


WILLIAM STEDMAN

 Christchurch

 December 5, 1999

 Cerebral palsy

 Para athletics

Grassroots:

Hi everyone! My name is William Stedman.

As a child I had lots of different hobbies. I enjoyed skiing, reading and played the guitar. Throughout my years at primary school, I played football and cricket. Sport played a big part in my life from an early age.

I was born in Sydney, Australia and lived there until I was 5 years old. At the age of 5 I moved to Christchurch and have stayed there ever since.

My journey as a Para athlete:

I was born with cerebral palsy, which predominantly affects the left side of my body, as well as my coordination. I'm not as strong on my left side, also my coordination is impaired. When I'm sitting down or walking, it's not too bad. When I'm running my left side only does what it wants to do, so my running forms are not that great.

In 2012, my family were in the UK for 3 months. The Paralympic Games happened to be on at the same time. This is when it clicked for me. I saw people with the same disability as me running around this massive stadium, and I thought "I want to do that one day." I got back home, joined an athletics club, contacted Paralympics New Zealand and then the journey began!



#208

 Watch

<https://youtu.be/moVofiBJ6CE>

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My journey in athletics led me to specialising in the 400m and long jump. The 400m is one lap of an athletics track.”



WILLIAM STEDMAN

The first time that I represented New Zealand was a year after I started exploring the world of athletics. It was at the Doha Para Athletics World Champs in 2015. It was a really cool experience. I was only 15 at the time and found out I was going less than 2 weeks before we left! We were out of the country for about 3 weeks with pre-camps in Dunedin and then Doha. My parents came and watched me, and the rest of the athletics team was really supportive.

One of my proudest moments as a Para athlete was winning silver in the long jump in Tokyo. Just before I left for Japan, I found out I had a stress fracture in my lower back. This was pretty concerning especially because it was particularly aggravated by long jump. However, with the help of my awesome support team I got to the long jump pit on the night of competition. With 1 round to go, I was sitting in 6th place, with a jump well below where I knew I could be jumping. With nothing to lose, I ran in and jumped and won the silver medal. I am proud of this result mainly because of all the things that went wrong right up until that final jump, but I pulled it together and performed.

I now train between 6 – 8 times a week with a mix of track and gym sessions. Training is a big part of being an athlete, but so is balance. I almost always have one day a week off, which I have found so important for my longevity as an athlete. I also have an awesome support crew around me, coaches, nutritionists, physio, mental skills etc. These other areas are just as important to my performance as training is. Being an athlete is a holistic thing, you can't just train hard. I also need to rest, sleep, recover, eat, and have other none sport related things in my life to perform well. This balance is what allows me to continue to do what I do and to enjoy doing it.

Determination is really important to being a high-performance athlete. Throughout my career there have been times where things go wrong, injuries, results that didn't meet expectations etc. This is where having balance in my life is so important. Determination is so much easier thanks to the other aspects in my life. For me I study engineering, love doing other sports, friends, church, family. Keeping sport in perspective, having balance, and also having the belief that I can do better have helped me achieve my sporting goals. I was inspired by the 2012 Paralympic games to give para sport a go. One of the best things about the Paralympics is how they inspire people with disabilities.

If I were to give someone advice, it would be to find something you enjoy and realise that it will take a lot of hard work.

But also, don't get so wrapped up in it that it becomes who you are. Have other things you enjoy in life, you will need to work hard to get to where you want to be, but make sure your life isn't too out of balance.

Fun facts:

- My favourite foods are mangoes and passionfruit.
- My favourite time of year is autumn.
- I'm a morning person.
- My favourite place I've visited is Europe. There is so much history and culture.
- The funniest moment in my journey as a Para athlete is when my teammates bet on how many times I would lose while I was away!

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*Keep it simple
and just do it!”*

