

Olympic dreams

Maitland Mercury (31/07/08)

Her idols may be Cathy Freeman and Asafa Powell, but this 14-year-old is no slouch on the athletics track herself. Abermain sprinter Jacarna Fenton returned from an invitational tour of Canada last week with a swag of seven podium finishes from two events.

Fenton out-paced Canadian and American runners at the Jack Brow Memorial Meet in Kelowna and at the Trevor Craven Memorial Meet in Vancouver in June and July.

In Kelowna the Cessnock High School student secured two first places in the 200m and 400m events and ran second in the 100m event.

Fenton went on to exceed her own expectations at the Vancouver meet, with gold medals in the 100m and 200m race, silver in the 800m, her least favourite event and fourth in the 400m.

She also secured a fourth place finish in the relay event with fellow Australian competitors.

Two gold medals in her pet 200m events were the most encouraging results for Fenton, but it was her silver medal in the 800m that surprised both her and father Darryl Bain.

"She never usually runs the 800m," Bain said.

"We had a long wait until the 200 in the afternoon so I asked her if she would like to run the 800m to fill in some time. And she ended up running second."

But the middle distance success is not about to sway her preference for shorter races.

"I like the 200m better, 800 is just too long," Fenton said.

While she reflects on her own success, Fenton looks forward to watching Australia's Olympic athletes triumph at next month's Beijing Games, with plans of her own to conquer the world stage one day.

"I can't wait to watch the Olympics," she said.

"I'll definitely be watching in that second week when the track and field events are on.

"I want to go to the Commonwealth Games in 2010 and the Olympics in 2012, that's my goal.

"I don't care how long it takes, I'll get there."

Fenton trains three times a week in Kurri Kurri and Wangi with coach Warren Metcalf.

She currently runs three seconds outside Commonwealth Games qualifying times for the 200m.

Fenton was the worthy recipient of a Hunter Economic Zone athletics scholarship earlier this year, which helped fund her Canadian tour.

She became eligible after a string of outstanding results in early 2008.

In March this year Fenton won the 400m State title at Homebush and remains undefeated in the 100m and 200m events at both zone and regional level.