



On the 27th November 2008, the NSW Institute of Sport will celebrate the achievements of our athletes, coaches, and programs throughout 2008 at the NSWIS Annual Awards Dinner. Thirteen awards will be presented at this year's event to be held at the Australian Jockey Club, Randwick.

The NSWIS is proud to announce the finalists for this year's Awards Dinner. The award categories recognise the outstanding sporting achievements, strength through adversity, academic excellence, and career development of our athletes. And the nominees are...

Australian College of Physical Education Academic Excellence – General

Katherine Bates (Cycling): Katherine Bates has been required to study and submit assignments by correspondence throughout the year due to training commitments in the USA. This season, Bates claimed third place and Australia's only medal on day two of racing in the Beijing World Cup, the official track cycling test event for the 2008 Olympic Games. The two-time Olympian finished sixth in the Points Race in Beijing.

Grant Brits (Swimming): Grant Brits is studying a Bachelor of Commerce/Professional Accounting at Macquarie University and achieved two distinctions this year. Brits won a bronze medal as part of the Men's 4 x 200m freestyle relay team at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Gabrielle King (Sailing): Gabrielle King is enrolled in a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of New South Wales, majoring in Actuarial Studies. In her first semester she achieved a distinction average, a wonderful achievement considering her sporting commitments. King retained her title as Junior World Champion by winning the 2008 Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championship in the Laser Radial class.

Joel Milburn (Track & Field): Joel Milburn competed at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games making the semi-final in the 400m with an outstanding run. It was a year of great improvement for Milburn, breaking the 45 second barrier for the first time and winning the 400m at a World Cup event in Switzerland. Milburn is enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Psychology, at Macquarie University and excels in his studies.

Michael Naray (Archery): In 2008 Michael Naray was accepted into the Jullian Ashton Arts School in Sydney to undertake a post-graduate art degree. The 2008 Beijing Olympics Games was Naray's debut Olympics. In his individual event Naray had an excellent two arrow victory in his round of 64 match before losing to Romanian Viktor Ruban in the round of 32.

University of Sydney Academic Excellence

Alexandra Croak (Diving): Alexandra Croak is enrolled in Occupational Therapy. She held a distinction average in semester two 2007, and in semester one 2008 she has increased that to a high distinction whilst preparing for the Beijing Olympics. She won the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship, the most prestigious combined sporting and academic award from the University of Sydney. Croak finished 18th in the 10m Platform at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Kaarle McCulloch (Cycling): Kaarle McCulloch is enrolled in a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) Human Movement and Health Education. In the second semester of 2007 she achieved a distinction average and in her first semester of 2008 she achieved a credit average. Further to her studies, McCulloch achieved two top 10 finishes in the 2008 World Cup Cycling series as well as competing at the World Championships in Manchester, England.

Sarah Stewart (Wheelchair Basketball - Women): Sarah Stewart has been working hard to finish her PhD in Philosophy, 'Mental Content' at the University of Sydney. Stewart competed at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing where the Gliders finished with a bronze medal. Stewart was fundamental to the team's success, regularly making match winning plays to lead the team to a podium finish.

Evan Walker (Sailing): Evan Walker is enrolled in a Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Sydney. Walker has been placed on the Dean's list of Excellence for Academic Performance every year since starting his degree in 2005. Along with excelling at university, Walker won the 2007 and 2008 Australian Open Match Racing Championships and was selected to the 2008 Australian Youth World Championship team.

Aimee Watson (Winter Sports): Aimee Watson is currently completing her third year of a Veterinary Science degree. In her second and third year she has managed to achieve a distinction average despite training for and competing at the Junior World Championships. In 2008, Watson became the National Women's Long Distance Champion and in doing so qualified for the 2008 World Cup and 2008 World Championships.

Ian Thorpe/Grand Slam International Outstanding Achievement – Female

Nicole Kullen (Equestrian): Nicole Kullen was selected onto the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games team where she placed fourth, sixth and 11th in her respective events. These achievements are particularly significant considering in year 11, Kullen contracted Meningococcal Septicemia, resulting in the amputation of her legs and partial use of her arms. Through her will, determination, and family support, she was back on her horse only eight months after her illness.

Katrina Lawrence (Canoe Slalom): Katrina Lawrence suffered a back injury at a Beijing Training Camp in October 2007 and did not return to training until February 2008. Despite her best efforts to regain form and confirm her position on the Olympic team, Lawrence unfortunately missed selection. Lawrence was the overall winner of the 2008 World Cup series.

