

## *Kyle Swan 2015-2018*

2015	IAAF World Youth Championships	Cali	10,000m	33 <sup>rd</sup>	50:52.5
2016	World Racewalking Team Championships	Rome	U20 10km	32 <sup>nd</sup>	44:07
2018	World Racewalking Team Champs	Taicang	U20 10km	10 <sup>th</sup>	41:44
2018	IAAF World Junior Champs	Tampere	U20 10,000m	6 <sup>th</sup>	41:24.12

Kyle Swan, born on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1999, is one of many talented young walkers to come out of the eastern suburbs of Melbourne in recent years.

He started competing at his local Little Athletics centre at Knox in 2005, aged 6. He was following in the footsteps of his older brother who was already competing at Knox, although he later quit. Kyle competed in all events and soon found he had an affinity for the longer distances. Walks coach Frances Attard noticed his potential and invited him to attend one of her racewalk training sessions. He eventually started training with Fran's squad in early 2008, initially for just one session per week.

Kyle also joined the Victorian Race Walking Club in early 2008, aged 9. His first winter season saw him racing in the VRWC U9 division, with occasional forays into the U12 age group to contest slightly longer distances. His season culminated with a couple of very promising walks at the Australian Roadwalk Championships in Melbourne - 2<sup>nd</sup> in the RWA U10 1km championship (**5:57**) and 4<sup>th</sup> in the RWA U12 2km championship (**11:10**).



*Kyle Swan races at Middle Park along with Jemima Montag in May 2008*

Over the next couple of seasons, he continued to explore the sport, gradually improving his times and learning as he went. He won the Victorian Little Athletics U10 1100m championship in March 2009 (**6:17.41**) and walked his first LBG Carnival in June 2009, coming 4<sup>th</sup> in the U12 2km championship (**10:56**).

It was in 2010 that he really started hitting his straps. His year started with a win in the 2010 Victorian Little Athletics U11 1500m championship (**7:51.98**). Then in June 2010, he won the LBG Carnival U12 2km championship (**9:34**) and finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the LBG U14 2km championship (**10:10**). It was his first national level medal and he won by over a minute.

*That year I followed around the seniors in the LBG 20 mile in AIS Coach Brent Vallance's car, which was great. Inspired by the performances of my idols Jared Tallent and Chris Erickson, I went on to win my first national medal that day.*

That 2010 winter season, he suffered his first setback, being disqualified in the Australian U14 3km Roadwalk Championship in Brisbane in August, while leading.

He joined Knox Athletics Club for the 2010/2011 summer season, starting to race against the older walkers in the Athletics Victoria racewalking scene.

He showed signs of things to come in December 2010, recording a time of **25:57** in a track 5000m at Clifton Hill – aged 11. He finished second to NSW walker Tyler Jones (the first of many championship races between these two talented walkers) in the Australian T&F Championships U14 3000m in March 2011 (**15:35.34**) but then a week later he suffered a loss to Emmet Brasier in the Victorian Little Athletics U12 1500m Championship (**7:39.56**). It was all part of the learning curve.

He began training with Simon Baker and 'The Baker's Dozen' in 2011, aged 12. Simon subsequently guided him to many more national medals, state records, and his first international teams.

He finished second to Tyler once again in the Australian U14 3km Roadwalk Championship in Canberra in August 2011 (**16:34**), following up 2 weeks later with an inaugural time of **57:15** for in a VRWC 10km race. Once again, his endurance over the longer distances was on show.

One walk of note at this time was at Clifton Hill in February 2012. Walking in a VRWC track race, Kyle's time of **14:38.0** was well under the current Victorian U13 record. Only the lack of watches prevented him claiming the State record.

A couple of weeks later, he was devastated after being disqualified after crossing the line first in the Victorian Little Athletics U13 1500m Championship in Bendigo. This meant he missed out on selection in the Victorian team to contest the ALAC National Championships.

The disappointment was soon alleviated when, in March, he won the Australian T&F Championships U14 3000m with a PB **14:54.29**. It was his first Australian championship win, and he was still only 12 years of age.



*March 2012 – Kyle wins his first Australian Championship gold medal, in the U14 3000m in Sydney*

Winter 2012 saw major improvements over 3km (**14:29**) and 5km (**24:51**) and wins in the LBG U12 2km in June (**9:35**) and the Australian U14 3km Roadwalks Championship in August (**14:41**).

