

## Athlete profile no. 3:

### Fabrice Lapierre

**D.O.B.** 07/10/1983

**Coach:** Dan Pfaff

**Former coach:** Fred O'Connor 1994-2002, Jim Vanhootegem 2003-2012

**Occupation:** Graduate A&M University Texas, Professional athlete

**Club:** Westfields A.C. Joined in 1997, awarded Life Membership in 2007

### International Championships:

**2002 World Junior championships:** Silver medal long jump (7.74m), 6<sup>th</sup> qf 100m (10.48)

**2006 Commonwealth Games:** Bronze medal Long jump (8.10m)

**2006 World Cup:** 8<sup>th</sup> long jump (7.58m)

**2008 Olympic Games:** Qualifying round long jump (7.90m)

**2008 World Athletics Final:** 1<sup>st</sup> place long jump (8.14m)

**2009 World Championships:** 4<sup>th</sup> place long jump (8.21m)

**2009 World Athletics Final:** 1<sup>st</sup> place long jump (8.33m)

**2010 World Indoor Championships 2010 – Long Jump** Gold medal (8.17m) – 8.19 in qual round.

**2010 Commonwealth Games:** Gold medal long jump (8.30m) Comm. Games record

**2011 World Championships:** Qual. Round (7.76m)

**2013 World Championships:** No mark

**2014 Commonwealth Games:** 4<sup>th</sup> long jump (8.00m)

**2015 World Championships:** Silver medal long jump (8.24m)

**2016 Olympic Games:** 10<sup>th</sup> long jump (7.87m) 7.96 qual round.



### Other Major Internationals (a selection of the better ones):

**2016 Rabat Grand Prix** 2<sup>nd</sup> long jump 8.36m

**2015 World International Challenge, Zagreb** 1<sup>st</sup> long jump 8.29m

**2013 Houston Rice All Comers meet** 1<sup>st</sup> long jump 8.25m

**2012 New York Adidas Grand Prix** 2<sup>nd</sup> long jump 8.10m, 8.14m (2.4)

**2011 Sotteville (FRA) International meeting** 3<sup>rd</sup> long jump 8.04m

**2010 Nuoro Memorial International, Italy** 1<sup>st</sup> long jump 8.40m

**2009 Aviva British Grand Prix** 1<sup>st</sup> long jump (8.16m)

**2009 Athens Grand Prix** 1<sup>st</sup> long jump (8.24m)

**2009 Golden Gala Meet (IAT)** 3<sup>rd</sup> long jump (8.22m)

**2009 Spanish Grand Prix** 1<sup>st</sup> (8.57m 3.6w) (8.35m legal)

**2009 Golden Spike (CZE)** 3<sup>rd</sup> (8.15m)

**2009 German Grand Prix** 4<sup>th</sup> long jump (8.04m)

**2009 Pre Classic (USA)** 3<sup>rd</sup> long jump (8.02m)

**2008 Croatia Grand Prix** 1<sup>st</sup> long jump (8.14m)

**2008 AVIVA British Grand Prix** 3<sup>rd</sup> long jump (7.96m)

**2008 Cork Meet Ireland** 1<sup>st</sup> long jump (7.95m)

**2008 Thessaloniki Meet Greece** 2<sup>nd</sup> long jump (8.06m)

**2008 Shanghai Grand Prix** 2<sup>nd</sup> long jump (8.15m)

**2006 Nuoro Grand Prix Italy** 1<sup>st</sup> long jump (8.19m)

### National Championships:

**1999 Australian all Schools** (Sydney) – U18 Silver medal 110m hurdles (14.77), U18 9<sup>th</sup> long jump (6.44m), U18 6<sup>th</sup> triple jump (13.70m)