Simmonne Morrow (Softball): Simmonne Morrow was forced out of competition during 2007 due to a knee reconstruction. On her return, she eventually fought her way back into the hotly contested national team for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. She hit her first home run in Olympic competition in Beijing with a total of three during the Games. A three time Olympian, Morrow won bronze at these games after a closely fought match against Japan.

Nicole Parks (Winter Sports): At the age of nine Nicole Parks contracted Guillian Barre Syndrome, which attacks the nervous system and left her wheelchair bound and in hospital for many months. Her determination, drive and passion for mogul skiing has lead to her amazing accomplishments. Parks was ranked number two in Australia in the Open Division and number one in the 2007-08 domestic season.

Ian Thorpe/Grand Slam International Outstanding Achievement – Male

Youcef Abdi (Track & Field): At the 2008 Olympic Games Youcef Badi finished sixth in the final of the 3000m Steeplechase in a personal best time of 8:16.36 – his second personal best time in just three days. His time was 0.14 seconds outside the Australian Record and the best by an Australian at an Olympics. All this, despite spending part of 2008 training in Kenya as post-election violence erupted. He had to bunker down in a friend's house without food, water or electricity.

Kurt Fearnley (Wheelchair Track & Road): Kurt Fearnley has had another very successful year. However, his success did not come easily and he faced a number of obstacles throughout his Paralympic campaign. At the 2008 Paralympic Games Fearnley had to wait until the final day of competition to win a gold medal in the Men's Marathon. Fearnley also won two silvers and won bronze at the Games.

Brad Kahlefeldt (Triathlon): Brad Kahlefeldt achieved his goal of making the 2008 Olympic team to compete in Beijing but was handed another set back when he injured his hip six months out from the Games. The injury severely hampered Kahlefeldt's Olympic preparation as he could not train to the standard required to compete at his best. Kahlefeldt showed guts and determination just to finish the race in Beijing, resulting in a 16th place finish.

Matthew Mitcham (Diving): Matthew Mitcham returned to training in 2007 to train with NSWIS coach Chava Sobrino. At the Beijing Olympic Games Mitcham achieved the unimaginable by preventing the Chinese from making a clean sweep of the diving competition and winning an Olympic gold medal.

Shane Rose (Equestrian): Shane Rose's achievements at the 2008 Olympic Games are remarkable considering that he sustained maxillary facial fractures from a kick on the head by a horse during his preparation for the Games. As part of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Australian Equestrian team, Rose won a silver medal in the Team Eventing competition.

Lawler Partners Career Development

Kyla Bremner (Wrestling): Kyla Bremner finished her internship at the end of 2007 and is now a resident at Bankstown Hospital. Bremner was working full time as a Locum prior to taking time off to prepare for the Beijing Olympic Games. Bremner's Olympic selection created history as she became Australia's first female Olympic wrestler. Bremner fought hard at the Beijing Games but was defeated in her opening bout.

Rod Chisholm (Rowing): Rod Chisholm is the Senior Investment Analyst for RARE Infrastructure, a fund management company specialising in global listed infrastructure. At the 2008 Australian Olympic selection trials, Chisholm finished first in the Men's Lightweight Pair, which secured him a place in the Australian Olympic Team. In Beijing, Chisholm's first Olympic Games, he rowed in the Men's Lightweight Four that finished ninth.

Sophie Edington (Swimming): In 2004, Sophie Edington started a swimwear business called FAB Swimwear. Edington has continued to run her own business while swimming at a world class level. Edington had a very successful 2008 National Championships, winning gold in the 50m Backstroke, silver in the 100m Backstroke and bronze in the 50m Freestyle. This was enough to book her a spot in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Team.

Trent Franklin (Water Polo - Men): Trent Franklin continued to complete his Masters degree while running his own insurance business Enrizen, as well as training for the 2008 Olympic Games. The Australian Men's Water Polo team performed strongly at the Games, finishing eighth. The Beijing Olympic Games was Franklin's second Olympics.

Lachlan Milne (Canoe Slalom): Lachlan Milne completed his Medical degree in 2006 and has since been employed at Nepean Hospital as an intern/resident. Having qualified for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Milne stopped working in March 2008 to focus all his energy on his performance in Beijing. He and fellow paddler Mark Bellofiore finished seventh in the Men's C2 Canoe Slalom at the 2008 Beijing Olympics with a competitive time of 98 seconds.

Out and About Marketing and Media Junior Athlete of the Year

Ashlee Ankudinoff (Cycling): Ashlee Ankudinoff emerged as one to watch in the lead up to the 2012 London Olympics following a great year on the bike. In July 2008, Ankudinoff won two gold medals at the 2008 UCI Junior Track Cycling World Championships, winning the Team Pursuit and Individual Pursuit.

