

The Observer

Running's covergirl

Hilary Stellingwerff featured in the premiere edition of Canadian Running Magazine

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Stefania Barron, Running Room store manager of Lambton Mall, shows a copy of Canadian Running magazine featuring former Sarnian Hilary Stellingwerff (nee: Edmundson). The magazine made its debut in February. Bottom left: Stellingwerff on the cover.
GLENN OGILVIE The Observer

Olympic hopeful Hilary Stellingwerff has got it covered.

For the former track and field standout at St. Christopher Secondary School in Sarnia and reigning Canadian women's 1,500 metre champion, 2008 is already off to a good start and the season is just getting under way.

Stellingwerff, who won her first Canadian women's 1,500m title last July at Windsor, is featured on the cover of the inaugural edition of Canadian Running Magazine that went on sale across Ontario in February.

"They asked me about my training. How I felt about the past summer's experience at the World Championships in Osaka and my goals for this summer, leading into the Olympics," Stellingwerff said of the experience, in an e-mail interview with The Observer from her home in Switzerland.

"We did the interview over e-mail in late fall," she continued, explaining the decision for a cover photo was made later after the magazine learned she'd be back home in Canada to race the Cross Country Nationals in Guelph on Dec. 2 and would be staying until the end of January.

"Once they knew that I'd be in Canada for a while, they asked if I'd consider being on the cover and going to Toronto for the photo shoot. I was excited and honoured, of course I said yes!"

Stellingwerff said the one-day photo shoot was conducted in Toronto in mid-December.

"It was my first time doing a photo shoot, but I had a lot of fun and felt really comfortable. New Balance sent a bunch of gear to them before hand so my wardrobe was set and I just had to show up and strike a bunch of poses," said Stellingwerff.

Her goals for this year include defending the Canadian 1,500- metre title she won last year and qualifying for the Summer Olympics in Beijing.

"I have a plan in place with my coach Dave Scott-Thomas in Guelph and my secondary coach here in Switzerland –Trent, my husband, so that I'm ready to do everything I need for the Olympics," Stellingwerff said.

To qualify for the Olympics, Stellingwerff needs to achieve her second Olympic qualifying time before the National Championships in July. She achieved her first qualifying time last summer with a time of 4:05.70.

Stellingwerff's training is designed to give her the best possible preparation for competing at Beijing, which means going directly from Windsor to St. Moritz, Switzerland for a month of high-altitude training.

"I'll have one race in Monaco at the end of that training camp to make sure things are in check," she said.

If successful in qualifying, Stellingwerff would rejoin Team Canada in early August for a mandatory two-week training camp in Singapore to acclimatize to the heat and time zones.

"Provided I've done everything right up until this point and qualified for the team, I will head to Singapore, and then onward to Beijing. My main goal will be to qualify for the final in Beijing - from there, anything can happen," said Stellingwerff.

So far, so good.

On Feb. 10, Stellingwerff qualified for the World Indoor championships taking place this weekend in Valencia, Spain, when she won in Karlsruhe, Germany with a time of 4:10.32 for 1,500-m – the minimum time to make the team was 4:11.50.

"I am using the championships more for a build up for the summer and for an excellent competitive opportunity to race some of the women who will be in Beijing," she said.

"I've been training really hard this winter and only plan to bring it down about a week before Valencia – I will save my major peak for August.

In terms of racing this summer, Stellingwerff said the full schedule of each race won't really come out until World Indoors, "so I have to plan after that."

However, current plans will have Stellingwerff gearing up in late May and June and race about four 1500s in Europe to go after the Olympic qualifying times.

Specifically, Stellingwerff needs to achieve one Olympic A+ standard of 4:05.70 between May 15 and July 6, or between April 1 and July 6 one Olympic A standard of 4:07.0, plus one Olympic B standard of 4:08.0.

"Then I have to get top-three at the National Championships in Windsor," said Stellingwerff, adding the Olympic qualifying times she needs are set by the Canadian Olympic standards which are more strict than the actual Olympic qualifying standard of 4:08.0.

The first issue of Canadian Running magazine tells also tell the story of Danny Kassap, a political refugee from Congo with dreams of Canadian citizenship and the Beijing Olympics, profiles B.C.'s Bastion Running Club, explores the surge in popularity of running forums with a look at <http://www.runningmania.com>, talks to running celebrity Ron MacLean of CBC's Hockey Night in Canada, and takes readers on a running tour of Quebec City and explores trail runs in the Maritimes and the Rockies.

Other features include training and nutrition tips, inspiration for winter running, and both shoe and gear reviews.

Running Magazine went on sale at newsstands in Ontario on Feb. 21. It is available at Running Room stores across the country, most Shoppers Drug Marts and at all major Canadian airports.

Canadian Running Magazine also launched a website at www.runningmagazine.ca.

Launched by publisher Grippéd Inc., Canadian Running Magazine is the only running magazine published in Canada and with all-Canadian content.

"This is the first running magazine that is truly dedicated to all levels of runners in the Great White North, from St. John's to Ottawa to Victoria," said editor-in-chief Michal Kapral.

"At last, Canadians can read about the best running routes, the excellent races, the most influential and up-and-coming runners, inspirational stories, winter running tips, and running news – in Canada! Oh, and running programs in kilometres, not miles!"

Coverage will also include articles on the latest running issues, fitness tips for all seasons, diet and nutrition information, in-depth features, and expert reviews of the latest footwear, fashion and accessories for runners.

"Our editorial team is led by accomplished runners who are tapped into the running community," says Grippéd Inc. publisher Sam Cohen. "We found the right people and ran with them. And hey, the first issue speaks for itself."

Kapral won the Toronto Marathon in 2002 with a personal best time of 2:30:40, holds the Guinness World Record for the fastest marathon while juggling (2:50:09), and is a sponsored athlete.

Senior editor Kevin Mackinnon is an accomplished runner, triathlete and coach, and the editor of Triathlon Magazine Canada. Senior editor Alex Hutchinson represented Canada at the World Championships. Publisher Sam Cohen is a life-long runner who will focus on 5K and 10K races in 2008. Publisher and editorial director Dave Chaundy-Smart is a passionate runner who completed his first and second marathons two weeks apart last fall.

Cohen says the Canadian running magazine market has significant room for growth. The U.S. publication Runner's World sells about 25,000 subscriptions in Canada and 10,000 copies on newsstands – with total U.S. sales of 600,000. Based on population – Canada has one-tenth the population of the U.S. – Canadian Running Magazine has the potential to reach 60,000 Canadians subscriptions.

Canada has an estimated one million runners, more than 500 running races, and expected sales of two million pairs of running shoes in 2008.