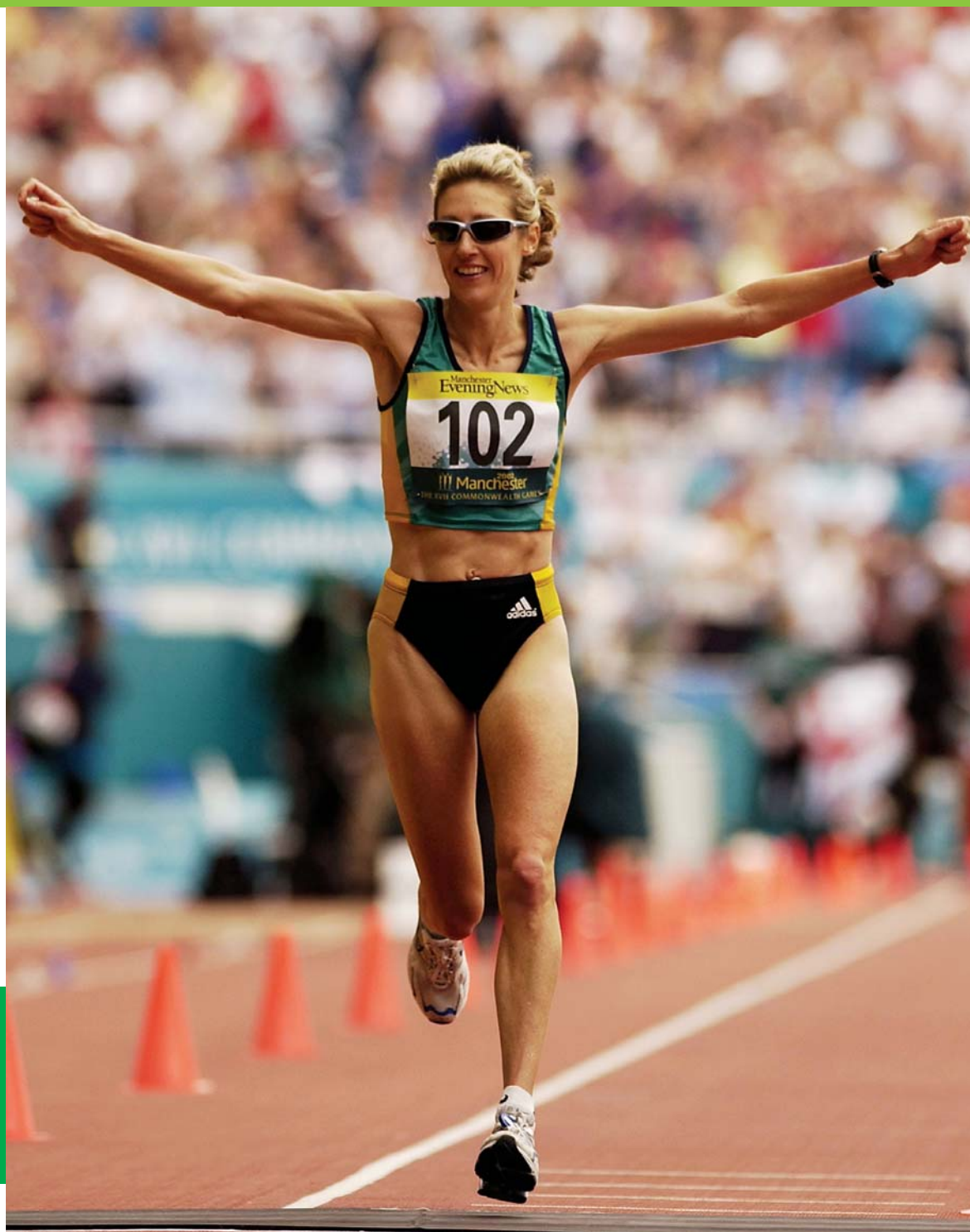


KERRYNN McCANN

THE UNSUNG HERO OF AUSTRALIAN DISTANCE RUNNING By Shaun Creighton

Name: Kerryn McCann
Date of Birth: 02.05.1967
Place of Birth: Bulli, NSW
Sponsors: Nike
Currently Living: Coledale NSW
Marital Status: Married to Greg
Occupation: Mum
Height: 162cm
Weight: 47kg
Shoe Size: 7.5
Hair colour: Blonde

Favourite shoe colour: Dark Blue
Most loved pair of runners you have ever had: Nike Syline
Favourite Race: New York Marathon
Top 3 running performances: Winning 2002 Commonwealth Games Marathon in Manchester, 2000 Sydney Olympics, and breaking Australian Half Marathon record at the Tokyo Half Marathon in 2000.
PB's for your favourite distances: 5,000m – 15.08, 10,000m – 31.55, Half – 67:48, Marathon – 2.25.59



Kerryn McCann is one of the “unsung heroes” of Australian Distance Running. During an international career, which dates back to the late 1980s, Kerryn has been at the forefront of Australian women’s distance running for almost 20 years. During this time she has won numerous national titles and Australian road races, held Australian Records at 5000m and the half marathon, won the Commonwealth Games marathon, and placed 11th in the Sydney Olympic Games marathon. R4YL spoke with Kerryn after her recent 4th placing in the Rock & Roll Marathon in San Diego where she posted a qualifying time for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games.

