

## **GLASGOW ATHLETES RETURN TO WINNERS CIRCLE IN HOBART**

Two Glasgow Commonwealth Games athletes on the comeback trail have set the scene for a high quality weekend of competition at the Australian Weightlifting Championships in Hobart.

Vannara Be and Tegan Napper both lifted for Australia in 2014, but have had very little competition since.

However they both showed they are well in the mix for selection for the Gold Coast next year with strong performances at the Royal Hobart Showgrounds on Friday.

Melbourne's Be only returned to the sport in January after three years away.

"I was hoping to get to next Commonwealth Games, that's why I'm back after taking three years off," he said.

"At the start of the year my coach called me up and asked if I was interested in making a comeback. I'm working two full time jobs at the moment, and trying to balance training.

"It's pretty hard. I'm trying to put a little bit more effort into training. I'll probably drop my Saturday job and just work five days a week so I can train on Saturday."

Be said he was a little disappointed in his weights on Friday, but believes after winning the 62kg title the signs are good.

Napper relocated from the Gold Coast to Adelaide after Glasgow, and has been battling injury.

"They were not the best lifts today on the platform, hopefully I can improve on that later in the year," Napper said after winning the 53kg title.

"I just want to get as far as I can, and hopefully be in contention for Commonwealth Games by the end of the year.

"Fingers crossed, everything goes well and I can get there. There's some stiff competition but I'll do my best."

Commonwealth Games medallist Erika Yamasaki, who was expected to challenge Napper for the title, was a late withdrawl after failing to meet the stating weight.

One lifter keener than most to get to next year's Commonwealth Games is Brandon Wakeling, who lives on the Gold Coast.

"It would be massive," he said after winning the men's 69kg title.

“Being a Gold Coaster myself, and having the Games in my back yard is a massive motivation. I get a lot of support from family and friends.

“It’s going to be the difference between those hard sessions and pushing through.”

Alyce Stephenson had a good win in the women’s 48kg division, but said she felt drained after the competition.

“It took it out of me a bit, I had to cut some weight, so I did feel a bit fatigued out there,” the Queenslander said.

“But I can’t complain. I got a PB on my snatch, a PB on my clean-and-jerk on this body weight, so I’m pretty happy about that.

“I hope to get to the trials at the end of this year for the Commonwealth Games. It would be the ultimate goal. It would be a fantastic opportunity, I would love to be on that team wearing the green and gold.”

NSW’s Parisa Haeri won the women’s 58kg title, but was another lifter left disappointed with their overall performance.

“They are not quite the numbers I was hoping for, but I’ve got to be happy with the end result,” she said.

“Training has been really good, and I felt really good coming into today, so no complaints.”

In Friday’s late event 20-year-old Queenslander Leo Lark missed only one lift from the competition to win the men’s 77kg title.

“I was happy I won gold, but I think I can do bigger numbers than that,” he said.

“Commonwealth Games is my big goal, it would be incredible. I’ve never represented Australia in a multi-sport event before, so the first time, a home crowd and just 40 minutes up the road from where I live.

“It would be unreal.”

The Australian Weightlifting Championships continue in Hobart on Saturday.