**2000 Australian U20** (Sydney) – U20 8<sup>th</sup> long jump (6.02m), U18 6<sup>th</sup> triple jump (13.32m)  
**2000 Australian U18** (Hobart) – U18 7<sup>th</sup> 110m hurdles (21.81), U18 11<sup>th</sup> long jump (6.05m), U18 8<sup>th</sup> triple jump 912.58m)  
**2000 Australian All Schools** (Adelaide) – U20 Gold medal long jump (7.11m), U20 Bronze medal triple jump (14.08m), U18 Bronze medal 100m (10.81), U18 Gold medal 200m (21.40), U18 Gold medal long jump (7.39m), U18 Silver medal triple jump (15.00m)  
**2001 Australian All Schools** (Melbourne) – U20 Silver medal 100m (10.94), U20 Bronze medal 200m (22.16), 5<sup>th</sup> U20 Long Jump (7.16m), U20 Gold medal triple jump (14.99m)  
**2002 Australian U20** (Brisbane) – U20 Silver medal 100m (10.64), U20 Gold medal 200m (21.54), U20 Gold medal long jump (7.71m)  
**2003 Australian Open** (Brisbane) - 3 fouls long jump  
**2004 Australian Open** (Sydney) 7<sup>th</sup> long jump (7.54m)  
**2005 Australian Open** (Sydney) – injured  
**2006 Australian Open** (Sydney) – Gold medal long jump (8.12m)  
**2007 Australian Open** (Brisbane) Qual. round – 6.70m  
**2008 Australian Open** (Brisbane) – 8<sup>th</sup> long jump  
**2009 Australian Open** (Brisbane) – Gold medal long jump (8.29m)  
**2010 Australian Open** (Perth) – Gold medal long jump (8.78m)  
**2011 Australian Open** (Olympic Park Melbourne) - Bronze (7.83m)  
**2013 Australian Open** (SOPAC) – Gold long jump (8.00m)  
**2014 Australian Open** (Lakeside Stadium, Melbourne) Silver medal long jump (7.87m)  
**2016 Australian Open** (SOPAC) – Gold medal long jump (8.27m)

#### **NSW Championships** (limited results available prior to 2002)

**2001 NSWCHS** – 17+ Bronze medal 100m (10.96), 17+ Gold medal long jump (7.10m), 17+ Gold medal triple jump (15.07m)  
**2002 NSW Open**– Bronze medal Long Jump (7.24m)  
**2002 NSW U20** – Silver medal 100m (11.02), Silver medal 200m (21.42), Gold medal long jump (7.42m)  
**2008 NSW Open** – Gold medal long jump (7.75m)

#### **RECORD(S):**

**NSW Open record – long jump** – 8.35m – Spain 2009

**NSW Open record – long jump** – 8.40m – Nuoro 2010

**Australian Open record – long jump indoors** – 8.19m – Doha, Qatar 11/03/10

#### **Brief history**

Even though Fabrice had been coached by Fred O'Connor at an early age, he didn't apply for Westfields Sports until Year 8 when he was accepted. Fabrice displayed early ability in a variety of events including horizontal jumps, sprints and hurdles. Probably his first success in high school/senior athletics was in the hurdles and this became his focus for a few years. Years 8 and 9 saw numerous state medals in hurdles, long jump and triple jump, along with the occasional success in sprints. Fabrice trained hard through year 10 and displayed enormous patience while he made numerous National finals finishing just short of the medals.

It wasn't until year 11 that Fabrice was finally able to perform with physical ease and confidence; and perform he did! At the 2000 Australian All Schools in Adelaide, Fabrice came home with 7 medals (including relays) and three performances which broached the World Junior standards in 200m, Long Jump and Triple Jump. In fact Fabrice's 200m time of 21.40 still stands today as the Westfields Open record. It was clearly one of the most impressive performances of the meet ever at an All Schools. Then in 2001 at the Australian All Schools in Melbourne, under cold windy conditions, Fabrice performed again with Gold, Silver and Bronze in triple jump, 200m and 100m. Despite jumping a reasonably impressive 7.16m in long jump, Fab finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place in what was probably the strongest selection of long jump athletes in the history of the event, however within 4 months he would leave them all behind in one of the most impressive World Junior Trials in history.

With the upcoming 2002 World Junior Championships in Jamaica only 7 months away Fabrice became determined to qualify. The only problem was that he was capable of doing so in three separate events (4 if you include the triple jump). Fred O'Connor brought the best out of Fabrice in his lead up to the 2002 World Junior Trials (National U20 in Brisbane) when Fab won the NSW Open title at the young age of 19. He continued his sprints training as well with Dan and by the time of the Trials in Brisbane Fabrice was almost invincible. He won the 200m final with consummate ease and more importantly ran 10.64 into a headwind in the 100m final to pick up a Silver medal. He had already qualified for World Juniors in 100m and 200m before contesting his primary event the Long Jump. The 2002 National U20 long jump final was one of the most memorable ever held. There were three athletes who had already posted qualifying jumps; training partner John Thornell, Scott Crowe (ACT) and Fabrice. The winner would gain automatic selection and the other spot would most likely go to the runner-up. Fabrice was not in either of the top positions after 5 rounds and was about to miss out on selection when he pulled out a massive 7.71m personal best with his final leap to take the title. It was a 6<sup>th</sup> round effort he would reproduce at the World Junior Championships later in Jamaica.

