

## **Jared Tallent**

2001	World Youth Champs	Hungary	10,000m	7 <sup>th</sup>	44:50.0
2002	World Junior Champs	Jamaica	10,000m	19 <sup>th</sup>	45:51.2
2004	Racewalking World Cup	Naumburg	20 km	75 <sup>th</sup>	1:30:01
2005	IAAF World Champs	Helsinki	20 km	18 <sup>th</sup>	1:23:42
2006	Commonwealth Games	Melbourne	<b>20 km</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>1:23:32</b>
2006	Racewalking World Cup	La Coruna	20 km	14 <sup>th</sup>	1:21:36
2007	IAAF World Champs	Osaka	20 km	DQ	
2008	World Racewalking Cup	Cheboksary	20 km	10 <sup>th</sup>	1:19:48
2008	Olympic Games	Beijing	<b>20 km</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>1:19:42</b>
			<b>50 km</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3:39:27</b>
2009	IAAF World Champs	Berlin	20km	5 <sup>th</sup>	1:20:27
			50km	6 <sup>th</sup>	3:44:50
2010	World Racewalking Cup	Chihuahua	<b>50km</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>3:54:55</b>
	Commonwealth Games	Delhi	<b>20km</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>1:22:18</b>
2011	IAAF World Champs	Daegu	20km	24 <sup>th</sup> *	1:25:25
			<b>50km</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3:43:36</b>
2012	World Racewalking Cup	Saransk	<b>50km</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>3:40:32</b>
	Olympic Games	London	20km	7 <sup>th</sup>	1:20:02
			<b>50km</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>3:36:53</b>
2013	IAAF World Champs	Moscow	<b>50km</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>3:40:03</b>
2014	World Racewalking Cup	Taicang	<b>50km</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3:42:48</b>
2015	IAAF World Champs	Beijing	20km	26 <sup>th</sup>	1:24:19
			<b>50km</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3:42:17</b>
2016	World Racewalking Cup	Rome	<b>50km</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>3:42:36</b>
	Olympic Games	Rio de Janeiro	<b>50km</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3:41:16</b>

Jared Tallent, born 17<sup>th</sup> October 1984 and hailing from Ballarat, started his career as a member of Ballarat YCW. Lightly built at 60 km and 178 cm in height, his long stride and pure speed make him a formidable opponent.

Daryl Biggin was his long time coach, guiding his career from the Little Athletics stage right through to late 2003 when he handed him over to Brent Vallance at the AIS.



*Jared strides out in front in the 2001 Australian All Schools Championships*

In 1999 Jared was competing successfully at a National level in two sports. He had placed second in the triathlon in the Victorian All Schools Championships and went on to place 15<sup>th</sup> in the Australian title. He also made a breakthrough in race walking. At previous Nationals he had finished out of the medals but in 1999 he was third at the Australian Youth Championships and, in December 1999, he won the Australian All Schools Under 16 1500m walk title (**6:11**) in Sydney. He followed this up with a win in the Sydney Youth Olympics Festival 5000m (**22:56**) in January.

With a few State League matches under his belt (bests of **12:47** and **22:22**), he was 6<sup>th</sup> in the Victorian Open 5000m track championship in March 2000 in **21:17**. What a great time for someone who had just turned 16!

May 2000 saw him place 2<sup>nd</sup> to Scott Holloway in the Pacific Scholastic Games 16-17 Years 3000m in **12:50**. This marked the start of an underage rivalry that continued for several years..

In June, he was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Australian Junior 10 km road title in **46:35** (beaten by the older Troy Sundstrum and Douglas Connelly). He also won the Victorian All Schools Under 17 5 km (**22:16**) and the Victorian Under 18 8 km walk (**37:56**). A surprise defeat in the Australian Under 18 8 km walk in August was the only blemish on an otherwise great winter.

Come the 2000/2001 summer season and he was walking even faster. He was unbeatable at the Australian All Schools championships in Adelaide in December, winning both the Under 20 5000m (**22:16**) and the Under 18 3000m (**13:38**). His best Victorian State League time for the season was **12:04.0**, a new Victorian Country Under 17 record. His season ended in fine style when he won the Victorian Open and Junior 5000m double (**21:55**). Then he was off to Bendigo where he won the Australian Under 18 3000m title in **13:09**. On the basis of these performances, he was selected for the 10,000m walk at the World Youth Championships in Hungary in July 2001.

The 2001 winter season saw him win the Victorian Open 10 km road championship at Albert Park in **44:15**. Then a trip to Canberra in June gave him the Australian Junior 10 km title in **43:53**. A month later in Hungary, he walked fantastically against a top class field to finish 7<sup>th</sup> in 44:50, less than a minute outside a medal. A win in the Victorian Under 18 8 km road title (**36:15**) set him up for his win in the Australian Under 18 8 km road title in Hobart in September.

Come the 2001/2002 summer, Jared was ready to go again and defended his Australian All Schools Under 20 5000m (**22:27**) and Under 18 3000m (**12:54**) titles. A bout of illness (thought initially to be glandular fever) saw him down on form for a while but he seemed to recover over the Christmas break and came back in January looking fresher. The big breakthrough for the summer came in early February when he finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the Canberra Grand Prix 10,000m track walk in a PB of **43:36**. This qualified him for the World Junior titles to be held in Jamaica in July 2002.