The 2012/2013 summer saw Kyle continue his age group dominance, winning the Australian T&F Championships U15 3000m championship (**16:36**) and the Victorian Little Athletics U14 1500m championship (**6:42.47**) in March.

The winter of 2013 saw Kyle move from being a good underage walker to an outstanding one. Aged only 14, he reduced his PBs to **13:36** (3km), **22:54** (5km) and **48:07** (10km). He was forced back onto third place in the LBG U16 3km (**14:09**) by the older Tyler Jones and Adam Garganis, but in his own age group he was unbeatable, going on to win the Australian U16 5km Roadwalk Championship in Launceston (**23:52**). On this particular occasion, third place went to unknown Western Australian walker Declan Tingay. Kyle would soon get to know Declan well as they battled the

age group championships from then on. Kyle's final walks of the winter saw two excellent 10km times – 48:07 and 49:43.

The 2013/2014 summer saw Kyle take another step up the ladder. He won the Victorian Schools U15 3000m championship in a PB **13:23** in October, but he missed the Australian School Championships in December as the family was travelling overseas. He did get a compensation of sorts when he participated as a visitor in the USA Indoors Open 5000m track championship in Rochester, NY, finishing 4<sup>th</sup> with 24:57.

Back in Australia early in the new year and a bit short on fitness after his road trip, it did not take him long to get back into racing mode and the times soon started to tumble again. He won the 2014 Victorian T&F U16 3000m championship in February 2014 with a PB **12:49** and placed second to Declan Tingay in the Australian T&F U16 3000m championship in Sydney in March (13:22). But it was his walk the following day that drew attention, as he finished fifth in the Australian T&F U20 10,000m championship with a huge PB of **46:50.00**. He was still aged 14 but was now mixing it competitively with the older junior boys.



*March 2014 – Kyle races in the Australian U20 10,000m walk, along with Declan Tingay and Tyler Jones*

He also celebrated his final year in Little Athletics that season, with a win in the Victorian Little Athletics U5 1500m championship (a PB **6:57.29**).

The 2014 winter saw more impressive walking by Kyle, who was now 15 years of age. Racing in May in a VRWC U16 5km road championship, he won with a PB **21:38**. The following month, he took on a big load in the annual LBG carnival in Canberra, finishing fifth in the LBG Open 10 Miles championship (**1:15:15**), then backing up to take second in the U16 3km championship (13:50) and third in the U18 5km championship (23:16).

2015 would be Kyle's first chance of an Australian vest, with the World Youth Championships to be held in Cali, Colombia. The qualifying standard had been set at 44:16, a tough but achievable standard.

The early signs were not promising. The rest of the 2014 winter season saw little to write home about, and the first half of the summer was inauspicious. He walked a slow 50:20 to finish sixth in the invitational 10km walk at Fawkner Park in December 2014.

But come January 2015, it all clicked and a whole series of PB times followed. He won the Victorian T&F U17 5000m championship in February with **21:10.47**. This was a Victorian U16 record, an added bonus.

A week later, he showed he was just about there, coming second to the older Tyler Jones in the Athletics Australia invitational 10km in Adelaide with **44:20**. Two weeks later, he walked an excellent double in the Australian Junior T&F Championships in Sydney, coming second to Declan Tingay in the U17 5000m championship (**22:07.15**) and second to Tyler Jones in the U20 10,000m championship (**43:50.85**). His 10,000m time was one of the fastest track walks ever walked in Australia by a 15-year-old.

He was selected, along with Tyler, as part of the Australian team to contest the 2015 World Youth Championships.

As the winter season unfolded, the signs were good. His LBG double in June – first in the U20 10km with 43:38 and second to Tyler in the U18 5km with 23:56 – was followed by a PB **12:27.77** in a World Junior Camp 3000m walk in Brisbane a week later. Alas, Cali was a frustrating and disappointing experience for both Kyle and Tyler. Kyle was taken out of the race at the 3000m mark and forced to serve a 2 minute time penalty. Coming back in after that timeout and now a lap behind the leaders, he had no chance of recovering but, to his credit, walked it out, finishing well back in 50:42.5. Tyler also had a nightmare time, eventually stopping as one of 7 DNFs.

