

GOLD COAST

Local based World Champion Triathlete, **Emma Snowsill** prepares for **Commonwealth Gold**

Proudly wearing green and gold, 24 year old Emma Snowsill is a multiple world champion triathlete and favourite for Gold at the Melbourne Commonwealth Games. Born and raised on the Gold Coast Emma has her sights set on Olympic Gold for the future.

She recently took time out of her training schedule to share a little youthful inspiration and wisdom! Her commitment and determination to succeed has helped her conquer self-doubt and break through the darkness of devastating personal loss.

Emma Snowsill is an inspiration for us all!

MW: This close to the Commonwealth Games what is your training schedule like?

ES: It's pretty much seven days a week, two to three sessions a day. It's roughly five to six hours a day. It could be a six kilometre swim then a three hour bike ride, then an hour in the evening. Then there's massage and bodywork to keep the body at optimum performance levels.

MW: In Melbourne... who will be your toughest competitor?

ES: I'd say my other two team mates. The Australians are pretty tough; they are the biggest threats. It would be great to get a clean sweep of the medals; that would be wonderful for us all.

MW: Is there any rivalry between you? Are you good friends?

ES: Yeah, we're all good friends outside as well. We all get along really well. We're out there to give it our best, but we support each other. There can be tension before because the nerves get to us as they do with anyone, but we're a team.

MW: This has been a big part of your life from very early. You were part of the Nippers Surf Life Saving, you were on the podium winning swimming carnivals by the time you were 8 years old. Was it always this career for you?

ES: Not actually triathlon. I grew up swimming. It wasn't till I was about 17 or 18 that a friend introduced me to triathlon and I got more involved. About three years ago I decided I wanted to do triathlon full-time over swimming. Now here I am in Melbourne for the Commonwealth Games.

MW: What does it feel like to compete at this level? You get to do this as a living; there are very few people who get to do this as their job.

ES: Yes. It's a full time job with the same commitments as anyone else. I'm very grateful to have this as my life. It doesn't matter what you choose to do, if you want to succeed at your passion and be at the top level, it takes commitment. It just happens to be that my commitment to my career is sport.

MW: You've won multiple world championship titles but what is the ultimate for you? Is it competing at home to a home crowd?

ES: At the moment yes, it's the Commonwealth Games. The next thing after Melbourne is the Olympics. But that's a few years off and to represent Australia in Melbourne at these Games is such a fantastic opportunity. I always wanted to compete at swimming in the Olympics and now I have my passion for triathlon. To compete for my country at the Olympics and wear the green and gold would be unbelievable.

MW: What does it feel like to represent your country?

ES: It's such an exciting feeling. You feel so proud putting on your green and gold suit and going out there to compete for Australia. I think growing up in Australia; sport is part of our culture and life. Sports people in Australia are widely recognised for what they do on the world circuit. It makes you feel so good about yourself, to know you are one of those people who get to compete at the top of your profession. It is such a privilege for me.

MW: There are so many kids heavily involved in sport and they go on to be good athletes. But what makes top athletes competing at this level different? Where does that extra impetus come from to take it this far and keep the commitment?

ES: I think professional athletes want to know how much they can get out of themselves. What are they capable of? It's like that for anyone in any job I would think. If you want to see what the best you can do is, you need to find the commitment and hard work to be the best you can be. In any career, you set yourself goals and challenge yourself to meet them; it's no different for us. I'm so fortunate to have a job that I really love and to have the opportunity to do it while my body is young and can handle it. It's about finding out where I can stretch myself to meet further challenges. It's having a passion and a love for what you do. That goes for anyone. This is definitely not an easy sport or an



- GOLD!

by Maggie Wilde

easy choice, there are days where you have your ups and downs, but like any career you just have to go with it and find the passion again.

MW: Are there days where you would prefer to stay in bed?

ES: Definitely. That does happen to us all. For me it's a matter of saying 'Well everyone has a choice, I know what it takes to be good. I know what I need to do to become better. I know that I have to get out and do it again right now. I have to stretch myself again today and push myself to my limits.' It's when the going gets tough that you have to grit your teeth and move through it. There are some days you do great out there and some days you don't. But you just have to go with it and get up and try again the next day.

MW: Is it because it's your passion, does that make it easier?

ES: Of course. This is my job and my passion. I also know I am not going to be able to do this forever. I am passionate about racing, about training and competing. I enjoy seeing what I can do with my body each day.