He was 2<sup>nd</sup> to Scott Holloway in the Australian Junior 10,000m track title in hot conditions in Brisbane (**47:24**) in April and followed this up with a successful title defence in the Australian Junior 10 km roadwalk in June in Canberra (**45:18**). His performance in Jamaica in the 2002 World Juniors (19<sup>th</sup> in **45:19.2**) was another good performance in hot and trying conditions.

For the third year in a row, Jared won the Australian All Schools Under 20 5000 walk in early December. His time of **21:23.6** was a PB and saw him just beat an up and coming NSW walker called Adam Rutter. This would be the start of a fierce racing rivalry between these two very talented juniors.

As the summer progressed, Jared's times quickly dropped. On 27 February 2003, he won a State League competition in Melbourne in **11:54.4** and then won the Victorian 5000m Open title in another PB – **20:48.85**. He then defended his Australian 10000m Junior title in Brisbane with **45:20** and two days later he took bronze in the Australian Open 20 km roadwalk title with **1:33:11**.

The 2003 winter saw him mixing it with the senior walkers while studying for his H.S.C in Ballarat. The most memorable race of his season was in the Australian Junior 10 km roadwalk in Canberra in June. This event saw a final nail biting finish involving Jared and NSW walkers Adam Rutter and Aaron Meller. Aaron crossed the line first, Jared second and Adam third with centimetres between the three. Aaron was subsequently disqualified by the Chief Judge, using the new 'Power of Three' rule. But this rule could only be applied to the Australian title. So spectators saw the unique situation where Aaron had won the Federation title but Jared had won the Australian title. This unfortunate situation overshadowed the fact that Jared's win was his third in a row in this particular Australian title. His time on this occasion was **44:55**.

With his Year 12 studies completed, Jared accepted an AIS Scholarship and relocated to Canberra in late November 2003. The move was expected. He returned to Melbourne almost immediately for a VRWC December 20 km walk which he won in a PB time of **1:31:23**.

With the pressures of his final school year behind him and with new training partners in Canberra, the results came quickly. In the space of a week in late January 2004, he recorded **43:16** for 2<sup>nd</sup> in an A Series 10000m track walk in Adelaide and then recorded **1:28:10** for an A Series 20 km roadwalk in Canberra. A month later in the National 20 km title in Sydney, he improved again to finish 4<sup>th</sup> in **1:27:34**.

This walk bettered the 1:28:00 World Cup qualifying time and Jared was in his first senior Australian team. He now had 2 months to prepare for Germany. Alas, the best laid plans can sometimes fail. Jared was diagnosed with a severely bruised knee, the effect possibly of the increased tempo and frequency of training.

Jared's 75<sup>th</sup> place in the World Cup 20 km walk (**1:30:01**) did not tell the real story. Although lacking in race fitness, he still passed the 10 km mark in a PB time of **42:56** before fading. He showed in this race that he is ready for the next step. He has the right attitude and will benefit immensely in the AIS environment.

Returning from Europe, he contested the Federation Junior 10 km in Canberra in June, just going down to Adam Rutter in an unforgettable contest. With a wonderful display of sustained speed, Adam walked 42:13 while Jared walked **42:18**.

His final race for the winter was the Australian 30 km championship in Canberra in late August. Contesting his first ever 30 km race, he won the National title with a PB time of **2:23:22**, beating Chris Erickson by some 30 seconds.



*Tom Barnes, Jared and Chris Erickson make the early pace in the 2004 Australian 30 km event*

The 2005 year started off just as every previous year had for Jared – with further improvement. His first hitouts were on the track in Canberra in low key interclub meets in January. In quick succession, he recorded wins with **11:30.9** for 3000m and **19:37.6** for 5000m, times that place him amongst our best ever speed walkers.

His 2<sup>nd</sup> place to Nathan Deakes in the Canberra A Series walk in February saw him record **1:25:53**, a PB by over 1 minute. He was slightly down on this form in coming 5<sup>th</sup> in **1:27:15** in March in the National championship but he had gone through the first 10 km in just over 42 mins, a PB split.

It was no surprise when in late April, he made his big break through and recorded a time of **1:22:54** in the Chinese leg of the IAAF Racewalking Challenge Series. On this occasion, he went through the first 10 km in a PB time of 41:40 and then came home with an even faster **41:12**. His 20 km time gained him Australian selection for the 2005 IAAF World Championships.

Two months later in early June, he fronted for the annual Canberra carnival, walking in the Open 20 Mile event for the first time. His winning time of **2:22:39** was second only to Nathan Deakes' debut time of 2:21, set in 1998 and saw him 5 minutes ahead of Chris Erickson in second place for the second year in a row.

In July in the NSW 10 km roadwalking championship, he became the sixth Australian walker to break 40 minutes with his winning time of **39:59**.

Onto Helsinki where he finished a very commendable 18<sup>th</sup> in **1:32:42** after a very fast first 10 km split of **40:15**. The general consensus was that, once his speed endurance built up, Jared was in for some very fast 20 km walks indeed.

Back in Australia in late August, he was immediately on the start line again as he successfully defended his Australian 30 km roadwalk title in Adelaide with a time of **2:12:58**, an improvement of some 10 minutes over 2004.



*Jared wins the 2005 Australian 30 km title in Adelaide in a PB 2:12:58*

Sessions at altitude at Thredbo and hard miles in Canberra paved the way for his next race, over 5000m, in the Ron Clarke Classic meeting in Geelong in early December. Yet another PB and yet another win! His time of **19:13.95** was a 25 second PB and was walked from the front.

A fine 3<sup>rd</sup> in the National 20 km roadwalk title in Sydney in early February (**1:25:23**) secured his Commonwealth Games berth and then he was back to Thredbo for one final altitude block.

