

THE AUSTRALIAN

Sport

Prime Minister supports a marathon mission

Margie McDonald

MATP

355 words

28 February 2004

[The Australian](#)

AUSSLN

1 - All-round Country

54

English

(c) 2004 Nationwide News Proprietary Ltd

THE 30-kilometre mark in the marathon is approaching and your legs feel like bags of sand, but you remember Rob de Castella's words and push on.

That was the scenario for Canberra schoolteacher Scott Westscott during his first attempt at the marathon in Fukuoka, Japan, in December.

De Castella's words were that marathons were like life -- ups and downs. "One minute you're cruising and feeling like Superman and then it hurts real bad but then you come good again, so stay with it."

"Deek" won the Fukuoka marathon in 1981 as his career was starting to take off.

"His words help you when you're out there plodding along. You wake up tired, you go to bed tired, because you're training so hard," Westscott, 28, said.

"But knowing people like Deek have gone before you and they were able to grind out these runs, you just do it yourself."

Westscott, an accomplished 5000m, 10,000m and half-marathon runner, has wanted to take the next step to marathons and a program has been set up by former ultra-marathoner and now federal Liberal MP, Pat Farmer who felt there was support for elite marathoners but not those trying to get there.

Westscott is tackling the London marathon on April 18 and wants to make the Athens Olympic team. His first 42km effort in Fukuoka was completed in 2hr17min.

Five rising marathon runners will be selected in the months before the Sydney Marathon, which is held each September to commemorate the 2000 Olympics.

They will be teamed with both a sports and business mentor -- one to help with training, the other with financial concerns. Patron of the program is "5km walking fanatic", Prime Minister John Howard.

Like his Prime Minister's XI in cricket, the marathoners will be known as "The PM's Team" and will compete under that banner.

Steve Moneghetti is mentor for 17-year-old HSC student from Hornsby in northern Sydney, Shane Hayes, who also has 1960 Olympic gold medallist Herb Elliott as his business mentor.

Photo