

## Adam Garganis 2016

2016	World Racewalking Team Championships	Rome	U20 10km	14 <sup>th</sup>	42:24
2016	World Junior Championships	Bydgoszcz	10,000m	16 <sup>th</sup>	42:23.0

Adam Garganis, born 18<sup>th</sup> September 1997, started competing at the Collingwood Little Athletics Centre in the U6 age group. As a youngster, he competed in all the events and was a good sprinter, but also a keen soccer player.

He joined Collingwood Harriers in October 2008, competing in the Athletics Victoria Shield competition in the 2008/2009 summer. It was at this stage that he started to regularly include racewalks in his repertoire, racing over the 1500m and 2000m distances in the U14 division.

He started to train once a week with Collingwood club legend Bob Gardiner and it was Bob who suggested that Adam join the Victorian Race Walking Club for some winter walking. This Adam did in April 2009, aged 11, and he walked a few club races in the U12 division that winter., with a best time of **11:28** for the 2km roadwalk.



*A young Adam Garganis at Middle Park in 2009*

Adam contested his first racewalk championships in the 2009/2010 summer season, with 6<sup>th</sup> in the Victorian Schools U14 1500m in October (8:11), 4<sup>th</sup> in the Victorian T&F U14 1500m in February (8:14) and 5<sup>th</sup> in the Australian T&F Championships U14 1500m (8:20) and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Victorian Little Athletics U13 1500m (8:10) in March.

Winter 2010 was spent with the soccer club before the summer saw him back competing in Little Athletics each Saturday morning and AV Shield on the Saturday afternoon. By March 2011, his walking had improved enough for him to win silver in the U14 Little Athletics 1500m walk in a PB **7:10.50**. Then it was back to soccer for the winter.

It was in the 2011/2012 summer season that he started to hit his straps, taking bronze in the Australian T&F U14 3000m (**14:28.00**) and finally winning gold in the Victorian Little Athletics U15 1500m. He was now starting to show some speed, lowering his 1500m walk time to **6:48** and his 2000m walk time to **9:31**.

2012 saw him drop soccer and walk his first winter season, aged 14. He improved as the winter continued, eventually taking bronze in the Australian U16 5000m Championship with **23:51** and finishing the season with an inaugural 10km time of **53:27**.

The summer of 2012/2013 saw him start to gain some recognition on the national level when he finished second in the Australian Schools U16 3000m Championship in December (PB **13:40.50**). On the basis of this walk, he was selected as part of the Australian team for the Australian Youth Olympics, which took place in January 2013 in Sydney. The meet is remembered for the weather. The two day athletics program had to be reduced to one day after all competition was

cancelled on Friday as Sydney's temperature rose to an all time record high of 45.8°C. For the record, Adam finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the 5000m with a PB **23:41.32**. He was unlucky to miss selection for the 4x100m relay, such was the quality of his sprinting at that stage.

He finished the season with his first Australian championship gold medal, winning the Australian T&F U17 5000m race with **23:50.57**.

Thus at age 15, he was starting to make his presence felt. Bob Gardiner felt he had taken Adam as far as he could so Adam moved at that stage to join Simon Baker's training squad. It meant a lot of driving for his mother but it did pay dividends, with Adam's times continuing to fall.

In the 2013 winter season, he walked his first LBG carnival, finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the U16 3km (**13:45**) and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the U18 5km (**24:16**). He also reduced his 10km time to **48:26** and walked his first 15km (**1:21:49**). His season finished with a bronze medal in the Australian U18 10km Roadwalk Championship in Launceston (**49:20**).



*The 2013 LBG Carnival – one of many close races between Tyler Jones, Adam Garganis and Kyle Swan*

The 2013/2014 summer was his first real chance for an Australian vest, with the 2014 Racewalking World Cup. The U20 10km standard had been set at 46:30 which was a stretch for Adam but not impossible. The season saw him recording a lot of PBs as he chipped away at the required standard – 1500m in **6:41**, 2000m in **9:02**, 3000m in **12:49.3** and 5000m in **22:37**. He recorded **48:06** in the Fawcner Park U20 10km in December 2013 and improved to **46:19** in the World Cup Trial in Hobart in February 2014. The good news was that he was under the required 46:30 standard. The bad news was that he was 4<sup>th</sup> behind Jesse Osborne, Nathan Brill and Tyler Jones. These 3 would be selected for the World Cup team and Adam would have to wait for his next opportunity. He finished his season on a high with gold in the Australian T&F U18 5000m (**22:32.82**) and 4<sup>th</sup> in the U20 10,000m (**46:41.51**), behind Nathan, Jesse and Tyler once again.

He started his 2014 winter season with a 10km PB time of **46:04** in Melbourne. He also reduced his 5000m time to **22:02.39** while racing in a Gold Coast meet in Queensland.

Two meets that winter deserve particular attention. He completed a huge triple in the annual LBG Carnival in June, coming 4<sup>th</sup> in the Open 10 Miles Championship (**1:13:56**), coming 4<sup>th</sup> in the U20 10km (**49:57**) and coming 4<sup>th</sup> in the U18 5km (**23:28**). Then in September, he competed in the VRWC 35km club championship at Middle Park, recording **3:04:54**. Striding through the 20km split in **1:41:17**, he held on well to finish second to Chris Erickson - creating an interesting age comparison worthy of the Australian sports commentator Bruce McAveny, with Chris aged 32 and Adam aged 16.