His final hitout before the Games was in the Victorian 5000m track title at the famous MCG in late February. His winning time of **19:12.27** was a 1 second PB.

At the Commonwealth Games in March, although the youngest competitor in the field, he took bronze with a finely judged **1:23:32**. Five weeks later, he recorded his best ever 20 km time with **1:22:31** when he came 20<sup>th</sup> in the IAAF Racewalking Challenge event in Yangzhou in China. Then three weeks later, he came a wonderful 14<sup>th</sup> place in the World Racewalking Cup in La Coruna in another PB time of **1:21:36**.

On his way back to Australia, the AIS contingent travelled via Eastern Europe and, while there, Jared won the Bruno Junk Memorial 10,000m track walk in Estonia in a slick **40:41**. It ended a great season of racing.

After a solid training block in Canberra, he fronted for the Australian 30 km championship in Hobart and, in tough conditions, he took second behind Nathan Deakes in **2:13:51**. He was doing big mileages and preparing for his first 50 km walk in Geelong in early December 2006.

Based on his previous showings in the Australian 30 km championships and his two outings over the Canberra 20 Mile championship, a good time was on the cards and Jared did not disappoint. Although fading slightly in the dying stages, his 3<sup>rd</sup> place (**3:55:08**) behind Deakes and Cousins was a great first up performance. His aim was to walk both the 20km and 50 km in the 2007 World Championships and he now had A qualifiers in both events.



*Jared on his way to 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 2006 Commonwealth Games 20 km event*

His season continued in style. He won the Canberra A Series meet in late January 2007 with a new PB of **1:21:32**, beating Luke Adams in the process. He then knocked out a fast **11:22.4** to win a 3000m track walk in the Sydney A Series meet in February and followed up with 2<sup>nd</sup> place behind Adams in the Australian 20 km championship in Brisbane in mid March. Conditions were too hot for fast times so he saved that for 2 weeks later when, in Shenzhen in China, he came 7<sup>th</sup> in the IAAF Grand Prix 20 km event in a PB time of **1:21:25**.

Jared was shattered when he was overlooked for selection in the 50 km event for the 2007 IAAF World Championships. The selectors chose him for the 20 km event only, preferring to choose seasoned 50 km walkers (Cousins and Erickson) for what would most likely be hot conditions in Osaka. He formally protested but his protest was dismissed and he had to face the harsh realities of the situation. If he wanted to do the double in the 2008 Olympics, he would need to look for another opportunity to convince the selectors.

Fired up by this omission, he took it out on all in the annual Canberra 20 Mile championship in June, recording **2:15:43** to break Willi Sawall's 1980 course record by 1 minute. His 30 km split of **2:06:27** was a huge PB.

He went into Osaka with confidence and made the World Championship 20 km race look easy. He maintained his position in the leading group as the big guns dropped in the heat and humidity and, at 15 km, found himself in the final group of 5 leaders. It was at this stage that he picked up a third red card and was disqualified. As he said afterwards, he still felt great and felt he could have maintained it to the finish. It was a very disappointing end for Jared's second World Championship race but he showed that he is indeed a force to be reckoned with.

Back in Australia, he turned his attention back to the 50 km distance, determined to prove just what he could do. In an astonishing performance, he walked away from a class field in the Australian Olympic Trial, held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and produced the third fastest time ever by an Australian to stop the clock at **3:44:45**, well inside his previous best of 3:55.08 and 15 minutes under the Olympic A-qualifying time of 4 hours. He was duly confirmed in the Australian Olympic team and will now contest the 50 km event at Beijing.

Six weeks later, in the Canberra National Series 20 km walk, he showed that he had recovered well from his 50 km effort, speeding through the first 10 km in 41:08 before slowing to win easily in **1:24:20**. A week later, in an interstate track match in Brisbane, he defeated a top national field over 5000m in an 11 second PB time of **19:01.24**.



*Left: Jared wins the 2007 Australian 50 km championship to 3:44:45  
Right: Jared wins the 2008 Australian 20 km championship in 1:19:41*

Three weeks later, on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> February in Melbourne, the Australian Olympic 20 km trial and 2008 Australian Championship was contested and Jared showed his intentions early with a 7:40 second lap of the 2 km course. From then on, it was a one man show. He passed the 10 km mark in **39:43** and held on wonderfully for a final time of **1:19:41**, a PB of nearly 2 minutes and a performance that confirmed his Olympic selection over the 20 km distance.

There was no rest in sight for Jared. The next month he was off to Beijing for an IAAF Racewalking Challenge event, one of a series of sporting events spread over a one week period to showcase the Olympic venues. His photograph was spread on front pages worldwide when he won the 20 km test event in **1:20:11**, the first winner ever in the new Olympic stadium.



*Jared wins the test event in Beijing in April 2008 in a world class time of 1:20:11*

From there it was onto Cheboksary for his World Cup appointment. In the leading pack early, he was one of 6 walkers who formed a breakaway group soon after 10 km. However, his 10 km split of **39:14** took its toll and he slowed in the second half, coming 10<sup>th</sup> in **1:19:48** – not that you can call a sub-eighty slow! To top off a great day's racing, the Australian 20 km team of Luke Adams (7<sup>th</sup>), Jared (10<sup>th</sup>) and Chris Erickson (30<sup>th</sup>) took third place in the prestigious Teams Event.

His final hitout before Beijing was in the annual Canberra 20 Mile event where he defended his title with a fine time of **2:20:31** (his third win in 4 years).

