

Official Publication of the Victorian Institute of Sport

PINNACLE

June 2018
WINTER EDITION
ISSUE 94

KATHRYN THE GREAT

Kathryn Mitchell



IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|--|----|
| MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR SPORT | 3 |
| MESSAGE FROM THE CEO | 4 |
| SCOTTY JAMES: "I'M JUST GETTING STARTED" | 5 |
| LASSILA'S LEGACY | 6 |
| KATHRYN THE GREAT | 7 |
| PRESSURE IS A PRIVILEGE | 8 |
| LIGHTNING BOLT HOLT | 9 |
| KEL O'BRIEN ADRENALINE RUSH | 12 |
| TAPPER DELIGHTS HOME CROWD | 13 |
| SCANLAN'S GOLDEN BIRTHDAY | 14 |
| SCHUMANN SHINES | 15 |
| RACHAEL LYNCH – "WHY SILVER IS GOLD" | 16 |
| KRIZANIC BOWLS INTO HISTORY | 18 |
| KOOKAS WIN SIXTH STRAIGHT GAMES TITLE | 19 |
| LISA WEIGHTMAN – THE RUNNING MUM | 20 |
| CUT DIAMONDS | 22 |

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR SPORT

The Hon John Eren MP

On behalf of the Andrews Labor Government and all Victorians a big thank you to our athletes, coaches, support staff, officials and administrators for your outstanding performances at the PyeongChang Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

From Isis Holt's inspirational burst of speed to win gold in the T35 100m to Mack Horton's golden double in the pool, it was great to see so many Victorians feature on the winner's podium at one of the most successful Commonwealth Games ever.

There were 53 VIS athletes that donned the green and gold for Australia, bringing home 33 medals from the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games – an incredible effort.

And a big congratulations to our VIS PyeongChang Winter Games representatives.

Lydia Lassila, Danielle Scott, David Morris, Laura Peel and Samantha Wells did us all proud at the Olympics, with Scotty James capturing a well-deserved bronze medal in the half pipe, along with Paralympians, Mitch Gourley, the Australian Team Co-captain and Jonty O'Callaghan.

The achievements and performances of these VIS athletes is not only a reflection of the depth of our sporting talent but the hard work of VIS coaches, officials and administrators to stay ahead of the game.

This Government is getting on with maintaining our state's edge, especially when it comes to helping our up and coming athletes get the support they need to be the best they can be.

Our four-year \$26.8 million Victorian Institute of Sport

package not only provides certainty for the VIS but also ensures VIS athletes are given every chance to succeed and do our state and nation proud on the world stage.

We have also provided additional funding for a VIS Regional Community Outreach and Roadshow to provide talented regional athletes, coaches and support staff with a unique opportunity to observe and learn from the best of the best.

Further to this, our Government has provided funding to improve VIS data management systems, helping to better keep track of athlete numbers, results and performance.

We are proud to continue funding the first-class high performance sport development programs at the VIS so more aspiring stars can strive for Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games glory.

It's backed up by our recent record breaking sports budget which features a record investment in levelling the playing field for women and girls.

This includes \$64.6m to introduce high performance facilities and more at the State Netball and Hockey Centre, \$20 million to redevelop Ikon Park into the home of women's football and \$10 million to help build a new Melbourne Victory Football Academy in Footscray Park. In short, we're kicking in millions across a number of high-profile

venues to ensure our high performers, male and female, have the best.

Investments like these mean every Victorian can look forward to not only cheering their VIS heroes on the world stage, but has a real chance to reach their athletic potential in their own backyard.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the VIS on your outstanding leadership, professionalism and innovative programs that have helped nurture this latest crop of champions.

I look forward to joining all Victorians in celebrating even more success going forward.



VICTORIAN
INSTITUTE OF SPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Anne Marie Harrison

Welcome to our 2018 post Games edition of the "Pinnacle". I join our Minister for Sport, John Eren in congratulating our many athletes for their endeavour, performances and sportsmanship displayed at the Games. During what has been a trying time for Australian sport in some areas it is with pride that we witnessed that seeking to excel in international competition can sit comfortably with dignity and humility in victory and disappointment.

It is also appropriate to acknowledge the "Team behind the Athlete" and extend our thanks to everyone in the Institute system who makes a contribution to our athlete's performances. They create the environment and contribute their expertise and experience to the journey and the outcome of an athlete.

At the end of each cycle, we also recognise the retirement of athletes and I particularly wish to pay tribute to two of our pioneering Aerial Skiers in Lydia Lassila and David Morris. Much has been said about their careers and how privileged we were at the VIS that we could support them from commencement to retirement. Both individuals with steely determination, courage that had us constantly in awe and a wonderful human spirit that has left their sport in a better place. We thank them for the joy they brought us and their legacy that will endure.

In closing I wish to acknowledge, through their Chairman Peter Beattie and CEO Mark Peters, the outstanding job GOLDOC did in hosting a wonderful Commonwealth Games and to the CGA, through their CEO Craig Phillips and Chef de Mission Steve Moneghetti, for providing a team culture and environment which enabled the athletes to excel.





SCOTTY JAMES: "I'M JUST GETTING STARTED"

The scene was set for the greatest halfpipe showdown in Winter Olympic history with VIS athlete Scotty James, two-time Olympic gold medallist Shaun White and the impressive Japanese teenager, Ayumu Hirano, qualifying in the top three places for the PyeongChang Halfpipe final.

Much had been made of the trio heading into the Games with bitter debates about perfect scores, skewed judging and technique versus technicality. But all that was cast aside when the three best riders in the sport laid down markers for the big show.

James, who had the honour of carrying Australia's flag at the opening ceremony, eased into qualification position with an 89-point first run.

The VIS athlete raised the bar with his second run, laying on some of his biggest tricks including frontside and backside 1260s, taking the qualifying lead with a score of 96.75. White was up to the challenge, scoring 98.5 in his second run to ease into the final, while the diminutive Japanese rider Hirano scored 95.25 for third.

In the final, James laid down an excellent first run that included his signature move, the switch backside 1260 with double cork, a trick with three-and-a-half rotations and a blind entry and landing. However, White responded immediately, grabbing first place with a run of 94.25.