Fabrice had qualified for the 2002 World Juniors' to compete in 100m, 200m and long jump. The long jump was obviously his best chance for a medal, but his next best chance was the 200m. Unfortunately the final of the 200m was scheduled during the long jump and Fabrice dropped the 200m and kept the 100m. Fab recorded a club open record of 10.56 seconds in the first round, then a wind assisted 10.48 in the quarter finals. Then it was time for the long jump final. Fabrice had made it through the qualifying round with ease, but was struggling in the final. It was the second last day of competition and the Australian athletes were generally under-performing. Team management had held several meetings reprimanding the team for their apparent lack of discipline. Even mild-mannered Fabrice had been unjustly criticised by management. Undeterred by the problems of the Australian team Fabrice nevertheless found himself after 2 jumps in the final out of the top eight and just scraped into the 7<sup>th</sup> position with his 3<sup>rd</sup> round attempt. His 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> jumps saw no improvement. Then with his last and final attempt Fabrice pulled out the big one again leaping a new personal best jump of 7.74 metres to take the Silver medal. Team management held another meeting and used Fabrice's courageous performance to lift the spirits of the Australian team and the last day of competition saw team mates outperform themselves with a second Aussie medal.

Observing from the sidelines in Jamaica were several USA University scouts. Fabrice was approached by several of them, but the one that caught his attention was A & M University of Texas (one of the big 12). Upon returning home, Fabrice had to make a life changing decision. The AIS wanted him on full scholarship, A & M wanted him on full scholarship and then there was the other alternative of staying with Fred. However, Fred fully supported Fabrice going to the USA. A dinner was held at Fabrice's home in Quakers Hill. Flying up from Canberra for the dinner was the head coach of Athletics Australia and the National Jumps coach. Also there was Fred and Dan. They all gave their pitch. Later, with Fred's blessing, Fabrice took up the Texas option. It has to be said that in the history of Australian Athletes taking up these USA scholarships, very few have ever gone on to succeed in athletics, let alone show significant improvement. Fabrice would break that mould!

Within two years Fabrice had won the 'BIG 12' meeting along with the Championship ring (top 12 Universities in USA). Then in the following year 2005 he would win the NCAA Championships which is huge in the States and he received World-wide recognition. There were many untimely injuries in those early years. Probably the most disappointing would be Fab's first time back on Australian soil to contest the Australian Open in 2003 when he suffered from severe shin soreness and couldn't open up on the runway. He would also miss the 2005 Australian Open final injured. But probably the most peculiar one was the 2007 Australian Open. Fabrice was again suffering from shin problems and in an effort to save himself for the final, he courageously decided to contest the qualifying round jumping off his other foot. He was actually capable of jumping over 7 metres on his wrong foot (enough to make the final) and had easily done it a few days earlier in training, but unfortunately it didn't happen on the day and he failed to qualify for the final.

By 2006 Fabrice easily won his first Australian Open and gained automatic selection for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games. Unfortunately Fred did not receive any team accreditation and Fabrice would be in the hands of the team coaches. Fabrice secured the Bronze medal in his first Senior International Championships. Later that year in Italy, Fabrice would move up to number 4 on the All time Australian rankings with a magnificent 8.19m leap at the Italian Grand Prix. This would become the best leap by an Australian for an eight year period since Jai Taurima set the Australian record of 8.49 metres at the 2000 Olympics. Officials on the long jump in Italy informed Fab that he took off from behind the board and in reality it was closer to 8.40m.

The next year was an up and down year with more niggling injuries. He could only record a 6.70m step into the pit during the qualifying round of the long jump at the 2007 Australian Open. Then 2008 was Fab's chance to qualify for the Olympics. It started off well for him when he attended his first NSW Open Championships since the last one he won back in 2002. Fab won easily on a cold and wet Saturday night. But the defending National Champion could only manage 8<sup>th</sup> place at the Olympic Selection Trials in Brisbane. Fabrice had already recorded a 'B' qualifier of 8.10m, but the selectors left him out of the team. I received a call from his sister Beatrice who asked for advice about an appeal. I indicated she had 24 hours to submit one and suggested a few key points. Beatrice submitted the appeal and the independent jury was convened. I have to say that the success rate for appeals is traditionally very slim. To everyone's astonishment the appeal was upheld and Fabrice was added to the Olympic team. One of the key points in the appeal demonstrated that Fabrice had always performed well in International meets (World Junior Silver & Commonwealth Games Bronze). Another key point was that he had every year satisfied the selection criteria of Athletics Australia. For the past six years he would make two trips to Australia – once for the Grand Prix's and once for the Nationals – as per the selection criteria he always did what was expected of him and unlike other big name athletes never begrudged having to return to Australia for the Nationals. Fabrice went to Beijing knowing that an 8.00m jump would get him into the final. He recorded 7.90m and just missed the cut off. Long time friend Aaron Warburton in the crowd recalled one of his leaps was 'humungous' but a foul.