Luke Davison (Cycling): Luke Davison has had a very successful season winning three gold medals at the 2008 World Junior Track Championships in the Omnium, the Madison and the Team Pursuit. Davison claimed two gold medals at the 2008 Australian Championships in the under-19 Madison and the under-19 Omnium and is a name to watch for 2012.

Megan Dunn (Cycling): Megan Dunn recently competed at the 2008 Junior Track Cycling World Championships in Cape Town, South Africa. Dunn sent a message to the world by winning three gold medals at the Championships. In what has been a fantastic year for Dunn, she won gold in the Women's Points Race, Scratch Race and the Individual Pursuit.

Casey Eastham (Hockey - Women): Casey Eastham was part of the Australian Women's Olympic hockey team who defeated Great Britain 2-0 to claim fifth spot at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Head Coach Frank Murray singled out four emerging rookies who impressed him at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and who have the potential to be world top 10 players, with Eastham topping the list.

Gabrielle King (Sailing): Gabrielle King has had another amazing year. Following a successful 2006-07 season, King retained her fantastic form by winning the 2008 Volvo Youth ISAF World Championships in the Laser Radial class. In winning this event King retained her title as Junior World Champion.

Classic Sportswear Most Memorable Moment

Kurt Fearnley (Wheelchair Track & Road): At the 2008 Paralympic Games Kurt Fearnley had to wait until the final day of competition to win a gold medal in the Men's Marathon. Fearnley shrugged off his week of ill-fortune, including crashes and a disqualification to win the gold in the Men's Marathon. In winning the Marathon Fearnley defended his 2004 title and made it back-to-back gold.

Jacqueline Lawrence (Canoe Slalom): Jacqueline Lawrence was a surprise nomination to the 2008 Olympic Team. Ranked seventh in the world, Lawrence's goal was to reach the final at the Olympics. She entered the final run in fourth position and completed her run without incurring penalties, finishing first with only three paddlers remaining. Only one of the remaining competitors could better her performance, securing Lawrence the Olympic silver medal.

Matthew Mitcham (Diving): In winning gold at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Matthew Mitcham created history by not only being the first Australian to win gold in that event at an Olympic Games, but also achieving the highest scoring dive in Olympic history to do so. Mitcham could not have asked for a more perfect finish to his Olympic campaign.

Softball: The bronze medal match of the softball competition at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games saw Japan and Australia going toe-to-toe for an epic 12 innings. With the game on the line at the bottom of the seventh innings, NSWIS athlete Kerry Wyborn smashed a home run to force another innings. The match was tied for a further five innings until the Japanese team finally came away with the win.

Water Polo - Women: The Australian Women's Water Polo Team featuring six NSWIS athletes won a bronze medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in a penalty shoot-out against Hungary. Rebecca Rippon equalised with just eight seconds remaining, forcing the game into extra time. After two periods of extra time the score remained tied, forcing a penalty shoot-out. The Australians held their nerve to win the game 12-11.

Wheelchair Basketball - Men: Five NSWIS athletes formed part of the Australian Men's Wheelchair Basketball team that won gold in Beijing. Brendan Dowler, Tristan Knowles, Grant Mizens, Troy Sachs, and Brett Stibners avenged their 2004 Athens Olympics loss to Canada by defeating them in Beijing.

NSW Arts, Sport and Recreation Regional Excellence

Equestrian: Regardless of the setbacks due to Equine Influenza in 2006-07, the NSWIS Equestrian Program contributed four athletes to the National Team to compete at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games - Shane Rose, Edwina Alexander, Kristy Oatley and Heath Ryan. Rose collected a silver medal in the Teams Event at the Games.

Swimming (Far North Coast): Based at Kingscliff, Greg Salter coaches 2008 Beijing Olympians Lara Davenport and Sophie Edington. Davenport was part of the Women's 4 x 200m Relay that won the Olympic gold medal in Beijing and Edington broke the Commonwealth Record in the 50m Backstroke at the 2008 Olympic Swimming Trials in Sydney.

Triathlon: The NSWIS Triathlon Program has had a successful year. Regionally based athletes have achieved great things on an international scale. Highlights included Brad Kahlefeldt's 16th place finish at the Beijing Olympic Games despite a crippling hip injury that threatened to end his campaign. At the Australian Triathlon Championships, Clayton Fettel won gold, and silver went to David Matthews, in the Olympic Distance event. Brendan Sexton won bronze in the Sprint event.

