

What a Year for BC Race Walkers!!!

At the Senior women's level BC Walks Nicola Evangelista and Heather Warwick are ranked 2nd and 3rd in the country. Katelyn Ramage remains on top of the Canadian Junior ranking board in both the 3k and 5k distances. Our Youth women now hold 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th top spots over the 3k distance. While on the men's side Spencer Gaby holds top honours in the Youth Male 3km distance.

But the real on slot this year was against the record book. On the women's side Katelyn Ramage broke the Western Canada Games 5k record in a time of 26:28.26. On the men's side this year every BC men's record from Junior up was broken at least once and several of them numerous times. BC's men's walking contingent lead the way and lead the country so completely that by the finish of the season BC had 3 athletes in the Men's 20km event with Olympic standard, 1 with A standard and 2 with the B standard.

Inaki Gomez had the highest placing of any Canadian athlete at the FISU Games in China, placing 5th. Inaki and Evan Dunfee then went on to England to come 1-2 in the British Championships and setting fastest ever times in Britain in a mile event earlier in the week prior to the British Championships. The two then went on to finish 3rd and 5th at the German Championships in Naumburg. In finishing 3rd Inaki also set a new BC Men's 20km record at 1:22:06. Earlier in the season Inaki also set the Men's 10000m record at the BC Championships in 40:02 and the 5000m record at 19:19.44.

Ben Thorne, while staying at home this year, was no less active in the record department. Ben started his record surge at the BC High School Championships with a 5:36 clocking for 1500m. He then went on to set a new Canadian Junior 10km record at the Canadian Championships in Calgary turning in a time of 41:34. At the BC Championships he set the 5000m record becoming the first Junior walker in Canada to walk under 20 minutes for 5k posting a time of 19:49.64. That wasn't enough for him though and he finished his season with an incredible 1:24:12 in his first ever 20km event attempt. That time is over 3 minutes faster than any Canadian Junior athlete has ever gone. Ben, as a first year Junior, will have several attempts to better his 5km, 10km and 20km Junior times in 2012.

Having 3 World Class athletes in the same training group sets Canada up very nicely for a Top 8 team finish next year at the World Race Walk Cup being held in Saransk, Russia in May. With the possibility of having 3 athletes in the 20km Walk at the 2012 Olympics we will likely be the only event able to keep pace with the Woman's 100m Hurdles (no offence intended to the relay teams).

Our walks program has blossomed nicely over the last decade to the point where we are now on the verge of being recognised as a world power in the sport. We continue to bring forward highly motivated athletes who can commit to the high volume of hard work that it takes get on to international podiums. The inclusion of the event at the club, JD and High School level is the key to helping the event find its rightful place in the BC Athletics spectrum. Hopefully the success that our young athletes are having today in the walks can be used to show athletes in other event disciplines just what is possible.

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