

## ADAM RUTTER (NSW)

While the name of Adam Rutter is fresh in everyone's mind after his excellent inaugural walk in the Australian Olympic 50 km trial earlier this month, it is timely to review his short career and ponder what the future might hold for this outstanding talent.

I am writing this on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2007 – since Adam was born on 24<sup>th</sup> Dec 1986, today his his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday His recent Olympic qualifying time of 3:52:19 was done while he was still 20 years of age.

Adam hails from Sydney and is a member of Sydney Pacific Athletics Club. A review of the club records for Sydney Pacific shows that he set the Under 14 1500m walk record at **7:14.55** on 9 October 1999 when he was 12 years of age. From these humble beginnings, he quickly rose to National attention, coming 4<sup>th</sup> in the 2000 All Schools Under 16 1500m walk in Adelaide, recording **6:23.25**, a great time for a 13 year old (Adam's birth date in December meant that throughout his Junior career, he would have to compete up an age group against older walkers.)

Since then, he has consistently astounded with his pure speed and natural endurance and he has more often than not won when it counted.

In March 2003, at 16 years of age, he came 2<sup>nd</sup> to Jared Tallent in the Australian Junior 10,000m track championship in a time of **45:29.46**, thus gaining selection for the 2003 World Youth championships. This was followed in June by one of the most memorable races in recent history on the Australian front – the Australian Junior 10 km championship in Canberra in June. The race saw three competitors race neck and neck the whole distance and a sprint to the line was needed to separate them. NSW walker Aaron Mellor got to the finish line first in 44:55 but was disqualified by the chief judge. Jared Tallent and Adam crossed the line together in **44:56** with Jared getting the nod ahead of Adam. But Adam's time cemented his place in the World Youth team and it was off to Sherbrooke in Canada with Michael McCagh of WA (Michael had come 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Junior 10,000m championship in 47:22.03). Unfortunately, things did not go his way in his first overseas race and he failed to finish (Michael finished 6<sup>th</sup> in a big PB time of 44:38.68). But Adam's performances in 2003 did let people know that there was a new young gun on the tracks.

He started 2004 in fine style with another silver medal in the Australian Junior 10,000m championship with **46:42.72** in hot conditions (Michael McCagh won this one in 45:40.38). This secured him a place in the Junior men's team for the Racewalking World Cup, to be held in May in Naumburg in Germany. Here he finished a fine 9<sup>th</sup> in **42:07**, ahead of Michael (45:32) and Ben Perske (48:41). It was a huge PB.

He then followed this up with a win in the Australian Junior 10 km walk in Canberra in June in another PB time of **42:01**. In fact he beat Jared Tallent (42:07) in that race, a major scalp in anyone's terms. Two weeks later, he won the NSW 10 km roadwalking title in a new Australian Junior Record time of **40:54**. Then it was off to Grosseto in Italy in July with high expectations. Our sole rep in the men's 10,000m walk, he raced aggressively and stayed with the lead group until the half way mark. From there he started to fade but was still well placed when disqualified (second place getter Vladimir Kanaykin is now the current Open World Record holder for the 20 km walk) . It soured what had been a fine year.



Adam contests the World Junior Championships in 2004

When he finished his Year 12 exams at the end of 2004, negotiations began in earnest and he was soon off to the AIS on a scholarship, as was Michael McCagh. These two fine junior walkers were far ahead of their compatriots and the decision was made to use them as the foundation to build the next generation of Australian walkers.

Guided by AIS coach Brent Vallance, Adam and Michael increased their workloads and started to prepare for the senior world and the 20 km distance. In late February he came a fine third in the Adelaide Grand Prix 10,000m walk, recording **41:47.44**, again ahead of Michael who was 4<sup>th</sup>. The 2005 Australian Junior 10,000m championship was a battle of two with Adam winning in **43:32.63** ahead of Michael who recorded 43:52.31.

The next big breakthrough for Adam came in March 2005 when he took bronze in the Australian Open Men 20 km championship behind Nathan Deakes and Luke Adams. This time of **1:24:46** had been achieved at 18 years of age and was a new Australian Junior record.

With no real international prospects on offer that year, he simply had to knuckle down and train. One of his brief appearances that winter was in the Australian Mountain Running Championships which were held in Canberra. Competing in the Junior Men's event, he took 3<sup>rd</sup>! He was not only an outstanding walker, he was also a pretty good runner (and an excellent mountain bike rider to boot). But his time in Canberra was not all plain sailing. He suffered food allergies and the training sessions he finished were interspersed with many that he could not complete. The Australian Junior 20 km championship in Adelaide in August was a prime example of his troubles. Walking with Michael McCagh, he was forced to stop for a nature break and never really got going again.



