

# *Ella Beere selected for Olympics*

by Justin Paine



**E**lla Beere, who paddled with Lane Cove River Kayakers as a teenager, has been selected to represent Australia at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris in three months time. It will be the first time someone who is or has been a member of LCRK has competed at the Olympics.

Ella will have the front seat in the women's K4 500m race. With her will be Aly Bull Ally Clarke and Yale Steinepreis, This highly rated crew came second in the 2022 world championships (watch the race at <https://youtu.be/y1l89qdlN1E?si=8Me9Z7khtmewstHy>) and will be a strong contender in Paris.

As a year 7 student Ella was asked to name her top personal goal and responded: "I want to compete and have success in sport at a high level." She has certainly achieved that goal.

Around 10 years ago Ella, then at high school, frequently came to the Lane Cove Wednesday night time trials with her father Jeff. She was a slim, happy girl – a natural athlete who was keen on sprinting. She was also good at padding and quickly started posting some impressive times.

I have a clear recollection of one particular evening when Ella was a short distance ahead of me as we neared the factory footbridge on our return leg. Suddenly she shouted out with great excitement: "I think I've got it!"

Clearly she was referring to her paddle stroke. I like to think this was a shining moment in her development as a top kayaker.

The last time I saw her was a couple of years ago when she came down to Lane Cove for a paddle. I didn't recognise her. Gone was the slim figure. In its place was a powerfully built woman – like all elite kayakers she has clearly spent a lot of



**Ella Beere, Aly Bull, Ally Clarke and Yale Steinepreis taking second in the 2022 world championships**

time in the gym.

This statement from the Australian Olympic Committee outlines the beginning of Ella's kayaking career:

"It all started on the beach for sprint paddler Ella Beere. Growing up on the NSW Central Coast, Ella had been competing in surf life saving events since she was five. She moved to Sydney when she was 10 years old but continued to commute to the Central Coast and be involved in North Avoca Surf Club.

"As a 16-year-old she decided to concentrate on ski paddling and her journey to the Olympics began."

Ella said: "I did surf life saving growing up and in U17s I decided to leave behind the beach events and try surf ski. My ski coach suggested I should do some kayaking to improve my technique."



**At age 16 Ella was recording fast times in sprint races at Penrith regatta centre**

In the following years she won a number of national age titles in K1 and K2 events and was also successful in international races.

She was Sports Captain at MLC School which in congratulating her on her Olympic selection also said: "Outside of her high-level athletic endeavours, Ella also aspires to become a psychologist. With an undergraduate psychology degree already in hand (Macquarie University), she aims to pursue honours soon. Her interest with psychology stems from navigating the mental challenges she experiences as a professional female athlete competing in a high-performance sport, as well as her passion for self-growth and her desire to help others."

*Special note:* Paul Lynch and Ross Chaffey, who paddled on Lane Cove River in the 1990s with others who subsequently formed Lane Cove River Kayakers, represented Australia in separate Olympics in K4 events. However they did not join LCRK.

## A star for the future

If you're looking for a kayaking star of the future, go no further than Ella Beere.

This cheery 17-year-old dominated the women's under 18 events at the National Canoe Championships in Perth, winning three gold medals and a silver out of four events.

Both the single sprints – the 200 metres and the 500 metres – went to her, and she also took out the K2 200 metres with Illawarra paddler Jayde Bagnall. She and Jade were second in the K2 500 metres.



Now her aim is to medal at the Junior World Championships in August in Minsk, Belarus. "I came 7<sup>th</sup> last year in the 200 so I want to do a bit better this year," she said.

As part of her training, Ella has been carving chunks of her times for the weekly Lane Cove River Kayakers time trial. She is 5 minutes faster than any other female has done the 12km course, and only the best of the male paddlers are ahead of her.

Ella got into kayaking at the age of 16 through surf life saving at Avoca "because I really wanted to improve my ski paddling and most of the good ski paddlers seemed to kayak".

Her favourite event is the 200m. "I love a fast sprint because I have always been a sprinter in athletics – 100m and hurdlers – and so I am used to a short, sharp race."

So, here's a fearless prediction (I love making fearless predictions): Ella Beere will be Australia's gun kayak sprinter at the 2020 Olympics.



At this LCRK party to celebrate my 80th birthday in 2014, I said to Ella: "Gee Ella, you're only 64 years younger than me." She thought it was very funny and we both had a good laugh.

Extract from *Rockitt* magazine April 2016