His Beijing Olympic walks were better than anyone could have expected and yet were not really unexpected. In the 20 km event, he retained his position in the lead group while others fell off until finally when the pack exploded at the 15 km mark, he was one of the three who broke clear. With a withering finish, he took third place with **1:19:42**, only one second slower than his lifetime best. Jared's performance matched that of Nathan Deakes and Jane Saville who both won bronze in the 20 km walks in Athens 4 years ago.

*"With about 3 km to go I thought maybe I was in with a chance. We spent a lot of time in Japan preparing for the heat and I think it really paid off today. Perfect preparation leads to good results. I couldn't be more happy - it's an Olympic medal. I was like - you little beauty, I'm over the moon. I get married in two weeks. It's going to be a fantastic month,"*

In the 50 km event six days later, he went one better, finishing second with a 5 minute PB of **3:39:27**. Not since Raelene Boyle won double silver in 1972 had an Australian Track & Field athlete won two medals at the same Games. Remarkably, the last time an Aussie male won two medals was in 1906, when Nigel Barker claimed bronze in the 100m and 400m. It was also the first time Australia had won a medal in the long walk event. The previous best results were 5<sup>th</sup> by Bob Gardiner at Tokyo in 1964 and 6<sup>th</sup> by Ray Smith in Melbourne in 1956.



*Jared enters the stadium to take silver in the 2008 Olympic 50 km event*

He returned to Australia a household name. His wedding to Claire Woods the following weekend in Walkersville in Adelaide was covered by the media and earned a two page spread in the 'New Idea' magazine.

Jared had one final appointment for the year, to contest the IAAF Race Walking Challenge Final in Murcia in Spain in late September. Only 4 weeks after his gruelling Olympic double, he raced to second place in 33<sup>o</sup>C temperatures in a time of **1:24:02** to win the 2008 IAAF Racwalk Challenge Series overall and pocket the US\$30,000 first prize.

Jared bypassed the Australian 50 km championship in December 2008, choosing instead to slowly recharge the tanks at his AIS base. His first serious race of the new year was on February 28<sup>th</sup> in the Sydney Track Classic meeting and what a beauty it was – a new Australian 5000m record of **18:41.83**. He battled the whole way with Mexican Eder Sanchez and only lost by the narrowest of margins after they both scorched through the last lap in under 1:25.

His next appointment was the Australian 20km Summer Championship in Melbourne on March 7<sup>th</sup> where he successfully defended his title with **1:19:42**, only 1 second outside his PB. From then, it was straight onto a plane and off to Chihuahua in Mexico for the opening leg of the 2009 IAAF Grand Prix circuit a week later. Unfortunately a stomach bug meant that Jared was not at full strength but he still powered to third place with **1:23:44** at altitude. This was followed by a 3 week altitude camp at Flagstaff in Arizona before the team traveled to Wuxi in China for yet

another IAAF Grand Prix 20 km race, held on 18 April. Against a very strong field, Jared finished 5<sup>th</sup> with **1:21:11**. It had been an intense and highly successful 2 months.

The 2009 LBG 20 mile race was a corker with the top AIS walkers in control as expected. Luke Adams took off from the gun with an 8 minute first 2km over the rolling hills. Jared took up the challenge, caught him at around the 4km mark and then went straight to the front and was never headed. With Jared passing the 10 mile mark in 66:21, his existing course record was always going to be bettered and thus it unfolded – with him crossing the finish line in **2:14:57**. His 30km split of **2:05:15** was just outside Nathan Deakes' Australian best of 2:05:06.

Two weeks later, he was back in action in the IAAF Challenge event in La Coruna. Although passing the halfway mark in a fast 39:57, he stopped soon afterwards.

Jared was the first of the Australians to finish in the 2009 World Championship 20km in Berlin, finishing 6<sup>th</sup> in **1:20:27**. What people did not know was that he had been battling a shin injury for some time and his final preparation had been effected. This meant that he was not in quite the same form as in Beijing but his class showed through with his high place.

The World Championship 50km six days later was an event that unfolded in unusual circumstances. By the time the half way mark was reached in 1:50:07, the lead group was down to three walkers – world record holder Denis Nizhegorodov, Luke Adams and Jared. The pace then picked up, the 2km lapsplits dropping from 8:40's to 8:37 to 8:27 to 8:25. When Nizhegorodov was forced to stop for a call of nature, Jared and Luke suddenly found themselves in the lead, some 30 secs clear of anyone else. It was a euphoric time for us Aussies roadside and we started to dream of a gold/silver finish. Alas, it was not to be. Coming up to 40km, the two Australians had slowed and over the final 10km, they were caught and passed by a number of walkers. Luke eventually finished the stronger of the two Australians, recording a personal best of 3.43.39 in sixth place just ahead of Jared in seventh with **3.44.50**. Brent Vallance commented on Jared pushing the pace when he hit the lead:

*"That's what you want when you are a double Olympic medallist. None of these guys died wondering whether they had it in them or not. That was the plan. He stuck to it well. He was probably growing in confidence after 30km. Unfortunately the boys just didn't have it after 40km. Jared was still in a medal position at 45km so that (pulling out) was never going to happen. He did crawl home in the last two to three km though. He's pretty beaten up at the moment."*

Jared's season finished with 8<sup>th</sup> place in the IAAF Racewalking Challenge Final in Saransk, with a time of **39:28** for the 10km roadwalk.

