



Eric dressed in his Australian Paralympic uniform.

Photo: Eric Magennis.

● RIVERSTONE BOWLS

## DOUBLE GOLD TO MAGENNIS

**Riverstone bowler, Eric Magennis, won two gold medals in lawn bowls at the recent 10th National Paraplegic Games in Hobart.**

Eric won the singles final defeating fellow New South Wales bowler, Don Watts, 21-8.

Eric and Don then teamed to win the pairs final defeating the Victorian pair Peter Connell and Wayne Lewis, 17-7.

It's been a great year of bowling for Eric as he has won the National Singles twice and the National Pairs three times.

Eric represented Australia last July in Canada, winning the Paraplegic Olympic Pairs with Bruce Thwaite (Concord Club).

He is a consistent bowler at the Riverstone Club, playing pennants.

This season he was a member of No 3 team which won the Nepean District Pennant Flag.

At the presentation night in Hobart he was chosen to represent Australia in the World Bowls Series in England for the 25th Silver Jubilee in July, as well as the south-east Asian Feswick Games to be held in Sydney during November.

Eric won the Olympic Singles in Germany in 1972 and was defeated in the titles in Canada by the South African bowler, Robbie Woods.

He was in the Riverstone four which won the Fairfield Diggers Shield last year.

New South Wales had 34 competitors at the sports and retained the State Shield by winning 45 gold medals, 40 silver and 30 bronze.



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# Eric Magennis

*Clarrie Neal*

Eric was born in Riverstone on 13 June 1938, the son of Ivy (nee Parkes) and Hector Magennis. He attended Riverstone Public School from 1946 to 1951 and completed his secondary education at Richmond Rural School.

He was a talented sportsman, training and learning to box at Aub Gillespie's gym, showing a lot of promise as a Rugby League player and like many other youngsters of the day, he bought himself a motor bike.

He joined the Riverstone Motor Bike club and attended their meetings on a property at Annangrove. Members made their own tracks through the bush, over jumps and crossing dry creek beds. It was while riding his bike around these bush tracks, that he came off in an unfortunate accident that left him a paraplegic.

In those days there were no stretchers available to immobilise the patient, so Eric was picked up and placed on a blanket in the back of a ute and taken to Parramatta Hospital. Robert Shepherd sat in the back of the ute with Eric, trying to keep him as comfortable as possible. He spent three months in the hospital and then several months rehabilitation at Mount Wilga, learning to use the wheelchair.

Eric did not allow this setback to dampen his enthusiasm for sport and he learnt how to play basketball from his wheelchair. He enjoyed being a spectator at the other sporting events and loved going to the Harold Park trots to watch Legal Raider, owned by his father, winning several races there.

Later he joined the Riverstone Bowling Club and took up the game of bowls. It was a game he loved and enjoyed playing with both the disabled and able-bodied men in their social games and in their Pennant teams.

Later he was to excel at wheelchair sports - winning Gold medals at the 1972 Paralympic Games in Munich, the 1976 Games in Tokyo, and the 1984 Games held in England.

Eric also represented Australia at the 1972 Heidelberg Paralympics in archery.

He also won medals at the Commonwealth Paralympic Games and at the FESPIC games (Far East and South Pacific). During the 1990s he represented Australia in a series of Bowls Test matches against New Zealand and South Africa.

He represented NSW in the Australian National Paraplegic Games held bi-annually from 1962 through to 1972. In 1979 Eric was a member of the team from Riverstone that finished runners-up in the NSW state fours championship.

Eric has given much back to the game that allowed him the opportunities to travel the world - he became a Level 2 coach for the Australian Bowls Council. He travelled to other Bowling Clubs coaching newcomers - both able and disabled. Just to prove how multi-talented he is, Eric has also coached several Riverstone Ladies Netball teams.

In the 1980s he owned and managed his wheel-chair manufacture and repair business at Wagga Wagga.

In the 1990s he went on a tour around Australia with a mate, over-nighting in cabins and caravan parks. This trip caused his mother much concern, but he assured her everything was OK and he would return safe and sound, which he duly did.

These days Eric lives in a care facility at Chatham, a suburb of Taree on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales.

The following entry on Eric was extracted from Wikipedia on 24 July 2021 and provides a summary of some of his major sporting achievements.

Eric Magennis (born 1937/1938) [1] is an Australian Paralympic lawn bowls player and archer. He first represented Australia in lawn bowls at the 1970 Commonwealth Paraplegic Games in Edinburgh, where he won a pairs gold medal. [1] At the 1972 Heidelberg Paralympics, he participated in archery and became the first Australian to win a gold medal in the lawn bowls Men's Singles event.[1][2] He won two further Paralympic gold medals, one with Bruce Thwaite at the 1976 Toronto Games in the Men's Pairs wheelchair event[3] and the other with Roy Fowler at the 1984 New York/Stoke Mandeville Games in the Men's Pairs paraplegic event.[2][4] He retired from international competition in 1986, having won 78 out of the 85 games which he played over his 16-year career.[1]

He also participated in able-bodied competition, notably as part of a team that reached the final of the 1979 New South Wales State Fours Championship.[1] He is affectionately nicknamed "Wheels" in the bowling community.[1] As of 1991, he was working as a lawn bowls coach in the Sydney suburb of Riverstone and throughout New South Wales.[1] He also competed in national championships in archery, weightlifting, table tennis and pistol and rifle shooting.[1]

1. *Schuback, Ian (6 August 1991). "Wheels' Magennis just keeps on bowling along". The Sydney Morning Herald. p.39. Retrieved 30 October 2012.*
2. *"Athlete Search Results". International Paralympic Committee. Retrieved 13 May 2012*
3. *"Lawn bowls pairs results for 1976". International Paralympic Committee. Archived from the original on 4 March 2016. Retrieved 10 August 2012.*
4. *"Lawn bowls pairs results for 1984". International Paralympic Committee. Retrieved 10 August 2012*

## Paraplegic bowler sportsman of year

A paraplegic bowler, who has the distinction of being world champion at his sport, is the natural choice for the Gazette-Hawkesbury Sporting Club sportsman of the year award.



ERIC MAGENNIS

One of the best known personalities at Riverstone, he is Eric Magennis, who last year won a gold medal for Bowls Singles at the Paraplegic Olympic Games, held in West Germany.

A credit to his town and district, this wheelchair sportsman has overcome his physical handicap to the extent that he now competes regularly at the Riverstone Bowling Club, and his example and assistance to other people similarly afflicted has enabled them to take up similar forms of recreation.

As well as bowls, Eric enjoys other sports, and also had the honour of representing Australia at snooker at the Paraplegic Games, being beaten by the eventual gold-medal winner.

At the Windsor Bowling Club last season, an outstanding performance was put up by Len Miller, who won the Singles Championship and was in the runner-up teams in the Triples and Mixed Fours.

Len was selected on four occasions in Nepean District teams, and has been one of the club's most consistent A Grade Pennants players.

At Richmond Club, one of the veteran players, Eric Bergweaver produced a fine bowls under strong pressure to win his first Major Singles title.

This was a very creditable effort on Eric's part as he beat Fred Miller, one of Richmond's most consistent players, in the final.

A No. 1 Pennants player at Richmond, who has improved enormously during the past season is Mick Byrnes and he will be a strong contender in this year's championship events.

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