Donning his iconic red boxing gloves, the two-time World Champion went into his final run in third place behind White

and Hirano, who had taken the top spot with 95.25.

While James was not able to improve on his earlier score, White seized the opportunity winning gold in his last run with a whopping 97.75 to claim his third Winter Olympic gold medal, ahead of Hirano.

The likeable Victorian from the sleepy town of Warrandyte, couldn't hide his emotions after clinching the bronze in the best halfpipe final the Olympics has seen.

"I came out and did it the Australian way and gave it a real hard crack, I was expecting a really good battle and a battle it was," James said.

"I'm very proud of my country and where I come from but I can assure you I am just getting started, you can expect to see a lot more of me in the future."

Although bronze might not have been the colour Scotty was hoping for, he acknowledges he was involved in the "best snowboard halfpipe competition ever" and now has his eyes on the future and the Beijing 2022 Games.

"I want to be the best in the world, I am absolutely ready for Beijing," James said with a smile.



LASSILA'S LEGACY

It might not have been the result she wanted to finish on, but Lydia Lassila's illustrious career simply won't be judged on her final jumps at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games.

She had two chances to qualify for the final and unlike her teammates, Danielle Scott and Laura Peel who both earned a spot in the final, both of Lassila's attempts ended in a misjudgement of the gusty tail wind and the ignominy of backside landings. With that, Lassila's five-time Olympic career came to an abrupt end.

The 36-year-old has achieved it all over the past two decades and despite the initial disappointment of missing the PyeongChang final, there is no doubt her legacy will live on in Australian sporting history.

As a young wide-eyed gymnast from Melbourne, Lydia Ierodiacondou's Olympic aspirations were set and then dashed by injuries and misfortune. The opportunity to transfer her gymnastic abilities to the twists and turns of aerial skiing, provided her with a second chance to realise her dream – and create many new ones.

She made her Olympic Games debut in 2002 at Salt Lake City having only been skiing for two years. A water jump accident almost ruined her Torino 2006 campaign, but just 8

months later, she headed to her second Games. It was in Torino where, after landing awkwardly, she blew her knee out and was again forced off the snow.

Through an experimental roller-coaster of guts and perseverance, she turned her major injury setback into fuel for an almighty comeback. Her dreams were finally realised at the Vancouver Olympic Games in 2010 when she captured the gold medal with a World Record score.

At her fourth Games in Sochi 2014, she was determined to become the first woman to complete a quad-twisting triple somersault.

In one of the boldest decisions ever seen by any Australian athlete at a Summer or Winter Olympics, Lassila decided to attempt the quad-twisting triple somersault – a jump so difficult it had never been so much as attempted in competition, let alone landed.

Lassila could have won with a lesser jump in a final – but that's not the Australian way, and it's definitely not her way! She executed the jump but back-slapped the snow on landing,

losing vital points, meaning she joined aerial skier Alisa Camplin with an Olympic bronze to go with her gold.

Much of Lassila's pride in her fifth and final Winter Olympic campaign came from her feats off the snow – balancing life as an elite athlete, entrepreneur and most importantly, a mother to her two young sons, Alek and Kai.

"I enjoyed it because I had my boys with me and such a supportive husband in Lauri. When I said I wanted to go back, he rolled his eyes but as soon as I made that decision he supported me."

"It has been a wild ride to bring the boys along and have them at training camps and it just proves you can do it as a mother. You can run a business as an athlete and a mum, you can do it all, it is just a matter of logistical challenges, but it's possible."

While failing to land a punch in PyeongChang, her ability to juggle sport, a business and family during the campaign has been a source of pride – and has sent a message to the new generation of young female athletes.

KATHRYN THE GREAT

As Mitchell approached the runway for her final throw at Gold Coast 2018, the display of raw emotion was truly inspiring. The enormity in what Mitchell had achieved was realised, the tears came and she was overcome with what she'd finally done at her fourth Games.

This is about far more than winning. Kathryn Mitchell's Commonwealth Games gold represents a journey of joy, disbelief, love, and struggle.

With emotions running high, Mitchell tried to contain herself by focusing on the process that Coach Uwe Hohn and Victorian Institute of Sport Psychologist, Mark Spargo had imparted.

"As the final round started to close out and I knew I would probably win, I started to think about all the things that Uwe and Mark had told me and the things we had to overcome and work through," Mitchell explained.

"It was at that moment I fully understood trust. It was hard to believe what had just unfolded."

Rewind to the start of the competition, it was safe to say that Mitchell had all but wrapped up the gold medal on her opening throw, rewriting the Australian and Commonwealth records to a mammoth 68.92m and etching her name into VIS folklore as the 100th VIS gold medal in Commonwealth Games history.

"My first throw was just to be like all others I had done this season. Focus on my process and nothing else," Mitchell said.

"I didn't want to think that I'd won already because we had the whole competition to go but I knew it would be very difficult for the other girls to beat."

The performance at Gold Coast 2018 not only cemented herself as the greatest the country has ever seen, but now the seventh best throw in the world of all-time with fire in the belly burning for greater success.

"Seventh all-time is a great achievement. However, I think there is much more left in the tank. I am concentrating on my health and I'm excited about what is possible," Mitchell said.

"I definitely have distance targets that I'd love to achieve but recently I've started to let go of these and just let the gates of possibility swing open."

The mindset of Mitchell this season has been to concentrate on the process and the results will follow. Achieving this mindset wasn't an easy task for Mitchell, but she knew it was necessary if the next step in her career was to be taken.

With guidance from experienced VIS Sport Psychologist, Spargo, the pair have been able to rewire her thought processes to spark an upward trend to greatness.

"I have always been a totally results-focused athlete, as far back as I can remember. A big part of my sense of self is woven into outcome," Mitchell said.

"When I first met Mark and we started to talk about my approach, it was very difficult for me to see how I would



be able to let go of that results-focus after so long. I knew though I had to find a better way and I knew I had to open myself up and trust him.

"Mark helped me find myself again and start to rediscover the person behind the athlete. I took each session we did and then did a lot of my own internal work - reading, listening to podcasts, learning a more spiritual approach for myself.