Fabrice, never daunted, went on to finish the European season with incredible success; jumping 8.14m in Croatia, 8.15m in Shanghai and won the Golden League Final (World Athletics Final) with 8.14m. Along with the Golden league victory came a cheque for US \$35,000. Having now gained the respect of the selectors Fabrice was contacted after his win in Shanghai by the chief selector congratulating him on a World Championships qualifier. Then returning to Australia for the Grand Prix's and Australian Open Fabrice would contest his seventh National Open event. It certainly didn't get off to a good start and Fabrice was sitting in 7<sup>th</sup> position with one jump left. Just as he had done on numerous occasions in the past at major tournaments he pulled out a massive P.B. leaping an incredible 8.29 metres with 0.8 wind. It moved him up to number 3 alltime Australian.

The European season in 2009 was Fabrice's finest ever. He produced the longest ever leap by Australian when he won the Spanish Grand Prix with an impossible 8.57m (3.6) defeating the World and Olympic Champion Irving Saladino. In history no Australian has ever landed that far in the pit. To make things even better he backed it up with a legal 8.35m leap in the same competition to rise to number 2 on the All-time Australian rankings ... only Jai's Olympic Silver medal jump was better. Then just to prove it wasn't a fluke a few days later he won the Athens Grand Prix with 8.24m. It was the sixth time that year Fabrice had jumped over 8.20 metres. Then came the 2009 World Championships. Fabrice qualified easily for the final and came home with 4<sup>th</sup> placing. Fabrice's distance was a very impressive 8.21 metres despite a recent hamstring problem that kept him from training only a few weeks earlier. In his interview he used no excuses and said he did the best he could on the day (but we knew that hamstring problem had taken the edge away). Fourth in the World! What an amazing achievement! As usual, Fabrice always bounces back to prove a point and just like he did after the 2008 Olympics, within weeks of his 4<sup>th</sup> placing in Berlin Fabrice successfully defended his Golden League Final title by winning again in Italy with a performance of 8.33m and another US \$30,000.

Then at the 2010 Australian Open/Commonwealth Games Trials, Fabrice was about to have the performance of his career. With all the pressure off him, having been automatically selected for the Comm. Games with his World ranking, Fabrice was out to defend his National Title. Just like at the 2009 National Open Fabrice was not leading the competition and he had one leap left to win the title. He had led with 8.13m until Chris Noffke leaped 8.33m with his final attempt. Fabrice pulled out the most incredible performance with the 6<sup>th</sup> longest leap ever in world history by a human being. Fabrice landed in the pit an unbelievable 8.78 metres with a 3.1 tail wind. It was the most outstanding performance by any athlete at the meet.

2011 and 2012 were relatively quiet years with injuries and bad luck being prominent. A bronze at the 2011 Australian Open and missing the 2012 Australian Open and London Olympics must have been very disappointing His best effort during this 2 year period came in New York with a 8.14m wind assisted jump.

Fabrice then returned to Australia in 2013 and retook his National title winning The Australian Open Long Jump with a competitively modest 8.00m. He had also recorded an impressive win in Houston with 8.25m. Now under his new coach Dan Pfaff, Fabrice admitted he had never felt stronger and by 2015 he had returned to the top recording a win at the Zagreb International with a leap of 8.29m and backing that up with another career highlight – Silver medal at the 2015 World Championships.

Leading up to the 2016 Olympics Fabrice won his 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Open title with 8.26 and then a brilliant 8.36m at the Rabat Grand Prix. This brought up to number 4 in the World as he contested his 2<sup>nd</sup> Olympic Games in Rio. The pressure was on him as the Australian media declared Dani Samuels and Fabrice Lapierre to be Australia's only 2 medal chances in the Stadium. Fabrice finished disappointingly 10<sup>th</sup> in the final.

Fabrice will turn 34 in 2017. He clearly is one of the greatest long jumpers in World history and most believe he will continue to jump, particularly considering the 2018 Commonwealth Games are being held on the Gold Coast.