Winter Sports: In 2008, the comprehensive regional structure delivered significant results at the following events; World Cup, Europa Cup, Junior World Championships - Cross Country, and the Grand Prix Revolution Tour. Most notably, Jenny Owens won a silver and a bronze medal at World Cup events throughout the year. Emma Chapman-Davies won bronze in the Europe Cup in the Moguls.

Sydney City Toyota Team Athlete of the Year

Ryley Batt (Wheelchair Rugby): Ryley Batt was Australian Wheelchair Rugby team that claimed a silver medal at the 2008 Paralympic Games. Competing in his second Paralympics, Batt's dream of winning a Paralympic medal was finally fulfilled.

Darren Bundock (Sailing): Darren Bundock had an exceptional year, culminating in an Olympic silver medal in the Tornado class of the Sailing Regatta at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Lara Davenport (Swimming): Lara Davenport qualified for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Team after finishing fourth in the 200m Freestyle at the 2008 Olympic Selection Trials. At her debut Olympics Davenport swam in the heat of the Women's 4 x 200m Freestyle Relay team to qualify the team for the final. The team went on to win a memorable gold medal in the final.

Francis Hegerty and Matthew Ryan (Rowing): Francis Hegerty and Matthew Ryan were part of the Men's Coxless Four at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games that won a silver medal. Other results as members of the Coxless Four in 2008 included gold at the World Cup in Lucerne, Switzerland and the Australian Rowing Championships in Penrith.

Nathan Wilmot and Malcolm Page (Sailing): Nathan Wilmot and Malcolm Page were stand out performers at the 2008 Olympic Games. The pair won gold in the Men's 470 class at the Olympic Sailing Regatta capping off an amazing few years for the NSWIS duo.

Telstra Coach of the Year

Andrew Dawes (Wheelchair Track & Road): Andrew Dawes coached NSWIS Wheelchair Track & Road Program athletes including Paralympians Angela Ballard, Kurt Fearnley and Christie Dawes. Fearnley won back-to-back Men's Marathon titles as well as adding two silver and one bronze to his ever increasing list of achievements. Dawes and Ballard each won a silver medal from the Games.

Ryan Moar (Water Polo - Women): Ryan Moar was assistant coach of the 2008 Women's Water Polo Olympic Team that won a bronze medal in a penalty shoot-out against Hungary. Moar placed six NSWIS athletes on the 2008 Beijing Olympic team. These athletes were Nikita Cuffe, Taniele Gofers, Alicia McCormack, Rebecca Rippon, Jenna Santoromito and Mia Santoromito. The 2007 NSWIS Coach of the Year was instrumental in assisting the girls in their bronze medal winning performance in Beijing.

Chava Sobrino (Diving): Chava Sobrino coached NSWIS Diving athletes including 2008 Olympians Matthew Mitcham and Alexandra Croak. Mitcham produced outstanding results throughout the nomination period including a clean sweep of events at the 2008 Australian Championships (1m, 3m, 10m) and winning the gold medal in the Men's 10m Platform at the Olympic Games. Alexandra Croak finished 18th in the 10m Platform.

Erik Stibbe (Sailing): Throughout the nomination period Erik Stibbe coached a range of talented NSWIS athletes including Gabrielle King, Hannah Natrass, Michelle Muller, Tom Burton, Nick Peate, Byron White and Rhys Mara. The achievements of Stibbe's athletes included first place at the Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championships in the Laser Radial class (King) and first place in the Hobie 16 Youth World Championships in the Hobie 16 class (Muller).

Gary Sutton (Cycling): Gary Sutton coached the NSWIS Cycling athletes that represented Australia at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games including 2007 World Champion Katherine Bates. Sutton coaches NSWIS athletes Ashlee Ankudinoff, Lauren Kitchen, Luke Davison, Megan Dunn, Paul Fellows, Peter Lewis and Scott Law. These athletes won a total of 12 medals at the 2008 Junior World Championships including eight gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

Sydney Olympic Park Authority Program of the Year

Diving: The NSWIS Diving Program produced some extraordinary results throughout the nomination period including the achievements of 2008 Olympians Matthew Mitcham and Alexandra Croak. Mitcham produced outstanding results including winning the gold medal in the Men's 10m Platform at the Beijing Olympic Games. Alexandra Croak finished 18th in the Women's 10m Platform.

Equestrian: During 2006 and 2007, the NSWIS Equestrian Program felt the impact of the Equine Influenza, which affected competition leading into the 2008 Beijing Olympic qualification period. Regardless of this setback, the program contributed four athletes to the national team to compete at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games - Shane Rose, Edwina Alexander, Kristy Oatley and Edwina Alexander. Rose collected a silver medal in the Teams event.