Kyle bounced back the following month, winning the Australian U18 10km Roadwalk Championship in Melbourne with a time of 45:10.



*Kyle with his present and past coaches Simon Baker and Frances Attard at the 2015 Australian Schools T&F Championships in Melbourne*

2016 saw further international opportunities, with the World Racewalking Team Championships (qualifying time of 46:30) and the World Junior Championships(qualifying time of 43:35.5) on offer.

He looked on target with his early 2015/2016 summer season races, winning the Australian Schools U18 5000m championship in Melbourne with a PB **20:59.59** and taking second behind Tyler in the invitational U20 10km roadwalk at Fawkner Park with a PB **43:01**.

After a good training block over the Christmas / New Year break, his next major races occurred in February 2016. First to the Victorian U18 5000m Championship which he won with **21:42.84**, then a week later to Adelaide when he finished second to Tyler in the Oceania U20 10km Roadwalk Championship with a PB **42:48**.

This locked in selection for the 2016 World Racewalking Team Championships in Rome. The question was now – did he want to try for the World Junior Championships team in July. Being only aged 17, he would only be allowed to go to one of the two, but which one?

As it turned out, the decision was made for him when he was disqualified in the Australian T&F U20 10,000m Championship in Perth in March. World Cup it would be! As an aside, Tyler Jones was also disqualified – the two top boys had both fallen foul of the judges.

Kyle did bounce back two days later in the Australian T&F U18 5000m Championship, finishing second behind Declan Tingay, with a PB time of **20:51.32**.

Kyle's World Cup walk in Rome in May was a good one, finishing as the second Australian with a time of **44:07**. He would also be eligible to compete in the U20 10km in the 2018 World Cup so this was very much a learning exercise for him.





*May 2016 – Kyle competes in the U20 10km at the World Racewalking Team Championships in Rome*

The rest of the 2016 winter season was spent on the home front. His LBG double was excellent – third in the Open 10 Miles championship with **1:15:35** and a win later in the day in the U18 5km championship with 23:00. He continued to record good 10km times, winning the Victorian U18 10km Roadwalk Championship in Melbourne with 44:34 and winning the Australian U18 10km Roadwalk Championship in Canberra with 45:44. He finished his season with an inaugural 20km in a VRWC roadwalk, his time a good first up **1:38:30**.

With no international events on offer in 2017 and with his final year of schooling to take his attention, it was a case of putting in a good summer and then putting the head down in the school books.

He had his usual battle with Declan Tingay in the Australian Schools U18 5000m Championship in Canberra in December (2<sup>nd</sup> with **22:00.76**) and then spent a few weeks in Canberra in January as part of an international walks camp. While there, he kicked out a 10,000m track walk time of **43:51.64**, an indication of good form.

The following month, he finished second to Declan in the Oceania U20 10km Roadwalk Championship in Adelaide (**43:56**). A week later, he won the Victorian T&F U20 5000m Championship (**20:53.73**) and then, after a further week, he finished third in the Victorian T&F Open 5000m Championship (**21:33.44**).

At the end of March 2017, he walked a big double at the annual Australian T&F Championships in Sydney, coming second to Declan in the U20 10,000m walk (**43:21.42**) and fourth in the Open 10,000m walk (a PB **42:47.31**).

Since those last two walks, he has concentrated on keeping his fitness while he completes his secondary schooling. He continues to walk on the local VRWC front, but nothing too serious.

His PBs read impressively:

1500m	6:09.42	Melbourne	17/10/2016
3000m	12:27.77	Brisbane	14/06/2015
5000m	20:51.32	Perth	11/03/2016
10km	42:47.31	Sydney	31/03/2017
20km	1:38:30.00	Melbourne	11/09/2016

It is hard to believe that Kyle is only 18 years of age. He has been blessed or cursed with competing against a group of equally high achievers – Tyler Jones, Adam Garganis, Declan Tingay and Emmet Brasier – and this has spurred him on to better and better performances.

We await the next chapter of his career, post Year 12. Final comments to Kyle:

*Recently, I've been training with Brent's squad, however my training is secondary to my school work at the moment. That said, it will be exciting to see what results I can produce when year 12 wraps up in November. I should have the whole summer to prepare for the World Junior Champs and the World Team Champs in 2018!*