MW: If you think back to the Nippers or competing at school, did you ever let yourself imagine standing on the podium with a Gold medal at the Commonwealth or Olympics?

ES: It's something you fantasise about. You have to believe in yourself. That's the same with anything. If you have the belief and you do everything possible to reach those goals and achieve what you want then anything is possible. For me, to go to the Olympics and do the best I can doesn't make me any different to anyone else with a goal. I just happen to have a different job. In a funny way top athletes enjoy going out and punishing and pushing their bodies to achieve their goals. I know that sounds strange.

MW: Punishing and pushing them in the most kind, athletic and loving way of course!

ES: (laughs) Of course!

MW: So outside of sport, what are your passions and interest?

ES: Obviously when I'm in training I'm always extremely tired and I don't have much time and energy to spend on other things. When I'm on a break I love spending time around the house renovating, painting and fixing up the garden. I'm always doing something very physical. I'm always out in the surf, always very active.

MW: You have said you are inspired by Lance Armstrong. Is there anyone else that inspires you?

ES: I honestly admire anyone who has the commitment to be the best they can be. Obviously Lance is a particular athlete that stands out purely because of the adversity that he's faced and overcome. I think everybody has a story to tell and there are always different reasons why people get to where they do. It doesn't matter whether they come first or tenth, the thing I admire is whether they give it their best shot when they do something they love. I have great admiration for people who overcome personal hurdles and challenges in all areas of life.



MW: If you weren't in sport what would you do?

ES: Oooh! I've thought of many things. I don't think I could be in an office, sitting at a desk. I'd get agitated very quickly. It would definitely have to be something active and outdoors. Maybe commentating, sports management or perhaps not even something to do with sport at all. Perhaps buying and selling houses and renovating, I enjoy that.

MW: Are you doing that at the moment? Do you have a place on the Gold Coast?

ES: Yes, every year I have about four weeks off in November and I fill it with doing stuff around the house, I love the challenge of doing something creative. My partner and I work on it together; he's a carpenter by trade - that helps. He's always got a thousand ideas too.

MW: How long have you been with him?

ES: About two years.

MW: Is he very supportive of what you do & the time you spend away?

ES: Yes. He's a Champion Triathlete as well. Craig Walton. That's how I got to know the team and our nutritional sponsors, Megaburn. He'd been competing for many years before I got to know about Triathlon. We are both very fortunate to get to travel together. It's not so lonely; it's great to be able to support each other.

MW: Your spiritual beliefs? Do you have any particular way in which you view the universe, God? Does that come into the picture for you?

ES: I don't have any set beliefs. I suppose for me it's more about being a happy person. I do believe in what goes around comes around. I think if you are a friendly, happy and nice person you will be surrounded by the same.

It's time to be positive, you've got this life to live and you need to make the most of it, whatever that means for you. I think the best thing is to enjoy every day the best way you can & live your life with happiness.

MW: So you're not going to come back as a re-incarnated Buddhist Monk then? All that sitting around and meditating might not do it for you?

ES: (laughs) I don't think so! All that sitting... whew!

MW: So what makes your heart sing with happiness?

ES: Family, friends and enjoying what I have and can do in the moment. I look at the news sometimes and I see what people go through and it makes me realise what a good life I have. I have my wonderful partner Craig; I have a roof over my head and food on my table. The simplicity is what makes me happy, I'm thankful for that. When we see what happens in the rest of the world, it makes me realise how truly fortunate we are.

MW: What advice do you have for anyone who has a dream? How do they maintain that extraordinary focus?

ES: I've been in a similar position as others where I've had to take a massive gamble with my life. To make the decision to not go to University or work in a traditional role. To make the move to triathlon full-time, it has all been a gamble. I think lots of things in life are like that whether it's buying a house or investing in your career.

It's making conscious decisions about the gambles. For me it was about the choice to focus on sport or not. My focus paid off. If you have made a decision like that, it's then up to you to find your own focus to make it real. We've all got it inside us. I'm no different I just happened to choose sport. Sometimes if you want something bad enough, the question is: 'Are you going to die trying?' You have one go at this. Sometimes you do need to take that leap of faith. If you give it 100% and it doesn't work then at least you know you gave it everything you had and you can move on to the next thing. But don't give up without giving 100% first. If you know your passion, have your goal and give it 100% then I think anything is possible.

