

HEROES



Every year at this time, *Runner's World* celebrates the achievements of runners who amaze us with their performances and inspire us with their generosity. Take the people on the following pages – our 2012 *Runner's World* Heroes of Running. By defying expectations, breaking barriers and leading future generations, they remind us that the simple act of moving forward can have a profound impact.

BY HARRIET EDMUND





IN HIS STRIDE: Jack Swift looks ahead to the 2012 London Paralympics.

THE COMEBACK KID

JACK SWIFT

“Whenever I’m hurting at training, I remember back to those days in hospital and know nothing is going to be as hard as that.”

I’d just turned 21 and was working as a plumber’s labourer in Melbourne. It was a regular day on 6 December, 2006; we were laying water mains in Spring Street in the city and had excavated two metres to lay pipes in the ground. Part of my job was to sweep up the dirt to load it into the back of the truck and take it to the tip. I walked around to the truck, which was beside the excavator, when the driver saw something in the trench and accelerated forward without seeing me. Before I knew it, I had a 14 tonne excavator on my leg and was yelling out for him to back off.

It happened in seconds. I remember looking at my leg as the excavator was reversing and knowing I would never walk on it again. The bone fragments were like splinters. There was a nurse walking past who ran over and took my belt off to strap it around my thigh and restrict the blood loss. The next thing I remember is the paramedics arriving and giving me morphine.

I was in hospital for four months and there was definitely a time when I didn’t think I could get any lower. When something is taken away from you, it makes you realise how much you under-estimate everything you do in life.

It took me a long time to get out of bed and into a wheelchair because I had extensive skin grafts to save my knee. Initially, I could only sit in the chair for about five minutes so that the grafts didn’t break down.

When I was moved to the rehabilitation hospital, I could work in the hydrotherapy pool and started to feel as if I was actually accomplishing something.

I was the youngest person in the amputee ward, most were diabetic sufferers. I would play wheelchair basketball with them and the guys from the spinal ward. I’d look at them and think, ‘What am I complaining about? I am still going to be able to get up and walk, there’s no point in whinging about it’.

Learning to walk again was the hardest thing I’ve ever done. Just making it 10 metres would completely exhaust me.

It was around this time when Paralympic world champion Don Elgin visited me and spoke about what life would be like as an amputee. It was a positive step for me because this man was born with one leg and had done so many great things in his life.

I decided then that I wanted to do everything post-accident that I did pre-accident. My passion was always sport, health and fitness and I decided I would become a personal trainer and study exercise science.

Don introduced me to the track and I had a running leg made up. At first it felt as if the leg would snap because the carbon fibre foot is so light. It’s also longer so that when you land the carbon compresses and you get more energy from it, which made it awkward starting out. ➔

Don introduced me to Tim Matthews (triple Paralympic gold medallist and Melbourne athletics coach) and I started training with his squad in 2009.

Running became exhilarating and made me feel alive again.

I had just qualified for the 400 metres at the 2010 national championships in Perth when I got injured. Two screws that had been stabilising my tibia and fibula in my right leg had snapped and my hamstring tendon was catching on the screw heads. I had surgery a month out from nationals but didn't perform well after the interrupted preparation. The last thing I wanted to do was make excuses, especially in Paralympics. Anyone can make an excuse – we've all got disabilities, you've just got to make the best of what you've got. I learnt it's what you do away from the track that helps you get faster, stronger and fitter – recovery sessions, ice baths, stretching, physio and getting your diet right. As long as you've got something to work towards you can keep reminding yourself why you're doing these things day-in and day-out.

In August 2010, I set a B qualifier for the 2011 IPC Athletics World Championships in New Zealand, which allowed me to race the 400 metres and be a part of the 4 x 100 metres relay team.

It was great to join the Australian team and race against the best in the world like Oscar Pistorius, who is a double amputee and recently qualified for the semi-finals at the able-body IAAF World Championships in Daegu, South Korea. I don't think you can compare us guys, whether you're quicker or slower, to able-body athletes because the energy systems are different. I think Oscar should stick to the Paralympics, but he's good for the sport and creates interest for us.

I knew I would be looking at his backside in the 400 metres in New Zealand, but my goal was to keep progressing – I ran 56:7, which was a 1:1 second PB.

The feeling of competing is completely different to what I was used to playing [Australian Rules] football. With an

individual sport it feels as if there's a lot more pressure on you and everyone is watching, but I enjoy that too.

