

# Julie's Calisthenic Journey

Written by Rebecca Garlick  
(Niece)



## **Club Level**

Julie began her Calisthenic journey as a 12-year-old in the Inters team at Ballarat Calisthenics College when a family friend enticed her to join (this family is also still involved with Calisthenics today). It was originally to fill in for a figure march as they didn't have enough numbers for the team, but now 43 years later she hasn't left. Julie was a competitor for nine years before finding her true calling, which is behind the scenes rather than on the stage.

Julie was the class manager of the Tinies & Sub-Junior sections at Ballarat Calisthenics College, a position she held for seven years, whilst I competed in the team. She also held the position of Club Secretary at Ballarat for two years (1990 -1991).

The family decided to move to Sovereign Calisthenics in 1992. Whilst at Sovereign, Julie was the fundraising secretary, a position she held for nine years. She was always trying to find different ways of raising money for the club from chocolate drives, to club bags, to pens. She would always put her name forward to man sausage sizzles and fundraiser drives. In 2007, she was nominated by Sharon Mason (a parent of the Club at the time and a current RSSS volunteer) for her tireless work she did behind the scenes and for making people feel welcomed. Julie knew all the children and parents within the club by name, all this without having children of her own.



From 1999 to 2004 Julie held the position of District Councillor for District 9. This entailed travelling to Melbourne for meetings once a month, as well as visiting each of the clubs in her district. The district included the clubs Jayde, Sovereign, Horsham, Stawell, Grampians, Warrnambool, and Pentland to name a few. Julie liaised with the coaches and CVI admin. This

was a way coaches and competitors could get their message across to CVI before they introduced coach meetings.



## **RSSS**

In 2003 Julie decided to give back to the local calisthenic community and begin volunteering at the Royal South Street Society Competitions. She first began assisting with Front of House ushering and door person, before moving backstage and assisting with time keeping, stage managing and registration.

In 2012, Julie became a sponsor of RSSS, donating money then later a trophy in her Mum Kathleen's memory, as she too loved RSSS. Also, in that year, Julie became a member of the Calisthenics Committee at RSSS which oversees the running of the discipline of Calisthenics in a voluntary capacity. As Ron Harrington (the discipline chair at the time), was beginning to step back, he asked Julie to take over the running of the Intermediate week of the competition. Julie jumped at this challenge. This involved organising the schedule of competition, liaising with club coaches, and ensuring the week went off without a hitch. In 2014, saw part of the RSSS comps being moved to the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts (WCPA) due to a major rowing competition being held in Ballarat. Ron put Julie's name forward to run the competition at WCPA as Ron needed someone who had a calisthenics background, who knew WCPA and someone he could trust with this important role, whilst he continued to work at Her Majesty's Theatre.

Julie became the Deputy Chair of Calisthenics section in 2014, she shadowed Ron for 12 months learning the reins. When Ron retired from being the discipline chair in 2015, Julie was asked to continue being the Deputy Chair, she held this role until the end of 2018.

In 2016 Julie finally turned her love of calisthenics into her paid work when she began working at RSSS in April that year. She became the Competition Officer which entails managing 13 disciplines, helping the discipline chairs, making sure jobs are completed and ready for the start of each discipline. This includes getting critiques ready, booking flights and accommodation for the adjudicators, and catering just to name a few.

In 2017, Julie was the Deputy Chair for the Arts for All competition, a new section at RSSS primarily for people living with disabilities. In 2020 Julie took over the running of this section. Also, in 2020, on top of her Competition Officer duties, Julie became the Volunteer Officer looking after over 180 volunteers, keeping them engaged in newsletters and Zoom catch ups during Covid 19 restrictions. Lets' hope the competition is bigger and better post Covid-19.

Julie has been a strong supporter of the RSSS comps having held a season ticket for the Calisthenic section for 40 years. She is often seen spending countless evenings at Her Majesty's Theatre watching all divisions and sections or nowadays down in Lucky's Foyer in the RSSS Office. Even though she is a paid member of staff, she will still volunteer her time during the competitions.

## **Ballaarat Solo Competition**

Julie had always supported the Ballaarat Solo Competition (which was formed by the Ballarat Calisthenic Club), by watching local competitors. In 2006, Julie decided to volunteer at the competition by assisting with timing. Julie joined the committee in 2008 to take a greater role in the competition. In 2011, Lorraine Meade who was the competition convenor at the time was retiring soon so Julie shadowed her for 12 months before becoming a co convenor with Krystle Williams in 2012. She became the sole convenor in 2013 a position she still holds today.

The competition has grown quite considerably in the years since due to soloist numbers growing. The competition has almost 600 competitors from Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Northern Territory. This has also meant that we have needed to use two venues to run the competition. Many competitors and their families remark how the Ballarat Solo Competition is the 'friendly' competition. Although Julie has a small band of volunteers in the committee to support her, she is still there from 6.30am to 11pm for the two and half days of competition, not leaving the premises during this time. Julie's role begins well before the March/April competition. She leads committee meetings provides training to volunteers, gains sponsorship, organises the trophies and medals, organises adjudicators, collates the entries, manages the schedule, prints and collates the program, double checks competitor information, liaises with photographer and videographer and organises catering for the weekend to ensure our adjudicators are well fed as well as our committee members. She oversees committee members collating time sheets and critique papers. These are just some of the roles Julie does, this is often hours each night after a full day's work RSSS and weekends. Once the competition ends, Julie contacts and thanks our sponsors and volunteers and then restarts it all over again for the following year.

In 2016 after the RSSS has held the Graceful Girl competition for many years, they decided to begin the Calisthenic Solo section. This section is fully sponsored by the Ballarat Solo Competition, which includes Trophy for the Winner, Coach Trophy, \$1750 in Prize Money and Highly Commended Medals. It is something that Julie was keen to do and made it happen.

In my 23 years of Calisthenics, Julie never missed a competition or concert of mine – this was from my Tinies years all the way up to Masters. She has travelled all Victoria and interstate to support me and/or the Club as a whole. She has travelled interstate to watch the Victoria State Team on numerous occasions and also volunteered to other competitions such as CVI to assist them. In the 43 years she had been involved she has sewn countless sequins, made team headgear, and made props.

Julie has made many lifelong friends with many different people from many different clubs – this has included competitors, volunteers, parents, coaches, officials, and adjudicators.

Calisthenics really is an addiction and who could have believed that one little shy 12-year-old, 43 years later would now make a living out the sport she loves. Julie looks forward to a new kind of calisthenic journey when she starts to support her little great niece Charlotte when she begins calisthenics next year.