MW: In short?

ES: You have to do something you love. It makes all the difference as to how much you can give to your goal. If you make sure you love it then perseverance is easier, giving 100% is easier. Loving what you do makes the biggest difference of all and it's more fun.

MW: So many people seem to get stuck doing what they think they should do rather than what they'd love to.

ES: Everyone's motivation is different,

everyone's goals are different. I took some risks and with commitment and focus, it paid off. You need to ask yourself have you got the commitment and focus and if so, can you take the leap of faith? Do what you can to enjoy life and live each day as if it is your last! Have fun and be happy!

MW: Great advice!

ES: I'm just like anyone else, I get tired and cranky. I don't like the bills when they come in. The only difference is I do something that requires dedication to working my body to its limits.

MW: Has there been a time in your life where you thought maybe you made the wrong choices.

ES: Yes, of course there are times where I ask myself 'Have I done the right thing?' 'Is triathlon really for me?' There have been a lot of years and tears behind getting me to where I am now. It's not just about winning races. The training & hours behind competing are never ending; no-one gets to see that. It's about minimising those doubts and staying focused. I'm going to show myself and others what I can do and what I am made of. I will never know if I don't give it my best.

MW: Your family, are they all still on the Gold Coast?



For information about Emma Snowsill, go to www.emma-snowsill.com

ES: Yes. Mum and Dad still live at Benowa Waters where I grew up. My sister is studying at Griffith University.

MW: Do you meditate; do you balance that with your training?

ES: When I get the chance I sit out on my deck and simply BE with myself and nature. It's my relaxation and chill out time. It's where I let myself think and let go.

MW: How do you switch off from negative thoughts?

ES: It's definitely something you have to practice and stay on top of. I find it hard like anyone else. But I've learnt to really hear myself. Rather than let the thought take hold I keep repeating what I can do rather than what I can't. I believe you can talk yourself into things and out of things. The mind is very powerful. If you want to do something enough, it's a matter of telling yourself and your body again and again 'I can do this!' Turn the negatives into positives and make them work for you rather than against you.

MW: When you saw the tragic accident in Germany where Amy Gillett was killed, can you imagine finding the strength to push through & compete again knowing a team mate can't?

ES: Yes. It's very hard. You go through a very dark state of mind. It takes a lot of courage to come through something like that and still compete. Sometimes it takes longer for some than others. For me it is about wanting to honour that person and what they strived for. To compete again is what they would want you to do. To find the courage to stand in the place where they would have loved to stand in honour of them says so much. Sometimes it takes an horrific 'wake up call' for people to dig even deeper and find their true strength.



MW: Have you had any 'wakeup calls like that?'

ES: Yes unfortunately. Four years ago my partner at the time (also a professional athlete and Olympic hopeful) was killed whilst cycling here on the Gold Coast. It was a very difficult time and I think that's probably why my outlook on life is so focused but I still know the importance of happiness, family and relationships.

MW: How did you get through that time?

ES: A lot of questioning, a lot of doubting what life was about. Asking myself things like 'Is competing the right thing to do?' It wasn't a decision I took lightly. I found the support of those around me, my family, really helped me find a perspective to move forward. I focused on the positive things he loved about life. I'd imagine the same would be for the Australian team as they grieve for Amy. Competing was something he loved, so I chose to continue in honour of him.

MW: You are obviously very close to your family.

ES: Yes. I am very lucky. My partner Craig Walton, my sister and my mum & dad, they are all extremely supportive of what I do. They understand what I go through in my training, what I put my body through. Craig is wonderful, he understands so much because he puts himself through the same thing. But I draw on each of them for support in different ways. I wouldn't be where I am today without any of them. I am so grateful to have their support.

MW: You have a great attitude! The Gold Coast is lucky to have you.

ES: Thank you. I've looked at my options and I am embracing what is important to me right now and staying focused. I've looked at what I have, what I love, the gifts I have been given and I'm very grateful and choose to make the most of them.

MW: A cheeky question... any inside tips, what are your chances for Gold in Melbourne?

ES: I never like to say, not that I ever really know I suppose. I go into each and every race to give it my best shot... if I come first or tenth... as long as I give my best on the day.

MW: Good luck for Melbourne Emma and thank you. I'm sure every heart on the Gold Coast will be there in spirit for you.

For more information, go to www.emma-snowsill.com