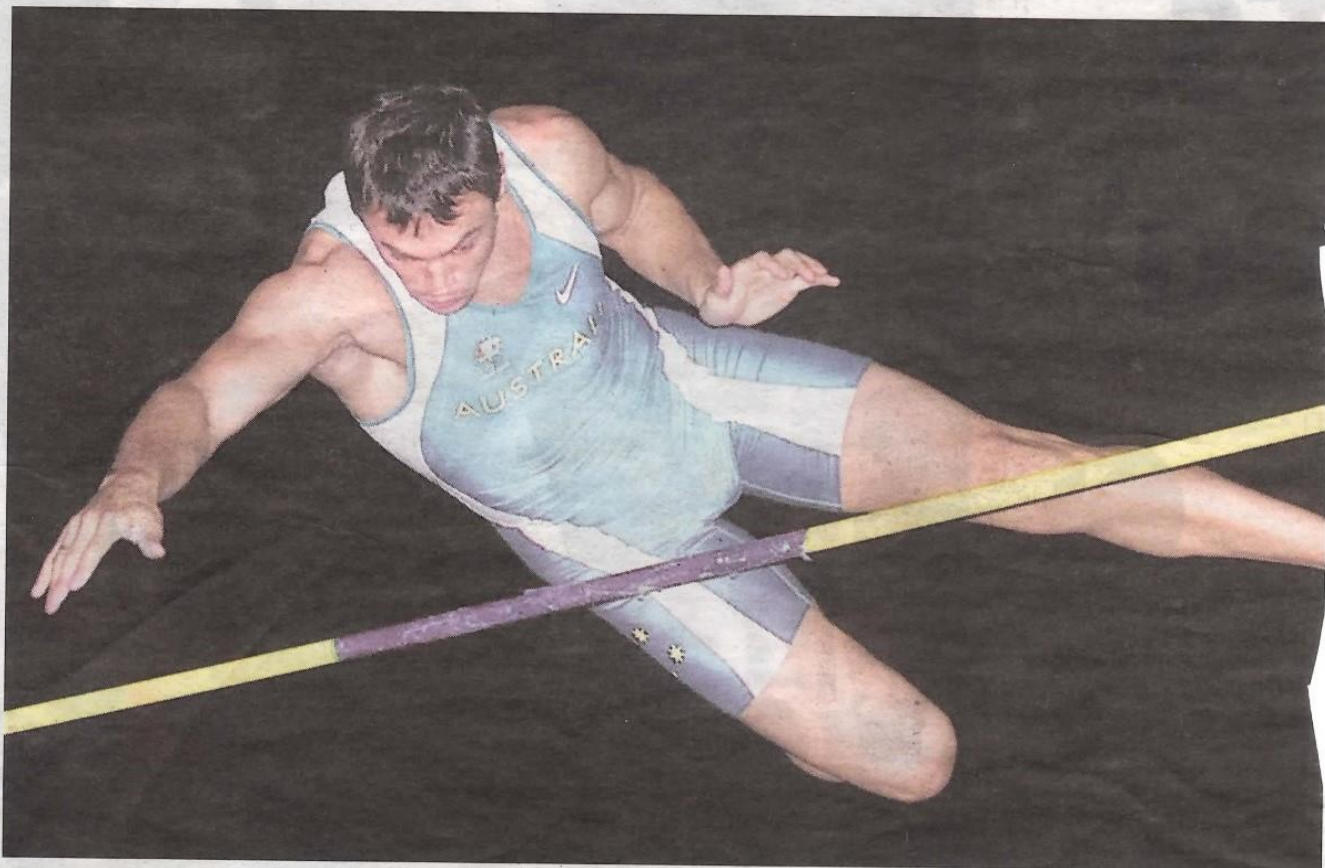


Where are they now? **Dmitri Markov**



ON TOP: Dmitri Markov representing Australia at the pole vault back in a 2000 pre-Olympic meet.

Markov's treasured memories in vault

JESPER FJELDSTAD

DMITRI Markov was on top of the athletic world, figuratively and literally.

He became world champion and set the Oceania record in pole vault at 6.05m in the 2001 world championship and collected the gold medal.

Markov, 40, had a long and distinguished career; he competed for Belarus in the early years before moving to Australia and becoming a citizen in 1999. Some of the highlights included the world championship, a silver in the world championships in Spain in

1999, coming second in the world junior championships for his native Belarus in Portugal back in 1994 and winning the European indoor championships in Sweden in 1996.

He competed in the Atlanta Olympic Games, in which he finished sixth, and was equal fifth at the Sydney Games.

His final main event was the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, where he won a silver medal.

Markov retired after persistent foot injuries the following year and misses his time competing and travelling.

"Probably just being in lots

of competitions and doing a lot of travelling," Markov said. "Especially the really big competitions: the world championships and major team events.

"But some of the smaller competitions, in town squares, were also good — something different."

Does it miss it? "Oh yeah," he said without needing a second to think about it.

He works as a carpenter these days, and among recent projects he's worked are the Marion Aquatic Centre, Burnside Village and Harris Scarfe in Rundle Mall.

Work keeps Markov as fit

as a trout and he also does a bit of personal training after work in parks and beaches around Adelaide and at a gym in Walkerville. He is also delighted to follow his son's budding football career.

Oleg Markov was taken by Richmond in the 2015 AFL draft. Dad cracks up over how his son fell in love with the Australian game after being a promising high jumper.

"He used to be in athletics for a long time, in high jump actually," Markov recalls. "He jumped 205cm a couple of times. But when footy started, he said 'No more high jump'."