I'm now working on building my endurance and improving my symmetry in my amputee side to avoid fatiguing on the back straight of the 400 metres. My main goal is to make the London 2012 Paralympic team. In the meantime if I can help amputee children to feel as if they can do everything an able-bodied person can do, like Don encouraged me, I'll be proud."



THE ULTRA MUM

PAM MUSTON

"It hit me the day before the race, 'This is real!' I was standing, with my crew in the lunchtime sun at Death Valley waiting to register for the Badwater Ultramarathon. It was 52°C in the shade and we were starting to wonder how we would survive after coming from the depths of a Canberra winter.

So much preparation had gone into being there – running up to 200 kilometres a week, spending two hours a day four days a week in the sauna, getting my nutrition right and planning how the crew, including two of my children Clare, 21 and Jack, 17, would keep me cool as we crossed the desert.

As soon as my wave left at 8am the next morning my focus was getting from one mile to the next. Every mile I would eat, drink and use wet towels to help keep my body temperature down.

We took most of our food from Australia because I'd spent hours practicing with it in the sauna to see how my body would react when eating at such high temperatures. I timed the foods during the race to loosely resemble a regular day. Breakfast included Weetbix with condensed milk and pureed fruits, snacks consisted of dried crackers, sweet biscuits, watermelon and berries, light meals were small peanut butter sandwiches, and heavier meals were cold boiled potatoes, packet soups and tins of creamed rice. Keeping my fluids up was also vital – during the race I drank more than 113 litres of water, but I still lost four kilograms, mainly in fluids. I was aware of the health risks from running in the heat and the crew made sure I closely followed our plan every mile.

As the middle of the day approached I remember thinking how good my Australian Cancer Council hat was. It had Velcro flaps and a 30+ sun protection neck buff so you could only see my eyes. It meant the iced towels I placed under the hat on my head and neck didn't dry too quickly. I wore white arm coolers and a white T-shirt and light grey shorts. We applied sun cream to my legs every three hours and I constantly used lip balm around my mouth and nose to stop them from drying out. But about 70 kilometres into the race, we hit 60kph winds between Stovepipe Wells and Townes Pass and everything dried out in seconds. At times the wind felt so strong that it was pushing me backwards. All I could think about was keeping every part of my body covered up, and just taking one step at a time knowing the winds would ease once I reached the summit.

As soon as the sun went down, it was such a relief to be out of the glare and direct heat. During the day I could see the long straight road stretching for miles ahead, but at night all I could see was the stars and the moonlight shimmering on the distant salt lakes. It was very sparse and beautiful.

But through the night I got sick and began to struggle between Darwin and Lone Pine. I started feeling nauseous and began vomiting what resembled black tar. When I got home, tests showed I had developed three stomach ulcers and had a nasty bacteria, which were treated with antibiotics.

I knew I wasn't well, but I didn't think about quitting. I just wanted to manage it so that I could keep going and hopefully finish strong. →



BADWATER BEST: Pam Muston's resilience gets her through the world's toughest footrace.



By the second day my feet were burning and I had a heat rash all over my body. I changed my shorts and T-shirt because they were stiff like cardboard from the salt and sweat, and in hindsight taking some heat powder would have been a good idea.

I began thinking of my mother Pat, who passed away four years

ago. When I'm running ultramarathons I always get the feeling that she's looking after me and keeping me safe. She was a very motivated lady and I think I get my ability to concentrate for long periods from her. I can easily get lost in time and not get fatigued.

Coming into Lone Pine, it was cooler and I felt a lot better. Little did I know it was my crew's turn to face some difficulties. The wind had blown dust and sand all over the road and when they pulled over behind me they got bogged. I kept running but didn't think much of them not being with me because I assumed they had stopped to brew some tea and soup. But they were frantically trying to push the car out of the sand.

When they caught up with me I'd reached Lone Pine and we had 21 kilometres of uphill to complete. I could almost taste the finish. As I ran through the town I had a surge of energy and was feeling good about coming to the end of such an amazing adventure.

After 37 hours and 49 minutes, the crew and I ran across the finish line together flying the Australian flag. It was such an overwhelming feeling to have done it after three years of preparation.

There are so many unknowns in this race; I had no idea what was possible, but to finish in the top 10 females was very satisfying. I was presented with the famous finishers' belt buckle and T-shirt and became an official member of the Badwater family. I'll definitely go back to do it again."