Jared's next race was the 2009 Australian 50km championship, held in pouring rain at Fawkner Park, Melbourne, in late November. He was able to negotiate the adverse conditions and powered to a PB time of **3:38:56**, with his last 10km (done in ever increasing rain intensity) his fastest. Unfortunately the other medallists, Tom Barnes and Duane Cousins, had another 30+ mins to walk at that stage and the rain intensity was so great by then that the course flooded in a number of places and they were literally wading through lakes of water.

The 2010 Australian 20km Summer Championship, held in Hobart in mid February, was going to be a hard race to win. It boasted the winners of the previous three IAAF Racewalking Challenge Series – Eder Sanchez of Mexico (2009), Jared (2008) and Luke Adams (2007) - as well as Nathan Deakes (2007 World 50km champion) and a whole swag of world class internationals. Coming straight off a 3 week stint in the AIS altitude house (as was the case for his 50km walk), Jared burst to the front from the gun, dragging the lead group through for a sub-8 min first lap. His pace was relentless, ticking off a whole series of 7:50 laps to reach the half way mark in a super fast **39:07**. He was on his own after the first lap and from then on it was just a case of how fast he could go and how much he would win by. The margin ended up around 3 minutes with a PB winning time of **1:19:15**.

Two weeks later, he finished his summer season with a win in the Sydney Track Classic 5000m in a fast **18:51.39**.

Jared's next appointment was at the IAAF Racewalking World Cup 50km event in Chihuahua in mid May. It turned out to be a superb event in very tough conditions. The sun was out from the start as it quickly heated up towards the expected top of 32°C. To make matters worse, the 2km course had no shade and a hot strong wind kicked up in the second half of the race, building into gale force in the final stages of the event.

Mexican walker Horacio Nava led for most of the race, with Jared never far behind. Jared had nearly bridged the gap when, as he passed under the finish banner at the 30km mark, he was violently sick for some 30 secs. I thought that would be the finish for him but somehow he got going again and, to my surprise, eventually caught Nava at around the 40km mark. But the effort had been too much and he then dropped behind him back into second place. Further back, Slovakian walker Matej Toth made his own bid for glory, surging right up to Jared and passing him, then bridging what



had looked like an unbeatable gap to Nava in the final kilometre. His final 5km split was 21:44 was easily the fastest of the race. Nava held on for second while Jared took third with **3:54:55**, his first ever World Cup medal and one that added to his growing reputation as a big time walker. Jared was quoted on the A.A. website after the race

*“It was definitely a tough day at the office, not everything went my way so I was happy just to finish in the end and still get a medal. After about 15km I was having trouble keeping my fluid down, I got to the 27km mark and started to throw up and then at 30km I stopped right in front of the grandstand and just puked like I did in Beijing. I felt better once I did that and put on a few good laps but I was trying to drink and it just wasn’t going down so effectively I walked the last 20km without having a drink which made it tough, especially with the weather.”*

With that box ticked, the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi became his new focus. Another win in the LBG 20 Miles Championship (a pedestrian 2:26:35) was followed 6 days later by a time of **1:21:31** in the IAAF Challenge Series 20km in La Coruna. Jared then fronted in the Victorian 30km championship in Melbourne in early August, winning with **2:08:27**. His last race before the Commonwealth Games was a fast **38:29** in the IAAF Challenge Series Final in Beijing.

The Commonwealth Games 20km race in Delhi in October was an exciting one with Jared, Luke Adams, local favourite Harminder Singh (IND) and David Rotich (KEN) locked together for the first two thirds of the race. Coming up to the 14 km mark, Jared and Luke applied the pressure and it was soon the two of them out the front matching it stride for stride, just as in Berlin the previous year. Just before the 18km mark, Jared was able to make the decisive break as Luke stumbled over a section of raised concrete. He made the most of the hiccup and stormed home to win in **1:22:18** with Luke a gallant second in 1:22:31. Jared was sympathetic to his teammate’s misfortune.

*“I was still feeling pretty comfortable (towards the end of the race) and Luke managed to get a bit of a break but I was waiting for a kilometre to go and when I saw that it was the opportunity, I went for it,” he said. “He just seemed to trip and it was a perfect chance to take my opportunity and go for the win but it was unfortunate for Luke.”*

The hard year of racing and training had perhaps taken a toll on Jared as, in the 2010 Australian 50km Championship at Fawknor Park in December, he stepped off the track at the 38km mark, allowing Luke Adams to go on and win with 3:47:34. It was a different story in Hobart in February 2011 at the Australian 20km Summer Championship, as Jared extended his lead lap by lap, passing the 10km mark in 39:33 and working hard in the second half to win in **1:20:19**. This was his fourth win in a row in this event and his winning times read very impressively – 1:19:41, 1:19:42, 1:19:15 and 1:20:19. Luke Adams was second with 1:21:00.

Seemingly re-energized now, he put in a series of excellent races in the buildup to the 2011 IAAF World Championships: a win in the Athletics Australia Tour Meet 5000m in Sydney (**19:01**), 4<sup>th</sup> in the IAAF Challenge Series 20km in Taicang (**1:19:57**) and a win in the LBG 20 Mile Championship (**2:18:59**).

But the signs were not promising come the World Championships in Daegu, Korea, as Jared finished a disappointing 27<sup>th</sup> with **1:25:25** in the 20km.

