

Our Future STARS

by TIFFANY BONASERA

THEY'RE YOUNG, THEY'RE MOTIVATED AND THEY'RE FAST (AND GETTING EVEN FASTER). THEY'RE SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE STARS OF ATHLETICS. IN THE FIRST OF MANY FUTURE INSTALMENTS, WE WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO EIGHT OF OUR MOST PROMISING FEMALE DISTANCE RUNNERS.

★ MADELINE Heiner NSW, 19

THE University of Sydney pharmacy student made her mark on the international athletics map at the 2005 IAAF World Junior Cross Country Championships in France, where she placed an outstanding 16th in her debut at the event. She rates this as her most memorable performance and says she "loved every moment of the race and the trip".

Of her many achievements, the Dave Chisholm-trained athlete says winning the 2003 Kembla Joggers' Fitness Five is another highlight because she "was the star of the day and the proudest girl in the world".

With personal bests of 4.18 over 1500m and 9.56 (with a fall) in the 3000m steeplechase, Madeline is aiming to keep improving

in the short-term, and is determined to "make big teams" in the future. Madeline remains focused on her athletics despite juggling a heavy university workload, but concedes it's tough to maintain "the little things" like stretching and strength when she's pressed for time.

Now based in Sydney for her studies, Madeline is originally from Shellharbour, south of Sydney, where she says she still likes to train with people like Jared Poppett, who pulls her through her favourite 400m session with "precision" timing. For Madeline, fellow Australian athletes Eloise Wellings and Russell Dessaix-Chin are her inspirations.

Away from athletics, Madeline is an accomplished piano player who gained two diplomas in music before she was 15. She says her "brother is [her] best friend and favourite person in the world".

If you're exhausted enough just reading about Madeline's busy schedule, then you'll be amazed to know she also makes her social life a priority. In fact, her personal motto, "When life hands you a lemon, crack open the tequila and salt", is a reflection of her outgoing personality and sense of fun. Still, when it comes to the business of athletics, there's no one more serious than Madeline Heiner.

FAST FACTS:

Sponsors: Puma, NSWIS, Mr and Mrs H.
Short-term goal: To master an unassisted chin-up.



Madeline Heiner representing Australia at the 2005 World Cross Country.

★ LUCY Stazzat NSW, 18

A FIRST-YEAR business student at the University of Technology Sydney, Lucy has also had an almost textbook year in athletics. She's represented Australia at two international meets – 2006 IAAF World Junior Cross Country and 2006 IAAF World Junior Athletics Championships – and won the Australian Under-20 Cross Country title in Hobart.

Now coached by John Atterton and a member of UTS Norths, Lucy first started out in the sport in year 7 when her mum encouraged her to join the school cross country and athletics teams. Running, it seems, is in the genes, with Lucy's mother formerly competing at a national level in England. Like her mum, Lucy found she loved it and has continued to improve ever since.

With personal bests of 9.29 over 3000m and 4.27 over 1500m, Lucy says her long-term goal is to represent Australia at the 2012 London Olympics in either the 5000m or 10,000m. But she's well aware it's a tough road ahead and is willing to make the commitment to get there. She's a firm believer that sweat and sacrifice equal success and is prepared to do what it takes. While she realises nothing can replace hard work to achieve results, Lucy does have a race day superstition. Her best friend gave her a special bracelet that she only wears when she's competing.

Speaking of competition, there's a healthy level of rivalry among Lucy's squad, which has really helped

her raise the bar in training. Of the many sessions they do, Lucy says her favourite is one she describes as a "monster" course, which includes strong efforts up a 700m hill and onto the flat followed by a jog/walk recovery repeated six to seven times.

In her downtime, Lucy enjoys shopping, spending time with her family and friends and going out to breakfast after a long run on Sunday. Like most athletes, Lucy is self-motivated, but she does gain inspiration from monthly quotes from her coach. She particularly likes this one: "Winning isn't normal, and normal people don't win. So, the more normal your life becomes, the less chance you've got of winning". No doubt Lucy will continue being the successful individual she's set out to be.

FAST FACTS:

Sponsor: Brooks.
Favourite movie: Notting Hill.

