"I spent the majority of my life in New Plymouth. It's fair to say that I come from a very sporting family. Dad himself represented his province of Wellington in his early days in his chosen sport of athletics and consequently he supported us in whatever sport we chose as we grew up. The first sport I ever played was soccer. I ended up going to Spotswood College in New Plymouth. Although I wasn't the most skilful player ever around I had speed on my side and that was evident from early on, and even going through Primary School with school athletics, I would always win the 100 and the 200 metre races. I played soccer and volleyball there as well.

At that stage in the early years I never had any real aspirations to go to the Olympics but that changed later on nor did I have an occupation in mind."

The Balanced Development of Body, Will and Mind

"The most influential person in my track and field times, was a teacher of mine, and her name was Rowie Gould. She used to coach me after school and get me very enthusiastic with athletics. Some friends and I decided to get involved with surf life saving, so we all joined the New Plymouth Old Boys' Surf Club at Dohere and had instant success and some very, very good years after that - I would have been probably 16 or 17 at the time.

I had two role models that I admired; they were Daley Thompson, and Alan Wells. Both men competed and won Gold Medals at the Games of the XXIII Olympiad, Moscow, 1980.

I honestly believed I was going to be a sprinter, and then I thought well if I'm not going to be a sprinter I'll look at another way of doing it, and I thought, well I'm going to have to choose another sport.

I actually had visions of me standing on a dias of all things - Yeah, although not going to be a sprinter I'll look at another way of doing it, and I thought, well I'm definitely choked up, thinking I've actually done it, and I've reached my goal, and what I'm going to do, and I've done it, and I'd achieved it, and that was even before competing. And I thought that's it, I've done it! I'm here.

That was a special feeling for me.

Pride in Participation

Be the Best You Can Be

I was trying to prepare mentally for my events, which was hard in a big room, so it was a matter of bundling up, putting layers on layers, going outside and trying to run and stretch and stuff like that. Everybody has his or her own method of preparing, but part of my mental build-up was going through the national anthem in my mind. And still, even now, the national anthem is a strong pull in me. I'm very passionate about it, and passionate about my country.

And I guess there was a huge joy in effort.

Closing Ceremony

Everybody received a Participation Medal and there was a feeling of a common bond, and it was a very happy and joyous occasion.

We'd trained so hard, and we'd set our goals and we'd achieved our goals, and now it was all over.

Message to Youth

First yourself a goal and do something it takes to achieve it, and start off with small goals, achieve those, and work on to bigger goals. You should do everything within your power to achieve them and you have to know that you will need to sacrifice everything along the way.

I set my goals that I wanted to be a sprinter and although I didn't reach within your power to achieve them and you have to know that you will need to sacrifice everything along the way."

Blair Telford – Olympian