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THE FUNDRAISER

CRAIG GOOZEE

“I’m no hero, I might be to my kids and Jess if she was alive, but I am just a father who tried to do anything for his precious daughter. I also did it for those parents suffering now, who are in the same position as I was 12 years ago.

Jess was seven when we discovered the tumour on her elbow. I was working undercover for the New South Wales police force and hadn’t had much time off so I decided to take the family away for a holiday on the New South Wales Central Coast. While we were there Jess told my wife Lisa and I about her lump. When we returned home we took her to the doctor and within 48 hours it was confirmed that she had a rare bone cancer called Ewing Sarcoma. From that day she started a year of treatment at the Sydney Children’s Hospital. As a parent this news is just mind blowing, but I never thought she would die.

Jessica took everything in her stride. She was very strong and didn’t care much about losing her hair and looking different. I learnt a lot from her and I believe this is what gave me strength through my ultramarathons.

It was when I was in the hospital with Jess that I saw how much support was needed for the kids to be happy and cared for. I felt as if I had to contribute and, ultimately, play a small role in one day finding a cure.

The first ultramarathon I did in 1998 was planned as an 800-kilometre paddle between Sydney and the Gold Coast; we called it Avalon to Broadbeach for Cancer, or A2B4C. I raised \$152,000 for Children’s Cancer Institute Australia (CCIA). But when two cyclones hit I was forced to run 65 kilometres from Crowdy Head to Port Macquarie along the beach and headlands, and another 25K stretch near Byron Bay. My background was in 100 metre sprints and surf boat rowing, so this was the furthest I’d ever run. The conditions were tough and my legs were screaming, but I just did what Jessica was doing in hospital and got on with it. It made me realise I could run longer distances than first thought and I started joining Lisa on her runs. Lisa would average about 100 kilometres a week, and has since been the first female to finish the Sydney Oxfam Trailwalker three times.

I believe running and fitness is something that helped Lisa and I stay together during Jessica’s treatment. Many families break up during these hard times and we saw many couples split under the pressure.

After the first A2B4C I was awarded 1998 NSW Parent of the Year, but it was a devastating day because two hours before the ceremony doctors confirmed Jess’ tumour had returned and that she would need her right arm amputated.

That’s when she asked me to do another marathon and I accepted the challenge. We both picked out the route across Australia – 5000 kilometres from Albany in Western

Australia to Broken Bay in Sydney. But on 24 June, 1999 Jessica sadly passed away and it wasn’t until some months later that I decided to go ahead with the event in her honour. I found myself running about 20 kilometres every day before either riding or paddling, and we raised more than \$320,000.

I continued running afterwards with Lisa and I found it quite therapeutic. We did Oxfam together and travelled to Japan to run the Osaka Marathon side-by-side.

In 2000, I received an Order of Australia Medal and was named as an Australia Day Ambassador but, to be honest, the awards didn’t mean that much to me because I wasn’t fundraising for that reason, it was for the children and their families who were affected by cancer. →



A2B4C WINS:
Running for cancer
sees Craig Goozee
awarded an Order
of Australia Medal.

Ten years after Jess' death I decided to do another A2B4C ultramarathon – this one, 14,000 kilometres around Australia. I averaged about 200 kilometres a day running, paddling and cycling and finished in 91 days.

Running was a way of stretching out after being coiled up in the other two disciplines. It also gave me time to reflect. There wasn't a day go by that I didn't think about Jess.

The toughest point was running 200 kilometres through the back of the Great Sandy Desert in WA. It was harsh and unforgiving. I remember on the second day in the desert I woke about 3am to get an early start, as I just wanted the day to finish. Troops from the Port Hedland military base joined me 10 kilometres out of town and it was a relief to have some company. But it was all worth it because we raised another \$820,000 for CCIA. I was on a high for so long just knowing what I had achieved both physically and for the charity.

After the race, I decided to move into the fitness industry and this year accepted a one-year contract as a strength and conditioning coach for Toyota Shokki rugby team in Japan.

It has been hard being away from my family – Lisa, Tim, 18, Kylie, 16, Claire, 11 and Blake, 9, but they visit every school holidays and we always speak on Skype. I would love them to be here with me, but it wasn't ideal with their schooling and Kylie doing her HSC.

I'm still running and love the trails in the mountain ranges near Kariya, Nagoya where I live. I often head up there for a two or three hour run through the cedar and pine forests.