"We then worked on the process on the runway. I practiced the things we had worked out which allowed the results to just take care of themselves."

Reaching the dais was a special moment for a number of reasons, Gold Coast 2018 will go down as Mitchell's first time on the podium at a major senior international competition after five near-misses at Olympic, World Championship and Commonwealth level.

Amid all the ups and downs, at last the moment was hers, the national anthem echoed throughout Cararra Stadium.

"I told Uwe and Mark a few days before the final that just once I would love to feel the 'winning moment' - that moment just after the end of competition when you have done it and you get your medal and listen to the National Anthem. I've always wondered how great that would be," Mitchell said.

"Mark told me I would get my moment if I concentrated on the process. He was right. The fact that I was able to experience it at a home Games will live in me forever."

Looking to the future, the 35-year-old envisioned she would retire after the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, but after reaching new heights she has a wise outlook on the future.

"Maybe I've continued to endure because I didn't have that improvement that perhaps most successful athletes have in their 20s. So I'm still exploring my potential. As long as my body can do it, there is no reason to stop," Mitchell said.

"I understand that age eventually has its limitations, but if we didn't keep track of our ages and only did things based on what we could still do physically I think we would surprise ourselves."



PRESSURE IS A PRIVILEGE

Cool and impervious to pressure, Mack Horton put expectations aside to get Australia off the mark in the Commonwealth Games' gold medal column, racing the way he wanted in the men's 400m freestyle event.

Many accolades were on offer for the Olympic champion; a win on home soil and the chance to become the first swimmer since Ian Thorpe - way back in Manchester in 2002 - to win Commonwealth Games gold for Australia in this event.

With a cool head and no intention to spend his afterburners in the early stages, Horton produced a clinic of control to beat English rival, James Guy, and compatriot Jack McLaughlin.

Australia once had ruled the pool in the middle distance race but since Thorpe in 2002, it has been slim pickings - no golds and just a smattering of minor medals. However, Horton broke the 16-year drought on the Gold Coast and confirmed his status as the world's premier middle distance swimmer by clawing back the lead after being in third place at the 200m mark.

Guy went out hard — so hard in fact that he was under world record pace through 200m - with McLaughlin, the national 1500m freestyle champion, sitting patiently on his shoulder.

But the real master race plan was unfolding in lane four as Horton allowed the others to take flight, while he remained solely focussed on executing his own race tactics.

"Whenever I race I want to feel like I'm in control and part of that is telling yourself you're in control and I felt like I was in control the whole race," he said.

Horton steadily turned the screws and by the 300m mark, he had overtaken his compatriot, before accelerating mercilessly past Guy. On the turn for the final 50m he was half a length in front. This was the procession the crowd had anticipated.

That half-length would not be forfeited, with Horton powering home to take the gold.

Somewhat sceptical of his rival's approach, Horton said Guy's all-guns-blazing tactic in the first half of the race would always leave the door open for his own tactic of accelerating late on.

"If you're going to go out that hard, they're going to sting a lot more on the way home," he said.

Surprisingly, Horton rated this win over his Rio Olympic triumph.

"Swimming in front of your home crowd is unreal. I probably feel more emotion winning here than in Rio because of everyone cheering for you."

"That didn't happen in Rio!"

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RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

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Congratulations to the VIS athletes who competed in the 2018 Commonwealth Games.





LIGHTNING BOLT HOLT

Teenage sprint sensation Isis Holt lived up to her nickname by adding Commonwealth Games gold to her expanding resume of sprint titles on the Gold Coast.

Lightning Bolt Holt, who won double gold at last year's World Championships, never looked in doubt as she took the win in the women's 100m T35, exploding out of the blocks before speeding clear of the field to cross the line in 13.58 - cementing herself as the giant of para-athletics. The VIS spoke to the bubbly 16 year-old;

How does it feel to be a Commonwealth Games GOLD medallist?

It's an incredible feeling! Obviously each major event holds its own significance but to win gold at a home Games has always been a dream of mine. So to be able to say that I've now achieved that is pretty surreal!

What was it like competing at a home Games in front of your friends and family?

I loved knowing that I had friends and family watching me compete! Right after my race I ran up to my coach (Nick Wall) and one of my training partners and was able to say a quick "hi" and "thank you" to them before running my victory lap. To share that special moment with the people I train with almost every day and who helped me to get to where I am today, was so exciting. It's something that makes me smile and that I will remember forever.

What was your best moment from the Games?

Winning the gold was pretty special! But I also really enjoyed getting to know other athletes outside of the Paralympic circle and having the opportunity to support other TeamAus athletes and celebrate our team's success with different people from a range of sports. The village was pretty cool too!

What was it like competing alongside able-bodied athletes on the World stage?

Having a combined team was probably what I was most nervous about, as I didn't know a lot of the athletes on the team. However, I found that we all had a lot in common regardless of whether we had competed at the Olympics or Paralympics. It also gave some of the para athletes some great exposure and it was really nice to feel like the crowds were just as eager to support our events as the able bodied ones.

Tell us about village life?

It's pretty awesome being able to live in a village that consists of nothing but athletes. It feels a bit like being in a very green and gold bubble away from the rest of the world so it's always very weird leaving the village. The vibe was really cool with coverage everywhere to keep up with events and someone always knowing what was going on and when. The Aussie team especially began to feel like a really big extended family by the end of the Games and I think there was a resounding sense of pride from the moment we entered the village to the moment we left.

How did the VIS support you leading into the Games?