★ SARAH Grahame VICTORIA, 16

THIS courageous athlete is not afraid to take her chances. Against a star-studded field at the Victorian Open Athletics Championships at the MCG earlier this year, Sarah took the lead from the gun against the likes of Eloise Wellings, Anna



Sarah Grahame has made the steeplechase one of her specialities.



Lucy Stazzat (38) competing at the Zatopek Uzo 3000m.

Thompson and Sonia O'Sullivan. Setting the pace for the first 600m, Sarah was eventually overtaken by the more experienced competitors but certainly gained their admiration, and that of the crowd.

More recently, Sarah competed for Australia at the 11th IAAF World Junior Championships in Beijing, where she contested the 3000m steeplechase, and she placed second in the 18/19 years event at the Australian Cross Country Championships in Hobart. Earlier this year, Sarah was a member of the IAAF World Junior Cross Country team.

Formerly a competitive swimmer, Sarah considers herself an endurance athlete and says her favourite sessions involve distance rather than speed. Coached by Tony Benson, Sarah is a versatile distance athlete with personal bests of 10.37.50 in the 3000m steeple, 16.56 in 5000m (track), 37.09 in 10,000m (track) and 35.12 for 10,000m (road).

A member of the Box Hill club, Sarah says her sporting idols are Australia's Benita Johnson and Melissa Rollison. While her aspirations include representing Australia at major championships such as the Olympics and Commonwealth Games, Sarah rates claiming her first state title at the Victorian Primary Schools' State Cross Country as her most memorable race to date, and that "possibly always will be".

Sarah is equally as confident in life away from athletics. It's hardly surprising she earned a reputation

among the Australian world junior team for being able to negotiate a good deal at the shops during her trip to Beijing.

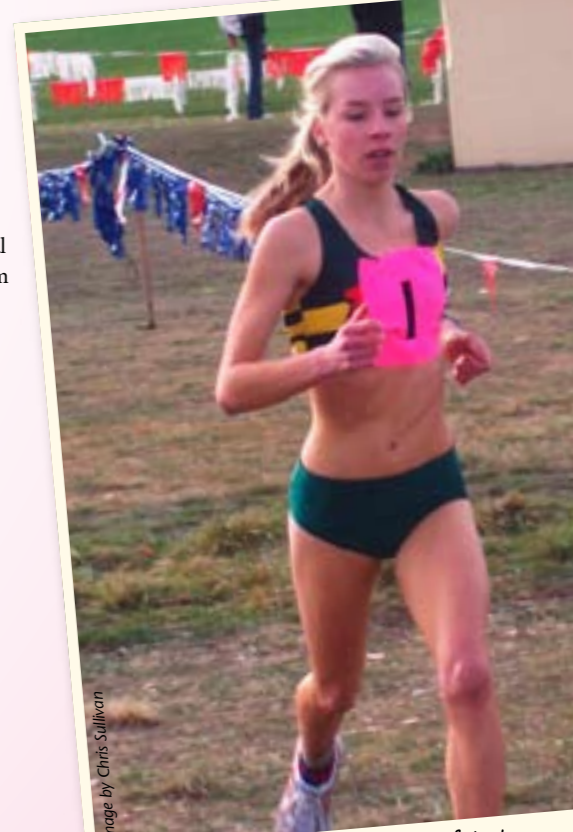
For now, Sarah is aiming to make the team for both the 2007 IAAF World Junior Cross Country Championships as well as the IAAF World Youth Championships in the Czech Republic. Despite her lofty ambitions, she urges young athletes never to lose sight of the fact that the most important part is to have fun. "Enjoy what you are doing, and if you do your best, no matter the outcome, be proud of your achievements".

FAST FACTS:

Sponsors: Brooks, CBD Cycles, Harpers Personal Training, Touch of Finance.
Favourite food: Ice-cream, scones with jam and cream and a hot chocolate after a hard training session on Saturday morning.

★ LIBBY Clarke TASMANIA, 17

A MEMBER of the Athletics Tasmania/Tasmanian Institute of Sport Development Squad 2006/07, Libby started Little Athletics when she was just seven years old. Coached by her mother Ketrina, Libby says the highlight so far has been competing at the ISF Cross Country 2006 World Schools' Championship in Italy earlier this year. Representing the Newstead



Libby Clarke competing for TAS in the School Sport Australia XC relay.