You’ve had a wonderful athletic career. Starting out as a schoolgirl, despite being a very good junior athlete, did you ever consider your athletic career would be so successful?

No probably not. When I was really young I said I wanted to go to an Olympics. I gave the sport away for 2 years in my teens and then gradually got back into it. It took 2 years to be running well again. I was pregnant in 1997 with my first son Benton and hardly ran a step for a year and the same thing happened, I slowly started training again, never really thought I could get back to where I was, but came back better than ever. I guess if you are patient and persistent enough eventually it will happen.

Many readers may not realise what a “range” you’ve had in your career - from Australian Mile Champion in 1988, to an Australian 5000m record and Commonwealth Games gold medal in the marathon. Of these events, do you have a favourite, and how has your training differed both as your career progressed and for different events?

When I was young I looked forward to Sunday long runs. I was such a skinny, scrawny little kid and I felt like I could run forever on a Sunday morning long run so I guess it was only a matter of time before I ran a marathon. My training changed when I started to be coached by



London Marathon

Chris Wardlaw in 1994 after the Commonwealth Games in Canada. I started doing a lot more mileage each week and my sessions became shorter but more intense so I had the speed to run a good 3000m, 5000m or 10km and also the strength to run a good marathon. But my favourite distance is the half marathon, the 5km is too fast and marathon too hard, a half is just perfect.

Can you outline the factors you feel helped turned you from a “very good runner” who made Commonwealth and Olympic teams to a truly world class runner who is very competitive in any race?

My goal was to make an Olympic and Commonwealth Games team and I achieved that in 1994 & 1996. I think having the next year off, being pregnant with Benton, was good for me because I came back with a lot more determination. Benton was born on 15th September 1997, exactly 3 years to the day of the opening

ceremony of the Sydney Olympics and I was determined to get back in time for that. It is not often you get a chance to compete in an Olympics in your own city so I wanted to make the most of it, so I guess that was my motivation. I trained harder than I have ever trained before but I was also a lot more relaxed because I had a beautiful baby boy to come back to after each session. I think the combination worked for me.

Of all your wonderful achievements, do you have a “most memorable moment”?

I can’t ever imagine feeling like I felt the moment I entered the Sydney Olympic Stadium in 2000. Ok, I finished 11th but I felt I had won the race, the way the people of Australia supported us “Aussie Athletes” was amazing and something I will always cherish. Manchester was great but there was something about Sydney that was really special.

“ I can’t ever imagine feeling like I felt the moment I entered the Sydney Olympic Stadium in 2000. ”

Many readers may not know that you were in a “winning position” in the 2002 NYC Marathon before tripping late in the race. If you’d have won New York, how would that have compared to your Commonwealth Games win earlier in the year?

It would have topped off a great year! I think about that race often and it frustrates me. I think the CG and NY marathons are very hard to compare. CG is what you do for you country and I am proud to put on the green and gold and proud to represent Australia. Winning the NY marathon would probably have been the greatest win in my career, mainly because it is the biggest marathon in the world and they always have a class field.

Your family is very sporting - with your father a former runner, sister an accomplished runner & husband an accomplished surfer (and you also had the tragedy of losing your brother). What role have your family played in your career?

My family is very supportive and we have a great time together as a family each time we travel to a marathon somewhere in the world. Often we have a holiday maybe at Disneyland or somewhere after a marathon, something for us to look forward to. I think the tragedy of losing my brother in 1993 changed my life. I never take things for granted, I enjoy and make the most of every race or everything that we do together. I try to get as much out of life as possible.

With your sister living in Boulder, have you thought of spending more time running road races in the USA?

My dream would be to live in the US in summer and Australia in summer so we would never have a winter. I would love to do the road racing circuit one year before I retire but it’s not that simple. My husband works and my son is at school so it makes it a bit hard. I don’t like to leave my family. Most races I have I go to Boulder to train and my family come over a couple of weeks later so it gives me some time to knuckle down,

train hard and get some rest in between.

How do you juggle life as an elite athlete with work and family - especially with a baby?

My gosh its hard and sometimes - I don’t know how I do it. I ran NY marathon last year and I wondered “how many other girls in this race were up last night at 11pm rocking a 1 year old baby to sleep?” But it’s the choice that I have made and I love it and wouldn’t have it any other way. My family comes first and I can only do what I can do.

Are you planning on running the Melbourne Commonwealth Games, and if so, is that likely to be your last international race?

Yes I am planning on running the Melbourne CG. How lucky have I been in my career to have had Olympics in Sydney, Olympics in Athens where it originated and now a CG in Melbourne. I am looking forward to it.

Thanks

B4YL

Athens Olympics

