



TAMSYN Lewis surprised everyone, including herself, by producing the race of her life to win gold in the 800m world indoor championship in Spain. The 29-year-old Melbourne star now has her sights firmly set on a medal at the Beijing Olympics. Reports: Page 2, 78 Picture: REUTERS



Winner: Tamsyn Lewis after the race. Picture: AP

Golden triumph shocks Tamsyn

Glenn Mitchell

NO one was more surprised than Tamsyn Lewis herself when she won her first major title on the world stage yesterday.

Once dubbed a "C-grade celebrity who runs", Lewis outlasted a red-hot field to claim the 800m gold medal on the final day of the world indoor championships in Spain.

"I am in complete shock," an exhausted Lewis said.

But parents Carolyn and Greg, who were listening on the internet at their home in Kew at 3am, were anything but surprised. And they say she is now a big chance at the Beijing Olympics.

"Now she knows she can beat these girls on the big stage," Mrs Lewis said yesterday.

"The only problem was we missed the race by five minutes and when the results went up we didn't quite believe it.

"We thought it might be some sort of glitch.

But when we realised it was the right result we were ecstatic."

Mr Lewis said his daughter was on the verge of quitting athletics after the Athens Olympics.

"The only person who didn't believe she could win on the world stage was Tamsyn herself," Mr Lewis said.

Mrs Lewis said her daughter almost reached breaking point after outspoken coach Nic Bideau described her as a "C-grade celebrity".

"She said to me 'Mum, I'm not sure this is all worth it any more'. It was a very cutting remark to make about an athlete, especially one who works as hard as Tamsyn."

Lewis, 29, yesterday collected \$43,000 for beating one of the all-time greats of 800m running, Maria Mutola, of Mozambique.

Sport, Page 78