

Mount Isa Athletics

4th December 2011

Mount Isa may have a new champion in the making. Fifteen year old Brianna Smith has just returned from Brisbane's QEII Stadium where she was competing in the Hammer throw event at the Australian All Schools National Athletic Championships. Smith's best throw of 45.07m was enough to see her secure the bronze medal in the field of nine of the best under sixteen hammer throwers in the country.

Smith was over the moon with her performance managing for the first time to record four consecutive legal throws in a competition. "It's been really hard training without a throwing cage as everything feels so different when you get into a competition" Smith said. "We put up a couple of poles and a tarp to simulate the gate of a hammer cage and this worked really well, forcing me to throw within the sector lines. As well, when left for Brisbane we went via Townsville as there is a council park which has two throwing cages that are open for the public to use.

Smith's 45 metre throw while being her best recorded competition throw was still short of some of her training throws of 48m which would have seen her securely into second place and only three metres short of the winning 51.46m throw.

Placing third in the National competition was enough to gain her the possibility of attending an Athletics Australia run "Junior High Performance Programme" which includes a coaching clinic at the Australian Institute of Sport to be held in April of next year. "I was also told if I could maintain my position in the top three nationally for my age group I may receive an invite to compete at the World Youth Championships in the Ukraine in 2013." Smith said.

When asked about Brianna's Nationals success Club Throws Coach Ken Dickson said "All the credit has to go to Brianna for the work she has put in this year. She has been with the club for quite a few years now and has always been a good, strong athlete but something triggered last Christmas and there was no stopping her from there on. She was working out with weights, watching the world champions on YouTube and practising her rotations on the back patio. By the time season had started she had gone from throwing 24 metres to over 35 metres." Dickson continued "The one thing I have learned about coaching Brianna is to give her some advice or technical tip then leave her alone in the throwing ring for a while to 'nut it out', by the time I get back she usually has it sorted"

Dickson went on to reinforce the fact that Smith has achieved this outstanding result mainly due to her own determination and willpower coupled with the many hours her parents Estelle and Paul Smith spend fetching Brianna's near 50 metre throws.

Having now completed all of the available school based competitions, Smith is hopeful of competing in the club based Under Age (U/14yrs to U/20) State and National Championships in February and March next year but as with all talented athletes in the North West, family finances can only go so far.

CLUB VENUE

Sunset Oval
Able Smith Parade
Mount Isa, Queensland

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