

2007 looks to be an exciting year for Australian orienteering. In July, the world's top juniors will descend upon NSW to contest the Junior World Orienteering Championships. Then in August in the Ukraine, our own World Champion Hanny Allston will be defending her crown and looking to cement her place in the top echelon of world orienteering.

THIS year will be the first time the Junior World Championships will be held outside of Europe, and the honour of hosting the event has been bestowed upon the town of Dubbo. A strange choice, some might think, but what is needed to host an event of this nature is bush land that will challenge the best orienteers in the world, and an area that is unknown to Australian and international competitors. This will provide a fair competition with no home ground advantage. Rumour has it that the Dubbo region has some fantastically challenging forests, and with no orienteering races ever having been held in the surrounding areas before, the championships are sure to test every competitor's abilities. The other essential ingredient to host such an event is a city with the facilities

to cater for a couple of thousand out-of-town visitors, and a local community that gets behind and supports the event. By all accounts, Dubbo has also shown the goods in this area.

The last couple of years, Australia has been very successful at the Junior World Championship level, with Hanny Allston winning the long distance race last year, and NSW boys Julian Dent and Matt Parton placing in the top 6 in 2005 and 2006. All these athletes have now moved to the senior ranks, and it will be a new group of athletes that Australia will be pinning its hopes

Hanny Allston – destined for big things in the next 12 months



Simon Uphill is Australia's hope in the Junior World Men's champs

set on capturing the long distance title.

Allston has been awarded a training scholarship from the Australian Sports Commission for 2007, which will afford her the "luxury" of preparing for her title defence. She will be able to compete in all the major international lead-up races and spend time training and getting accustomed to the terrain in the Ukraine before the World Championships. In 2007, Allston will spend half of her time in Europe and the other half in Australia. She will be able to stand on the starting line in the Ukraine knowing that she has had as good a preparation for the World Championships as all her major rivals of the dominant orienteering nations of Europe.

Before Allston heads off overseas she will be concentrating on improving her running speed and competing in local fun runs and running races. Her early season form has been looking good. She recently ran a 13.03 lap of the 3.85 km Tan in Melbourne, and an

impressive 2 hours 43 minutes for a 42 km section of the Bruny Island Ultra Marathon. To keep up with Hanny's training and racing, you can check out her home page at www.hannyallston.com

In addition to Allston, the entire Australian women's team for the 2007 World Championships is looking very strong. The team of Grace Elson, Jo Allison, and Allston placed 4th in the relay at last year's World Championships. Natasha Key and Tracy Bluett, who have placed 9th and 13th respectively at previous World Championships, will be vying to make a comeback into the team in 2007 after childbirth put them both out for 2006. This is sure to make competition for team spots very competitive, and hopefully will lift the relay team one step higher into a medal position in August.

For more information on Orienteering go to www.orienteering.asn.au

on in Dubbo. South Australian university students Simon Uppill and Vanessa Round look to be Australia's star runners in Dubbo. Both have the experience of competing in previous Junior World Championships under their belts and are concentrating all their efforts on being in the form of their lives in July.

The Senior World Championships in 2007 will be held in the Ukraine. Tasmanian Hanny Allston, the youngest ever senior world champion, will be out to defend her crown in the sprint distance, and also has her sights



Vanessa Round is Australia's hope in the Junior World Women's champs