>> Harriers club, Libby has personal best times of 7.06 in the 2000m steeple, 17.57 for 5000m and 10.01 for 3000m. One of this teenager's short-term goals is to go under 11 minutes for the 3000m steeple, and she's working towards that with her favourite session: an interval session involving steeples and 300m repeats. It's seeing improvements in her performances and making several state teams that keeps Libby motivated. She is determined to represent Australia again in track or cross country in the future.

Like many young athletes, balancing training and study commitments proves challenging, but Libby says she makes good use of her free period. When she's not on the move, Libby likes to relax by reading magazines and spending time with her dog. Thankfully, her favourite food is the energy-packed banana!

Libby names Commonwealth Games triathlon champion Emma Snowsill as her sporting idol and says a little-known fact about herself is she collects drink bottles. Her advice to other aspiring athletes is to "try lots of things/sports and see what you're best at".

FAST FACTS:

Sponsors: Engine, Fairbrother.
Favourite movie: Pearl Harbour.

KARINNA Fyfe
TASMANIA, 17



Image by Chris Sullivan

Karinna Fyfe pushing hard in the Australian U18 XC champs.

THIS Glengarry-based athlete was recently juggling the demands of a year 12 workload as well as training and racing commitments, but she says her athletics gives her a welcome break from her studies. Coached by Fay Denholm, Karinna says her sessions are always interesting and varied, which helps maintain her enthusiasm and determination to succeed in the sport when life becomes pretty hectic.

Karinna describes her Sunday pre-season session as the one she looks most forward to. Her training group meets at a local park where they do a combination of regular running, push-ups, sit-ups, skipping, plyometrics, hills and stair runs. It seems to have done the trick, with Karinna chalking up some encouraging performances and personal bests. These include times of 2.12.54 over 800m, 4.30.83 for 1500m and 9.48.88 for 3000m.

Winning a gold medal at the 2005 Pacific School Games in Melbourne in the 3000m has been her career highlight, but it's just the start of bigger things. Representing Australia at the World Youth Championships and the World Junior Athletics Championships are among her goals in the longer term. In the short-term, she's aiming for a good result at the Australian All Schools and Youth Athletics Championships in December. She'll be going into that with confidence after a solid fifth placing in the 16/17 years event at the Australian Cross Country Championships in Hobart.

A member of the North Launceston club, Karinna leads an active lifestyle away from athletics. She says she enjoys other sports such as hockey, soccer and horse riding. Living on a hobby farm, Karinna has a much-loved black thoroughbred horse called Ninja. If time allows, Karinna also likes to cook and watch live music shows. Karinna's personal motto, "If you're going to do something, you might as well do your best and do it well", definitely offers insight into what makes this high-achiever tick.

FAST FACTS:

Favourite foods: Avocado and sour dough bread.
Favourite movie: Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail.



Image by Blue Elephant Photography

Clare Geraghty on the way to 2nd in the 2006 City to Surf

CLARE Geraghty
QUEENSLAND, 20

SHE'S small in stature, but this Brisbane-based athlete has been posting some big results in recent months. Her second placing in the City to Surf 2006 in the time of 48.25 has perhaps been her most high profile result and has really thrust young Clare into the spotlight. Coached by Steve Manning and Chris Gale, Clare is a member of the Intraining running club and says it's been a great environment for her development in the sport after making the transition from doing athletics at school.

Now studying for a university degree in public relations and working part-time at Mrs. Fields Cookies, Clare says her increased training and racing schedule means she has to be very organised. Naturally energetic, Clare says running appeals to her because she likes keeping fit and active. Despite being just 20, Clare's proving she's a gun over the longer distances with personal bests of 1.14.54 in the half marathon and 34.50 over 10,000m. In the short-term, Clare is hoping to qualify for the World Cross Country Team. In the future, her sights are set on representing Australia in the marathon, like her idols Kerryn McCann and Steve Moneghetti.

Being a competitor must be in Clare's blood, as she says she wanted to be a jockey when she was growing up. Though that didn't eventuate, her love of racing (of the athletics kind) has certainly been shining through. With a tough racing schedule, Clare sticks to a regular pre-race routine of having her mum's pasta the night before; she listens to music and makes sure she has her race kits packed before she goes to bed! For Clare, whose personal motto is, "Everything happens for a reason", there's every indication it will all work out brilliantly.