*16 year old Adam finishes the VRWC 35km championship with 3:04:54 in September 2014*

Adam was one of those walkers who seemed to thrive on lots of races. Over the 2014/2015 summer, he raced 21 times, finishing in the first 3 on nearly every occasion. He reduced his track times once again: 1500m in **6:07**, 2000m in **8:06**, 3000m in **12:15**, 5000m in **21:49** and 10,000m in **44:50**. He won silver in the Australian Schools U18 5000m in Adelaide in December (**22:54.47**) but could only manage 5<sup>th</sup> in the Australian T&F U20 10,000m championship in March, even though he recorded a PB **44:50.32**. The U20 men's standard was improving quickly, and he was beaten by Tyler Jones, Kyle Swan, Declan Tingay and Kyle Bird.

He would need to pull his socks up in the 2015 winter if he was to retain his position. And he did just that. 17 year old Adam did a very impressive double at the LBG Carnival in June, winning the Open 10 Mile ( PB **1:12:52**) ahead of 19 year old 2014 World Junior rep Nathan Brill and then completing the U20 10km just over an hour later, finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in 52:05 for the team. Two weeks later, he took silver in the Victorian 20km roadwalk championship with a PB **1:31:08**. Two weeks later, he took silver in the Victorian 15km roadwalk championships with a PB **1:09:21**, recording a 10km PB split of **44:03**. He finished his season with silver in the Australian U20 10km roadwalk championship in Melbourne (**45:39**).

It was now time to aim high. Athletics Australia had set qualifying standards of 46:30 (for the 2016 World Racewalking Teams Championships) and 43:35.5 (for the 2016 World Junior Championships). Both were achievable. The bigger ask was to finish high enough in the talented junior pool to earn selection.

The 2015/2016 summer saw him recording PBs over the shorter distances (**6:01** for 1500m and **21:24** for 5000m) and chipping away at his 10km times. He finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the invitation U20 10km at Fawkner Park in December (PB **43:03**) behind Tyler Jones and Kyle Swan. He finished 3<sup>rd</sup> once again in the Oceania U20 10km roadwalk championship in Adelaide in February (PB **42:53**) behind Tyler and Kyle. He now had his World Racewalking Team Championships selection assured. But he had to go at least one place better in the Australian U10 10,000m championships the following month if he was to have any chance of a World Juniors berth.

In fact, he improved 2 spots, winning the Australian U20 10,000m walk in Perth with **43:13.24** and booking his trip to the 2016 World Junior Championships in Poland in July. The task was made a little easier in the hot and sunny conditions when favourites Tyler Jones and Kyle Swan both suffering disqualifications. But Adam would have been up there with them in any case and the final places were in no way assured.

Adam was in career best form and his training was at an all time high. It was no real surprise when he was the first of the Australian boys to finish in the 2016 World Racewalking Teams Championships in Rome in May (PB **42:24**) .

His walk in the 10 Mile Championship at the LBG Carnival in Canberra the following month was spectacular. 18 year old Adam won in a record **1:09:51**, breaking away from the 20 Mile Championship leading group of Jared Tallent, Chris Erickson and Quentin Rew with 2km to go. It was a dominant performance.

Fast forward another month to Poland for the 2016 World Junior 10,000m championship. The Australian reps both performed admirably, with Tyler Jones 12<sup>th</sup> in a PB 42:02.96 and Adam 16<sup>th</sup> in a PB **42:22.96**.



*Adam walks in the 2016 World Racewalking Team Championships and in the 2016 World Junior Championships*

Back in Australia, he still had more racing in his legs. He scored an inaugural win in the Victorian 30km roadwalk championship in early August. His time of **2:23:39** was a 15 minute PB and confirmed his wonderful potential over the longer distances. Four weeks later, he earned his first Australian Open gold medal, winning the Australian 20km Roadwalk Championship in Canberra with **1:34:23**.

It had indeed been a stellar winter.

With nothing specific on the radar for 2017, Adam took the opportunity to compete in the annual 4 day Lake Taihu Classic in China in late September. His performances were nothing to write home about but he enjoyed the experience and indicated that he was keen to return in future years.

He spent January 2017 at the AIS in Canberra on an extended training camp, along with a large contingent of Australian and international walkers. With such a good training period under his belt, he travelled to Adelaide the following month for the Australian Summer 20km Roadwalk Championship, recording a 4 minute PB time of **1:27:27**. Two weeks later, he took silver behind Rhydian Cowley with a PB **21:16.31** in the Victorian 5000m track championship.

As the 2017 winter season progresses, he is training and racing on the local Victorian front. He has silvers so far in the Victorian 15km road championship (**1:07:37**) and the Victorian 10km road championship (**44:28**) so is off to a good start.

Adam is still only aged 19 but he has achieved so much already. A late developer, he has forced his way to the top of the junior rankings and now looks set to successfully transition into the senior ranks. I look forward to watching from the sidelines.