*“I’m pretty disappointed to be honest, I usually should be able to hold that pace easily but it wasn’t there today. My preparation hasn’t been ideal and I now have a week to turn it around for the 50 kilometre event later in the week. I had some pretty solid long sessions at home before coming here and am hoping to find what I was missing today for the next race.”*

We need not have worried as it was a different Jared who fronted for the 50km race six days later. Always near the front, he laid his cards on the table at the 35km mark, increasing his pace and starting the long chase to catch the sole leader Sergey Bakulin of Russia. His next 5km was a very quick 21:40 and he was slowly closing the gap. He maintained the pace with a split of 22:04 up to 45km - he was now 90 secs behind Bakulin and nearly 1 minute clear of fellow Russian Denis Nizhegorodov in third place. Alas, it was not to be. Slowing to 23:50 in the last 5km, he surrendered his silver medal to the chasing Russian in the 49<sup>th</sup> km - the final stats showing Bakulin first with 3:41:24, Nizhegorodov second with 3:42:45 and Jared third with **3:43:36**. As a footnote to this race, Bakulin eventually lost his gold medal due to blood irregularities and Jared was upgraded to second place.



*Jared in action in the 2011 IAAF World Championships 50km in Daegu*

The 2011 Australian 50km Championship at Fawkner Park in December saw Jared intending to only walk the first 30km with training partner Chris Erickson and then stop. But at the 30km mark, although he did not even have any feeding materials on hand, he decided to keep going, caught leader Nathan Deakes and finished as fresh as a daisy with a winning time of **3:49:43**.

His subsequent summer races were equally impressive. He finished just behind Canadian Inaki Gomez in the Sydney Track Classic 5000m with **18:47.77**, then a week later he won the Australian Summer 20km Championship in Hobart with **1:23:01**. This might sound a fairly pedestrian performance but the reality was far different. With the Saturday evening temperature nudging 39°C, conditions were horrendous. He was in a class of his own, finishing around one minute ahead of Chris Erickson. A week later, he finished second to Mexican Eder Sanchez in the IAAF Challenge Series meet in Chihuahua, Mexico. Although walking at altitude, he still walked a time of **1:21:50**.

Three weeks later, he improved his 20km to **1:20:34** with 5<sup>th</sup> place in the IAAF Challenge Series meet in Taicang, China.

His 3<sup>rd</sup> place walk in the IAAF World Racewalking Cup in Saransk (**3:40:32**) was walked from the front as he forced the pace lap after lap, the only non-Russian in a phalanx of red vests. The attrition rate was high with 1/3 of the 110 strong field failing to finish in the torrid conditions, but Jared was undeterred, recording yet another superb time and gaining yet another medal in top international competition. Nowadays it reads as a gold medal performance, with the first and second placed Russians retrospectively banned for drugs violations.

Returning to Australia, he won the LBG 20 Miles Championship in Canberra with his usual quality performance - **2:18:00**.

Jared timed his preparation well and his walks in the 2012 Olympic Games in London were just about perfect. His 7<sup>th</sup> place finish time of **1:20:02** in the 20km race was his best time of the year. With the first two walkers under 1:19:00 and the first six under 1:20:00, this was the highest-quality 20km walk in Olympic history.

It was but an entree before the 50km main course. After walking with the leaders for the first half of the race, Jared lost contact with the group and looked out of medal contention. Yet, with a remarkable recovery, particularly in the last six kilometres, he surged back, eventually claiming silver medal for a second successive Games. And did it stylishly, lowering his PB from 3:38:56 to **3:36:53**.

*I learned a lesson in Daegu and just held back in the early stages and stayed comfortable. I tried to stay focused throughout and bring it (the gold medal) home. The Olympic Games is pretty special for me. To get my third Olympic medal is pretty special. The plan was really to attack that last 10K. I don't think I could have done much more."*

Once again, he was subsequently promoted to the gold medal position as yet another Russian was retrospectively banned. So he eventually had the honour of being awarded the 2012 World Cup and 2012 Olympic 50km walk titles, as well as the Olympic 50km record. Sadly, he was robbed of his chance to stand atop the podium on both occasions.



*Jared celebrates his PB finish in the London Olympic 50km*

Jared's life now underwent a huge upheaval. After a review of Australia's poor overall Olympic performance, Athletics Australia decided to terminate its scholarship program with the AIS in Canberra, meaning Jared and the other resident walkers would now lose the significant support that comes from such a concept. Jared and Claire decided to move to Adelaide, settling near Claire's family. Claire announced her retirement and would now take on the role as Jared's coach.

The other significant change in Jared's lifestyle came about because of the ever increasing media demands, whether appearing at some sporting function or supporting some good cause. It seemed that he was somewhere in Australia every weekend.

Yet with the move from Canberra and with his ever increasing media presence, he still had to find time to train. From his perspective, the next Olympic cycle had started.

His first appearance post London was in the Australian Summer 20km Championship in Hobart in February, where he won his sixth straight title, his time of **1:22:10**. This win locked in automatic selection for the 2013 IAAF World Championships in Moscow.

A week later, he finished third in the IAAF Challenge Series 20km in Taicang, China, in a better time of **1:20:41**. He next appeared in the IAAF Challenge Series 20km in La Coruna, Spain, in early June, winning with **1:21:21** in hot conditions. Then it was straight back to Australia to defend his LBG 20 Mile title in Canberra, winning as usual with **2:20:41**.

His World Championships walk in August 2013 was another quality performance as he secured his fifth medal in Olympic or World Championships competition, taking the 50km bronze with **3:40:03**. After leading with two Russians early in the race, he seemed to falter, dropping back to seventh at the half-way mark before fighting his way back up through the field to move into third in the last 10km. He now had bronze (20km) and silver (50km) from the Beijing Olympics, a bronze in the 50km from the Daegu World Championships, a silver in the 50km in the London Olympics and now a bronze again. It is an impressive effort, but he was disappointed to again miss the gold medal.

