

## **Sporting History: Belinda Barnes (Wright) – Softball**

### **International / National Representation**

Belinda made her senior debut in the Australian Women's Open Softball Team (Aussie Spirit) in 2001 at the Trans-Tasman Challenge and went on to play 224 games for Aussie Spirit. She played in 34 international tournaments including 6 Canada Cups (2003-2008), Olympic Qualifying Event (2003), 2 Japan Cups (2002, 2007), 2 Blacktown International Tournaments (2004, 2005), China Cup (2007) and many more. Detailed list below.

Belinda missed selection in the Australian Team which was to compete in the 2004 Athens Olympics, but she was called into the team as a reserve. She trained, competed and travelled with the team to the Athens Olympics where she was required to be ready to play if needed. The experience of being an Olympic reserve helped Belinda to firmly get her softball career on track.

Belinda became a key member in the Aussie Spirit Softball Team and in 2006 and she was selected in the Australian Team which contested the 2006 ISF Women's World Softball Championships held in Beijing, China from 27 August - 5 September. This Team won Bronze with the first four teams qualifying for the 2008 Olympics.

Belinda achieved the ultimate in her sport when she was selected as a member of the Australian Women's Softball Team which competed at the 2008 Olympic Games. The 2008 Olympics were held in Beijing, China and the Australian Women's Team won Bronze.

### **TOURNAMENTS – Australian Representation**

2001	Trans-Tasman Challenge	2005	Canada Cup
2001	New Zealand tour	2005	World Cup
2002	South Pacific Classic	2006	International Series v Chinese Taipei
2002	Japan tour	2006	Canada Cup
2002	Japan Cup	2006	US Cup
2003	Olympic Qualifier Sydney	2006	World Championship, Beijing, China
2003	Canada Cup	2007	China Series
2003	San Francisco tour	2007	Italy Series
2003	Japan tour	2007	Netherlands Series
2003	Hobart International v Japan	2007	Canada Cup
2004	Blacktown International	2007	China Cup
2004	Canada Cup	2007	Japan Cup
2004	Champions Cup	2007	Japan Elite Challenge
2004	Pre-Olympic Tournament, Italy	2008	International Challenge
2005	Blacktown International	2008	Canada Cup
2005	Chicago Tournament	2008	Beijing Olympic Games
2005	International Chula Vista		

### **Gilley's Shield – State Teams playing in National Championships**

For 10 straight years, Belinda was a member of the NSW Open Women's Softball Team (NSW Firestars) which competed in the Australian Women's Fastpitch Championships (Gilley's Shield) from 2000 – 2009. After a 6 year break, and 2 children later, Belinda again found herself in the NSW Firestars in 2015 & 2016. With this team, Belinda won 6 National Championships (2000, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2008 & 2015) and she captained the team in 2009.

In 2007, Belinda was named the NSW Female Softballer of the Year and another notable achievement, was when she was named Most Valuable Player for the 3rd round of the 2007 National Softball League.

Belinda was a NSWIS athlete from 1999 - 2009 and as a part of this team, competed in every annual Australia Cup and National League Tournament. She was also a member of the AIS softball program from 2000 - 2008.

### **Hunter Residency**

Belinda was born in Newcastle, NSW and grew up in Bonnells Bay. She attended Bonnells Bay Primary School and Morisset High School where she was named the Caltex Allrounder (for academic and sporting achievements) in her final school year, 1998.

Belinda first began playing softball when her teacher introduced her to the game in primary school. She honed her skills and was selected in the Hunter Region PSSA team in 1991 & 1992 which lead to selection in the NSW PSSA Softball Team in 1992. Belinda went on to represent the Hunter at various CHS tournaments throughout her High School years. Although she missed selection to compete with NSW at the CHS All Schools Softball Championships, she was picked up by Northern Territory to compete in the All Schools event.

Growing up, Belinda was able to develop her skills and improve her knowledge of softball whilst competing with the locally based "Castle Lakers" in the State League competition. Being a member of the Hunter Academy of Sport in the early 90's was also beneficial to Belinda's development as an athlete.

Aside from softball, Belinda also represented the Hunter Region at the NSW CHS Athletics Carnival in 1996 for javelin, triple jump and 4x100m relay. She won a bronze medal in the javelin.

### **Retired from Sport**

Belinda has now retired from playing Softball at top (national) level.

### **Other Achievements**

In her junior years, Belinda competed with NSW contesting the 1996 U/16 Australian Softball Championships and the 1998 & 1999 U/19 Australian Softball Championships. NSW were national champions on each of these occasions.

As a junior, Belinda was also selected as member of the U/19 Australian Softball Squad and was successful in her bid to become a member of the Australian Under-19 side. This team competed for the 1999 Junior Women's World Championships held in Taipei, Taiwan where the team finished 5th.

Belinda gained a scholarship to attend the University of Newcastle and she enrolled in a Bachelor of Teaching / Bachelor of Health and Physical Education degree. She studied from 1999 – 2002 and after graduating, Belinda, was targeted by the NSW Department of Education and Training, who offered her full time, permanent employment. She began her teaching career in 2003 at Narara Valley High School on the Central Coast. Belinda is still teaching at this school.

Belinda was a finalist in 2003 for the University of Newcastle 2002 Sports-Person-of-the-Year award.

Later in her career, Belinda was a member of the North Shore District Softball Association State League Team in 2014 and 2015 with the team winning the State League competition on both those occasions. She received the batter of the series for this competition in 2014.