Queensland Race Walking Club Inc.

ABN 59 065 512 712

Building on a fine tradition of race walking, 71 years in the making.

November 26th 2026

Birmingham and the "mixture of fried fish" of walking: how athletics is destroying itself.

An article published on August 16th by Claudio Licciardello on the subject of "whether a European Walking Championship under the same conditions as the one in Birmingham still makes sense." It addresses the defining characteristics of a discipline like race walking as well as some rule changes that the author finds questionable, to say the least.

Thought provoking and a great discussion starter !!

After erasing the historic distances and identity of race walking, European athletics reached its nadir in Birmingham: four simultaneous races, double-crossing, congested feed zones, and an incomprehensible spectacle. Even on the track, differing regulations and ranking privileges complete the picture.

There are disciplines that need to be revitalized and disciplines that are progressively demolished by the very people who claim to want to revive them. Race walking belongs to the latter category. After years of questionable decisions, distance changes, erasure of traditions, attempts to pursue a supposed modernity, and constant regulatory experiments, the European Championships in Birmingham have reached the almost inevitable outcome: a huge "mixture of fried fish" in which four races are held simultaneously, men and women overlap, "marathon walkers" and specialists of the shorter distance cross paths, double-crossings multiply, and even following the fight for medals becomes an exercise for the initiated.

It was hard to imagine a more effective way to further debase a discipline already severely impacted by the decisions of recent years. Race walking had its own identity; it didn't need to borrow it from anyone. The 20km and especially the legendary 50km were more than just numbers: they represented decades of history, champions, time benchmarks, national schools, and comparisons between generations. The 50km, in particular, was the toughest test not only in athletics, but probably in the entire Olympic program, an extreme race that required specific preparation, physical and mental endurance, tactical ability, and a completely different level of effort management than shorter distances.

However, without a rational explanation, World Athletics decided to cancel it. First came the 35km, presented as a modern solution better suited to the new needs (of whom?). A distance with no real tradition, introduced in place of one that had an enormous one. The 35km, in turn, barely had time to exist before the same officials who had imposed it decided to cancel it

as well. Since 2026, international walking has adopted the 21.0975 km and 42.195 km distances: half marathon and marathon walking.

The nomenclature itself speaks volumes about the cultural confusion that reigns at the top of athletics. The marathon, in fact, is not a generic unit of measurement equivalent to 42 kilometers and 195 meters. It is a race with its own tradition, its own mythology, a history rooted first in ancient Greece and then in the origins of the modern Olympic Games, which has transformed that seemingly irrational distance, introduced in London 1908, into one of the universal symbols of sport. The same goes for the half marathon, which over time has become an independent specialty of road running. Walking, on the other hand, had other distances and a different history.

Calling a 42.195 km race a "marathon walk" conflates two distinct identities in a childish attempt to make walking more recognizable by leveraging the prestige of another discipline. With the stated aim of promoting one discipline, therefore, the decision is gradually erasing its historical references, adopting names and distances belonging to another. The result is not greater comprehensibility, but rather greater confusion. For decades, it was enough to say "marathon" and everyone knew which race was being referred to. It was enough to say "20 km" or "50 km" and the reference was equally immediate. Today, we must distinguish between a marathon run and a marathon walk, between a half marathon and a half marathon walk. A reform that claimed to make the discipline more accessible to the public has achieved the extraordinary feat of requiring a linguistic clarification that was previously unnecessary.

Birmingham has brought this logic of debasing walking to its conclusion. The four men's and women's race walking events, spanning two distances, were concentrated at the same time and on the same narrow circuit, just 1 km long. The television results were devastating: athletes competing in different races were constantly mingling; men and women competing in the long and short distances ran the same sections, but belonged to four different classifications; the lapping became incessant; an overtaking could be a decisive attack for a medal or simply the passing of an athlete competing in another race and at a different stage of their race.

The viewer, therefore, cannot rely on what they see: they must constantly consult the graphics, stopwatch, number of laps, bib colour, and distance. If possible, they should keep an eye on the live timing online to understand more. In other words, they must first decipher the competition and only then can they try to follow it. It was said that this format would have increased the visibility of the race walk: in reality, four simultaneous races do not generate four times as much attention, but rather a fragmentation of attention in which none of the four competitions receives the space it deserves.