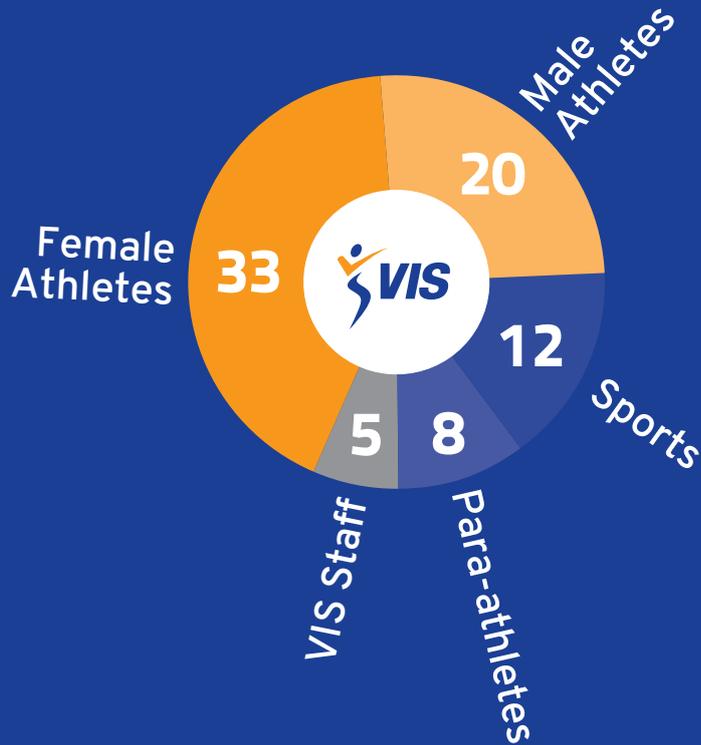
I regularly used the gym and physio facilities at the VIS as well as a few other programs such as nutrition. I definitely think access to these services contribute greatly to both my physical and mental preparation before big competitions, and always have.

What's next on the horizon for Isis "Lightning Bolt" Holt?

My next major competition probably won't be until the Tokyo Paralympics in 2020, but between now and then I have year 12 to complete at school, Brunswick Secondary College, which will be the main focus for the next year.

VIS AT GC 2018

VIS REPRESENTATION



MEDAL TALLY

VIS MEDAL TALLY



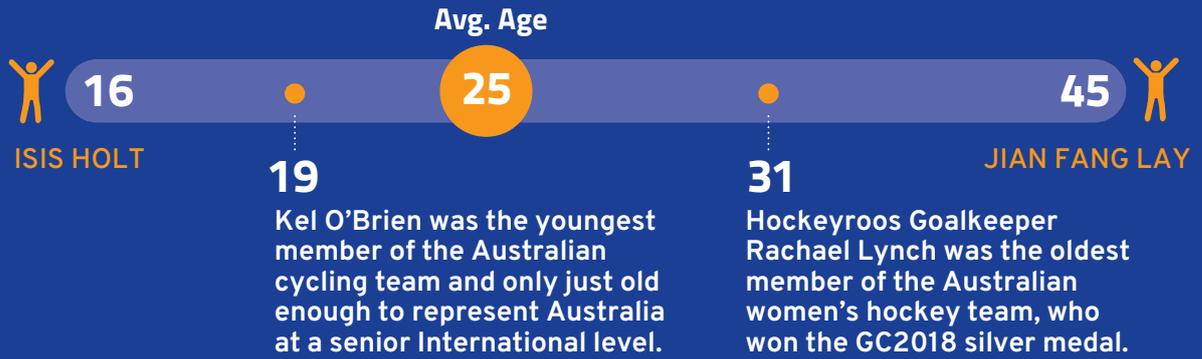
35 Medalists
31 Top 8



AUS MEDAL TALLY



AGE SPAN



WORLD RECORD

KELLAND O'BRIEN

3:49.804

4000m Team Pursuit

GAMES RECORDS

KATHRYN MITCHELL
68.92m
Athletics Javelin

MACK HORTON
7:05.97
Swimming 4x200m Freestyle Relay

LAETISHA SCANLAN
38
Shooting Trap

STANDOUT ATHLETES

Mack Horton

- G** 400m freestyle
- G** 4x200m freestyle relay
- S** 200m freestyle
- B** 1500m freestyle

Damien Schumann

Became the inaugural Commonwealth Games men's beach volleyball Champion with partner Chris McHugh.

Carla Krizanic

Broke Australia's 12-year lawn bowls gold medal hoodoo, winning the fours and triples events.

STANDOUT SPORT

The Kookaburras, featuring VIS athlete Aaron Klienschmidt won an unprecedented sixth straight men's hockey Commonwealth Games title.

FUN FACTS

Kathryn Mitchell became the **100th** VIS gold medallist in Commonwealth Games history.

Melissa Tapper won the first ever gold medal for Australia in the sport of table tennis.

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

64,933
reach (organic)

131,121
reach

141,600
impressions

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TOP TWEET <https://twitter.com/VicInstSport/status/984010600270499840/photo/1>

KEL O'BRIEN ADRENALINE RUSH

"It is a World Record, 3:49.804. They weren't racing England, they were racing the World, and they beat the World." One commentator said as the Australian quartet crossed the line in first place at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

At 19-years of age and only just old enough to represent Australia at senior international level, young VIS cycling star Kelland O'Brien combined with Alex Porter, Sam Welsford and Leigh Howard to smash the Men's Team Pursuit world record on their way to Commonwealth Games gold at the Anna Meares Velodrome.

The Australians set a new Games record in qualifying of 3:52.041, more than three seconds clear of second-placed England.

A tactical move from the team saw teenager O'Brien replace former Individual Pursuit World Champion, Jordan Kerby, in the final and the transition was seamless.

The "Ashes on Wheels" took place in the final, but after several tight laps it was clear the Australian quartet had no intention of letting the Old Dart succeed. The Aussies scorched the track in a world record time of 3 minutes 49.804 seconds, shaving nearly half a second off the record which Great Britain set in Rio two years ago.

"The feeling of crossing the finish line and knowing we had won gold was one of the most special moments I have ever experienced."

"The home crowd has been built up as being extremely loud, that is an understatement, the last kilometer of that race was unbelievable and something I will never forget," he said.

Kell has been cycling since he was five years old, and loves "getting an adrenaline rush" from the "physically and mentally demanding" sport.

Despite his early introduction to the sport, he was not a

prolific winner during his junior years and failed to rack up the results required for official state support. As a result his talents were overlooked and he was never offered a place on the Victorian State team – the foundation for moving up the hierarchy.

The turning point came when Cycling Australia allowed independent riders to compete at the National Championships in 2015.

Riding for only the second time on a new sponsored bike in his favoured event, the 3km Individual Pursuit, Kel had nothing to lose.

