

# THE TORCHBEARER

NEWSLETTER 78 - Mar 2026



**Committee:**

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## President's Comments

Greetings once again fellow Torchbearers and partners. Our 2025 AGM held at the RSL was well attended with all executive positions remaining unchanged.

Sons and daughters of Torchbearers would be welcome as Andrew Cummings is a prime example how the Club could continue to prosper with youthful leadership. We are open to suggestions from our members.

Good health to all. Best wishes to all members and keep the flame burning!

Kind regards  
Jim Vallely  
President



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

The Club's Annual Meeting was held at the Cairns RSL on Saturday 8th November 2025.

Office Bearers elected were:

Jim Vallely - President

Paul Eggers - Vice President

Bill Cummings - Secretary/ Treasurer

Andrew Cummings - Assistant Secretary/  
Treasurer and Torchbearer Editor.

The Club recorded balances as at November 2025 of \$10,013 in the Cash Management Account and \$773 in the Working Account.

Discussion took place about the possibility of widening the membership of the Club to include Torchbearers from the 2000 Olympics and prospectively from those participating in the

2032 Olympics. What would be involved to bring this about is being investigated.

## NQ Games Mackay

INVITATION



The Club will again sponsor the 1500 metre men's and women's events at the North Queensland Games to be held in Mackay May 1st to May 4th 2026.

Members are again invited to be present as catered VIP's at the Games Official Opening:

**6.00PM Friday May 1st at Great Barrier Reef Arena (Harrup Park) 89 Juliet St, South Mackay.**



Great Barrier Reef Arena (Harrup Park)

Members are also especially invited to be present at the prize giving for the 1500 metre events that will be held as follows: Sunday 3rd May 2026. Women's Open 1500m at 800am and Men's Open 1500m, 830am. Location the Mackay Aquatic & Recreation Centre, 193 Boundary Rd, Ooralea QLD 4740



Mackay Aquatic & Recreation Centre.

An Olympic photographer will be on site, and should Olympian Tori West not compete in the race, she'll be part of the presentation.

It would be helpful if members intending to be present could advise the Secretary on 0418 871 011 or admin@56ers.org.au

## TORI WEST

Heptathlon, Olympian Tori West will take part in the presentation for the 2026 North Queensland Games 1500m events. Raised in Townsville she attended the University of Queensland. In July 2024, she was selected for the heptathlon at the 2024 Paris Olympics. She finished 20th, with 5848 points (not happy with her performance with a personal best of 6245 pints).

She won the heptathlon at the Australian Athletics Championships in Perth on 12 April 2025. In September 2025, she competed at the 2025 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, Japan, finishing in seventeenth place.



*Tori West competing in the 800m event at the 2024 Paris Olympics.*

The heptathlon is a track and field combined events contest made up of seven events for women only while the men compete in the decathlon.

The heptathlon is a 2 day event consisting of 100 metres hurdles, high jump, shot put, 200 metres on the first day and long jump, javelin throw and 800 metres on the second. The heptathlon has been contested by female athletes since the early 1980s, when it replaced the pentathlon as

the primary women's combined event contest (the javelin throw and 800 m were added).

In recent years some women's decathlon competitions have been conducted, consisting of the same events as the men's competition in a slightly different order, and World Athletics has begun keeping records for it, but the heptathlon remains the championship-level combined event for women.

Australian heptathlon top 6 all-time recorded points.

1. **Jane Flemming** 6,695 points, Gold, 1990 Auckland Commonwealth Games.
2. **Glynis Nunn-Cearns** 6,387 points, Gold, 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.
3. **Kylie Wheeler** 6,369 points, 9th, 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.
4. **Jane Jamieson** 6,354 points, Gold, 1985 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games.
5. **Tori West** 6,245 points, Götzis Austria, 6<sup>th</sup>, Hypo-Meeting annual athletics competition.

The men's decathlon consists of 100 meters, long jump, shot-put, high jump, 400 meters day one and, 110 meter hurdles, discus throw, pole vault, javelin throw and the **1500 meters** day two.

Ashley Moloney won bronze at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games with 8,649 points, the first Australian decathlete to medal at an Olympics.



*Ashley Moloney celebrates his bronze medal in the decathlon 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.*

At the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, Dubler an Australian decathlete gained admiration for sacrificing his own final 1500m leg of the decathlon to act as a "pacer" and motivator for

Ashley Moloney. Dubler's selflessness was acknowledged by many commentators as being instrumental in Moloney's bronze medal win, and was lauded by the Australian media as one of the most memorable moments of the Tokyo Olympics. On 30 April 2022, International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach presented Dubler with the inaugural Cecil Healy Award for Outstanding Sportsmanship displayed at an Olympic Games.



*Cedric Dubler yells encouragement while being passed by Ashley Moloney during the 1,500m.*

For the decathlon Cedric Dubler finished 21st out of a field of 23 after failing to record a valid mark in the pole vault 2 events before the final event of the 1500m. Just two weeks before the Tokyo Games, Dubler tore his hamstring. For most athletes, this would have been a tournament-ending injury. However, Dubler made the gritty decision to compete anyway, knowing he wouldn't be at 100%.

