

FRED O'CONNOR OAM - AWARDED 1994

27/12/1923 – 3/7/2018

Fred O'Connor, OAM, first became involved in athletics at the age of nine, when he competed in the NSW Railways and Tramways Annual Picnic Race. When asked, 'Did you win?' he replied, 'Of course, I don't compete to lose.' This attitude has typified his commitment to athletics since that day in 1933, until his retirement in 2016.

Fred competed in the first World Masters Athletics (then called Veterans) in 1981 in Christchurch. He last competed at the AMA Nationals in Melbourne in 2012, followed by a short encore at the NSW Police Games in 2015. He still holds many State Masters records from M65 - M80 in short and long hurdles, triple and long jumps, pole vault, and the multi events, and holds Australian records in triple jump, short and long hurdles, and the decathlon. His name appears in numerous All-Time World Rankings.

Fred began coaching in 1942. He holds a Level 4 Coaching certificate in sprints, hurdles and relays (ATFCA, 1987) and is a qualified IAAF Jumps Coach (AIS, 1988). As well as coaching athletics at Westfields Sports High for twenty-five years, he has given his time generously from beginner to Olympic level. This provided him with the opportunity to pass on to his athletes his passion for biomechanics and technical perfection. That he took his own advice is clear, from his mastery of the decathlon into his eighties without injury.

Fred has held a range of positions with NSW Masters from 1978 to 2008, including president, treasurer and secretary. He also edited the Waratah newsletter.

He was awarded Life Membership of NSWMA in 1994, and the Order of Australia in 2015.

Fred sadly passed away on July 3, 2018.



Career Highlights:

- Second best triple jump in the world in 1943-1944.
- Life membership: NSW Masters Athletics, Australian Track and Field Coaches' Association (NSW), Athletics NSW and Westfields Athletics Club.
- Athletics Australia Merit Award, 1989.
- Coach of the Year, 2002 (NSW AT&FCA).
- NSW Sports Federation Distinguished Long Service Award.
- Officiating at the jumps for the 1996 World Juniors, 2000 Olympics and the 2001 Goodwill Games.
- Merit Award, World Association of Veteran Athletics for Administration in the Oceanic Region, 2001.
- Order of Australia Medal for Services to Athletics, awarded in 2015.