



History of the St George District Athletic Club

Compiled by Michael Gentle

1924

Our First Olympian

Ernie Austen was named as the club's first Olympic Games representative following a remarkable 1923-24 track season in which he won every Championship walking event in which he competed, from club events to Dunn Shield, State Championships and Australasian Championships.

- 1st, Australasian 1 Mile Walk Championship – 6m 45s;
- 1st, Australasian 3 Miles Walk Championship – 22m 13s;
- 1st, NSWAAA 1 Mile Walk Championship – 6m 51.6s
- 1st, NSWAAA 3 Miles Walk Championship – 22m 45.5s
- 1st, 1 Mile & 3 Miles Dunn Shield;
- 1st, 7 Miles Australian Championship.

Unfortunately, Austen was subsequently disqualified in the first qualifying heat of the 10000m walk at the 1924 Paris Olympic Games.



"I was in third place, just behind the leaders and going along very easily. I thought I had a good chance but then an American judge chap came up and told me I was disqualified. I asked him why but he said he didn't know. You usually get two cautions before being disqualified but I wasn't aware of them. Nobody ever did tell me why I was outed."

Ernie Austen (centre) competing at the 1924 Paris Olympic Games.

- E.E. Austen

The Olympic Games disqualification was the first of Austen's 15-year competitive walking career. In a very slow paced race, only 6 of the 13 athletes to start the race finished. Australian athletics officials were adamant that his style was satisfactory, and the farcical circumstances led to walking being dropped from the 1928 Olympic Games.

Ernie Austen retired from athletics on his return home from the 1924 Olympic Games, however he could not stay away and returned after an absence of some months.

State Championship Victories

1924 was a good season for the St George club, with many fine performances throughout the season.

Alleyn Gainsford won his first State Championship in 1924 when he won the State 10 Mile Championship at Ascot Racecourse by inches from Tom Watters with Australasian Champion Frank Bailey in third. The finish was so close that there was dispute of the result amongst the spectators. Alleyn was placed 2nd in the Manly Modified Marathon, and 3rd in the State 5 Mile Championship.



1924 Novice Cross Country Championship Team at Rose Bay

The club's first championship victory at the NSW Novice Cross Country Championship came on 21st June 1924 when Les Brodie won the race and the club placed 2nd in the teams. Club teams also placed 2nd at 5 Mile State Championship, 10 Mile State Championship and Manly Modified Marathon.

The club's 1924 open competition successes included:

- Bill Tilt, 1st Giles Cup, 31st May 1924
- Les Brodie, 1st NSW Novice Cross Country 5 Mile, 21st June 1924
- Jack Harris, 1st Western Suburbs Open, 28th June 1924
- Len Robinson, 1st Bob Tuck Memorial, 16th August 1924
- Jim Garrad, 1st, Y.M.C.A. Open, 23rd August 1924

1924 saw the commencement of Interclub Competition. The trophy was donated by Percy Thompson who was the Race Secretary of the NSW Amateur Athletic Association at the time, and competition was split between Pratten Park, Manly Oval, Hurstville Oval, University Oval No 2 and the Sydney Sports Ground.

Awards & Trophies

K. Francis Cup

Best All-Round Competitor

F. Matson & E.F. Groves

Club Champions

100 yds	George Campling	
220 yds	George Campling	24.0s
440 yds	Edward Groves	
880 yds	J. Brown	
1 Mile	Wal Liddle	4m 46.8s
3 Miles	Wal Liddle	
1 Mile Walk	Ernest Austen	
3 Miles Walk	Jack Batger	
Shot Put	Fred Matson	
High Jump	Oscar Matson	5ft 2in
Broad Jump	Fred Matson	
Hop, Step & Jump	Fred Matson	



1924 5 Mile Club Championship at Masonic Hall, Hurstville

Further Reading

The club website has many documents pertaining to the history of the club available for download in pdf format: <http://www.sgdac.org/documents.php>

The club website has detailed results of club events, open handicap events, track & field events, and State, National and International Championship events featuring club athletes from 1921 onwards: <http://www.sgdac.org/results.php>

Please contact the author via webmaster@sgdac.org with feedback, suggestions, additional information, results or resources to help expand and improve these history documents.