



# Victory to bring new outlook

Scott Gullan

COMMENT

THIS time two years ago Tamsyn Lewis was embroiled in her famous catfight with Jana Rawlinson.

In the end there was no winner out of that one and when Lewis then showed up on *Dancing with the Stars*, she copped it from all angles as it seemed her celebrity status was getting ahead of her deeds on the track.

Finally, that ugly chapter in Australian athletics can be put to bed, thanks to one important fact — both women are now world champions.

Rawlinson's performance last year to win the 400m hurdles world title eight months after giving birth was amazing, but Lewis produced something just as unbelievable yesterday.

Her performance to win the world 800m indoor title not only shocked her but also the athletics world. A report on the IAAF website described the victory as a "seismic shock".

A close-up fourth in the semi-final at the Sydney 2000 Olympics was Lewis' previous best performance at a major championships.

The world indoor championships rank a tier below the world championships but still much higher than the Commonwealth Games.

Lewis' 800m final yesterday had some serious class in it.

Mozambique's Maria Mutola may be getting on, but she is a superstar and was gunning for her eighth indoor title, while Spain's Mayte

Martinez ran third in the world championships last year.

After an Australian season where she won her 13th national title, taking the 400m-800m double, Lewis arrived at the indoors just wanting to get past the first round.

Last year at the Osaka world championships she went out in the opening round. In Athens, four years ago, it was the same result.

But this time she knew she was in career-best condition. That's why when the gap presented itself with 350m to go, she took it. Previously, she wouldn't have had the confidence in her body to make such a move.

Now, she knows she is good enough. And that changes her mindset for Beijing dramatically.

When she steps up to the line she won't be some unknown 30-year-old Australian, she will be the world indoor champion. And she doesn't have to look too far back for some promising precedents.

Remember Brit Kelly Holmes? She was written off and hounded by the press yet came out at age 34 in Athens and won Olympic gold in the 800m and 1500m.

That may be stretching things, but the moral of the story is that after years of trying, everything finally clicked for Holmes and look what happened.

Everything finally clicked for Lewis yesterday and look what happened. Maybe, it could again in Beijing.