



Geraint Thomas

IN THE SADDLE WITH WALES' OLYMPIC CYCLING CHAMPION



sport@walesonline.co.uk

Chance to compete in home Games is so special

SO 2012 has finally arrived. That year everyone has been talking about forever it seems.

To be fair though, I think all the hype is justified because to be able to compete in my home Olympics is very special.

It's what every athlete dreams of, so to have this opportunity while in my 'prime' is amazing.

It means that much to me that I have decided to skip the Tour de France and Spring Classics in order to com-

pete at my best in the Games.

It only seems like yesterday that we were in Beijing, but now London is less than eight months away.

Time will go by, even faster once the season starts in Adelaide for the Tour Down Under.

Pressure around the velodrome is definitely building.

Expectations are high and everybody wants to succeed.

It is quite a bit different coming back to this type of environment after being on the road the last couple of years.

On the road you are left to your own devices in a way.

The support is there if you need it, but it is left to you to take it or not.

Whereas, with the track, it is a bit like going back to school. The training, gym sessions, lunch, dinner, everything is done for you.

To be honest, I struggled to get back to that way of thinking. Now with the Games just around the corner it has made it a lot easier.

I will still be racing a lot on the road before London.

Along with a few week-long stage races, I will compete in the Giro d'Italia in May (a three-week stage race similar to the Tour de France, except in Italy).

This is what I did before Beijing. It will mean a lot of time away from home, at training camps or racing.

Time away from my girlfriend and mates is probably the hardest thing to deal with as an athlete.



■ Geraint Thomas celebrates after winning gold in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

But all the sacrifices are worthwhile when you stand on the podium at an Olympic Games or World Championships.

So it's 'flat out' now from the Tour Down Under, which starts on the Tuesday until the Games in August.

Hopefully it will all be worthwhile, but one thing's for sure, I will be doing

everything I can to stand on that top step in London!

Meanwhile, I'm pleased to announce I'll continue to be an ambassador for children's charity Action Medical Research in 2012, an epic year for me and the charity.

Action are celebrating 60 years of funding medical success – as well as

organising some great bike rides – and I'm gearing up for my biggest year yet with the Olympics.

To find out more about Action Medical Research's great work or to register for one of their bike rides, visit www.action.org.uk

For all my latest news and results visit www.geraintthomas.com



■ The GB pursuit team on their way to victory at the Laoshan Velodrome

Golden great Hoy to be part of the Revolution

SIR Chris Hoy will take part in his first competition of the Olympic year when he rides in the Revolution event in Manchester at the end of this month.

Hoy, who won three Olympic titles in Beijing in 2008, will on January 28 step up preparations for February's Track World Cup in London – a competition which doubles as the Olympic test

event – and April's Track Cycling World Championship in Melbourne.

"The Revolution will be a good opportunity to race and test our form a few weeks ahead of the London World Cup," the 35-year-old Scot said.

"We've been out in Perth in Australia on a long training camp and it is always good to get back to racing and see how the

hard work has paid off.

"Revolution is a special event with a fantastic home crowd so we always want to perform at our best.

"There's a strong sprint line-up and I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Hoy will compete against British team-mates Matt Crampton, Ross Edgar and Jason Kenny, who was last week

crowned world champion after France's Gregory Bauge was stripped of his title.

Bauge's compatriots Mickael Bourgain, Michael D'Almeida and Quentin Lafargue will also be riding at Revolution.

■ Sir Chris Hoy is launching his 2012 campaign in Manchester

