

Top Aussie PERFORMANCE

THE COMMONWEALTH Games produced many outstanding performances by our Australian runners and it was always going to be a very difficult decision to select one single performance. Some of the major highlights included fantastic results by Craig Mottram, Kerryn McCann, Eloise Wellings, Sarah Jamieson, Donna McFarlane and Melissa Rollison. However for this issue we have given the TAP to Benita Johnson for her awesome performances at the World Cross Country Championships and the circumstances surrounding these results.

Like many of the Australian athletes, early in 2006 Benita was focusing on both the Commonwealth Games and the World Cross Country. In 2004, Benita had won Australia's first individual medal at the World Cross Country Championships after claiming gold in the 8km event and it was hoped that she may again challenge for a top 10 position. However, given that her performance in the Commonwealth Games 10,000m (4th in 31.58) was well down on her world class standards (personal best: 30.37), things were

not looking good for the upcoming World Cross Country.

But in true champion form, Benita managed to turn the tables in less than two weeks, and after an enthralling battle with a string of Ethiopian athletes she managed to finish 4th in the 8km event. An absolutely amazing turn in form, given she was merely 22 seconds behind the 2005 5,000m and 10,000m World Champion, Tirunesh Dibaba.

But after the 8km race on the Saturday the weekend was not quite over for Benita, who then contested the 4km event the following day. The 4km event had an amazingly close finish with only seven seconds separating the first 6 places. Benita was right in the mix and narrowly missed a medal, again coming away with 4th place.

Some people will say that finishing in 4th place is the worst spot you can finish; given you are so close to winning a medal. In this case, R4YL thinks it is tremendous to see Benita recapturing the form that made her so competitive on the world stage and more than deserving of the TAP for this issue, congratulations Benita!

R4YL



The women's 2006 World Cross Country long course event with Australia's Benita Johnson featuring prominently. Image by David Byrne.

R4YL QUIZ

Issue #6 Questions:

- 1 In Which city was the 1988 Olympics held?
- 2 Who is the founder of shoe and clothing company Adidas?
- 3 Who holds the Commonwealth record in the men's 5000m?
- 4 Which Australian won gold in the 3000m Steeplechase at the 1962 Perth Commonwealth Games?
- 5 Who was the first woman across the line in the 2004 City to Surf?
- 6 Who has the women's World record in the half marathon, and how fast did she run?
- 7 Who was the first Aussie across the line in the 2005 Berlin Marathon?
- 8 Who has the World Best performance for 24 hour track running?
- 9 Who had the fastest marathon time in 2005 and what did he run?
- 10 Who held the Australian 5000m record before Craig Mottram, and how fast did he run?

Issue #5 Answers:

- 1 What place did Craig Mottram finish in the 2002 Commonwealth Games 5000m? **6th**
- 2 Youcef Abdi and Kris McCarthy both finished what place in their events at the last Commonwealth Games? **3rd**
- 3 Distance great Steve Cram won the 800m and 1500m double at which Commonwealth Games? **1986**
- 4 Australian Marathoner Mal Norwood ran what double at the Commonwealth Games? **10000m – Marathon, B. 5000m & 10000m**
- 5 How many Commonwealth Games has Steve Moneghetti won medals at? **Four. Three in the Marathon and one in the 10000m**
- 6 Which female athlete competed in the 10000m for Australia at the 1994 Commonwealth Games and in Triathlon for England at the 2002 Commonwealth Games? **Michelle Dillion**
- 7 Who was the last Australian to win a middle/distance track event at the Commonwealth Games? **Kate Anderson, 5000m**
- 8 Tony Manning won which event for Australia at the 1970 Commonwealth Games? **Steeplechase**
- 9 Andrew Lloyd won the 5000m at which Commonwealth Games? **1990 Auckland**
- 10 How many Australian athletes have won both Commonwealth Games and World Championship medals in distance running events? **Two – Deek & Mona**