## WINTER OLYMPICS

Team AUS delivers most successful Winter Olympic Games performance ever.

The Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics has delivered a defining moment for Australian winter sport.

Australia finished the Games with six medals, three gold, two silver and one bronze, the highest medal tally in the nation's Winter Olympic history.

Australia's success spanned freestyle skiing, with two gold medals and a bronze in moguls, gold in snowboard cross, along with silver in snowboard aerials and half pipe. Australian athletes also put

in strong performances across alpine skiing, cross-country skiing and bobsled.

Jakara Anthony made history as the first Australian to win two Winter Olympic gold medals in women's moguls, while Scotty James became the first Australian to win three Winter Olympic medals in snowboard half pipe.



*Scotty James celebrates Gold at the 2026 Olympic Games Italy.*

## 2026 SO FAR

Other standout Australian sports stories of early 2026.

**The Matildas' Asian Cup Surge:** After a massive semi-final victory over defending champions China (2–1) on March 17, the Matildas have booked a date with their long-time rivals, Japan, for the trophy. The Heroics of Sam Kerr and Caitlin Foord both found the net in the semi-final to secure the win. A Milestone During the semi-final, Emily van Egmond made her 170th appearance, officially becoming the most-capped player in the history of any Australian national team. The final is set for this Saturday, March 21, at Stadium Australia in Sydney.

**Winter Paralympic Resilience (Milano Cortina):** The 2026 Winter Paralympics wrapped up in mid-March with a historic performance by the Australian team. Australia maintained its incredible record of winning a medal at every Winter Paralympics since 1992. Ben Tudhope, the flag bearer and star of the team showed immense "Aussie grit" by winning Silver and Bronze in snowboarding events despite competing with a dislocated shoulder. Liana France, at just 16 years old, became Australia's youngest-ever female Winter Paralympian.

### Cricket: Men's Ashes & Women's Dominance:

Earlier in January, the Men's team secured a 5-wicket victory in the New Year's Test against England at the SCG to wrap up the 2025/26 Ashes series. The Australian Women's team recently completed a dominant sweep of India, culminating in a 10-wicket Test match victory at the WACA. Annabel Sutherland was the standout, winning Player of the Match.

**Oscar Piastri's in Melbourne:** Just days removed from one of the most crushing moments in his Formula 1 career, Oscar Piastri says he is only focused on the future. In front of a mammoth crowd at Albert Park, Oscar Piastri crashed his McLaren on the lap to the grid and did not start the Australian Grand Prix.

## OSCAR PIASTRI

**Oscar Piastri** born 6 April 2001 is an Australian racing driver who competes in Formula One for McLaren. Piastri has won nine Formula One Grands Prix across four seasons. At the age of 24 he moves past Ricciardo and Webber for most F1 races won.

Jack Brabham (14), Alan Jones (12), **Oscar Piastri (9)**, Mark Webber (9), Daniel Ricciardo (8).

Sir Jack Brabham has won 3 Formula 1 World Drivers' Championships, 1959, 1960, and 1966. Brabham's 1966 title remains one of the greatest feats in motorsport history, as he is the only person to ever win the World Championship driving a car of his own manufacture (the Brabham-Repco).

Alan Jones won the title in 1980. Driving for Williams, Jones became the teams first-ever World Champion, a victory that kick-started the team's era of dominance in the 1980s and 90s.

Born and raised in Melbourne, Piastri began his career in radio-controlled racing before moving into karting aged 10. His father, Chris Piastri, is the founder and owner of *HP Tuners*, an automotive software company; the company sponsored his junior formula career with up to \$6.5 million. He served as Piastri's kart mechanic

as he contested national championships in Australia.

A member of the Alpine Academy from 2020 to 2022, Piastri signed with McLaren in 2023 to partner Lando Norris, following a contract dispute with Alpine. He made his Formula One debut at the Bahrain Grand Prix, achieving his first career podium in his rookie season at the Japanese Grand Prix. Retaining his seat for 2024, Piastri achieved his maiden victory in Hungary, which he repeated in Azerbaijan, becoming the fifth Australian to win a Formula One Grand Prix.

Oscar Piastri's 2025 season was a true "coming of age" story in Formula 1. While he ultimately finished 3rd in the Drivers' Championship, he established himself as a legitimate title contender, leading the standings for 15 out of the 24 rounds and pushing the championship battle to the very last race in Abu Dhabi.



*McLaren's Oscar Piastri wins Saudi Arabian Grand Prix to lead F1 standings.*

After a rocky start in Australia where a late rain shower dropped him to 9th, Piastri went on a tear. He secured his maiden pole and win in China, followed by a clinical "Middle Eastern sweep" in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. By the time the circus left Zandvoort in August, Oscar held a 34-point lead over the British driver Norris and looked like the favourite for the title.

His "Grand Slam" at the Dutch Grand Prix was a master class in composure, maintaining the lead through four separate Safety Car periods.

The championship battle tightened as F1 moved into the flyaway races. While Norris and Dutch driver Max Verstappen found another gear, Piastri struggled with low-grip surfaces (a known

weakness identified by Team Principal Andrea Stella).