*"I felt absolutely terrible out there early, and at the 15-kilometre mark when I dropped off the Russians I didn't think I would finish. I was really hurting, surprisingly sluggish. As the race went on I tried to get motivated, and I started to feel a bit better as the race went on. I was proud that I could pull together a strong last ten kilometres to come into the bronze medal position. I have trained all year for this, we train all year for one event and I didn't want to let anyone down, especially my wife Claire. It's great to win a medal and have reward for all the hard work."*

In November 2013, he accepted an invitation to walk in a new 4 Day Race in China, but his performance was low key. In fact, his summer was on the line due to a hamstring injury. He opted to walk the 20km at the annual Fawkner Park

meet in December, finishing second in a slow 1:27:23. Then he suffered a disqualification in the Australian Summer 20km Championship in Hobart in February 2014 in somewhat controversial circumstances.

After a tough battle with rising star Dane Bird-Smith, Jared finally cleared away in the dying stages of the race, crossing the finish line in 1:22:34 with Dane 5 secs in arrears. Both walkers had walked under 40 minutes for their second 10km, an indication of just how hard Jared came home. It was then that Jared was advised that a third red card had been put in against him in the final lap and so he was disqualified, meaning that the title now went to Dane. And this is where it gets interesting. Never before have I seen so many red cards in a meet of this standard. The pile was so big that at one stage it looked like the DQ board would fill and the recorders would be looking for a second one! It is just lucky that the cards were so well shared out amongst the walkers or we might have had many more DQs. I was not impressed! To get to this standard, you have to be a good walker. I could see no possible justification for the huge number of reds. In my opinion, Jared was indeed unlucky.

At least Jared was now walking strongly again, timely given the World Racewalking Cup less than 3 months away. He had to make up for lost time, so he embarked on a series of overseas races, taking 7<sup>th</sup> in the Challenge event in Taicang (**1:24:11**), 4<sup>th</sup> in Lugano (**1:20:55**) and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Dudince (**1:22:45**). The heavy racing load paid off, with yet another medal coming in the IAAF Racewalking World Cup in Taicang (**3:42:48**).

*"It was a quick race, and my race went to plan at the start. I went out with the Russians and made a move at about 15 kilometres to push the pace up but they were too strong in the closing stages. Honestly I am a little disappointed to not win the gold, I want it very much, but to know that I could hold on to the bronze position pretty comfortably in those closing stages is a big positive to take away from today. It can be really tough when you are the only man not in red, white and blue in the lead pack and I just have to keep doing my best and pushing them as hard as I can. I'm one man out in a group that train together and then compete together and to be in the mix when they walk as a group like that is a strong performance."*

Eventually in April 2024 (10 years down the track), he was officially upgraded to silver for this race – yet another Russian drugs cheat eventually caught. And the other Russian (the gold medallist) was also eventually outed for drugs but got to keep this medal. So in a sense, it was arguably gold for Jared after all in this championship.

The rest of 2014 was very quiet, apart from a 20km walk in La Coruna (**1:22:19**), his usual win the LBG 20 Mile Championship in Canberra (**2:27:27**) and another low key appearance in the Lake Taihu 4 Day walk in China.

Jared was a DNF in the December 2014 Australian 50km Championship at Fawkner Park, forced to retire early with an upset stomach. But he bounced back in February 2015, winning Australian Summer 20km championship (in Adelaide this time) for the seventh time with **1:24:05**, helped by the late scratching of favourite Dane Bird-Smith.

He suffered a surprise loss in the LBG 20 Mile Championship in June, coming second to New Zealander Quentin Rew with **2:23:02**. He did not look as sharp as usual and the big question was - could he bounce back for the IAAF World Championships in Beijing in August.

His first walk in the Beijing Worlds was not a confidence booster - 26<sup>th</sup> in the 20km with 1:24:19. Could he do better in the 50km? He was upset.

*"The pace is totally different for the 50K. Today I felt like I could go forever, I just couldn't go any faster. I probably didn't finish off as well as I thought I could, mentally I was struggling a bit. But I am looking forward to next week."*

And he was right! Six days later, he walked a superb race to finish 2<sup>nd</sup> to Matej Toth in the 50km championship. Walking under clear skies and in hot conditions, his final time of **3:42:17** saw him earn his first World Championships silver to go with bronze medals in Daegu in 2011 and Moscow in 2013.



*Finally a clean 50km podium- Jared with Matej Toth and Takayuki Tanii after the 2015 World Championship 50km*

The Australian walkers got a taste for what they had lost over the last 4 years, with the AIS holding a study in Canberra that involved two camps, one pre-Christmas 2015 and one in January 2016. These gave Jared a chance to work on his base.

Jared's one race before the 2016 IAAF World Racewalking Team Championships was a hitout in the IAAF Challenge Series 20km in Taicang, The omens were good: 6<sup>th</sup> with **1:21:50**.

Two weeks later in Rome, he walked his usual solid World Cup 50km, finishing second with **3:42:46**. Shamefully, the Italian Federation fast tracked drugs cheat Alex Schwazer into their 50km team and he was first to cross the finish line. He should never have been there. Justice was served when he was retrospectively banned yet again for a new drugs offence, ensuring Jared was upgraded to the gold. Yet another gold and yet another missed opportunity to stand on the top step of the podium.

