

Basil's keeping on running

Age no barrier on course for Baldwin

BY MAX STAINKAMPH

WHEN he was eight and still living in Wembley in England, Basil Baldwin set out to run a mile in his backyard.

Ten metres up, 20 across, 10 down and then 20 across again, around and around, until he hit a mile - all under the stern gaze of his parents' alarm clock.

His inspiration? Over the back fence, the Olympic village as athletes converged for the first post-war games.

Now, nearly 75 years on and half a world away, Mr Baldwin's still running.

He achieved the fabled four-mile minute while living in Tasmania, although with a grin on his face he admits it was while heading down a decent slope on Mt Wellington, with snowdrifts taller than he was stacked on either side of the road.

Last weekend he ran eight kilometres in just under an hour at age 81, and joked he "gets slower every year".

I used to do [Parkrun] but it was very demoralising because your PB was this in whatever year it was and mine would get further and further away, so I'd say I did a personal worst," he laughed.

This weekend, Mr Baldwin won't be running - but not due to the snow. He's run through that many times since moving to Orange in 1990, and expects to run through many more snow in years to come.

On Saturday, while the rest of the running club hit the pavement in the biting wind and freezing snow, Mr Baldwin will be running in a different way - he'll be running an orienteering training session.

Orienteering is a sport involving maps, moving through often difficult terrain to find different points at speed, and as he and wife Jean have been involved with the Orange Goldseekers for three decades, it's something the pair love.

"It keeps me going and that's what important. I'm very lucky that I've got good helpers and good friends and Orange is a really good place to live," Mr Baldwin said.

It's not a niche sport, either. A session last week had 69 participants out at Ophir.

"We have a lot of family groups, 15 kids who come along with their parents regularly," he said.

Teaching children about



NOT SLOWING DOWN: Basil Baldwin is still running most weeks - and on the Saturdays he isn't, he's running orienteering sessions, as he's done for 30 years. Photo: MAX STAINKAMPH

orienteering is a passion - while it's been harder in 2020 due to the coronavirus, Mr Baldwin's still done what he can to introduce students to the sport.

"They'll think 'this isn't very cool,' but we did a simple exercise to find two points and come back, by the time they did that they were switched on. They all

enjoyed it," he said.

While last year's gala day won't come to fruition this year, Mr Baldwin's hoping to be back at it soon - and he's

not likely to be easing up any time soon.

"I don't need to have plans to slow down, I just do slow down. I like to think I'll be active for many years to come."