#### **August 2005: Adam with Michael McCagh contesting the Australian U20 20 km roadwalking title in Adelaide**

At this time, he was suffering the ongoing frustration of walking superb times but being stuck in the invidious ranking position of Number 4 in the 20 km event, behind Nathan Deakes, Luke Adams and Jared Tallent. He had great speed, evidenced by his 3000m time of **11:27.70** (Sydney 17/02/2006) and his 5000m time of **19:36.30** (Melbourne, 09/03/2006) but the other 3 were even faster and he had to watch the TV as they took the medals in the 2006 Commonwealth Games 20 km.

To his credit, he put his head down and raced. He was second to Jared Tallent in the Australian Under 23 20 km walk in late February (**1:26:51**) and improved this to **1:22:55** in Yangzhou in China in late April. But even there, he was still the fourth Australian behind Deakes (1:19:07), Adams (1:21:14) and Tallent (1:22:31). His efforts, however, were rewarded with a World Race Walking Cup berth and in May in La Coruna in Spain, he came 50<sup>th</sup> in the Open 20 km in **1:26:54**. He was still only 19 years of age and was now mixing it competitively with the men.

But Adam could not bridge the gap to the other three. He won the Australian Under 23 20 km championship in Brisbane in March 2007 in horrendously hot conditions (**1:32:13**) but could not win a berth in the IAAF World Championships in Osaka. Obviously in two minds as to his future, he threw in his AIS scholarship and returned to Sydney.

Luckily for us, he reconsidered and, a month or so later, was back in Canberra and pounding the roads. The rest is history. Under Brent's watchful eye, he quietly prepared for his first 50 km endeavour. His first tentative steps were in June when he walked a superb Canberra 20 mile event, taking third place in **2:26:33**. Then, as we all know, he exploded onto the 50 km stage on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2007 with second place in the Australian championship and a time of **3:52:19**. He now has his Olympic berth but in the 50 km discipline rather than the 20 km event.



Adam contests the Olympic 50 km trial on Dec 16 2007 – pictured with Duane Cousins and Chris Erickson

And now onto the statistics

#### International Competitions

2003	World Youth 10,000 metres Walk	24/24	Did not finish
2004	World Junior 10,000 metres Walk	31/31	DSQ
2004	Race Walking World Cup Junior 10 km Walk	9/63	42:07
2006	Race Walking World Cup 20 km Walk	50/115	1:26:54

#### National Competitions

2002-03	Aust. Junior T & F 10,000 metres Walk	2	45:29.46
2003	Aust. Junior Walking 10 km Walk	2	44:56
2003-04	Aust. Junior T & F 10,000 metres Walk	2	46:42.72
2004	Aust. Junior Walking 10 km Walk	1	42:10
2004-05	Aust. Junior T & F 10,000 metres Walk	1	43:32.63
2005	Aust. Mountain Running Junior Mountain Run (9km)	3	46:12
2005	Aust. Walking 20 km Walk	3	1:24:46
2006	Aust. U23 Walking 20 km Walk	2	1:26:51
2007	Aust. U23 Walking 20 km Walk	1	1:32:13
2007	Aust. Walking 20 km Walk	3	1:32:13

#### Pb's at 16/12/2007

3,000m Walk	11:27.70	Adam Rutter	NSW	24/12/1986	3	Sydney	17/02/2006
5,000m Walk	19:36.30	Adam Rutter	NSW	24/12/1986	3	Melbourne	09/03/2006
10,000m Walk	41:47.44	Adam Rutter	NSW	24/12/1986	3	Adelaide	19/02/2005
10km Walk	40:54.00	Adam Rutter	NSW	24/12/1986	1	Sydney	26/06/2004
20km Walk	01:22:55	Adam Rutter	NSW	24/12/1986	23	Yangzhou	22/04/2006
30km Walk	02:16:09	Adam Rutter	NSW	24/12/1986	3	Canberra	10/06/2007
LBG 20M Walk	02:26:23	Adam Rutter	NSW	24/12/1986	3	Canberra	10/06/2007
50km Walk	03:52:19	Adam Rutter	NSW	24/12/1986	2	Melbourne	16/12/2007

#### Australian Records

10 Km Road	Aust U20	40.54	26 Jun 04	SYDNEY	Adam Rutter	NSW	24 Dec 86
20 Km Road	Aust U20	01:24:46	6 Mar 05	SYDNEY	Adam Rutter	NSW	24 Dec 86