Sailing: The NSWIS Sailing Program has produced another year of great results culminating in the selection of 12 NSWIS sailors onto the Olympic team. At the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games the NSWIS sailing program won a gold and silver medal. NSWIS duo of Nathan Wilmot and Malcolm Page took home gold in the Men's 470 class and Darren Bundock took home silver in the Men's Tornado class.

Swimming: The NSWIS Swimming Program experienced another successful year. The success of the program culminated in superb results at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Lara Davenport took home gold swimming in the heats of the Women's 4 x 200m Freestyle Relay and Grant Brits won bronze in the Men's 4 x 200m Freestyle Relay.

Wheelchair Track & Road: The NSWIS Wheelchair Track & Road Program had another excellent year, particularly the inclusion of three athletes on the Paralympic team; Angela Ballard, Kurt Fearnley and Christie Dawes. The trio of Paralympians achieved outstanding results at the 2008 Paralympic Games. Fearnley won back to back Paralympic titles in the Men's Marathon, along with two silver and one bronze medal. Dawes and Ballard each won a silver medal from the Paralympic Games.

NSW Arts, Sport and Recreation Female Athlete of the Year

Lara Davenport (Swimming): Lara Davenport qualified for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Team after coming fourth in the 200m Freestyle at the 2008 Olympic Selection Trials in March 2008. At her debut Olympics, Davenport swam the heat of the Women's 4 x 200m Freestyle Relay team that went on to win gold in the final.

Lindy Hou (AWD Cycling): Lindy Hou competed at her second Paralympic Games in Beijing, teaming up with Pilot Toireasa Gallagher. In the first event of their Paralympic program Hou and Gallagher claimed the bronze medal in the Women's 1km Time Trial. The pair then finished the Women's 3000m Individual Pursuit in a time of 3:41.494 to claim the silver medal.

Jacqueline Lawrence (Canoe Slalom): Jacqueline Lawrence made her Olympic debut at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Lawrence performed outstandingly, making her way into the final after finishing fourth in the qualification rounds. She had a nervous wait for the final two competitors to complete their run, with Lawrence eventually winning silver.

Rebecca Rippon (Water Polo - Women): Rebecca Rippon was a member of the Australian Women's Water Polo Team at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games that won the Olympic bronze medal in an epic playoff match against Hungary. Rippon scored a goal which eventually led to a penalty shootout where the Australians secured a bronze medal.

Kerry Wyborn (Softball): Kerry Wyborn smashed a home run in the seventh innings of the bronze medal softball match at the Beijing Olympics to keep the Australian's chances alive. After five more innings of tense play the Japanese managed to win the game with Australia taking home the bronze medal.

ClubsNSW Male Athlete of the Year

Kurt Fearnley (Wheelchair Track & Road): NSWIS Wheelchair Track & Road star Kurt Fearnley had another very successful year. Fearnley, an experienced Paralympic competitor, won gold in the Men's Marathon at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics. Fearnley also took home two silver medals in the Men's 800m and 5000m and bronze in the 1500m at the Games.

Peter Leek (AWD Swimming): Peter Leek competed at his first Paralympics in 2008. At the Beijing Paralympics, Leek had an outstanding meet winning eight medals from eight events. Leek won three gold medals (4 x 100m Medley Relay, 100m Butterfly and 200m Individual Medley) and in doing so broke four World Records. He finished the Games with three gold, four silver and one bronze.

Matthew Mitcham (Diving): Matthew Mitcham re-commenced full time training in 2007, moving from Brisbane to train under NSWIS coach Chava Sobrino. The move proved to be a success as Mitcham won gold in the 10m Platform at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and in the process, setting a new Olympic Record with his last dive.

Malcolm Page (Sailing): Sailor Malcolm Page competed superbly throughout the nomination period. Page and sailing partner, fellow NSWIS scholarship holder, Nathan Wilmot won several regattas in the lead up to the Beijing Olympic Games. Wilmot and Page were stand out performers at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games winning gold in the Men's 470 class at the Olympic Sailing Regatta.

Nathan Wilmot (Sailing): Similar to his sailing partner Malcom Page, Nathan Wilmot had another amazing year, winning several regattas, including the Delta Lloyd Regatta in Holland, the Australian Championships at Manly, and the European Championships in Italy, in the lead up to Beijing. Wilmot and Page were stand out performers at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games winning gold in the Men's 470 class at the Olympic Sailing Regatta.