

## CLUB SPOTLIGHT - BALMAIN (METRO)

by Andrew Kohlrush, BAC President

Balmaln Athletics Club was formed, or so we thought at the time, in 2012 by the committee of Balmaln Little Athletics Centre (BLAC). They wanted to create a direct pathway for the kids who were competing at BLAC with the first recruits being Paige & Holly Campbell. Paige subsequently represented Australia at the 2019 World XC and World Champs in sseeple. Now a steady flow of juniors compete for the Balmaln Athletics Club and rather than watching their children have all the fun, a couple of us dusted off the spikes and started competing again. We weren't aware at the time, but we were the reincarnation of the Balmaln Athletics Club that competed in the 1970s and 80s and had amongst others Warren Parr, Commonwealth Games medalist and Olympian, as a member.

The return to Athletics after a "bit" of a hiatus presented a few physical challenges. "I can't remember this being so hard" and "I have never had that sort of injury" were commonly heard during and after training sessions or competitions. But, in keeping with the World Masters Athletics motto "Athletics for life", we enjoy getting out there and having a go.



The last couple of years have seen more age groups compete for Balmaln with 'retired' athletes from BLAC becoming seniors. Mat Rawnsley remarked on his return to Athletics "I've been back doing sprinting, and the occasional jump or throw, since a little while after I turned 40. It was my daughter starting Little A's that led me to reconnect with it after 20+ years' absence. I couldn't imagine not doing it now. It becomes such a rewarding part of your life - training, competing, camaraderie, coaching, everything about it on many levels".

There are many reasons people take up a sport and just because we are getting older, doesn't mean we can't still enjoy our sport. Andrew Kohlrush who along with Andrew Watson has done much of the heavy lifting in our field events team over past couple of years reckons "you enjoy running, jumping, throwing, walking - hanging out with other athletes.



*"Without going to the World Masters in Lyon 2015, I would not have discovered the French side of the family - who literally lived around the corner from my hotel!"*

Last season was challenging owing to the restrictions on training and competing, but when we did, we enjoyed the time competing together and encouraging each other in our pre, or new, events. One of our new members Mahesh in his first competition helped us to a second place in last year's Club Championships. Mahesh took up Athletics when he was 9 years old. "I was always the smallest and shortest kid in the class and I was super happy to realise I could run fast at the time beating all the taller kids. I'm still attracted to the sport, a place to discover yourself and take control of your physical and mental capabilities that translates into the general aspects of life".



*Photos (Andrew Kohlrush):*

*L: Warren Parr (Getty images)*

*R: The Masters Balmaln Boys*

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This year is the 50th anniversary of BLAC and to commemorate this milestone and the connection between our home ground at King George Oval, Rozelle and the traditional owners, the Wangal people, Balmain has a new uniform. Over the past couple of weeks our athletes have successfully competed at the State Relay Championships, wearing our new strip with pride in the knowledge of the connection to the area in which we compete



With more athletes regularly involved the club has now commenced a weekly training session at King George Oval, where coaches can assist with Throws and Long & Triple Jump. For those with nimbler limbs, there is the opportunity for some Hurdles and Racewalking coaching too. We'd love to see you, so contact BAC at [info@balmainlac.org.au](mailto:info@balmainlac.org.au)



King George's Oval is located in  
Rozelle in Sydney's inner west

The venue is a seasonal grass track, which is located in a foreshore park adjacent to Iron Cove Bay. The 'Bay Run', a 7km circuit, is a popular running location.