



MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Cross Country Team poised and ready for home World Championships

The cream of Australia's distance running crop are primed to take on the rugged Bathurst terrain next month, with Athletics Australia finalising its 28-strong team for the World Athletics Cross Country Championships Bathurst 2023, taking place from February 17-19.

Announced nearby the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge today, the Australian Team will compete for both individual and team success in what is renowned as one of the most gruelling 'back to basics' events of the World Athletics Series.

The first four Australians across the line in non-relay events combine to form a team score that will determine where the nation stands among up to 68 countries, while the Mixed 4x2km Relay team will compete for glory over the iconic Mount Panorama course.

Commonwealth champion **Oliver Hoare** and Tokyo Olympic finalist **Jessica Hull** will join Olympian **Stewart McSweyn** and Commonwealth Games bronze medallist **Abbey Caldwell**, in the Mixed 4x2km Relay Team – a formidable quartet earmarked as the host nation's best medal-winning chance.

Olympians **Ellie Pashley**, **Isobel Batt-Doyle** and Australian team debutant **Holly Campbell** join Australian trial winners **Rose Davies**, **Leanne Pompeani** and **Caitlin Adams** in the Women's 10km. The Men's 10km will see Australian team debutant **Rorey Hunter** and Commonwealth Games representatives **Andy Buchanan** and **Ky Robinson** bolster the team already spearheaded by Australian record holders **Jack Rayner** and **Brett Robinson** as well as **Matt Ramsden**.

Headlined by Under 18 Australian 3000m record holder **Amy Bunnage**, the Under 20 contingent of **Gabrielle Schmidt**, **Gabrielle Vincent**, **Aspen Anderson**, **Claudia Meaker** and **Fieke Van Der Kamp** will race over 6km. Racing over 8km, **Logan Janetzki** and World Under 20 representative **Archie Noakes** will lead the way for teammates **Jack Coomber**, **Cael Mulholland**, **Ciaran Rushton** and **Bailey Habler**.

Commonwealth Games gold medallist **Oliver Hoare**, who will travel back to Australia from his home in the US says the prospect of being crowned *world champions* on home soil is one that is proving to be irresistible.

"You only get a few opportunities if you are fortunate enough to represent your country on the world stage," Hoare said.

"To be able to do it on Australian soil is a huge opportunity and I'm very excited to be coming home to compete for a world title with the best Australian middle distance runners in Abbey (Caldwell), Jess (Hull) and Stewy (McSweyn). I hope we are all able to get Australia behind us as we go for the team tile in Bathurst. We will see you out there!"

Olympian **Ellie Pashley** who was rewarded for her strong sixth place finish at the Australian Selection trials at Stromlo Forest will make her first appearance in the green and gold since giving birth to her daughter, Tiggy Rose, just seven months ago.

“I am really excited for this one! It’s probably a bigger deal for me than people realise, mostly because I didn’t think it was going to happen so soon after having a baby. I have never done a home championship race or a World Cross Country before,” Pashley said.

“I have always loved cross country, I did it as a kid through primary school and high school. It’s something that I have wanted to do for years and years, ever since I started running seriously.”

A two-time Australian Cross Country champion, **Andy Buchanan** said he was looking forward to joining Australian distance greats as a World Athletics Cross Country representatives after pulling on the green and gold for the first time at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

“Being a distance runner, you dream of running World Cross. So many of our great runners have performed well there, so it’s very special to be a part of an Australian team in Australia,” Buchanan said.

“With six runners from each country and a range of athletes from the track and the road, it quickly becomes the deepest race there is. Hopefully the Australian distance running community come out in a big way to support us.”

Athletics Australia General Manager, High Performance Andrew Faichney congratulated team members and emphasised the significance of the home World Championships:

“Australia is entering a golden era in distance running, and it’s particularly exciting that this talented team will be representing our country on home soil,” Faichney said.

“We have some of strongest ever distance runners on this team as well as the next generation of stars that we believe have a bright future in the sport. I know this team will leave it all out there in Bathurst, displaying their grit and determination to their international counterparts and the Australian public watching on site and from home.”

NSW Minister for Tourism Ben Franklin encouraged sporting fans from all over the country to get to Bathurst to cheer on the Australian team competing at the world championships:

“We’re thrilled the World Athletics Cross Country Championships will be held in Bathurst which will bring thousands of visitors into regional NSW injecting more money into our hotels, restaurants and small businesses,” Mr Franklin said.

“This is an exciting opportunity for our Australian athletes to compete on home soil with the enthusiastic support of a home crowd. Make sure you get your tickets to cheer on our green and gold-wearing champions in Bathurst next month.”

The World Athletics Cross Country Championships Bathurst 23 will take place from February 17-19. Alongside the Championship races will be a number of mass participation races to allow runners, walkers and sports fans to race the same course as their elite counterparts. To find out more visit www.worldathleticscrosscountry.com

TEAM AUSTRALIA – 2023 WORLD ATHLETICS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Men’s 10km – Jack Rayner, Matthew Ramsden, Brett Robinson, Rorey Hunter, Andy Buchanan, Ky Robinson.

Women's 10km – Rose Davies, Leanne Pompeani, Caitlin Adams, Isobel Batt-Doyle, Holly Campbell, Ellie Pashley.

Mixed 2km Relay – Stewart McSweyn, Abbey Caldwell, Oliver Hoare, Jessica Hull.

Under 20 Men's 8km – Logan Janetzki, Archie Noakes, Jack Coomber, Cael Mulholland, Ciaran Rushton, Bailey Habler.

Under 20 Women's 6km – Amy Bunnage, Gabrielle Schmidt, Gabrielle Vincent, Aspen Anderson, Claudia Meaker, Fieke Van Der Kamp.

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