Even from a technical standpoint, consequences emerge that should not exist in such a prestigious event. The athletes themselves, from the moment the absurd program was announced, warned of the risk of congestion at refreshment points: when competitors from four different races arrive in the same stretch, they must move sideways, locate their refreshment points, slow down, and rejoin the flow. Trajectories cross, groups overlap, men and women from different races can find themselves in the same space precisely when the action becomes less linear. An athlete can therefore be disturbed not by a direct opponent, but by someone competing in another competition. It is difficult to imagine a more evident demonstration of how sporting logic has been sacrificed in the name of compressing the program.

Added to all this is the impossibility of a double victory. In the past, a specialist capable of excelling at both distances could attempt to win two medals, or even two golds, a feat

achieved, at traditional distances, only by the legendary Polish athlete Robert Korzeniowski at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Today, with the races held simultaneously, that possibility is eliminated not by a technical limitation, but simply by a scheduling choice, making a potentially memorable sporting achievement practically impossible. Here too, while proclaiming the desire to create new points of interest, potential stories to tell are eliminated.

Race-walking has thus become the laboratory in which international athletics has experimented with one of its worst tendencies: continually modifying what already worked, in the belief that any change equates to modernization. Was the 50km too long? Away with the 50km. Is the newly created 35km unconvincing? Away with the 35km too. Does the 20km have a consolidated history? Let's transform it into a half marathon. Do races need greater visibility? Let's do them all together. Every perceived problem is addressed by creating a worse problem.

Birmingham, however, demonstrates that the issue isn't limited to walking. Even in track events, spectators are forced to contend with a proliferation of different qualifying systems that seem to have been conceived without a common philosophy: in the 1500 meters and 3000 meters steeplechase, qualification is based on placing, with no time repechage; in the 800 meters, however, placings and best times are combined; in sprint races up to 400 meters, however, a controversial "bye" is granted to the top twelve in the qualifying standings. Furthermore, in these latter races, the twelve privileged athletes who advance directly to the semifinals are not necessarily the twelve athletes who recorded the best times of the season. An athlete can therefore find themselves outside the top twelve despite being in better condition, or despite having recently achieved better times than someone who benefits from the "bye".

The sprain becomes particularly serious in the 400 meters, the so-called "loop of death." While saving a round in the 100 meters means avoiding a race by just a few seconds, missing a 400-meter race means avoiding a high-intensity effort that can have significant consequences in the hours that follow and the following day. There may be a minimal difference between the twelfth and thirteenth-placed athletes, but one reaches the semifinals without having run the previous round, while the other must face it with an extra 400 meters in their legs. Athletics used to be one of the simplest sports to understand. Whoever runs fastest wins. Whoever jumps highest or furthest wins. Whoever throws the furthest wins. In heats, the top runners advance, and sometimes the fastest times are fished out. This immediacy was precisely one of its greatest strengths. Today, there seems to be an almost systematic desire to complicate it. Birmingham represents the pinnacle of this decline because it concentrates in the same championship all the flaws accumulated in recent years: the erasure of traditions, artificial nomenclature, overlapping races, ranking privileges, different qualifying systems, and increasing difficulty for spectators to understand what's happening. But, we reiterate, no discipline has been mistreated as much as race walking.

The Birmingham "mixture of fried fish" is therefore not an isolated organizational incident. It is the end result of a concept according to which the history of sport is an obstacle, and disciplines must continually be reinvented, and the public can be won over by multiplying artifices rather than offering clear, recognizable competitions that respect their tradition. Those governing athletics today continue to talk about innovation, visibility, and modernization, but the results show otherwise: these new formulas not only fail to attract new audiences, but end up disgusting even those who have always followed every European, World, and Olympic competition, even those held late at night.

Giulio Chinappi OA Sport editor.

