

TIM'S TOP PERFORMERS OF 2008

Now that the IAAF has had its say, I thought it appropriate to zoom in on the top Australian walking performers/performances of 2008. Here is my list, in order of merit (my view only!).

1. **Jared Tallent**

It goes without saying that Jared is the top of my list. His 2008 performances include

- First in the Australian 20 km championship in February in a PB time of 1:19:41
- First in the IAAF Grand Prix 20 km event in Beijing in April in 1:20:11 and the first person to win a gold medal in the Birds Nest stadium
- 10th in the IAAF World Racewalking Cup 20 km in 1:19:48
- His third win in 4 years in the tough Canberra 20 Miler in June in 2:20:31
- Third in the Olympic 20 km walk and second in the Olympic 50 km walk
- First in the prestigious IAAF Race Walking Challenge Series for 2008
- Number 1 ranked male racewalker at the end of 2008

2. **Peter Bennett**

Peter, the President of Queensland Race Walking Club and a long time national walker, is a surprise second on my list. Regarded for some years now as our top Australian ultra distance walker, Peter decided in 2008 to test himself out against the top Europeans on their own home turf. His first race was the the Stages Race, held as part of the annual Paris-Colmar classic in June. Racing 6 stages over the 3 days and covering a total distance of 173 km, he took second place in 19:30:00. Two weeks later, he won the prestigious 24 Heures de Rouen in France with an amazing distance of **214.65 km** (or 133 miles for those of old enough to remember). Now putting that into perspective, Peter's Australian 100 km walk record is 10:51:25, Ian Jack's Australian 100 miles walk record is 17:59:30 and Jim Gleeson's 24 Hours Australian walk record is 196.490 km. Peter powered through the 100 km mark in around 10:30, passed the 100 mile mark in around 17 hours and covered 214 km in the 24 hours. Further, his distance of 214 km was the top 24 hour distance for the year by a big margin.

3. **Jess Rothwell**

What a year it has been for Jess Rothwell – and the good news is that she looks set to do build on this in 2009. Highlights were

- Walking her first ever 20 km in January in Canberra, winning the National Series event in 1:37:34
- Winning the Victorian U20 5000m championship in February with a new Victorian record of 22:08.76
- Winning the Australian U20 10,000m walk title in March in an Australian U20 record time of 46:15.17
- 5th place in the IAAF World Racewalking Cup Under 20 10 km roadwalk in May in a PB time of 46.44
- 4th place in the IAAF World Junior Championships in Poland in July in the 10000m walk in a PB time of 44:44.22

4. **Luke Adams**

Luke has already had a long and illustrious career but 2008 saw him rise to the occasion with a series of superb walks. The overall 2007 IAAF Race Walking Challenge winner had his best ever Olympics with a superb double. Highlights included

- 7th place in the IAAF World Racewalking Cup 20 km in May in a PB time of 1:19:15
- 6th place in the Olympic 20 km walk in 1:19:57, only 15 secs behind the medals.
- 10th place in the Olympic 50 km walk in a PB time of 3:47:45, after only being added very late in proceedings and walking without any real 50 km preparation. It was only in the final 10 km that he dropped off the pace – up till then he had threatened for a top 5 finish.

5. **Men's 20 km team, IAAF World Racewalking Cup**

Even without the services of Nathan Deakes, our men's 20 km team finished 3rd in the teams competition in the IAAF World Racewalking Cup in Cheboksary in May, with the following fine performances being recorded

7 th	Luke Adams	1:19.15	PB
10 th	Jarred Tallent	1:19.48	
31 st	Chris Erickson	1:22.55	PB
44 th	Adam Rutter	1:24.57	

6. **Andrew Jamieson**

Competing in the 2008 Australian 50 km road walking championship at Fawkner Park in Melbourne on Sunday 14 December, Andrew Jamieson finished third behind his much younger fellow medallists in a performance that left most of us speechless. Andrew, the 2007 IAAF Masters Athlete of the Year, had his own personal goal – to break the one Masters M60 World record had had thus far alluded him. It was perhaps the toughest one in the books, a time of 4:23:29 set by the great German walker Gerhard Weidner in 1993. And take it he did with a final time of **4:23:16**. He now holds every M60 World Masters Association walking record on offer but I am sure that this is now his favourite one! For the record, his M60 world records read as follows:

3000m	13:24.07	2007
5000m	22:38.7	2007
10 km	46:22.1	2007
20 km	1:35:38.9	2007
30 km	2:29:45.7	2008
50 km	4:23:16	2008



Jess Rothwell, Andrew Jamieson, Luke Adams and Jared Tallent in action in 2008



Peter Bennett (number 1) in the Rouen 24 Hour and the third place Australian team in the World Cup 20 km event