

# Melinda Gainsford-Taylor AM

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*Triple Olympian, Sports Commentator, MC and Presenter*



Melinda began running with Little Athletics in her hometown of Narromine in Central Western NSW at the age of 9 where she was discovered by coach, Jackie Byrnes.

To progress with her athletics, Mel moved to Sydney and went to boarding school at St. Vincent's in Potts Point. Injuries plagued her early years in Sydney, but helped develop a steely determination that would later help stamp the young sprinter as the country's premier female sprint star. With the constant support and belief of her coach, Melinda was ranked number 1 in the world at age 14 for the 100m.

Since retirement Melinda has been a National Selector for Track and Field and continues the role as the team heads towards the 2016 Rio Olympics. Melinda has been involved in extensive media and corporate work as well as conducting athletics coaching clinics around the country to inspire young children to pursue their dreams. She coaches kids from all sporting codes to help them with explosive speed and is currently expanding this business into local sporting clubs and schools.

Melinda ran her first half marathon on the Gold Coast in July 2011. But most importantly Melinda's biggest achievement has been becoming the mother of two beautiful children, Nicholas and Gabriella and lives on Sydney's Northern Beaches with husband Mark Taylor.

## ***Highlights from Melinda's athletic achievements are:***

- The only Australian athlete to win back-to-back National Sprint Double crowns. She has won 5 National Double crowns (1992, 93, 95, 97, 98)
- Currently holds the fastest time ever by an Australian woman for the 200m (22.23 seconds)

run in Stuttgart Germany in 1997.

- Australian Record holder in the 100m for 20 years with a run of (11.12 seconds) run in Italy in 1994.
- 200m World Indoor Champion winning Gold at Barcelona in 1995, making her at the time, the first Australian since Betty Cuthbert to win a World Championship.
- Represented Australia at 3 Olympic Games in 1992, 1996 culminating with Sydney 2000, where she held the position of female Captain of the Australian Track & Field team.
- A bronze and silver medallist at Commonwealth Games level.
- During the 1996/97 season, she set a string of records including five 100m/200m sprint doubles and yet another National Double crown.
- Enjoyed her second undefeated domestic season in 1998 and claimed (for the second time) the Female Athlete of the Year Award from National Grand Prix sponsor, Optus.
- In May 1998 Melinda placed a very creditable 3rd behind Marion Jones in the Osaka grand prix 100m.
- At the '99 National Titles, Melinda broke Raelene Boyle's long-standing record when she won her sixth National crown in taking out the 100m.
- Melinda enjoyed a phenomenal season in 2000 winning almost every race she contested and in South Africa, for the inaugural Test Series; she won the 100m and 200m in record time (although these were not official due to the tail winds). Additionally, she anchored the women's 4 x 100m relay team to not only the Gold, but to a new Australian record. Their time brought to an end the previous mark, which had stood untouched for over 23 years.
- At the Sydney Games, Mel made the semi-finals of the 100m and finished a very credible fifth in the 200m final running her best time of the year.
- Named "Sports Personality of the Year" by the readers of the Daily Telegraph at the NSW Sports Awards held at Stadium Australia in March 2000.
- She is still the current record holder for the 200m, 4x100m and 4x400m.
- Aside from athletics, Melinda is the only sports star to have a rose named after her, and has been featured in Who Weekly's 25 Most Beautiful People.

## Client testimonials

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“ Athletics NSW engaged Melinda to MC our Annual Awards Dinner in 2013 and again in 2014. Melinda was a pleasure to work with and made everyone feel at ease from elite senior and junior athletes through to our much-valued officials and volunteers. Melinda's genuine passion for the sport of athletics and the in-depth insight she is able to share as a highly respected sports commentator and former champion athlete, helped make our events very memorable for all those in attendance. Thanks again Melinda!

- **Athletics NSW**

“ Device Technologies had the pleasure of having Mel Gainsford Taylor address our staff at our annual Ladies Day. Mel delivered a motivational presentation that was sincere, heart-warming and inspirational. She did a fantastic job of sharing her personal story of triumph over adversity, her commitment to continuous and never ending improvement and how the lessons

learnt as an elite athlete can be transferred into both the workplace and our personal lives to help cope with the constant pressure and change we face... Thanks Mel, we all felt positively moved by your speech.

**- Organisational Wellbeing**

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