



Benita *johnson*

"Patience is the key. Just set small goals to aim for each year and eventually it will pay off."

Date of Birth: 6 May 1979 (age - 29)
Athletics Club: Glenhuntly
Coach: Nic Bideau
Event: Marathon
Personal Best: 2:22.36

Beijing will be Benita's third Olympics. She previously competed in Sydney (5,000m) and Athens (10,000m). At this year's Games, she will compete in the Olympic Marathon for the first time. She first ran a marathon in 2004, with her best result being achieved in Chicago in 2006, where she finished third in an Australian record of 2:22.36. Benita also holds the Australian Records for 2000m, 3000m, 5000m and 10,000m.

Born in Mackay in Queensland, Benita was an all round sportswoman having represented both Queensland and Australia in Under 18 Hockey. She began to concentrate on athletics in 1997 and her talent was obvious, gaining selection to represent Australia at the World Juniors in 1998 and the World University Games in 1999. During this time she accepted a scholarship to the Australian Institute of Sport and was coached by Dick Telford.

Benita excelled at all forms of distance running – Track, Road and Cross Country. She has represented Australia at numerous World Cross Country Championships, gaining international recognition by finishing in the top six on seven occasions and winning in 2004!

The most significant people in her sporting career have been her family, in particular, her sister Caitlin – also an elite athlete. Others integral to her Olympic campaign are her training partners, coach Nic Bideau and medical team.

Benita is currently a member of Glenhuntly Athletics Club and would like to be more active in local athletics when she retires from international competition.

When asked what advice she would like to pass on to young athletes starting their athletic careers, Benita said, "Patience is the key. Just set small goals to aim for each year and eventually it will pay off."

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