NEXT WEEK

2026 Australian Athletics All Schools Championships

Friday 4th – Sunday 6th December

WA Athletics Stadium, Perth, Western Australia

Entries

4th December

5000m Race Walk Women U17

Trinity DOULIS Western Australia 28:17.30
Ashleigh FARRUGIA New South Wales 29:46.47
Eliza KELLY Queensland 26:30.60
Bethany MOORE-KIRKLAND Queensland 25:17.67
Eva PARKER Tasmania 27:23.40
Matilda READ Victoria 23:58.70
Sierra THOMPSON Western Australia 30:45.00

5000m Race Walk Women U18

Caetlin ASHBY New South Wales 32:09.91
Katica BORSIC Western Australia 28:00.00
Emma GROCOTT Australian Capital Territory
Chelsey IRELAND Western Australia 29:34.10
Maisie MITCHELL New South Wales 26:40.21
Mietta MORGAN Victoria 26:36.40
Aangi SHAH Victoria 31:57.00

5000m Race Walk Men U18

Liam FREUNDT South Australia 22:59.89
Noah COOKE Queensland 21:56.39
Christopher NILON New South Wales 24:03.00
Koby IRVINE Queensland 23:16.87
Michael MATHISON New South Wales 24:27.00
Keenan MUNRO Western Australia 24:21.77

5th December

3000m Race Walk Women U15

Bethany FRANZKE Victoria 16:25.84
Elspeth HOOPER Queensland
Lunah IBRAHIM Victoria 16:50.00
Ashleigh MANSELL New South Wales 14:58.87
Scarlett NUNN Western Australia 18:00.00
Audrey RUSSELL New South Wales 14:21.42
Liliana TEMPLER South Australia 15:54.56
Isabella WELCH Queensland 14:21.66

3000m Race Walk Women U16

Mackenzie BANDIDT Queensland 17:18.88
Tory D'ALESSIO Western Australia 15:35.00
Grace DELANDER New South Wales 15:25.08
MiaRose EVERSON New South Wales 15:18.11
Mya MCCLURE Victoria 13:57.30
Addison ROOTS Western Australia 16:47.00

3000m Race Walk Men U15

Vinal LIYANAGE New South Wales 15:10.90
Tate MCQUEEN Victoria 15:49.25
Lincoln MOORE New South Wales 14:35.70
Tom MURPHY Western Australia 15:52.99

Leo RAMSAY Queensland 15:39.79

3000m Race Walk Men U16

Callum MARTIN New South Wales 11:58.80
Dylan SARDELICH Western Australia 13:34.90
Keiran SMITH Western Australia 13:35.00
Noah VELLA New South Wales 14:10.00

6th December

3000m Race Walk Women U14

Amelia CHISHOLM Queensland 15:41.22
Hannah CLAUSNITZER Western Australia 16:02.31
Kira EKERS New South Wales 15:48.60
Zoe FROST Queensland
Kate HAMLYN South Australia 17:42.89
Kailyn JONES Tasmania 19:43.00
Avia LUKETIC New South Wales 13:39.98
Indigo MARSHALL-MOODIE Victoria 15:04.00
Clare RICE Australian Capital Territory 17:18.00
Makenzie SILLITTO Western Australia 15:48.51
Nina TRICKEY North Queensland 17:49.30
Harper WINTERFORD South Australia 18:15.00

3000m Race Walk Men U14

Logan ALLISON Victoria 16:12.30
Nate APPLEYARD New South Wales 13:39.61
Hudson CONWELL Western Australia 16:30.70
Samuel HUCKER Tasmania 21:36.00
Liam MEALE New South Wales 14:59.20
Lachlan NICHOLS Western Australia 17:34.57
Hayden ROBERTSON Queensland

QUEENSLAND MASTERS ATHLETICS
Saturday afternoon December 5th SAF QMA HEP/DEC CHAMPS
3.00pm 1,500metres
Entries open at **Sat 28 Nov 2026 06:00**.
Sunday afternoon December 6th SAF QMA HEP/DEC CHAMPS
3pm 800 metres
4pm 3,000 metres
Entries open at **Sat 28 Nov 2026 06:00**.

RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS

Dakar 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games

Men 5,000 Metres

1 GONZALEZ Gabriel ESP 11 FEB 2009 20:41.36 ~
2 TARASIUK Vitalii UKR 30 NOV 2009 20:55.54 ~
3 ABE Futo JPN 11 SEP 2009 21:09.22 ~>
4 HENAULT Matteo FRA 4 JAN 2009 21:17.26 >~
5 SORRESSA Davide ITA 23 OCT 2010 21:41.09 ~~~
6 HUN NUNEZ Tobias Josue GUA 1 JUN 2010 21:57.32 ~ PB
7 AVENDANO Jhamil BOL 11 MAY 2010 22:27.58 >~ PB
8 PIVARSKI Patrik CRO 21 OCT 2009 22:29.00 ~~
MEJRI Mohamed Amin TUN 5 JAN 2009 DQ ~~>~> TR54.7.5

MOHAMED Youssef EGY 16 APR 2009 DQ ~~~> TR54.7.5

Women 5,000 Metres

1 WANG Yaru CHN 13 JUN 2009 22:58.33 ~ PB
2 ANDRIJAUSKAITE Juste LTU 2 OCT 2009 23:55.00 ~~
3 KOZKA Daryna UKR 7 MAR 2010 23:58.96 ~ PB
4 ALFOLDI Sara HUN 8 JUL 2009 24:47.07 ~
5 LOPEZ CARRANZA America Yaretzi MEX 5 APR 2010 25:31.62 ~~~
6 SLIMI Rim TUN 31 MAY 2009 25:44.20 >
7 MARTINEZ Kristel Alexia GUA 10 DEC 2009 27:06.24 >~ PB
ANDIA Rocio PER 20 JUL 2009 DQ ~>~~ TR54.7.5
D'ALESSANDRO Rebecca ITA 29 JUL 2009 DQ >>~~ TR54.7.5
NJERI Cecilia KEN 2 MAR 2009 DQ ~~>~ TR54.7.5

Queensland Masters Athletics

QSAC Meet #4 Sunday 22nd November

1500 Meter Race Walk

Gannon, Brenda W52 8:18.99
Dale, Joy W55 11:10.93
Bennett, Peter M71 10:08.02
McKinven, Noela W84 Qma 14:12.64

5000 Meter Race Walk

Gannon, Brenda W52 29:49.74 (26:31.44 75.52%)
Dale, Joy W55 40:42.76 (34:36.35 57.88%)
Bennett, Peter M71 34:16.93 (25:27.89 71.05%)
McKinven, Noela W84 47:50.53 (30:31.69 65.61%)

Age Graded Times & Percentages in Brackets

QA Track Season

Coming QA Walks

January 10th 3,000 metres SAC
February 6th 3,000/5,000 metres SAC
February 27th 3,000 metres QA Championships
March 6th 3,000/5,000 metres
March 20th 3,000/5,000 metres

QMA & Brisbane Region Track Season Calendar

QMA Website Queensland Masters Athletics: Track and Field

Sunday Morning 13/12/26 – SAF Brisbane Region Comp. Includes 1 mile
8.00am 3,000 metres
10.00am One Mile
Saturday Afternoon 19/12/26 – SAF Brisbane Region Competition
4.15pm 5,000 metres
Sunday Morning 17/1/27 – SAF QMA OUTDOOR PENTATHLON Held in conjunction with Brisbane Region Competition Day 9 of Brisbane Season
Sunday Morning 24/1/27 – SAF Brisbane Region Competition Day 10 of Brisbane Season
Sunday Morning 14/2/27 – SAF QMA WOMENS THROWS PENTATHLON
Held in conjunction with Brisbane Region Competition Day 11 of Brisbane Season
Sunday Morning 21/2/27 – SAF QMA MENS THROWS PENTATHLON
Held in conjunction with Brisbane Region Competition Day 12 of Brisbane Season
Saturday Afternoon 27/2/27 – SAF QMA MEMORIAL DAY Held in conjunction with Brisbane Region Competition Day 13 of Brisbane Season
Sunday Morning 7/3/27 – SAF Brisbane Region Competition Day 14 of Brisbane Season

Saturday Morning 20/3/27 – SAF Saturday QMA 3000M RUN/WALK CHAMPS
Held in conjunction with Brisbane Region Competition Day 15 of Brisbane Season
Saturday 3/4/27 – SAF All Day QMA STATE CHAMPS DAY 1
Sunday 4/4/27 – SAF All Day QMA STATE CHAMPS DAY 2
April 23-26, 2027 AMA CHAMPIONSHIPS – PERTH
Saturday Morning 15/5/27 – SAF AMA HEP/DEC CHAMPS DAY 1
Sunday Morning 16/5/27 – SAF AMA HEP/DEC CHAMPS DAY 2