The statistics keep on coming. Adam is the youngest Australian walker to achieve the Olympic A Standard in both the 20 km and the 50km events. And look at the people behind him on the list

#### Youngest 50 km A qualifiers

03:52:49	Adam Rutter	AUS	24/12/1986	2	Melbourne	16/12/2007	7662	20 Years 362 days
03:54:37	Liam Murphy	AUS	05/06/1979	1	Melbourne	13/05/2001	8013	21 Years 348 days
03:55:08	Jared Tallent	AUS	17/10/1984	3	Geelong	02/12/2006	8081	22 Years 51 days
03:52:53	Nathan Deakes	AUS	17/08/1977	1	Melbourne	12/12/1999	8152	22 Years 122 days

03:54:38 Duane Cousins AUS 13/07/1973 1 Melbourne 17/12/1995 8192 22 Years 162 days  
 03:48:12 Dion Russell AUS 08/05/1975 1 Melbourne 14/12/1997 8256 22 Years 226 days

**Youngest 20 km A qualifiers**

01:22:55 Adam Rutter NSW 24/12/1986 23 Yangzhou 22/04/2006 7059 19 Years 124 days  
 01:23:04 Dion Russell VIC 08/05/1975 27 Eisenhüttenstadt 11/05/1996 20km 7674 21 Years 9 days  
 01:22:53 Jared Tallent VIC 17/10/1984 42 Cixi 23/04/2005 20km 7493 20 Years 193 days  
 01:23:24 Nathan Deakes VIC 17/08/1977 Naumburg 23/05/1998 20km 7584 20 Years 284 days  
 1:20:18.5 Nick A'Hern VIC 06/01/1969 4 Fana 26/05/1990 20,000m 7810 21 Years 145 days

Some of Adam's sessions at Canberra must be seen to be believed. Take the following brief selection from early 2006:

Adam Rutter - Speed 10x400m (on 3 mins)		
AIS Track - 28/02/006		
Distance	Split	Accumulative time
1	0:01:29.00	0:01:00.00
2	0:01:25.04	0:01:00.00
3	0:01:24.63	0:01:00.00
4	0:01:24.22	0:01:00.00
5	0:01:24.64	0:01:00.00
6	0:01:23.54	0:01:00.00
7	0:01:24.10	0:01:00.00
8	0:01:24.40	0:01:00.00
9	0:01:24.43	0:01:00.00
10	0:01:20.39	
	<b>0:14:04.4</b>	<b>0:23:04.4</b>
	0:01:24.44	1.64
	<b>Average speed/km</b>	<b>0:03:31.1</b>

Adam Rutter - Speed 4x3km (2min)		
Kaleen - 31/03/06		
Distance	Split	Recovery
3	0:12:26.00	0:02:00.00
3	0:12:11.00	0:02:00.00
3	0:12:10.00	0:02:00.00
3	0:11:59.00	
	<b>0:48:46.0</b>	<b>0:54:46.0</b>
		1.12
	<b>Average speed/km</b>	<b>0:04:03.8</b>

Adam Rutter - Speed 5x2km (2min)		
Kaleen - 17/03/06		
Distance	Split	Recovery
2	0:08:08.52	0:02:00.00
2	0:08:00.75	0:02:00.00
2	0:07:56.00	0:02:00.00
2	0:07:53.09	0:02:00.00
2	0:07:47.31	
10	<b>0:39:45.7</b>	<b>0:47:45.7</b>
		1.20
	<b>Average speed/km</b>	<b>0:03:58.6</b>

Adam Rutter - Speed 5x2km (2min)		
Kaleen - 11/04/06		
Distance	Split	Recovery
2	0:08:05.00	0:02:00.00
2	0:07:54.00	0:02:00.00
2	0:07:57.00	0:02:00.00
2	0:07:57.00	0:02:00.00
2	0:07:50.00	0:03:00.00
<b>10km</b>	<b>0:39:43.00</b>	
500	0:01:58.00	0:02:04.00
500	0:01:57.00	0:02:02.00
500	0:01:56.00	0:02:06.00
500	0:01:57.00	0:02:03.00
500	0:01:53.00	0:02:10.00
12.5	<b>0:49:24.0</b>	<b>1:10:49.0</b>
		1.46
	<b>Average speed/km</b>	<b>0:03:57.1</b>

There is no doubt that Adam has a wonderful international future. He is one of those rare talents who comes long only once in a while. We wish him all the best with his career and hope it will be long and fruitful.

Tim Erickson  
 24 December 2007