

DANIEL COLEMAN - 2008 WORLD CUP REPRESENTATIVE, UNDER 20 10KM WALK

Daniel "Freddy" Coleman, born 2/2/1989 and currently ranked as the top Under 20 race walker in Australia, is Tasmania's only current elite walker.

Now aged 19, Daniel commenced racewalking in Little Athletics, winning the Tasmanian Under 13 1500m LA Championship in 2002. That same year, he took his first tentative step onto the national stage, placing third in the Australian Under 14 3 km roadwalk with **15:29** and placing 3rd in the Australian Under 14 Schools 1500m track championship with **7:15.31**.

In 2003 he moved up to the Under 16 age group with a series of competitive performances. He took fifth place in the 2003 Australian Schools 3000m walk with **14:19.93** and improved to 4th the next year with **14:09.08**. Along the way, he took silver in the 2004 Racewalking Australia 3 km championship in Canberra (**14:40**) and bronze in the 2004 Australian Under 16 5 km roadwalking championship (**25:00**).

In 2005, he moved into the Under 18 age grouping and had to turn his attention to the longer distances, to which he seemed ideally suited. In quick succession, he took third in the Australian Under 20 10 km championship in Canberra in June (**48:54**), won the Australian Under 18 8 km roadwalking championship in August (**39:22**) and recorded a fine **49:41** in a VRWC club 10 km walk in October. In November, he was 4th in the Pacific Schools Games 15-16 3000m walk with **13:24.92**. In hot conditions in December in Sydney, he took silver in the U17 3000m (**14:04.26**) and U20 5000m (**24:11.44**) walks at the Australian Schools Championships.

In January 2006, he improved his 10 km time to **48.41** in the Canberra A Series meet and then came the big break through in Sydney in February when he produced a sub 9 minute last 2km lap to force his way under the Racewalking World Cup qualifying standard of 47 minutes, finishing the 10 km roadwalk with **46.47**. A day later he won the Australian U18 3000m walk with **13:10**, yet another PB. Two weeks later he travelled to Melbourne and finished 10th at the MCG in the Victorian 5000m title, recording **22:28.04**. Finally, the end of March, he came 3rd in the Australian U20 10000m track title with yet another PB time of **46:43.75**.

At the World Cup in Spain in May 2006, where he was the Junior Team Captain, he finished the best of the 3 Australians in the U20 10 km roadwalk, coming 42nd in **47:02**. (and was in fact the 4th U18 walker to finish). After winning the Racewalking Australia U18 5 km walk in Canberra in June 2006 (**23:10**), he won the Australian U20 10 km roadwalk title in Hobart in August with yet another PB – **46:17**. He finished the year in fine form, winning the Tasmanian All Schools Under 20 5000m championship in October with a 1 minute PB time of **21:29**. His hard work was recognized that same year when he was awarded a Tasmanian Institute of Sport scholarship.



Daniel, on the right, on the way to victory in the Australian U20 10 km roadwalk in Hobart in August

2007 saw him trying to balance the demands of his Year 12 studies with the demands of his walk training. Now under the guidance of AIS walks coach Brent Vallance, he was frequently seen challenging the Mount Wellington slopes as his solo training intensified. Battling an injury, he was forced to settle for second place in the Australian Under 20 10 km in Canberra in June (**46:47**) but bounced back to win the Racewalking Australia Carnival 10 km in Adelaide in late August in a PB time of **45:58**.

It was not until his final year of secondary school had completed that he was free to concentrate on his walking and he showed his intentions with a time of **44:50** in winning the 10 km roadwalk held in conjunction with the Australian 50 km championship in Melbourne in December.



Daniel racing in Melbourne in August 2007 (track) and December 2007 (road)

From there it was onto Canberra where he participated in a 21 day intensive walking camp at the AIS. As all camp participants were required to finish the stint with a 20 km walk in the Canberra National Series Meet in late January 2008, he duly lined up for his first 20 km attempt – the result a very encouraging 7th place in **1:33:26**. His next roadwalk was in Melbourne in late February where, in a test walk held alongside the Australian 20 km championships, he won in **44:24**.

The aim had always been to break the 44:05 qualifying standard and hence gain selection for the 2008 World Junior championships and the one opportunity for the summer now presented itself in the form of the Australian Under 20 10,000m track championship, held on the Gold Coast in March. He led from the front and won convincingly with a time of **44:11**, yet another PB but an agonizing 6 seconds away from his target. By way of consolation, he was selected in the Australian Under 20 Men's team for the 2008 World Racewalking Cup (his second World Cup selection) but it could so easily have been the double.

With his Year 12 behind him, Daniel has now relocated to Canberra where he works part time and trains with the AIS walkers. With a great last 2 years under his belt, he has earned a second opportunity to mix it with the world's best. Following on from that, his next big challenge will be to successfully transition from outstanding Junior to competitive Senior. With his mixture of talent and commitment, I think the odds look pretty good at the moment.