FAST FACTS:

Short-term goal: To qualify for the IAAF World Cross Country team.
Favourite food: Pasta, fruit and ice-cream.

EMILY Brichacek
ACT, 16



Image by Tim Sawkins

Emily Brichacek promises to be one of our best yet.

IN a low-key meet at the AIS last year, Emily captivated the small crowd with a blistering run to break the Australian under-16 3000m record in a time of 9.08.93. Everyone in the know sat up and took notice as the young Canberra talent catapulted into the national and international spotlight.

She backed up this sterling performance with a hat trick of wins at the 2005 Australian All Schools and Youth Athletics Championships at Sydney Olympic Park, taking out the 800m, 1500m and 3000m.

Despite having to withdraw from this year's IAAF World Junior Cross Country squad due to injury, simply being selected for the team is one of the achievements she is most proud of, and it's given her even greater determination to represent Australia on other occasions down the track.

Coached by Ted McLean, Emily, a member of both the Weston Creek Redbacks and Randwick Botany Harriers, is now preparing to make the 2007 World Youth Athletics Championships team and has long-term ambitions of representing Australia at the

Olympics and World Championships.

Grateful for the support of her family, coach and teachers, Emily says that despite her goals in athletics, schoolwork remains her top priority for the time being, because age is certainly on her side in a sport where athletes often don't reach their peak until their late 20s and 30s.

Athletics is like anything else in life: it requires preparation and patience. But good genes are a bonus, and Emily has them. Her grandfather, Ludvik, ran with the great Emil Zatopek in Czechoslovakia. Emily says Emil Zatopek and Herb Elliot are athletes she admires.

While Emily has big dreams and is willing to work hard in chasing them, she's also just like any other teenager who likes to read, go to the movies and have dinner with friends. She says her favourite movie is The Last Samurai "because I really admire the courage, focus and honour the Samurai represented". In the future, Emily too will be drawing on her inner courage and ability to focus in her quest to be the best she can be.

FAST FACTS:

Favourite food: Ice-cream and yum cha.
Personal motto: "Just because no one has done it yet, doesn't mean it can't be done".

RACHEL Green
VICTORIA, 17

THIS student has come a long way since first joining Little Athletics, following in the footsteps of her older sister Jo. She's now reaping the rewards of all her hard work over the years. Most recently, Rachel claimed the national cross country title in Hobart, beating her nearest rival in the 16/17 years' event by 15 seconds.

2006 was a memorable year for Rachel, who represented Australia at the IAAF World Junior Cross Country Championships in Japan. But for this Nicky Frey-coached athlete, the experience of competing in the cross country event at the ISF 2006 World Schools' Championship in Italy has been the highlight because of the "challenging course,... good atmosphere and great support from the rest of the Australian team".

A member of the Frankston club, Rachel says finding a balance between the schoolwork and training requires some "sacrifices", but the joy of training with her squad and the support from her coach and family make all the difference. Her personal

bests are testament to her dedication: 2.13 for 800m, 4.30 for 1500m, 9.39 for 3000m, 6.44 for 2000m steeple and 10.37 for 3000m steeple.

In the short-term, Rachel is launching an assault on the track session this summer in an effort to make the 2007 IAAF World Junior Cross Country team and compete in Kenya. Ultimately, she's striving to represent Australia at the Olympics, inspired by senior athletes such as Craig Mottram and Sarah Jamieson who are performing particularly well on the international stage.

With a personal motto of "don't worry, be happy", Rachel naturally has a relaxed approach to training and racing. But when she's not in an athletics mindset, Rachel likes to "chill out", spend time with her family and friends, go to the beach and hang out with her pet turtles!

While Rachel is still at the beginning of her journey in athletics, her level-headed outlook is a great message to other up-and-comers: "Run because you love it, not because other people want you to. Train hard and remember: what is hard to endure will be sweet to recall".

FAST FACTS:

Favourite food: Chocolate, pasta, fruit, Caesar salad.
Little-known trait: Rachel likes training in the rain.



Rachel Green representing Australia at the 2006 ISF Cross Country.