



The Carbine Club of NSW

Ralph Doubell AM

Born: Melbourne 1945

Carbine Club Member since: 1998

Born in Melbourne, Ralph Doubell had a relatively short international athletics career, but he managed to reach his peak at just the right time and in just the right place - an Olympic Games final.

When Doubell won the 800m at the 1968 Mexico City Games he became the first Australian to win over that distance since Edwin Flack 72 years before. The time he ran, 1min 44.4sec, equalled the 1962 world record set by New Zealand's Peter Snell; it still stands as the fastest by an Australian.

Doubell was a comparatively late starter in athletics, having run his first half-mile at the age of 17 at Melbourne High School. As a student at Melbourne University, Doubell competed in an intervarsity championship in Adelaide, and in the course of doing so, realised that athletics might provide him with a means for travel, otherwise unavailable to a poor student. He returned to Melbourne and approached legendary Austrian-born coach Franz Stampfl, the coach at the University, signalling the beginning of a unique and successful partnership.

Doubell also competed at the 1966 Kingston (Jamaica) British Commonwealth Games and finished sixth in the 880yds. He had the same result at the 1970 Edinburgh Games. At the 1969 Pacific Conference Games he won the 800m in 1:48.0.

Doubell had planned to compete at the 1972 Munich Olympics, but was prevented by calf injuries, which hastened his retirement. In the same year he was admitted to the Harvard Business School where he graduated in 1974 with an MBA. He was the Australian 880yds/800m champion in 1964/65, 1965/66, 1966/67, 1968/69, and 1969/70.

In 2006, Doubell was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to athletics through administrative roles, particularly with Athletics New South Wales, and as a competitor.