

Media Release

Wednesday, 6 November 2024

AUSTRALIAN TRACK AND FIELD STARS GO BACK TO THE FUTURE FOR COLES COMMUNITY ROUND

Australian track and field stars including Paris gold medallists **Nina Kennedy** and **James Turner** will go back to grassroots Little Athletics Centres over the next two weeks to inspire future Aussie athletes.

The Paris champions will be joined by 2024 Olympic and Paralympic heroes **Matthew Denny**, **Kelsey-Lee Barber**, **Jaryd Clifford**, **Brandon Starc**, **Reece Langdon** and **Cameron McEntyre** and **Sally Pearson OAM**, whose legacy was recently recognised with induction into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame.

The Coles and Little Athletics Australia ambassadors will visit over 60 Little Athletics Centres from **Wednesday, 6 November to Tuesday, 19 November** to motivate young athletes.

In addition to sharing training tips and nutritional advice, the ambassadors will join in the fun of Coles Community Round by taking on the kids in banana themed races and games, as well as delivering new equipment to centres that have recently received funding from the Coles Little Athletics Community Fund.

Dual World Champion and world record holder Jaryd Clifford will visit his alma mater in Melbourne's northern suburbs at Diamond Valley Little Athletics Centre, where he will make his first appearance since the Paris Paralympics when he came agonizingly close to adding two medals onto his Tokyo haul.

"Coles Community Round is such a great opportunity to return to where it all started for myself and many other athletes, and I'm excited to visit grassroots centres, particularly my old Little Athletics Centre in Diamond Valley," he said.

"Paris was such a rollercoaster ride and it's always humbling to go back to community clubs and to see the pure joy and delight these kids have for track and field. It's a reminder that athletics is first and foremost about having fun and being the best athlete you can be rather than medals and accolades. Coles Community Round is a great way to demonstrate these values, and I can't wait to meet this year's crop of little athletes and to share my experiences with kids and parents alike."

Coles Little Athletics Australia CEO Myles Forman said there has been a record interest in Coles Community Round this year, thanks largely to the calibre of ambassador visits on offer.

"Coles Community Round has been a feature of the Little Athletics calendar over the past four years and it's pleasing to see its popularity continue to grow with nearly 300 Centres running an event over the next two weeks," he said.

“Coles Community Round is a great way to celebrate our partnership with Coles, which has provided over \$2.5 million in sports equipment grants and more than five million bananas to our centres since 2017. The round also encourages centres to put the ‘fun’ back into the Little Athletics motto – family, fun and fitness.”

For a full list of ambassador appearance dates and centres visit Little Athletics Australia [website](#).

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For media enquiries, please contact

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About Coles ambassadors

Nina Kennedy (pole vault) is the reigning Olympic and World Champion and Australian record holder; **Matthew Denny** (discus) is the reigning Olympic bronze medalist, Australian record holder and Diamond League champion; **Kelsey-Lee Barber** (javelin) is a two-time World Champion and Tokyo Olympic bronze medalist; **Jaryd Clifford** (T12/13 middle/long distance) is a triple Tokyo Paralympic medallist, two time World Para-Athletics Champion and holds two world records; **Brandon Starc** (high jump) is a three-time Olympian, Commonwealth Games gold (2018) and silver (2022) medallist and Australian record holder; **Sally Pearson** (100m hurdles) is the 2012 Olympic champion, 2008 Olympic silver medallist and two-time World Champion.

About Little Athletics Australia ambassadors

James Turner (T36 sprints) is a four-time Paralympic gold medallist (including two from Paris) and has won seven World Para-Athletics Championship gold medals; **Reece Langdon** (T38 1500m) is the Paris Paralympic bronze medallist and 2023 World Para-Athletics Championship silver medallist; **Cameron McEntyre** (javelin) competed at the Paris Olympics and is the current national champion; **Nana Owusu-Afriyie** (sprints) competed for Australia in the 200m and 4x100m relay including the 2019 World Championships; **Emelia Surch** (long jump/heptathlon) and **Toby Stolberg** (high jump) competed at the 2022 World U20 Championships; **Jordi McMillan** (sprints) represented Australia on the 2023 U20 European tour, and **Jackson Mellor** (discus, hammer throw) is a medallist from the 2022 Pacific Mini Games and the 2023 Oceania Cup.