

Jemima Montag

Olympic Racewalker & Founder of Play On

Jemima's passionate plea for girls to stay involved in sport - not to become Olympic champions, but because of the invaluable sense of belonging and leadership skills they can gain - went viral, with one commentator calling it the "one of the best post-race interviews of the Olympics". To those in the athletics community, this sudden notoriety was no surprise. With her remarkable poise, sharp insights and ability to inspire, Jemima has been pegged as a leading light from the beginning.



Using her public platform for social change is very important to Jemima, who is studying medicine at the University of Melbourne, and also pouring her energy into a social endeavour she's deeply passionate about. Jemima is the founder of the Play On campaign which aims to remove barriers to physical activity for adolescent girls. Through Play On, Jemima and other female athletes have spoken to more than 2,000 girls at schools across Victoria to talk about health, body image, nutrition and inclusive environments, leaving students empowered and motivated.

Sport has always been a source of joy for Jemima, who grew up in Melbourne doing "everything under the sun" - ballet, swimming, tennis, soccer, surf life saving, basketball, little athletics and more. After deciding to focus on the highly technical sport of race walking, Jemima had some early successes including a win in the 2014 Oceania Race Walking Championships, but low confidence and self-esteem kept her from fully committing to sport. Then, a conversation with her mother (a former competitive hurdler) and sister inspired her to shoot for the stars.

She missed out on a spot at the World Junior Championships the following year, but she says that disappointing result has taught her much more than any of her wins.

"What I'm most proud of is my ability to work through those harder times, because I know that that's going to be a life skill that I keep with me forever," she says. Among Jemima's impressive accolades are Gold medals at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, silver at the World University Games in 2019 and a sixth place at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics - the second-highest result in Australian Olympic history. She won Commonwealth Gold again at Birmingham in 2023 and silver at the World Championships in Budapest in 2023 - setting a new Australian record - followed by two Bronze medals at the Paris Olympics 2024 in the women's individual and mixed team events.

Her long-term goals are to collect Gold in LA and Brisbane Olympics, and to continue having a positive impact on the community.

“Medals are fun, records are fun, but what has an enduring legacy, and what fuels me is the way that sport has opened up this opportunity to have an impact on other Australians,” she says.

Jemima Montag Talks About

AN OLYMPIAN’S TOOLBOX: HIGH PERFORMANCE MINDSET

This presentation translates key lessons from high performance sport and psychology for businesses and teams who hope to maximise their potential. Jemima will use interesting examples from her sporting career and extract key take-aways for the audience in areas such as cognitive expansion, overcoming adversity, balancing multiple commitments, and diminishing our fear of failure.

PLAY ON - Women in Sport: How to support us and the power of doing so

Having navigated the journey from a sporty little girl to an Olympian, Jemima has witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of sport on women and girls.

However, she has also seen many of her sisters and friends drop out, facing unique barriers. In this presentation and drawing on the “Play On” initiative that she developed during her time in the IOC Young Leaders program, Jemima passionately shares solutions, emphasising how sport can be a powerful tool for developing life skills such as leadership, confidence, resilience, and self-awareness and how these qualities not only benefit women in sport but can be translated into the workplace, relationships, and daily life.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE: IGNITING TEAMS AND SPARKING LASTING CHANGE

Jemima Montag is best known for her recent bronze medals in Paris and her memorable post-race interview, but her impact off the track is equally impressive.

From co-captaining the World Youth Track & Field team at the 2015 World Youth Games in Colombia to her numerous leadership roles in school, Jemima has always led by example—showing up prepared, motivated, and ready to inspire. She believes leadership is not just about “doing” but about empowering others: supporting the team, motivating them, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and helping each person discover their unique superpower.

Over the years, Jemima has learned the value of delegation and trust, understanding that building a successful team means creating something greater than the sum of its parts. In this keynote, Jemima will share her personal leadership journey, offering insights on how to inspire, empower, and create a thriving team environment; and demonstrate why true leadership is about creating a movement where everyone can grow and succeed together.

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