**Azerbaijan:** A frustrating DNF ended a streak of point finishes.

**Brazil:** A rare mistake in the wet saw him slide off and crash after hitting a patch of water kicked up by Norris.

**Las Vegas:** A technical infringement regarding skid-block wear led to a double disqualification for McLaren, stripping him of vital points.

Entering the final race, Piastri was one of three drivers (alongside Norris and Verstappen the 2024 F1 World Champion) who could mathematically win the title. He finished 2nd in the race, which wasn't enough to leapfrog Norris. He ended the season just 13 points behind his teammate, who claimed his first F1 World Championship.

## THE MILE & 1500m

The Mile and the 1500m (the "metric mile") are often considered the "Blue Riband" events of athletics. The most famous runners in these disciplines are usually defined by three things: breaking the 4-minute barrier, Olympic dominance, or holding long-standing world records.

Here are the most famous figures in the history of the "miler" fraternity:

### The Icons (Historical Legends)

**Sir Roger Bannister (UK):** The most famous miler in history. On May 6, 1954, he became the first person to break the 4-minute mile barrier (3:59.4), a feat previously thought to be physiologically impossible.

**Sir Jack Lovelock (NZ) & Herb Elliott (AUS):** Elliott is often cited as the greatest of the 1950s/60s era; he never lost a 1500m or mile race in his entire career and won the 1960 Olympic gold in world-record time.

**Paavo Nurmi (FIN):** "The Flying Finn" of the 1920s who held the world records for both the 1500m and the mile simultaneously.

### The British "Golden Era" (1980s)

In the 1980s, three British men traded world records and Olympic titles in what is considered the greatest era of middle-distance depth:

**Sebastian Coe:** The only man to win two Olympic 1500m gold medals (1980, 1984).

**Steve Ovett:** Coe's fierce rival who held multiple world records and won the 800m gold in 1980.

**Steve Cram:** Known as "The Jarrow Arrow," he was the first man to run under 3:30 for the 1500m.

### The Modern Greats (1990s–Present)

**Hicham El Guerrouj (MAR):** The "King of the Mile." He still holds the world records for both the 1500m (3:26.00) and the Mile (3:43.13), both set in the late 90s. He famously won double gold (1500m/5000m) at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

**Faith Kipyegon (KEN):** Widely regarded as the greatest female 1500m runner of all time. As of 2026, she is a three-time Olympic champion and the world record holder (3:48.68).

**Jakob Ingebrigtsen (NOR):** The current face of the sport. Known for his "double-double" European titles and Olympic 1500m gold (2020), he has spent the 2025 and 2026 seasons chasing El Guerrouj's elusive world records.

**Josh Kerr (UK) & Cole Hocker (USA):** The current top rivals to Ingebrigtsen. Hocker pulled off a stunning upset to win the 2024 Olympic gold, while Kerr is the 2023 World Champion.

## EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you are receiving this Torchbearer newsletter by mail but have an email address, could you please send an email giving that address to us at [admin@56ers.org.au](mailto:admin@56ers.org.au)

If you don't have an email address, don't worry, the Torchbearer and notice will continue to be posted out to you.

### JOKES CORNER

A man visited his doctor, and the doctor checked him over before commenting, "It looks like you get a fair bit of exercise."

The man replied, "Oh yeah, in fact, just the other day I walked 5 miles over rugged terrain as I climbed over rocks and trees. I also waded along the edges of a lake, pushing my way through tall thistles, and even slid down sandy slopes while getting sand in my eyes."

The doctor was quite impressed. "Well, you are certainly a dedicated outdoor enthusiast."

The man replied, "Not really, doctor. I'm just a really bad golfer."

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One day Max went to see Carl. Carl had a big swollen nose. "Whoa, what happened, Carl?" Max asked. "I sniffed a brose," Carl replied. "What?" Max said. "There's no 'b' in rose!" Carl replied, "There was in this one!"

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A man was driving down the road when a policeman stopped him. The officer looked in the back of the man's truck and said, "Why are these penguins in your truck?" The man replied, "These are my penguins. They belong to me." "You need to take them to the zoo," the policeman said. "Will do" was the reply.

The next day, the officer saw the same guy driving down the road. He pulled him over again. He saw the penguins were still in the truck, but they were wearing sunglasses this time. "I thought I told you to take these penguins to the zoo!" the officer said. "I did," the man replied. "And today I'm taking them to the beach."

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Three men are in the hospital waiting room because their wives are having babies. A nurse goes up to the first guy and says, "Congratulations! You're the father of twins." "That's odd," answers the man. "I work for the

Minnesota Twins!" Moments later a nurse says to the second guy, "Congratulations! You're the father of triplets!" "That's weird," answers the second man. "I work for the 3M Company!" The last man is groaning and banging his head against the wall. "What's wrong?" the others ask. "I work for 7-Eleven!"

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I taught Luna to sit. She was SO thrilled with the praise she got, that now, every time I turn around this is what I see. My heart!!!



Kind Regards  
Andrew Cummings

