

# Jim Lynch

Jim Lynch was the dominate short track speed skater in Australia, if not the World, at his peak, and throughout the 1970's Jim travelled overseas to Europe and North America to seek competition. Jim started skating at Bondi in 1960, taking up speed skating and hockey. He won his first NSW Championships in 1964 and his first Australian Championship in 1965. In fact Jim went on to win the NSW Championship for 15 consecutive years and the Australian Championship for 10 consecutive years, something that has never been beaten.

At this time Short Track was a new Winter Sport recognised by the ISU, but there were no real International Competitions or World Championships. Jim first represented Australia for the first time in 1972 at the Sapporo Winter Olympic Games and then went on to compete at the 1972 Speed Skating World Championships. Long Track was not Jim's sport but his ability at the start was so great that in the first 100m of the 500m at the Olympics Jim was below World Record Time and he brought the crowd to their feet. Jim continued to travel and compete internationally in Europe and North America setting records in both the UK and the USA. In 1975 Jim became the first and only foreign North American Champion. By the late 70s there was a lot of discussion about organising a Short Track World Championship and Jim became the first recognised Short Track Speed Skating World Champion in Sheffield, UK. In contrast to today, where skaters take weeks and months getting used to new equipment, Jim changed his blades the night before the start of the Championship and went on to win.

Jim continued to represent Australia in 1975 and 1985, always striving to improve his personal best times and to beat the opposition. In 1995, 33 years after he first took up speed skating, he set personal best times for all distances at that year's National Championships.

Jim has continued training and racing to this day. I think of two stories that typify Jim and his impact on skating in Australia and overseas:

1. The Championships in 1989 were held in Bendigo and Jim had returned to the sport after a break and this was his first Championship in a few years. During the Veterans 1000m Jim came third, and the winner came across the line and punched the air. I questioned the Veteran later as to why he had celebrated the end of the race, was it a PB? "No" he said " I beat Jim, first time in about 20years". In fact it was also the first time the second placed skater had finished in front of Jim.

That is in 20 years of: National Championships, State Championships and Duke Trophies, as well as in Weekly Racing

2. During the weekend of the '89 Championships I had questioned many skaters about what they had in their mind when they stood on the start line. The answers I got back were: "I want to skate a PB," "I want to get to the corner first" "I am going to concentrate on technique" and Jim's answer was "What do I have to do to win."