



# World title fires Tamsyn

## Indoor glory lights up Beijing bid

**JIM WILSON**

NEWLY crowned world champion Tamsyn Lewis was last night back running the streets of Valencia in Spain, declaring she has unfinished business in Beijing.

While her coach and brother Justin and her supporters urged her to celebrate her stunning victory in the 800m at the world indoor championships, the 29-year-old resisted the temptation and instead resumed her training program for the Olympics.

Lewis attended a gala dinner to mark the end of the world championships. She showed off her gold medal, but stuck to soft drink, maintaining her no-alcohol regimen until after Beijing.

"I was on cloud nine and I still can't believe what happened in the final but I just wanted to soak it up and then get back to the job of preparing for Beijing," Lewis said yesterday.

"I was drained at the end of the day and was physically and mentally exhausted, so alcohol was off-limits. I intend having a sleep and then go for a good hit-out in the morning, because the main event still awaits in five months."

The Australian's effort in Valencia upstaged some of the event's biggest names, including Mozambique's Maria Mutola.

Mutola was trying to win an eighth world indoor title, but Lewis outsmarted the African 800m star, relegating her to the bronze medal.

Ukraine's Tetiana Petlyuk was second, but the night belonged to Lewis, who stormed to the biggest win of her career.

Lewis earns \$43,200 in prize-money as just the fourth Aus-

tralian to win a world indoor title and the first since Melinda Gainsford-Taylor in the 200m in 1995.

"All the way around, all I kept saying to myself is, 'Oh my God, oh my God', because I knew I had an opportunity," Lewis said.

"Maria left me an opening and I grabbed it on the inside and that was a huge boost in then reeling in Petlyuk. I crossed the line and just couldn't believe it. I was shell-shocked. I was stunned and so emotional and right now I still can't believe it."

While the time of 2min 2.52sec was well outside the world record, it was a major psychological blow for Lewis ahead of Beijing.

Her aim of making the Olympic final in the 800m could now include a possible podium finish at the Games.

"I'm not getting ahead of myself, but to win this is a massive lift for my prospects for Beijing," Lewis said.

"I have always known I've got the ability, and the fact I'm injury-free and loving my racing are added bonuses. My support crew is incredible, and this world championship wouldn't have been possible without my brother and coach Justin, who is an inspiration to me."

It is the breakthrough win for Lewis internationally after her debut as a 16-year-old at the Commonwealth Games in Canada in 1994.

Last week, she won her 13th national title, securing berths in the 400m and 800m for Beijing. Lewis arrives in Melbourne on Thursday to resume her build-up for Beijing.

She intends returning to Spain before Beijing for training and is expected to finalise her build-up to the Games in Darwin in July.

"The job isn't done yet and I've always said Beijing is the top of the priority list and nothing has changed that," Lewis said.



**WORLD-BEATER:** Tamsyn Lewis shows off her gold medal.