

LONDON CALLING

Four Bunbury athletes in the running for Olympic selection

RILEY STUART

THE countdown is on — just one year to go until the 2012 London Olympic games.

And while events are set to take place far away from the South West, Bunbury is making a bid to be a part of the action with four athletes in serious contention for places in the Australian team.

No stranger to jet-setting, BMX star Lauren Reynolds' bid to race at the games has taken her around the globe over the last 12 months.

On Sunday Reynolds left for Copenhagen, Denmark where she will compete at the 2011 UCI World Championships — an event that she describes as the "most crucial" for Olympic hopefuls.

"But I don't like to think of it in that way too much because sometimes that can play with the whole pressure thing and you can make mistakes," she said.

"I'm not really thinking of it that way but at the end of the day it is very important and it's the biggest race of the year.

"The judges will look at this race as

'You never forget where you came from and who taught you along the way' — Olympic basketball hopeful Mark Worthington

the main one as well as the World Cup following that."

Reynolds, 20, said her Olympic bid was "on track", but the Australian team will not be finalised until early 2012.

The next month is critical. After a week in Copenhagen, Reynolds will head to the Netherlands for a fortnight of intense practice, and after that, make her way to London for round three of the Supercross World Cup that will give her the chance to race on the track that will be used for the Olympics.

Meanwhile in Kazakhstan, another of Bunbury's London hopefuls has been sweating it out at the Junior World Boxing Championships.

Representing Australia, Bunbury's Nathaniel May, 16, lost to the Euro-

pean champion 15-5 in what was a difficult fight for the South West talent as his opponent had a significant height advantage of almost 30cm.

Speaking from the team's base in Astana, coach Pete Stokes was upbeat about Nathaniel's Olympic chances.

"He did Bunbury and Australia proud, and he should still end up with a good world ranking," Stokes said.

May put his hat in the ring for a surprise Olympic selection when he claimed the Australian junior featherweight title in March.

Back in Australia, NBL star and Australian Boomer Mark Worthington is preparing to represent his nation again in some looming Olympic qualifying matches against New Zealand.

Scheduled for early September, the three-game series against the Tall Blacks will decide the Australasian representative at the London Games.

Since his debut in 2005 Worthington, 28, has cemented himself in the Boomers' roster, where he has been a member of their 2008 Beijing Olympics squad, and Commonwealth Games gold-medal winning side in 2006.

But Worthington told the *Times* he still pinches himself every time he represents his country.

"Every moment is as special as the last for me," he said.

"I've been lucky enough to do a couple of World Championships and an Olympics and obviously those moments stand out in my mind.

"There aren't too many things I forget when I put the green and gold on."

Worthington said he had fond memories of his days playing basketball in Bunbury, and plans to take his wife Andria, and two children to London should he win selection for the Games.

"I've had some great coaches along the way, I've been very fortunate," Worthington said.

"By no means am I a flashy player and what they instilled in me then has held true to what I do now.

"You never forget where you came from and who taught you along the way."

Taekwondo sensation Jasmine Klumpp, 18, showed she was a serious contender for the Games after winning gold at the Oceania Olympic Qualifying Preliminary Selections in Melbourne recently, scoring 29 points and having only four scored against her. None of her three opponents made it through a full fight.

Klumpp trains up to four hours a day at Bunbury-based institution Taekwondo Central with coach Justin Warren.

"Our plan has been to be competitive and learn, get faster, stronger, increase skills and experience for the first six months, then make a strong attempt at the team in the later selections for a strong finish," Warren said.

In three weeks Klumpp will fight for the right to be Australia's representative at the Oceania Qualifying Tournament, to be held in New Caledonia during September.



Jasmine Klumpp
TAEKWONDO Age: 18

Showed she's a serious contender for the Olympic team after winning gold at the Oceania Olympic Qualifying Preliminary Selections recently.

Lauren Reynolds
BMX Age: 20

Olympic selection bid continues this week at the BMX World Championships in Copenhagen Denmark — a key event.

Mark Worthington
BASKETBALL Age: 28

Has been a regular Australian Boomers' squad member since making his debut in 2005. Took part in the 2008 Beijing Games.

Nathaniel May
BOXING Age: 16

Currently competing at the Junior World Championships in Kazakhstan where his Olympic chances will hinge on a good performance.