

SIMON BAKER DISCUSSES HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE 2011 WORLD YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

Thanks to Simon Baker for the following guidelines for walkers targeting the 2011 World Youth champs.

Next year's World Youth (Under 18) Championships are to be held in Lille in France on July 6-10, 2011. Now that is not all that far away and athletes hoping for selection should already be planning their next 12 months carefully. Athletes born 1994 and 1995 are eligible to compete, with men racing over 10,000m and women over 5,000m.

Selection criteria (http://www.athletics.com.au/high_performance/high_performance_news/team_information) are available at the AA website and should be essential reading - the AA qualifying period started on 1 July 2010 and finishes 13 March 2011. The women's **5000m** standard is **24:00** and the men's **10000m** standard is **45:00**.

Planning to gain selection should be focused on

- a) achieving the standard
- b) performing well at the official selection trials, to be held at the National Youth Championships on 10-13 March 2011.

Tim Erickson has provided a list of possible qualifying events for both 10,000m and 5,000m events below. You must do your qualifying performance(s) in AA sanctioned event(s). This means many of the interclub and walking club races and Little Athletics events won't count. The All Schools in December has an U18 5000m event but only two walkers per State can enter. Although it is a mixed race, I expect AA will consider this for qualifying purposes.

You should check with AA and your competition organiser to be sure your performance at an event is going to be recognised.

Training

Achieving the qualifying times will take a consistent period of training, especially during your holiday breaks. You will need to build up to some 60-80 km a week over summer, including running. I won't be too prescriptive here; a lot depends on you individually and a consistent quality training is better than plugging away doing slow kilometres just to fill in your diary!

To walk fast over distance needs strength and endurance. Your training should include

- A track session with reps of 1 to 2km, mixed with shorter reps for leg speed (400 – 600m) once a week at or under race speed with limited recoveries (about half of the work interval),
- Hill sessions are good alternatives to repetition sessions - hills should be not too steep and allow proper race walk technique, but anything over 500m can be used,
- Race, fartlek or tempo sessions of 75% to 125% of race distance (at race speed), and
- An over distance steady walk each week.

In addition, core strength and gym work, running, swimming and cycling should provide alternative training. A rest day is essential, and you should only train once a day during the week other than stretching sessions. On weekends or holidays, you can do extra sessions, such as a run in the morning and a race or second session in the afternoon.

It is of great value to find training partners who will push you a bit harder than you can go at the moment. Training groups are essential helps to anyone wanting to go faster. Consider making mini-camps with other walkers on long weekends away from your usual training courses for variety.

Your school should be included in your planning. Start early to discuss options with supportive teachers to organise your work while you are away. Work your weekly training with your coach to suit your study load, and avoid tiring sessions before your tests and exams.

Walking is a technical sport, and video feedback is useful for coaches and athletes to identify weaknesses and should be used regularly.

Recovery

This is a topic for a later article, but briefly, to make sure all your training can continue, you need have a monthly visit to an experienced sports masseur or physiotherapist, to deal with the regular aches of training and keep everything in good shape. Club coach Mark Donahoo has a couple of very good articles on recovery on his own

website.

See <http://www.racewalkingwithmark.com/Enhancing%20Recovery.pdf> and
and <http://www.racewalkingwithmark.com/Recovery%20and%20training%20diaries%20April%202007.pdf>

Competition Opportunities

10km road or 10,000m track opportunities

Under 18 men can qualify with either 10km road or 10,000m track performances at ratified meets. Here are some on offer:

- 10km U20 men/women and 10km U18 men roadwalks are scheduled each July/August in most States as part of the general round of roadwalk champs. In Victoria these will be held on Sunday 8 August.
- 10km U20 men/women and 10km U18 men roadwalks are held as part of the Aust roadwalk champs on Sunday 22 August in Brisbane.
- 10km U20 invitation walks will be held with the Aust 50km on Sunday Dec 12th at Fawkner Park. This has already been cleared with David Gynther.
- ANSW normally schedules a 10,000m track championship in Sydney in January each year as part of its championship schedule.
- 10km U20 invitation walks to be held with the Aust 20km on Feb 19th 2011 in Hobart. Again, this has already been cleared with David Gynther.
- A 10,000m track walk will be scheduled at the National Underage T&F Champs in Sydney on 10-14 March 2011. This is the final selection trial.

5000m Walk opportunities

The Under 18 girls must qualify via 5000m track walks. 5km road walks are not acceptable. Opportunities include

- The Victorian Schools Champs in October will feature U18 5000m walks for boys/girls and the same will hold for other States. The Victorian champs are on 5-7 November 2010.
- The Australian Schools Champs (for those lucky enough to be selected) are on Dec 3-6 in Melbourne.
- The Victorian country champs include 5000m in which anyone can walk by invitation. This is to be held in Ballarat on 21-23 Jan 2011. NSW also has Country champs that include walks.
- The NSW State Club Champs include a 5000m walk. This year it was held in Sydney on 23 Jan 2010.
- The Canberra GP included a 5000m walk this year when it was held on Jan 30th. The Sydney Track Classic included a 5000m walk this year when it was held on Feb 27th. This summer, AA is changing to Tour meets but we can expect 5000m walks on some of the 5 dates.
- Most State T&F Championships include 5000m walks (Vic, NSW, QLD, SA, ACT for sure) and these are normally held in the Feb/March period. The Victorian Youth champs, with 5000m U18, are to be held on 25-27 Feb 2011. The Victorian Open T&F Titles on 4-6 March 2011 in Melbourne also feature 5000m walks.
- The Aust 5000m U18 championship for women will be held at the National Underage T&F Champs in Sydney on 10-14 March 2011. This is the official selection trial and is your last chance to get your 5000m time on the board. It is also the most important race of the season for the U18 girls.

In summary, there are a large number of suitable opportunities over 5000m and a smaller but still significant number of opportunities over 10000m/10km. The main thing to be done is to let everyone know and get athletes and coaches planning out their year and deciding which of the various events to target.

Simon Baker
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