Incredibly, in the qualifier he set the fourth fastest time (3:22.573) which was the fastest Victorian by almost a full two seconds. Then in the bronze medal ride, he went all out to catch West Australian Alex Rendell at a pace that could have arguably been good enough for the gold.

It was simply a ride no-one could believe – his strength and speed were incredible and he demonstrated to everyone that he had something else; something that could not be ignored.

Since then, O'Brien has gone from strength to strength and his progress has shown no sign of slowing. National U19 Omnium Champion, Champion of Champions at the 2016 Australian Track Cycling National Championships, World Champion in the Team Pursuit at the 2017 Track World Championships in Hong Kong, personal best times, the list goes on.

As one coach commented, "He's special, really special".

TAPPER DELIGHTS HOME CROWD



Melissa Tapper delighted a massive home crowd to secure table tennis gold in the women's singles TT6-10 at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

The VIS scholarship holder said adding Commonwealth Games gold medallist to her burgeoning resume might not sink in until she's "a grandma, rocking on a chair in my house one day with my grandkids."

The 28-year-old defeated Faith Obazuaye from Nigeria 7-11 11-2 11-6 11-3 at Oxenford Studios in the final of the para TT6-10 singles, for standing athletes with varying limb impairments.

The Nigerian's aggressive start to the match quickly crumbled as she repeatedly overshot the table following troubles with the net and was unable to break Tapper's dominance in the final three games.

The medal marked Australia's first table tennis gold since the sport joined the Games in 2002.

Fighting back tears of joy after her victory, Tapper said that her win wasn't about creating history but about achieving for herself and her family.

"I hope my medal can inspire others, but that's not my aim when I compete. Today I competed for myself and my family. I don't ever think about how my actions could be inspiring for someone else, but it has been incredible this week - I've had a lot of people coming specifically to see my matches."

The excitement and adrenaline of winning in front of a home crowd may just spur her to another Olympic-Paralympic double in Tokyo in 2020, and perhaps to win a medal.

"Tokyo is still a while off, I am just stoked to get through these last 10 days. This (the Gold Coast Games) is almost a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; this environment, the thrill and adrenaline I get here spurs me on to try and keep achieving a bit more," said Tapper.

Milly, originally from Hamilton in country Victoria, suffered a brachial plexus injury at birth which resulted in Erb's Palsy, a paralysis of the arm caused by injury to the upper group of the arm's main nerves. She was the first Australian to compete in both the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio 2016 and as such, is no stranger to very full Games programs.

In addition to her TT6-10 singles gold at Gold Coast 2018, she placed ninth in the women's singles, fifth in women's doubles and ninth in mixed doubles, while she finished fourth in the teams event.

Milly briefly spoke to the VIS Marketing team:

How does it feel to be a Commonwealth Games GOLD medallist?

Amazing, and a massive sense of relief. It only took 20 years, but we got there!

You won Australia's first ever table tennis Commonwealth gold – do you consider yourself a trailblazer?

I don't consider myself a trailblazer, but I am pretty excited about the little piece of history made and I find it fun and challenging to try to do things that haven't been done before.

What was it like competing at a home Games in front of your friends and family?

It was the most intense sense of pride I have ever experienced. My eyes would well up, my heart would skip a beat and I would smile from ear to ear knowing that I had my family, especially my nephews and niece in the stands and a part of the Games' experience. It just made me really happy!

What was your best moment from the Games?

Fighting hard with my team in a packed stadium for the bronze medal in the team event was incredible! We fell short in the end but I was just honoured to play in that match against such high level competitors and perform well in front of the crowd with an awesome atmosphere. Looking back, I think it was a great day for Australian table tennis.

Who gave you the most support leading into the Games and how?

I received a lot from everywhere. The VIS is across my entire program and is a massive part of my success of the past four years - without them, things would have been incredibly difficult. But outside of my training environment my family are No.1, with the most valuable player going to my brother! I just love having him at my competitions and it makes my heart smile seeing him get so passionate when I compete.

Tell us about village life?

It's like being in a bubble where everything is free and easy. Getting to socialise and catch up with fellow Aussies in the street and international friends, coffee dates, dining room discussions and a cheeky ice cream run were just a small part of each day.

What's next on the horizon for Milly Tapper?

A break! It has been a very hectic, non-stop 6 months, so looking forward to a bit of down time for myself, lighten up on training a bit and spend some more time back at my parents in Hamilton before gearing up and preparing for the World Para Championships in Europe in October.



SCANLAN'S GOLDEN BIRTHDAY

Birthday presents don't get much better than a gold medal and Laetisha Scanlan made it a 28th birthday to remember when she won the Women's Trap title on the Gold Coast, edging out Northern Ireland's Kirsty Barr in a nail-biting finish.

As icing on the birthday cake, she also secured a Commonwealth Games record of 38 targets.

"The last shot went so quickly, I don't even remember what I was thinking. All I knew was if I hit this I win and tried to stick to my routine as much as I could, considering the circumstances."

It was a case of *deja vu* for the Victorian, who had to win a sudden-death shoot-off to book her spot in the final just as she had in Glasgow four years earlier.

After finishing in tied sixth position, Scanlan had to shoot for her spot in the final and one miss of the 100kph flying disk would cost her a chance at the gold medal.

Scanlan said she wasn't as nervous as what she thought, because she had experienced the pressure before at Glasgow.

"I didn't even think I'd make the finals after the third round but my day was like a roller coaster and was full of highs and lows," Scanlan said.

"I knew she [New Zealand's Natalie Rooney] was a fantastic shooter as she was a silver medallist at the Rio Olympics and I knew she was going to be hard to beat, but because I had been through it before I took with me a bit of confidence."

Rooney was the first to make an error and Scanlan capitalised on the eighth target to secure her spot in the final. From there on, Scanlan never looked in doubt despite missing twice in her last five shots to give Barr an opening.

It came down to Scanlan's final shot of the day to claim the gold medal and she duly saluted before an unscripted rendition of 'Happy Birthday' was blared from the crowd.

"I don't know why I make it so hard for myself!" a teary-eyed Scanlan told the crowd after sealing victory.

"I was well aware that I had a two target lead heading into the last five [shots] and all I had to do was hit one. I then missed a couple of shots and finally landed the last one which was crazy when I hit it.