The 2016 Olympics in Rio was centre stage for Jared, and his preparation received a welcome boost when he was retrospectively awarded the 2012 Olympic 50km gold medal in a special ceremony in Melbourne on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June. It had taken 4 years but justice was finally served.



*Jared, in June 2016, finally receives his 2012 Olympic gold medal*

As an aside, Jared had been one of the most outspoken of the walkers in the push to hold Russia's racewalkers accountable. For years, they had stolen medals from walkers like Jared, yet they were seemingly untouchable. Finally,

biological passport testing ensured that their past drugs-tainted performances were reviewed and the bans came thick and fast. His stance had finally been validated.

Jared's third Olympic 50km walk in August 2016 saw yet another medal, but for the third consecutive Olympics, the 31-year-old Australian was the second man to finish the longest event in track and field, and he was clearly gutted. He had taken the lead after 40km and looked the winner until 2km to go, when Slovakia's reigning world champion Matej Toth overtook him and went on to claim the Olympic crown.

*"I really wanted it, I probably got a bit too excited. I was feeling really good, I was patient throughout the race and just when I needed to be a little bit more patient, I went for it and took off at 40km. I really thought I had it but I ran out of legs with about 4km to go. I saw Matej coming and I was trying to do everything to hold on. I really wanted to get to that finish line in first place today. I gave it everything but I just had nothing left."*

Toth crossed the finish line in 3:40.58, 18 seconds ahead of Tallent with **3:41:16**. Japan's Hirooki Arai finished eight seconds behind with 3:41:24, with Canada's Evan Dunfee fourth with 3:41.38. It was the most exciting 50km race I have ever witnessed.

With that walk, Jared became Australia's most decorated male athlete with four Olympic medals, one gold, two silvers and one bronze and the first Australian man to win medals at three successive Olympics.



*Jared Tallent – 4 medals in 3 successive Olympics (photo Athletics Australia)*

Life for Jared and Claire changed significantly in May 2017 with the birth of their first child, Harvey Sebastian Tallent. Now that was an interesting card to throw into the game!

Jared had medalled in 11 of his last 12 major internationals - Olympics, World Cup, Commonwealth Games and World Championships. That is an unbelievable performance and must be just about unmatched in walking. Here's how the list reads since 2008

2008	Olympic Games	Beijing	20km	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1:19:42
2008	Olympic Games	Beijing	50km	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3:39:27
2009	IAAF World Champs	Berlin	20km	5 <sup>th</sup>	1:20:27
2009	IAAF World Champs	Berlin	50km	6 <sup>th</sup>	3:44:50
2010	World Racewalking Cup	Chihuahua	50km	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3:54:55
2010	Commonwealth Games	Delhi	20km	1 <sup>st</sup>	1:22:18
2011	IAAF World Champs	Daegu	50km	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3:43:36
2012	World Racewalking Cup	Saransk	50km	1 <sup>st</sup>	3:40:32
2012	Olympic Games	London	50km	1 <sup>st</sup>	3:36:53 (OR)
2013	IAAF World Champs	Moscow	50km	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3:40:03
2014	World Racewalking Cup	Taicang	50km	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3:42:48
2015	IAAF World Champs	Beijing	50km	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3:42:17

2016	World Racewalking Cup	Rome	50km	1 <sup>st</sup>	3:42:36
2016	Olympic Games	Rio	50km	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3:41:16

His PBs read as follows

3000m Walk	<b>11:13.77</b>	28/02/2009	Sydney
5000m Walk	<b>18:41.83</b>	28/02/2009	Sydney
10 km Walk	<b>38:29</b>	18/09/2010	Beijing, China
20 km Walk	<b>1:19:15</b>	13/02/2010	Hobart
30 km Walk	<b>2:05:15</b>	07/06/2009	Canberra
50 km Walk	<b>3:36:53</b>	11/08/2012	London, England

He must be considered one of the greatest race walkers of all time. If we were to exclude the Russians / Italian who have finished ahead of him in dubious circumstances, then possibly the greatest. The honours list reads impressively:

Olympic Games	IAAF World Champs	IAAF Racewalking World Cup	Comm Games
2008 - 1 silver, 1 bronze	2011 - 1 silver	2010 - 1 bronze	2006 - 1 bronze
2012 - 1 gold	2013 - 1 bronze	2012 - 1 gold	2010 - 1 gold
2016 - 1 silver	2015 - 1 silver	2014 - 1 silver	
		2016 - 1 gold	

Jared was keen to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics but it was not to be. A series of injuries put paid to any chances of that. He did a few races in early 2017 but was then sidelined for nearly 2 years as he tried to nurse his body back into any sort of racing shape. He attempted a couple of 50km races in 2019 but finished neither. The writing was on the wall and he finally announced his retirement from international competition in March 2021.

While he had now retired from active competition, he certainly did not retire from the sport. He was soon picked up by Athletics Australia as an elite racewalking coach and he now has a large squad of walkers, some based in Adelaide and the rest spread around Australia.

By way of postscript, news came through in April 2024 that Jared was again the beneficiary of belated justice, in that the World Walking Cup 50km bronze medal he won in 2014 had at last been upgraded to silver. In that race - held in Taicang, China - the two Russians who finished ahead of him were later found to have doped and were banned. Only one, however, was required to hand back his medal - hence a silver for Jared and not the gold. Jared was presented with the silver medal in a special ceremony at the 2024 WA Teams championships in Antalya, Turkiye. The wheels of justice turn slowly, but they do turn eventually.



*Jared belatedly gets his 2024 World Team Championships silver medal from 2014*