REGISTRATION OPEN

Entries CLOSE Sunday 13th December 2026

The 2027 Oceania Masters Championships **Wed 27 to Sun 31 January,**
Venue: Nga Puna Wai Sports Centre Augustine Drive Wigram Christchurch 8025

Walks Programme

Wednesday 27th January 2027 3,000m Track Walk AM
Friday 29th January 2027 1,500m Track PM
Sunday 31st January 2027 5,000m Track Walk PM

OMA / NZMA Track and Field Championships - Meet Info - Track & Field Meet

Registration (26th October 2026) NZD $90.00
Event Fee NZD $20.00

Date Claimers 2027

Queensland 10,000m Race Walk Championships

Date: Saturday 20th February
Venue: QSAC Warm Up Track
Enter 2026/27 QA Championships: 10000m Walk & Track Mile - Queensland Athletics - revolutioniseSPORT
Entries close 19th February at 9am

2027 AMA National T & F Championships

- Date: April 23 – 26, 2027
- Venue: Ern Clark Athletics Stadium Cannington. WA

- **Walks Course** Perry Lakes Reserve is the location for the 10km walk. The 2km circuit is a certified relatively flat
- Perth 2027 | Australian Masters Athletics Championships

QA All Schools Road Walk Championships (Inc QRWC Handicap Meet)

When: Sunday May 16th
Venue: Murarrie Recreation Grounds

Canberra Walking Carnival June 12-13th 2027

Draft programme to be finalised and released shortly along with a new dedicated race website.

Queensland Road Race Walks Championships

Date: Sunday 11th July 2027
Venue: Murarrie Recreation Grounds

Racewalking Queensland Management Committee 2026/27

President: P Bennett
Vice President: B Gannon
Secretary: N. McKinven
Treasurer N. McKinven
Committee: S Pearson, I Jimenez, R Wales, J Dale, S Dale, A Bradley
Patron: S Perkins
Registrar: S Dale
Handicapper A Guevara / N McKinven
Uniforms: S Dale
Publicity / Media: P Chadwick / C Chadwick
Results: R Wales / N McKinven
Newsletter Editor: P. Bennett
Equipment Officer: Ignacio Jimenez & Noela McKinven
Canteen Convenor: R Wales, J Dale
Blue Card Co-ordinator: B Gannon
Club Captains: Phoebe Chadwick, Alex Bradley

Blue Cards

As part of our legal obligations and a condition of our affiliation with QA we must maintain a current Blue Card register. We have a duty to be fully aware of exactly who is coaching or providing services to our members, particularly when those members include children or young people under 18.
Equally important is ensuring that every coach or provider engaged in child-related activities holds a current and valid Blue Card, as required under Queensland legislation.
Our club will continue to ensure that we are meeting our duty of care and fulfilling and our legal obligations under the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000.Individuals requiring a blue card | Your rights, crime and the law | Queensland Government.
If you have any questions or require assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our club Blue Co-ordinator bluecardqrwc@gmail.com

QRWC Membership 2026/27

Membership - Qld Race Walking Club - revolutioniseSPORT

QRWC Uniforms

Wearing a club uniform at our club meets is desirable but not compulsory. All Race Walking Australia event competitors MUST wear the uniform of their Club, as registered with Race Walking Australia. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

Shop - Qld Race Walking Club - revolutioniseSPORT

Race Walk Coaching

If you are looking for coach or would like to be part of a training squad here are the qualified coaches in the club:

Noela McKinven Walks Level 4
Robyn Wales Walks Level 3
Shane Pearson Walks Level 3
Steve Langley Walks Level 3 Performance coach
Jasmine-Rose McRoberts Level 2 Club coach
Argenis Guevara Level 2 Development coach
Katya Martin Level 1

Contact emails:

qrwc1@optusnet.com.au Membership, coaching or general enquiries about the club

racewalkqld@outlook.com Articles for the newsletter, to send in results, to join newsletter mailing list.

Website Queensland Race Walking Club

About us *Racewalking Queensland* conducts its own winter road walk programme from April until September. Thank you to all our contributors of results & reports to this newsletter.