

Nathan Brill 2012-2016

2012	IAAF World Racewalking Cup	Saransk	U20 10km	32 nd	44:52
2013	IAAF World Youth Champs	Donetsk	10,000m	5 th	42:54.7
2014	IAAF World Racewalking Cup	Taicang	U20 10km	7 th	41:07
2014	IAAF World Junior Champs	Eugene	10,000m	17 th	42:54.4
2016	IAAF World Racewalking Cup	Rome	20km	95 th	1:32:48

Nathan Brill, born 24 May 1996 in Melbourne, was definitely born into a sporting family, with his father Craig representing Australia as a 50km racewalker at the 1987 World Junior Champs and at 4 Race Walking World Cups (1987, 1989, 1991 and 1993).

It was not until the start of 2010 when, at age 13, he participated in a few Victorian Little Athletics meets and tried the walk. In March 2010, in only his third ever racewalk, he won bronze in the VLAA U14 1500m Championship with a time of **7:01.01** - this was the last time he was beaten in his age group in Australia. From that day onwards, he was virtually undefeated at club, state and national level as he has worked his way up through the various underage divisions.

Yet, he did not have it all his own way, having to compete regularly against Jesse Osborne who was 16 months older than him. These two boys rewrote the underage record books and pushed each other to better and better performances.

Nathan did not come completely out of the blue. He had been a regular participant on the local fun run scene and was a talented young runner.

With his VLAA bronze medal under his belt, he threw himself enthusiastically into the VRWC winter season, walking literally every weekend at Middle Park and reducing his times over all distances. At the end of the 2010 winter season, his PBs stood at **13:16** (3km), **22:29** (5km) and **48:00** (10km) and he was only 14 years of age. On the national scene, he had taken 3rd in the LBG U16 3km and 4th in the U18 5km in June and won the Australian U16 5km roadwalk championship in Brisbane in August. This was the first of many national titles for Nathan.



Nathan wins the Australian 2010 U16 5km Roadwalk Championship in Brisbane

The 2010/2011 Summer Season saw him racing even faster and, by the end of the season, he had further reduced his PBs to **5:59.1** (1500m), **8:10.4** (2000m), **12:32.06** (3000m), **21:52** (5km) and **46:42** (10km) – and he had not yet turned 15 years of age!

He was immediately identified by Athletics Australia and placed in their 2011 Target Talent Program, the youngest ever walker to be so identified.

His 3000m PB of 12:32.06, done in February 2011 at the Box Hill track, set new Victorian U15 and U16 records. Other

summer highlights included a second to Jesse Osborne in the Australian Schools U16 3000m Championship in Melbourne (**13:07.35**) and two medals in the Australian Junior T&F Championships in Sydney – 1st in the U16 3000m (**12:39.98**) and 2nd in the U17 5000m (**21:56.23**).

The winter of 2011 saw him reduce his 5km time to **21:35** and his 10km time to **45:42** and he was now starting to challenge the top U20 walkers. Highlights included wins in the LBG U16 3km (**13:03**) and the Australian U16 5km Road Championship in Canberra (**22:06**).

The summer of 2011/2012 saw him finally eligible, by age, for an Australian vest, with the 2012 World Racewalking Cup scheduled for May in Saransk, Russia. He would still only be 15 years of age at the time of the championships but that was within the rules.

The selection trial was to be held in Hobart in February 2012 and the first 3 across the line would be automatic selections provided they had beaten the qualifying standard of 46:30. Nathan needed to fulfil both criteria, his fast 10km times being done before the qualification period had started.

His year finished on a high, with wins in the Australian Schools U16 3000m Track Championship in Brisbane (**12:58.04**) and in the U18 5km invitational walk at the Fawkner Park meet, with his winning time of **22:00** at Fawkner Park setting a new Australian U16 5km Roadwalk record.



Nathan wins the Australian Schools U16 3000m in December 2011

He was in great form in the leadup to the trial, recording times of **5:58.17** (1500m), **12:16.35** (3000m) and **20:44.66** (5000m). All he needed now as an ounce of luck in Hobart. But was it to be – the temperature at the start of the Saturday evening trial race was a scorching 38°C and walkers were withdrawing like ten pin bowls. He walked a superb race, coming 2nd to the much older Blake Steele in a time of 46:02. He was in the World Cup team!

He celebrated the following month with a further 2 medals at the Australian Junior T&F Championships in Sydney - 1st in the U17 5000m (**21:30.04**) and 3rd in the U20 10,000m (a PB **45:00.62**).

His subsequent performance in the 2012 World Cup was excellent. 15 year old Nathan was the youngest competitor in the U20 Men's 10km Road Walk but he let his feet do the talking with an 8 sec PB time of **44:52**, finishing 32nd from 67 starters. To finish in the top half of the field against an older group of the best Junior walkers in the world was no mean feat at his age.



Nathan competing in the 2012 IAAF Racewalking World Cup in Russia – the youngest walker in the U20 field

Back in Australia, he continued on where he had left off. He contested his usual 2 events at the LBG Carnival in Canberra in June but he upped the distances, taking 3rd in the Open 10 Mile Championship (**1:15:33**) and then 2nd in the U18 5km (**21:29**). The following month, he reduced his 10km PB to **44:24** with a win in the Victorian U18 10km road championship in Melbourne. He then finished off his winter with a win in the Australian U18 10km roadwalk championship in Adelaide (**45:03**).

