

Matt Cowdrey (Swimming)



BIOGRAPHY

At just 21, Matthew Cowdrey has already achieved Paralympic, World Championship and Commonwealth Games glory. A multiple world record holder, the teenage swimmer won eight medals at the 2008 Beijing Games and along with fellow swimmer Peter Leek was the top medalling athlete of the Australian team.

Born with a congenital amputation to his lower left arm, Matthew started swimming at the age of five and was determined to not just be as good as any able bodied person, but to be better. Having set his goals for success, he quickly stamped his mark on his S9 classification, breaking his first Australian open record at age 11 and world record at age 13.

At the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games Matthew won three gold, two silver and two bronze medals and finished the meet with two world & Paralympic record times. He followed this up at the 2006 Commonwealth Games, where he was the only Australian male swimmer (able-bodied or EAD) to win individual gold. The same year, he produced a phenomenal performance at his first world championships in South Africa, winning an incredible five gold, two silver and one bronze medals and breaking three more world records.

Matthew's excellent form continued through to Beijing where he won four individual gold medals and five overall each in world record times as well as three silver medals. His performances far surpassed his expectations and he particularly enjoyed the 50m freestyle and the 4x100m medley relay. Matt will continue swimming for as long as he enjoys it and is already planning to make a splash at the Australian Championships and World Championships in 2010.

STATISTICS

Date of birth	22 December 1988
Sport	Swimming
Discipline/event	50m, 100m 400m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 100m butterfly, 200m Individual Medley, 4x100 medley relay, 4x100 freestyle relay
Classification	S9, SB9, SM9
Disability	Single arm amputee
How acquired	Birth
Residence	Salisbury Heights, South Australia
Occupation	Uni Student – Law & Media
First time competed in your sport	1994
Sport highlights	3 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze at Athens 2004; Gold & world records EAD 50m & 100m freestyle at 2006 Commonwealth Games; 5 gold, 3 world records, 2 silver, 1 bronze at 2006 World Championships; 5 gold, 5 WR and 3 silver at Beijing 2008
Paralympic Games experience	Athens 2004, Beijing 2008
Personal honours/awards received	2008 Athens Paralympics team leader; Telstra Swimmer of the Year with a Disability 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 & 2008; 2004 Junior Male Athlete of the Year; 2005 Order of Australia Medal; 2006 Commonwealth Sports Awards – Outstanding Male Elite Athlete with a Disability; Swimming World Magazine's 2007 World Swimmer of the Year with a disability, 2008 Male Paralympian of the Year, 2008 Paralympian of the Year, 2009 SA Young Australian of the Year, SMH Sport Performer of the Year with a disability 2008
Most influential person	Coach Peter Bishop