



A year in the life of Sara Carrigan

Coaching, Mentoring and Ambassadorship

During the London 2012 Olympics, I experienced many mixed emotions but loved it all the same! It is hard to believe that it has been four years since I competed at the Olympic Games in Beijing and eight years since I won my Olympic Gold Medal at Athens! It seems like only yesterday! However, it also seems like an age ago when I think of how much I have jam packed into the last four years following my retirement from elite sport and turning my hand to coaching, mentoring and ambassadorship to give back to my sport and my community that gave me so much to realise my dreams.

Upon reflection, the last year alone has involved many exciting adventures! Some of these have included:

Co-hosting the joint SBS Cycling Australia 'Women & Wheels' Project, which aims to increase the overall coverage of women's cycling, its athletes and opportunities. I have really enjoyed the experience of interviewing our country's top female cyclists and helping to broadcast their journeys and successes to inspire others. Here is the link to these interviews: www.youtube.com/WomenAndWheelsCA

In conjunction with 'Rising Sun Adventures', I hosted my first cycling tour to Japan, based in the Japanese Alps in the town of Hakuba – the home of the 1998 Winter Olympics. I have ridden my bike in some of the world's most amazing places and this is one of them, especially up Mt Fuji! I lead a group of recreational riders aged up to 60 years old and it was simply awe-inspiring witnessing everyone exceed their own expectations!

Showered by the cherry blossoms, we spent the week pedalling through beautiful rice paddies on quiet country roads. We rode by ancient temples and shrines, enjoyed lunch at restaurants that were over 1000 years old and even stopped at the natural hot springs (onsens) – perfect for relaxing and easing the muscles. The direct flight from the Gold Coast into Tokyo with no jet lag made the experience even more perfect! You will have to join me next May when I do it all again! www.risingsunadventures.com/packages/sara-carrigan-tour

I was selected to represent the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) to attend the International Olympic Academy (IOA) in Ancient Olympia and Athens, Greece. The AOC usually only nominates one female and one male to attend, so I felt most honoured and I can honestly say it was two of the best weeks of my life spent with an amazing group of people from all around the world!

Returning to the place where I achieved one of my life dreams was magical and so too was the opportunity to learn and soak up the spirit of Ancient Olympia, the home of the Olympics! www.ioa.org.gr

I am excited to be one of the coaches looking after our juniors representing Australia at the end of September at the Cycling Road World Championships. Unbelievably, the course is the same as

when I did Junior Worlds in 1998 so it feels rather special and as though it has come a full circle. There are two athletes from QLD that are a part of our team in Emily Roper and Nick Shultz.

Induction into the GC Sporting Hall of Fame – What an honour! I was introduced to cycling on the Gold Coast at Somerset College and have since spent many hours over the last 17 years riding on our local roads enjoying the scenery, soaking up our beautiful weather, speeding around the Nerang Velodrome, pushing through the pain on the numerous climbs of our amazing hinterland. I truly appreciate the support of my Gold Coast community. It is by no accident that the Goldie has produced numerous champions. www.goldcoastsport.com.au

The opportunity to represent my home town and travel to St Kitts and Nevis last November as part of the Gold Coast bid team to win the right to host the Commonwealth Games in 2018, is an experience that will be with me forever! I am so proud of the Gold Coast and I will be forever grateful for the opportunities this city has provided me to achieve some of my life dreams. So to be able to give back and help the Gold Coast win the right to host the 2018 Commonwealth Games... I know will inspire young children of our community and aspiring athletes to follow their dreams. The Gold Coast truly is a sporting mecca and we can now share this with the rest of the world! www.goldcoastcity2018.com

J&A'S Do you have a question for Sara Carrigan? Email it to editor@coastmultisport.com.au