"There was so much relief, excitement and tears after all of that and to top it off it was my birthday so it was a huge roller coaster ride."

The three-time gold medallist won her first Games medal on debut in the trap pairs at the Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games, before setting an Australian record (74/75 targets) in 2012, a World Cup win in 2013 and gold on the 2014 World Cup circuit and Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

But these achievements might never have happened if it wasn't for her Dad, who was a recreational clay target shooter, taking her as a 10-year-old to the local club each weekend.

Having her Dad look on as she won, made her birthday and her GC2018 victory even more special. She burst into tears when she saw him after her event.

"My dad is my number one supporter, so seeing him I instantly cried" she said.



SCHUMANN SHINES

Damien Schumann was bitterly disappointed when was axed from his school volleyball team at Mazenod College in Melbourne's South East.

The decision prompted the then 18 year-old to switch his focus from the indoor court to the grains of sand within a beach volleyball arena, and he has never looked back.

More than a decade later, he has a Commonwealth Games gold medal hanging proudly in his pool room.

Schumann became the inaugural Commonwealth Games Men's Beach Volleyball Champion with partner Chris McHugh on a historic Wednesday evening at Gold Coast 2018.

It has been described as one of the greatest beach volleyball matches in history, three thrilling sets were produced that saw the Australian pair triumph over the highly favoured Canadian duo of Sam Pedlow and Sam Schachter to win gold, 2-1 (21-19, 18-21, 18-16).

The Aussie's took an early grip on the first set, before the Canadians fought back to claim the second, the two teams went into a nerve-racking third set.

It was a display of true Australian grit that had the electric Coolangatta crowd on the edge of their seats during the deciding set.

In a race to 15, Schumann and McHugh were trailing 9-12 mid-way through the third set which saw the Australian pair at a crossroad, entering into a realm that only a few select sportsmen can understand.

"It's hard to describe those sorts of pressure-filled moments," Schumann said.

"You can just feel your heart pumping and the adrenaline coursing. You're not sore, you're not fatigued, you're not tired. Your eyes go a little bit wider and you're just ready for anything."

"There's no steadiness when it gets to that place in the game."

Schumann said the pair had to dig deep when the odds were against them.

"Beach volleyball is one of those games when you are down 9-12 in the third set, you shouldn't really win those ones," he said.

Eventually, the home side gutsed it out with the crowd roaring them on to snatch gold from the red hot favourite Canadians.

The golden partnership, which formed after the Rio Olympics, is evidently a winning one with the potential to become better and stronger.

"We're constantly getting better on the things we want to improve on," said defender Schumann.

Now the pair are Champions of the Commonwealth - the first beach volleyball players to ever hold that title.

"To win a gold medal is absolutely unbelievable," Schumann says.

"That's crazy man, how cool's that?"



L-R | **TOP** Karri McMahon, Grace Stewart, Ashlea Fey, Renee Taylor, Edwina Bone, Jocelyn Bartram (GK), Jodie Kerry, Emily Smith | **MIDDLE** Madi Ratcliffe, Jane Claxton | **BOTTOM** Savannah Fitzpatrick, Stephanie Kershaw, **Rachael Lynch (GK)**, Jordy Holzberger, Kaitlin Nobbs, **Emily Hurtz**, Gabi Nance

RACHAEL LYNCH – “WHY SILVER IS GOLD”

The Hockeyroos settled for silver at the Commonwealth Games after being beaten by a clinical New Zealand outfit in the gold medal match at the Gold Coast Hockey Centre.

The Roos entered the final without conceding a goal in five matches thanks to the heroics of the exceptional custodian, Rachael Lynch; however a 14-minute spell in the decider where they conceded three goals consigned them to silver. Lynch reflected on her Gold Coast experience;

“Having recently returned from the Gold Coast and now enjoying a much needed break, it is with much pride that I have been able to show off my shiny silver medal. It has been wonderful to come home and share my experience with friends, family, the Victorian hockey community and also kids from my old school.

We were away for three weeks for the competition but it was during

the final 48 hours of the event that I learnt a very interesting thing: silver medals are won not lost. In the hours following our final game, I noticed some mixed responses from various Australians. The first was when we re-entered the village post-game and had the police and security guards at the gate clapping and cheering as we walked in: A wonderful moment! But then came the odd comment of “bad luck” “unlucky” “sorry about your loss”. Now I am not for one minute judging these people for their responses. Of course, we wanted to win and gold was what we were chasing and all desperately desired. And yes, we had lost! But why should five tough international games without a single loss and without a single goal conceded warrant “bad luck”?

Yes we didn't play our best in the final but we fought hard. Personally I was absolutely exhausted by the end of the game and I didn't do any of the running that the girls did. It's physically tough playing six games in two weeks and mentally draining too! New Zealand are always a difficult team to play and this time they were just better on the day. They deserved their gold and a part of me, very deep down, feels happy that they got to experience that winning moment that I got to have four years ago in Glasgow and eight years ago in Delhi. Of course I wish it had been my girls having the moment but this is sport and we can't all win!

Over three full weeks we trained, researched opposition, watched endless hours of sport, ate delightful



food in the dining hall, swam, chatted and played 6 really solid games of hockey. Being a home Commonwealth Games meant a few added pressures from media and sponsors but more so it meant incredibly supportive volunteers, smiling police officers, friendly staff and of course packed stadiums with roaring crowds who were all cheering for us!

I did have some nerves coming in to the tournament about the crowds. Playing in front of vocal crowds is not new to me. At the World Cup in 2014 we played Holland in the final in front of 15,000 screaming Dutchies. In Argentina we have struggled to hear over the noise of 5,000 singing Argentinians. But of course none of those times were the crowd there to support us. This was different. In a ceremony before these Games, where Mark Knowles was announced as flag bearer, we were treated to a Q & A from one of Australia's greatest athletes, cyclist Anna Meares. She spoke of her time in front of home

crowds and said that as an athlete you have to "use the crowd". Knowing that they are there for you, to support you, and help you have success means you can use them for that extra bit of energy that can get you across the line. And that's what I did. The roar of the stadium each time we scored a goal or I saved one was absolutely electric and something I will never forget.