While there are no more plans for Australia-wide ultras, I am looking forward to getting back home in March and running with Lisa in the national parks around Broken

Bay. It's all about making the most of life and there's nothing better than paddling for an hour and then running the unspoilt bushland tracks – it's pure bliss."



NEW ME: Now a personal trainer, Janelle Jacobson inspires others to lose weight and run for life.

THE LIFE SAVER

JANELLE JACOBSON

"I had always been a big person. My whole family is big – I just thought it was normal for me. But when I was playing with my son, Wil, on the floor and it took me 10 minutes to get up and chase him I realised I didn't want to be the mum sitting on the side lines missing out on things because I'm not physically able.

I called Essential Personal Training (EPT) in Devonport and made an appointment. When I got there I told my trainer, Jared [Wiseman], that I wanted to lose 60 kilos, but I didn't want to run, I hated running.

The day after the first session I was so sore I didn't think I could get out of bed, but Jared set me the task of going for two 30-minute walks that week. So I got out there and did it. It took me 30 minutes to walk one-and-a-half kilometres, but I'd never walked that far before and it felt great.

Gradually, I built up to walking for an hour, three times a week and improving my diet. In the first 10 weeks I dropped 20 kilos.

After I'd lost 30 kilos Jared introduced some running and I thought, 'Hang on, I didn't sign up for this'. But I followed his instructions and started running and walking between light poles and soon I could run five kilometres. I entered a local 5K and finished in 47 minutes – I cover the distance in 25 minutes now, but back then I was thrilled.

I had almost reached my goal weight of 100 kilos when I fell pregnant in August 2008. I kept active through the pregnancy and four weeks after Matilda was born I was back at training. I realised if I ran from my back fence to my front fence 12 times it equalled one

kilometre. So, I'd carry both baby monitors in my pockets and run two kilometres, twice a day while they were sleeping.

I even inspired my mum, Jan, to lose weight. She was often more disciplined than I was. She lost 50 kilos and ran the Skilled Burnie Ten in 1:11 in less than a year. We had just made a pledge to run the 2010 Melbourne Half Marathon together when she had an aneurism. She was 53 and given a five per cent chance of surviving. She was flown to Melbourne on life support and the scans showed there was no brain activity. The doctors initially thought if she did wake up she would be in a nursing home for the rest of her life, she wouldn't be able to walk, talk or understand where she was. But thankfully, she did wake up and is making a great recovery; she's even back at the gym twice a week. They said if it wasn't for her running she wouldn't have made it.

That's when I realised running has saved my life too. I made a pledge to run in Melbourne – I'd do a half-marathon for mum and a half-marathon for me, making up the full 42.2K.

My motto became, 'Find a way, not an excuse', and I began building up my kilometres. On the weekends I would get up at 3am on Saturday to run for four hours, spend the day with my family and go to work in the evening. Then on Sunday, I'd get up at 5am to train again. The rest of the week was all about recovery – easy kilometres, walking in the water and visiting my physiotherapist. I couldn't have done it all without the support of my husband Adam.

Running the 2011 Bank of Melbourne Marathon was easy compared to what I had to do to get there. On the morning of the

race Jared sent me a text message, which said, 'You don't need luck because you've been working for four years for this day'. I thought about that during the race. I also carried my phone and called mum when I reached the 21-kilometre mark; she cried and reminded me why I was doing it.

When I finally saw the MCG and knew the finish line was close I got goose bumps. My legs were numb when Jared joined me for the final kilometre and said I could finish in my goal time of less than five hours. I high-fived my family as I ran past them and the adrenaline kicked in. I sprinted across the line and pumped my fists in the air when I finished in 4:56:49.

It was such a special moment and I want other people to experience that feeling of accomplishment after working so hard for something. Becoming a personal trainer was the best way I could do that. I now have 20 clients of my own at EPT, many who are ladies wanting to lose weight. I think they know I have been in the same place they are in now, but I've seen it from both sides.

I also helped form a mothers running group on Sunday mornings where about 10 of us meet for a run and a coffee afterwards. As a mum you get consumed with your kids – and that's a good thing – but you need to remember that you are your own person too. I love going for a run and coming back to my children feeling refreshed and re-energised. Having a positive influence on them is the most rewarding part. Now, every night we have running races in the backyard. Wil even wears a watch and pretends to click on it and yells, 'Look mum, I'm doing a good time like you!' **RW**



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