The summer of 2012/2013 saw his improvement continue. He started off in outstanding fashion, pushing out 3 very fast times in a week in October - 1500m (PB **5:51.47**), 2000m (PB **7:52.5**) and 5km (**21:10**). He then produced two very fast 10km roadwalks in quick succession – **43:42** in late November at Middle Park and **43:44** in December at Fawkner Park. He also won the Australian Schools U18 5000m Track Championship with a time of **21:05.74**.

His form in the post-Christmas period was even better. In mid January, he won the Australian Youth Olympics (U18) 5000m track walk in Sydney in **20:08.02**, setting new Victorian U17 and U18 records. He walked an almost identical time (**20:08.72**) in winning bronze in the 2013 Victorian Open 5000m track championship in February, came 2nd in the AA invitational U20 10km in Hobart with **43:46** and then won the Australian U20 10,000m Track Championship in Perth in March with another PB of **42:48.70**. This last time broke the Victorian U18 10,000m track walk record. He also won the Australian U18 5000m Track Championship (**20:33.90**) in the same meet.

He was an automatic selection in the Australian team to contest the 2013 IAAF World Youth Championships in Donetsk, Poland.

He raced only sparingly over the next few months as he prepared for the 2013 World Youth Championships and it paid off, as 17 year old Nathan raced to fifth place in Donetsk after leading for the first half of the race. His time of **42:54.70** was only 6 seconds outside his PB. It is one thing to do walk well at home but it is a completely different kettle of fish to do it at the highest level of international racing.

Back home from Poland, he won the Victorian U18 10km road championship in early August in a PB **42:33** and followed this up with a repeat win in the Australian U18 10km championship in Launceston with **43:34**.

The 2013/2014 summer season saw Nathan consolidate his position as one of the top two U20 walkers in Australia, along with Jesse Osborne who had now moved from Brisbane to Melbourne. The two boys had a number of exciting races, with little between them. Nathan finished second to Jesse in the Fawkner Park 10km in December (**43:43**) and in the 2014 World Racewalking Cup trial in Hobart (**42:46**) but turned the tables to win ahead of Jesse in the Australian U20 10,000m Track Walk Championship in Melbourne (**20:08.59**). But the finishing order did not really matter. Both boys were a long way ahead of the opposition and both were selected for the 2014 IAAF Racewalking World Cup and the 2014 IAAF World Junior Championships.

Both boys performed strongly in the World Racewalking Cup in May in Taicang, China. Overall, the Australian U20 team won a bronze teams medal behind China and Spain, compliments of Nathan's 7th place finish (PB **41:07**) and Jesse's 12th place finish (42:13). The result was Australia's first ever team medal in the junior events and our third team medal overall. Nathan was quoted on the AA website: *"I'm so happy with that. It's a minute plus personal best, and I felt great throughout the race. We got a team medal too which is awesome, it's been a great day. I was treating this as a build up race for the World Juniors and it is good to see that I am going pretty well. It's awesome for the boys to win a medal together too."*



Nathan and Jesse Osborne compete in the 2014 World Cup in Taicang

Nathan warmed up for the World Junior Championships with 2nd place in the LBG Carnival 10 Miles Walk, with a PB **1:13:20**. Then he joined the Australian World Juniors squad for his final prep before the 10,000m track walk in Eugene.

Alas, things did not go to plan for the first time in Nathan's career. The results show that he finished 17th in **42.54.39**, but he was not happy with his effort. He had gone out hard with the leaders in the first five laps before fading over the second half. *"I am pretty disappointed. My legs felt heavy as hell."*

At this stage, he accepted an offer to relocate to Canberra and train with AIS coach Craig Hilliard. There was no longer a scholarship program but money would be made available for Nathan to build on his performances and transition to senior ranks.

He did not race for the next 11 months. He relocated with his family to Canberra, took some time out and travelled and generally did other things. It was not until August 2015 that he next started at Australian Championship level, coming 3rd in the national 20km roadwalk championship in Melbourne with an inaugural **1:31:36**. He improved to **1:27:14** in the Australian 20km Summer Championship in Adelaide in February 2016, the 5th Australian to finish and in a time that bettered the 2016 World Racewalking Teams Championships qualifying standard of 1:28:00. So he was now in his third World Cup team. After two U20 appearances, he would now contest the Open 20km, even though he was still only 19 years of age.

His World Cup performance in Rome in May 2016 (95th with **1:32:48**) was disappointing and reflected the fact that Nathan had had enough. The years of constant training and the continual high level performances had taken their toll. He has not raced since and I am uncertain if we will see him again.

He leaves us with a record of wonderful underage performances. He holds the following Victorian Track Walk Records:

Victorian U15 3000m walk	12:32.06	27/02/2011	Box Hill
Victorian U16 3000m walk	12:32.06	27/02/2011	Box Hill
Victorian U17 5000m Walk	20:08.02	19/01/2013	Sydney
Victorian U18 5000m Walk	20:08.02	19/01/2013	Sydney
Victorian U18 10,000m Walk	42:48.70	12/03/2013	Perth

If Victoria recognized road records, he would also have a number of these as he excelled equally on the road and walked faster than any Victorian had walked in those age groups over 5km and 10km.

He also holds one Australian Record

Australian U16 5km Roadwalk 22:00 11/12/2011 Fawkner Park, Melbourne)

Like his father Craig, he achieved at a young age and retired early. But, like Craig, his place as a highly achieving international walker is assured.