The Commonwealth Games as an event was a huge success. Gold Coast definitely put on a show and if you ask any athlete that attended I am sure you will only hear glowing reviews. The village was amazing, the facilities were top class, packed stadiums, happy supporters and so many positive results!

As is often the case for hockey we are unable to go and watch other sports live because our schedule runs for the whole two weeks. The opening ceremony was the night before game one so we couldn't march, and then rest and recovery meant leaving the village for long stints to watch sport

was not a priority. We did however have the Channel 7 App linked up to our TV so my roomies and I had events playing from the moment we woke up till we went to bed at night.

There were plenty of highlights across the two weeks and a few I found particularly inspiring; our room helped Tia-Clair Toomey by cheering her on in that incredible final lift to win Gold, Chris McHugh and Damien Schumann dug deep to win the beach volleyball gold. Our Aussie Diamonds (the only event I got to see live) had the gold snatched from their hands with just 1 second to go but stood proud on the podium when receiving their silver medals. And who could forget Mark Knowles in his final tournament ever? Carrying the flag for Australia then going on to win his fourth Commonwealth Games Gold with the Kookaburras. I love sport, I love Australia and I loved every single minute of these Commonwealth Games. Thank you so much to everyone who supported the Australian team!"



KRIZANIC BOWLS INTO HISTORY

VIS scholarship holder Carla Krizanic and her Australian Women's Lawn Bowls Fours team broke a 4398-day Commonwealth Games gold medal drought for the nation when they defeated South Africa in the final at Broadbeach Bowls Club on the Gold Coast.

Known as the Jackaroos, they trailed the game early but fought their way back into the match with a final score of 18-16 - the first win by any Australian team or individual lawn bowler at a Commonwealth Games since 2006.

Seventy-two hours after breaking the 12-year hoodoo, the Aussie women walked away with a second gold by dominating Scotland in the Women's Triples. Krizanic reflects on her experience on the Gold Coast;

"My Commonwealth Games experience was like living in a bubble of joy for two weeks. Whilst I competed in the Glasgow Games in 2014, the Gold Coast Games was a whole experience on a new level and well beyond what I imagined. I continually reminded myself to not get caught up in any performance expectations and to just enjoy the ride, and that I did!

Credit to how successful and enjoyable the Games experience was goes to the beautiful people that make up our lawn bowls team (Jackaroos) from support staff to players - it was one big happy family.

To be a part of the Jackaroos is to be a part of a family full of very different personalities - even conflicting personalities - but a family that truly respects each other, their differences and contributions to the team. I was so proud to be a part of this team and have two shiny gold medals beside me as a reminder of what a team can achieve when they are in it together.

My bubble of joy was completed by knowing that my family were in the stands enjoying the success as much as me, as most would know our families tend to do all the sacrificing, so to see them lapping up the experience as much as me was beyond words."

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L-R | **TOP** Aaron Kleinschmidt, Trent Mitton, Dylan Wotherspoon, Tyler Lvell, Flynn Ogilvie, Jake Whetton, Jeremy Edwards, Matthew Dawson, Eddie Ockenden, Tom Craig
BOTTOM Andrew Charter, Jeremy Hayward, Aaron Zalewski, Daniel Beale, Tom Wickham, Jake Harvie, Mark Knowles, Lachlan Sharp

KOOKAS WIN SIXTH STRAIGHT GAMES TITLE

Kookaburras legend, Mark Knowles, was sent into retirement a happy man as Australia defeated Trans-Tasman rivals New Zealand in the Commonwealth Games gold medal match.

Second quarter goals from VIS athlete Aaron Kleinschmidt and team mate Matthew Dawson gave Australia a commanding two-goal lead before going on to win an unprecedented sixth straight Games title.

Australia set up the win with a dominant first half where they had six shots on target compared to one.

After a tight first quarter, the Kookaburras upped the ante in the second and opened the scoring when Kleinschmidt's 21st minute scoop went over New Zealand goalkeeper, Richard Joyce.

Dawson then doubled the advantage not long after, with a trademark penalty corner flick deflecting off a defender's stick into the back of the net.

Not even the halftime break, nor an early green card to Lachlan Sharp, could turn momentum in New Zealand's favour, with some desperate defending preventing Australia from extending their lead.

The Kiwis pulled their keeper from the field in a bid for one final push, but simply had no answer to the Kookaburra's defence that limited them to just two shots on goal all night.

Kleinschmidt became the eleventh VIS male hockey player to win a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games.

The VIS men's hockey program has a long history of providing the Kookaburras with quality players, having a representative in five of the six gold medal teams, including five players in the inaugural 1998 Kuala Lumpur Games side.

Former Australian hockey star turned VIS Head Coach, Jay Stacy, was a part of the original Kuala Lumpur gold medal Kookaburras in 1998, while Luke Doerner was a vital part of both the 2006 and 2010 Kookaburra outfits leading the goal scoring in both years.

Recently retired, Chris Ciriello was selected in both the 2010 and 2014 Commonwealth Games and is well

known for his gold medal match hat-trick four-years ago in Glasgow which made him Australia's highest total Commonwealth Games goal scorer.

Whilst the team has changed a lot throughout the journey, one thing remains, the Australian men's team has always won gold at the Commonwealth Games and VIS athletes have played a large role in this success.

VIS' HISTORY AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Jason Duff (1998), James Elmer (1998), Jeremy Hiskins (1998), Jay Stacy (1998), Lachlan Vivian-Taylor (1998), Travis Brooks (2006), Luke Doerner (2006, 2010), Stephen Mowlam (2006), Chris Ciriello (2010, 2014), Andrew Philpott (2014), Aaron Kleinschmidt (2018).

LISA WEIGHTMAN – THE RUNNING MUM

VIS athlete Lisa Weightman is a high achiever and an incredibly inspiring person. Setting her sights high has led her to reach goals she never imagined reaching. She has taught us that by dreaming big, you can surprise yourself with what you're capable of.

Lisa has completed 14 marathons, competed in three Olympic Games, won two Commonwealth medals, works as a project manager and business architect for IBM and is a mother to her three year old son, Pete. An incredible amount of achievements for one, diminutive person!

