



PAUL GRAY

1969 -



Discipline: Cross Country Skiing

Olympic Participation: Albertville 1992, Nagano 1998

Medal awarded in: 2021

Paul Gray was eight years old when his family moved from Melbourne to Mt Beauty. His father had taken a job as an engineer with the hydroelectric scheme and Paul's parents thought Mt Beauty would be a great place to raise their three boys. What they probably didn't anticipate was that, just over a decade later, all three of them would be overseas at the same time, trying out for the 1992 Olympics.

Paul L'Huillier was a key figure in the development of Paul Gray. A PE teacher at Paul's school, L'Huillier started training Paul's older brother Mark and eventually became Paul's own coach when he was 14. The two kept working together for years and Gray still remembers fondly the times his coach would knock on his bedroom window early on a Saturday morning to go running. L'Huillier was a strong believer in Gray's potential and volunteered huge amounts of time writing training programs and supporting his athlete's development. He followed Paul Gray to the Olympics and was his coach when the skier made his Olympic debut at the Albertville Winter Games in 1992.

After the Games, Gray decided to take up biathlon. Despite meeting the qualifying criteria for the 1994 Olympic Games, he was not selected to the Australian team after Sandra Paintin-Paul achieved a better result in the last qualifying World Cup and took the last available spot. Gray not only missed out on his second Olympic participation, but also on the opportunity to join his brother Mark in Lillehammer, where the older sibling competed in cross-country skiing.

In 1997 Paul decided to switch from biathlon back to cross-country skiing. After participating in the Nordic Skiing World Championships in Thronheim (NOR), he became the first Australian to win the Kangaroo Hoppet, the long-distance cross-country race, part of the Worldloppet circuit. From there he went on to make the Olympic team again and compete at his second Winter Games.

Once retired from ski racing Paul Gray eventually returned to Mt Beauty, twenty years after he left, with his own young family. His two daughters are now teenagers and have both inherited his love for the snow.

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ANTHONY EVANS

1969 -



Discipline: Cross Country Skiing

Olympic Participation: 1992 Albertville, 1994 Lillehammer, 1998 Nagano

Medal awarded in: 2021

Anthony Evans grew up in Myrtleford, VIC and got into cross-country skiing at an early age with his dad and siblings. Growing up exploring the Mt Buffalo plateau, Mt Hotham, Mt Bogong and the Bogong High Plains was a special experience for the young Evans and made cross-country a sport for life.

Evans' breakthrough moment happened unexpectedly and caught even Anthony himself by surprise. In 1992, arguably with very few outstanding results to his name, Evans was selected to the Australian team headed to Albertville for the 1992 Winter Olympic Games. After competing in all the distance events, he thought he'd have a crack at the 50km event. With no pressure on his shoulders and nothing to lose, Evans ended up producing the best performance of his entire Olympic career, finishing in 37th place.

At the end of 1994, by then already a two-time Olympian, Evans decided to abandon ski racing. It turned out to be a temporary retirement: after missing the 1995 season, he felt a burning desire to come back and achieve more, so he quit his job and went back to training, firmly setting his sights on the 1998 Olympics. In Nagano Evans became the first Australian cross-country skier to compete in three Olympic Games.

Sport continued to play an important part in Anthony Evans' life once he retired from competitive skiing for good. Through sport he met his wife Carla, a three-time speed skating Olympian for the Netherlands, and sporting activities continued to take the Evans family to all parts of the world, be it cycling through the French Alps, skiing in the USA and Europe or just bushwalking through Tasmania with their two daughters, who share the same love of sport. One of them, Zana Evans, is also a cross-country skier and competed in the 2020 Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne.

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