

Oliver is still

I was born in Perth in 1989, grew up in Thornlie and moved to Madora Bay with my family after finishing high school. I started my career at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and now work in data analytics for the Federal Government, currently at the Department of Education Skills and Employment. I've been with my partner Bronwyn since meeting at the ABS in 2012. We have a one-year-old daughter, Matilda. She is my favourite thing ever but does take me away from the track.

I never did Little Athletics in my youth, instead playing cricket, however I always loved school and inter-school athletics and did pretty well on the track (I was Champion Boy in Years 11 and 12).

I played Ultimate Frisbee for seven years, with some highlights being captaining a South West WA team at the Mixed National Championships and competing internationally for a team from Guam.

I moved on from ultimate frisbee after niggling injuries made it more of a chore than fun. Harking back to all the fun of doing athletics, in early 2018 I decided to give it a go and went about trying lots of different events.

I loved them all, so decided to compete in decathlon. I started training with Canning Districts, where I am now a committee member, enjoyed the challenge of learning so many events and being able to measure my performance against myself.

I had found my new sport! Decathlon takes me back to the spirit of ultimate frisbee tournaments, which would be 3-4 hour long games over a few days with parties in the evenings. In decathlon the athletes help each other out as they go. There is no ego. Everyone is competing against the ten events, not each other. Wes Salisbury, Sasha Zhoya (who has since gone on to win World U20 gold and set the U20 110m Hurdles World record) and Jacob Schelfhout have all gone out of their way to give me advice during the competition. Sasha's comments on how nice the multi-eventers are, compared to the death stares given in the call room of individual events, will stick with me forever.

I honestly joined Masters to escape the 106cm hurdles in Open comps! They are terrifyingly high. I don't really have a desire to compete at Open level and I find the camaraderie and atmosphere of Masters meshes with my outlook on athletics, which is giving everything a go and supporting everyone. I will happily assist organising teams and spruiking multis to other members as a fun and rewarding event.



**Oliver in
Ultimate
Frisbee**

Masters are so helpful - Dave and Gay Wyatt with my jumps, Toni Phillips with hurdles, Glenn Bartlett and Warren Button with throws, Karyn Tolardo with walks and Geoff Brayshaw with pole vault. All constantly provide fantastic advice and support. Graeme Watson, Lindsey Glass and Paul Sheppard have also helped me get up to speed, however as they will attest, I am still a pretty big work in progress.

My favourite sessions are technical ones where I can improve on a facet of an event or solidify the cues I go through in my head.

My favourite events are pole vault and hammer throw. I'm all aboard the 'spin to win' train, plus I'm addicted to feeling like I'm flying for the short time I'm in the air with pole vault.

The event I'm most excited about is the Icosathlon (double decathlon) and I hope to compete in the Icosathlon world championships in a few years. I need to become a lot fitter for that event though. Sometimes even my 27m long jump run up seems too far!

Competing in pretty much every event means having a lot of targets. They include improving my hurdling confidence, and my Fosbury technique. I have already ticked off a major improvement to my pole vault, with increased confidence enabling a longer run up. I finally cleared 3m after seasons of being stuck with a PB of 2.45m.

My biggest motivation is improving my performances and skills. There's so much that I still have to learn, and it will come eventually.

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a high flyer

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In my first season I had a neck injury and a torn hamstring. Since then, just the odd incidence of shin splints. In general, with the right amount of stretching and load management, injuries have been mostly kept at bay.

My favourite results would be each of the six decathlons I have completed. Whilst I normally end up disappointed in one or two events, I always come out with a great feeling of accomplishment and a desire to improve something next time. The individual result I'm proudest of is clearing 3m in pole vault. It came out of nowhere and was a 30cm improvement of my PB. I hope to compete in every State decathlon for as long as my body allows me to.

Unfortunately, I've only been Masters eligible during peak-Covid and missed out on competing at a number of national events, however I'm excited to put on the Mawa colours in the future. I've proudly won a few open age medals (silver in decathlon, bronze medals in 400m hurdles and field relays with Canning Districts). The other thing I'm really proud of is winning 21 medals across last year's MAWA's Track and Field championships. I loved going out and competing in so many different events with a number of friends and talented athletes. Though, needless to say, I was exhausted afterwards!

One of the worst events I've competed in was my second ever race-walk. It was a 20k walk on Shelley Foreshore, on a cold, miserable and wet winter's morning. I took 3 hours; my clothes were soaked through and I had terrible blisters. The only warmth I had was from the pain radiating from a tight groin. I proudly finished without a single warning from the judges... must have been so slow they took pity on me!

However, those difficult times are balanced out by great experiences - running in the same race as Barbara Blurton when she set a 400m World record and competing alongside Paul Jeffrey when he broke the Decathlon World record were just fantastic achievements and to be a tiny part of it makes me feel very special.



in focus
with Carmel Meyer