While the media and those interested in her sport describe her as "the veteran", the inspirational 39 year old hasn't finished yet! We talked to Lisa about her life as a mother and elite athlete with a corporate career, and just how she does it all.

When did you start running competitively?

I started running in primary school. I was born with a weak chest and my Dad encouraged me to run and play sports to increase my cardiovascular capacity and to enjoy teamwork and a healthy lifestyle. I played everything at school but found out in high school that I could run. I'd go for regular runs with my Dad, who would increase the pace at various parts of the run. I'd keep up and it was then that he also thought I had the chance to become a great athlete.

What made you want to stick to it?

I didn't enjoy it at first as we'd run cross country in the mud on freezing cold days. But then I started to win races and realised if I put some training into it I could find out just how fast I could go.

In my 20s, I started working in a graduate position at PricewaterhouseCoopers, and although I enjoyed the challenge and new experiences work brought, I was exhausted most of the time. I suffered from recurring stress fractures as recovery was difficult and the injuries kept coming. Eventually I found new ways to recover and introduced intensity at a more relaxed pace which in turn helped me transition from the life of an injured athlete to the life of a competitive athlete.

When I made the transition to the marathon at 28, I really loved the roads and was hooked after I qualified for my first Olympics off my debut marathon in London. To be racing against the fastest women in the world was huge, and made we want to get better and better!

How many marathons have you run?

I've started 14 marathons and finished all 14! I won bronze at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010, and went one step better on the Gold Coast, winning silver. I've competed in three Olympic Games (Beijing, London and Rio) with my best position 17th place in London. At the Rio Games I was in the shape of my life, but came down with a sinus infection which made completing the marathon an amazing achievement in itself, but heart breaking. I then went on to run a PB of 2:25.15 at the London marathon last year which elevated me to third all-time on the Australia ranking list.

What goes into preparing for a marathon?

Training for the marathon takes a great deal of planning, a support team to help you on the journey and the ability to deal with setbacks and bounce back along the way. We usually work in 6 month blocks for the marathon, but plan years in advance. I run 170km per week. This is a smaller base than I'd like, but this is the right balance to be able to do well at my job, and to be mum!

What is the hardest part of running a marathon?

The hardest part of running a marathon is not the race itself, but the preparation and training that goes into it. Training in Melbourne across the winter months takes extreme dedication when you're heading out after a day of work in the dark and in many cases in the cold, wind and rain. But winter comes and goes and the feeling you get when you plan, prepare



and execute a race well is worth those difficult days.

The marathon is a long way and most of the time I'm thinking about the race and my plan and the strategy I'm deploying. Occasionally other thoughts float into your head or you might see someone you know on the course shouting at you which gives you a lift. With Gold Coast I was mostly thinking about how long it will be until the next drink station! It was hot!

Do you take part in any other exercise that compliments your marathon training?

I would love to take part in other exercise, but I don't have the time in my week. If I have a tight spot or a weakness I'll complete the necessary Pilates activity or throw in an AlterG session. But, I'm a Mum of a 3 year old boy, I work 4 days per week for IBM and I run. There's not much time for anything more. If I was in a position to be a full time athlete I would certainly love to add some yoga into my regular routine.

How do you balance working at IBM, with training as an elite athlete and raising a son?

There's so much talk about women in corporate roles and in the ability to combine a career and a family and I think I am a great ambassador for successfully achieving that in recent years. Finding new ways of working, being more agile and appreciating that happy employees produce amazing results is something corporations need to focus more on. I'm always looking out for opportunities to demonstrate that we can have it all. We just need to be given the chance!

I have an amazing family and was blessed to have my entire family there at the finish line on the Gold Coast. There's nothing better than finishing the race of your life and getting hugs from your son and your nephews and niece. I'd run another 30 degree marathon tomorrow just to get the



L-R | **TOP** Laura Geitz, Courtney Bruce, Kim Ravallion, Caitlin Thwaites, Liz Watson, Jo Weston, Steph Wood | **BOTTOM** Caitlin Bassett, April Bradley, Susan Pettit, Gabi Simpson, Madi Robinson



CUT DIAMONDS

It was the ending no-one predicted: Australia, netball silver medallists at the Commonwealth Games, England champions of the tournament.

In a brutal one-on-one contest, the Diamonds succumbed to a smothering English defence that slowed the team's trademark speed, clogged the mid-court and shut down the best goal shooter in the world, Caitlin Bassett.

For almost the entirety of the match there was nothing to split them - Australia led by one after the first quarter, but England had levelled to 25-25 by half-time.

Cheered on by a sea of gold and green in the 8,000-strong crowd, Australia then began to assert their dominance in the second half. Their lead stretched to four at the start of the final quarter, but just as it looked like the match had swung one way, England fought back to gain parity a few minutes later.

Then came the moment that will be replayed for many years to come.

Jo Harten's missed shot landed fortunately into Helen Housby's hands and the England goal shooter took aim; she too missed, but the umpire's whistle sounded and a penalty was awarded against the Australian defence. Housby was not going to let the second opportunity slip through her grasp, and somehow England pulled off the unthinkable in the most dramatic fashion possible.

Games' debutant and Diamond's key defender Jo Weston recaps her experience on the Gold Coast:

"The time I spent at the Commonwealth Games was eventful to say the least. From our team camp over the Easter weekend in Mooloolaba, which was fabulous footwork practice trying to avoid kids set loose during school holidays, to playing a shooting game at the venue familiarisation with two other

defenders which took 30 minutes to finish (I think we should stick to what we know and I'll keep them anonymous to protect their dignity).

One of the toughest decisions was that of choosing between the skirt or pant options for the Team Aus events, maybe it's due to the frequency of us playing in a dress but for me it was skirt, every time.

One of the toughest experiences of my entire sporting career was the short turnaround to our medal ceremony after the gold medal game. Perspective is something that comes with time, so to feel grateful and proud instantaneously of the silver medal we won post an agonising one goal loss was really challenging. However bittersweet the ending, the entire two weeks were surreal and something I wouldn't change for the world."

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | Ashley Gillespie, Tom Robertson, Chris Tetaz, Cathryn Pruscino

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