I can participate again in larger competitions such as Nationals or Worlds.

I was a member of the MAWA committee for 3 years - 2017 to 2019. I was also a member of the WA Race Walking club committee. I learned how to judge race walks and became a regular judge for the local Little Athletics centre.

IMAGE: Graeme Dahl

My daughter was a good race walker, and when I started taking her to WARWC training, I decided to have a go myself. I have competed in a few State Championships as well as the 2016 Nationals in Adelaide when I mostly concentrated on race-walking. I won silver medals for 1500m and 5000m walks. Later in 2016 I competed in the National Race-walking Championships in Canberra and won silver for my 10000m walk. I competed in the 2016 Perth World Masters Championships in the 5000m, 10km and 20km race-walks. I didn't place, but this experience was very special and memorable to me.

In 2018 I competed in the Perth Nationals and tried my luck in some different events - Steeplechase, Throws Pentathlon, Pentathlon and 4x400m relay, coming fourth in each event. In 2018 I was lucky enough to receive the MAWA Achievement award for track and field, and also gained a State record in 56lb Weight Throw. In 2019 I went to Melbourne for the Nationals. Here I was a bit more successful in terms of medals, winning gold in the steeple and silver in 300m hurdles. I am very proud of that gold medal.

IMAGE: Supplied

I discovered horses in my younger years and went to riding school until I bought my own horse when I was a teenager. I was involved with trotting races for many years and started participating in youth races when I was sixteen. I was one of the first female drivers in Norway to participate professionally in races at the tender age of eighteen The horse interest has continued throughout my life, and for the past twelve years I have been the proud owner of an Off The Track racehorse named Lucas. I regularly go for rides on him and have competed in a couple of jumping competitions at my local equestrian centre.

I completed a Horticulture course a couple of years ago, and spend a fair bit of time in my little garden. I find it's a huge challenge to keep plants alive here in Perth due to the hot climate. Much easier to grow things in Norway. I love climbing mountains and going on hikes in the Perth Hills. I try to hike as much as possible, especially when I visit Norway.

FILE IMAGE: Carmel Meyer

I can remember my very first steeplechase, running alongside David Carr. I overtook him at the hurdles, but he would catch up in between. At the last hurdle I thought to myself, 'right, you are in front of him, sprint to the finish and beat him'. Well, I had not considered David's years of training, and was surprised at how easily he overtook me at the home stretch. After that my goal in the steeple was to beat David at all costs. He was my biggest inspiration for a lot of competitions. One of my funniest steeplchase moments would probably be the time that I went for a swim in the steeple pit, or the time I stumbled over one of the hurdles and ended up under it instead of going over it.

I am always motivated by the tenacity and dedication from the athletes in the Masters. In MAWA you are accepted as you are and never judged about your performances . The camaraderie amongst the athletes is so inspiring and I have made life long friends. My aspirations for the future are to be able to continue running, keep fit, and be able to compete for as long as my body allows it.