

**Sport**

# Pocket rocket is shooting for the stars

By JAMIE PANDARAM



THEY call her the "pocket rocket", and 129cm gymnastics star Dena Christodolou is hurtling towards stardom at a furious pace.

The 12-year-old of Padstow has reached Level 10 after being in Level Four just two years ago.

Dena also won an International Level 10 gold medal in the beam event at the Reach for The Stars competition last December, her first major tournament at that level.

"That was the first medal I've ever won," Dena said. "I hang it on my bed."

"I was very shocked. I thought I wouldn't get anything, the coaches told us not to expect anything because it was our first time."

In fact, Dena had only been competing at Level 10 for five months before winning the gold.

"I hope for the best and try my hardest," she said.

Hard indeed. Dena trains for 35 hours each week, on top of attending school and studying.

This year she starts high school, although the selective college Westfields Sports High will make allowances for her to train and study effectively.

The youngster has also set herself the toughest goal of all: "I want to get to the Olympics in 2008."

By then she will only be 16, but judging by her rapid progress the Beijing Games is well within her grasp.



Dena Christodolou (left) with her medal and (right) during a performance.

# Hussein hungry

By JAMIE PANDARAM

IT'S a no-win situation for Hussein Hussein, but he must face another mediocre opponent because once again he has been screwed by boxing politics.

Hussein (pictured right) was hoping to start 2005 with a bang - a world title fight with World Boxing Organisation champion Omar Narvaez had been planned for this month.

But Narvaez's management placed such ridiculous options on the fight contract, Hussein would have virtually been owned by the Argentinean if he had won the title.

Now Hussein, who was married at the end of last year and has since moved into a home in Bankstown, will fight little-known Filipino Federico Catubay at Panthers League Club on February 6.

"I'm not supposed to

be fighting this guy, I'm supposed to be fighting for a world title," Hussein said.

"I didn't have a Christmas or New Year's break, I spent all my time training for a world title fight."

"And then to have it pulled out like that is very disappointing."

Hussein and his manager Jeff Fenech rejected the offer from Narvaez, because it was unreasonable in every sense.

Narvaez's camp wanted full television rights, and options on Hussein's next three fights. They wanted to choose who Hussein fought as champion.

"Nobody would sign that," Hussein, 29, said.

So now he is pitted against an opponent who would fall into the category fast becoming known as "Thai cab driver" - fighters from Asia who have a minuscule chance of victory but who willingly risk their



health for a free flight to Australia and a few hundred dollars.

If Hussein beats Catubay, which is more than likely, it will be said that he has just added another "bum" to his list of victims.

But what can he do?

Every time Hussein comes close to a title shot he seems to get further away.

"I just have to stay as busy as I can," he said.

"I want to have about five fights this year."

"If I have one or two fights hopefully I can get back up to number one

and be a mandatory challenger."

"That is how you get the champions to fight you - it has to be mandatory, you can't negotiate with them."

"Champs like Narvaez are running scared."

Hussein has fought for one world title, the WBC featherweight crown against Thailand's Pongsaklek Wonjongkam in Bangkok in November 2003.

Hussein lost by decision - his only professional loss in 27 fights - and he's desperate to avenge it this year.



LOCAL VOCAL TRIBAL

**Premiership Round 8**

**SATURDAY NIGHT - 29ND JANUARY**

7.00pm Penrith Nepean United v Blacktown City Demons  
Cook Park (St Marys) Wilson St, St Marys

7.00pm Central Coast United v Bonnyrigg White Eagles  
Central Coast Stadium Dane Drive, Gosford

7.00pm St George Saints v A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers  
St George Stadium 88 Bestic St, Rockdale

7.00pm Manly United FC v Sydney Crescent Star  
Cromer Park South Creek Rd, Dee Why

7.00pm Marconi Stallions v Wollongong Wolves  
Marconi Stadium Marconi Plaza, Bossley Park

**SUNDAY NIGHT - 30TH JANUARY**


6.00pm Sydney Olympic v Blue Devils  
Old Jubilee Stadium Jubilee St, Kogarah

6.00pm Parramatta Eagles v Bankstown City Lions  
Melita Stadium Everley Rd, South Granville

6.00pm Sydney United v Rockdale City Suns  
Sydney United Sports Centre 223 Edensor Road, Edensor Park

**Don't miss the Razorbacks final home game at Liverpool this Saturday when they clash with the New Zealand Breakers.**

**This is a MUST WIN for the Razorbacks as they strive to reach the playoffs.**






**SAM MACKINNON'S WEST SYDNEY RAZORBACKS V's NEW ZEALAND BREAKERS**

**WHITLAM LEISURE CENTRE, LIVERPOOL**

**SATURDAY 29 JANUARY 2005 TIP-OFF 7.30PM**

TICKETS FROM THE WHITLAM CENTRE OR CALL 9740 6259 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Further details from: [razorbacks.com.au](http://razorbacks.com.au) or 9740 6259



with Jamie Pandaram



**Soccer**

- BANKSTOWN Lions drew 1-1 with Penrith Nepean United in the NSW Premier League match last weekend to move back up to fourth spot with 12 points. Last season's Golden Boot winner Matthew Borg made his much anticipated return for Bankstown. While Borg failed to trouble the scorers, teammate George Nohra hit a 20-yard screamer in the eighth minute to cancel out an earlier strike by Penrith's Luke Tomich.

**Basketball**

- THE West Sydney Razorbacks are at long odds to make this year's National Basketball League finals series after losing their fifth match in a row last Saturday. The Pigs must win their remaining matches and hope for other results to go their way if they are to make the play-offs. Last Friday an undermanned Pigs lost to Townsville 119-96, and the next night were beaten 107-96 by Cairns Taipans.

**Cricket**

- THE hard work of popular groundsman Warwick Starr and all Bankstown cricket club officials is the reason Bankstown Oval was chosen to hold the Pura Cup match between NSW and Queensland from this Friday, so well done team. Tickets for the match, NSW's 1000th, are \$5 for adults and \$1 for children.

**ACTION INDOOR SPORTS BANKSTOWN**

**54 HOSKINS AVE, BANKSTOWN**

**PH. 9707 2617**

**MEN'S CRICKET** SUMMER COMP  
8-a-side 8-ball overs

**MEN'S SOCCER**  
5-a-side played on a double court

**LADIES & MIXED NETBALL**  
6-a-side SUMMER COMPS  
Mon - Tue - Wed Ladies  
Mon & Wed Mixed

**LADIES & MIXED BEACH VOLLEYBALL ON SAND**  
Great Fun - 4-a-side

**ALSO AVAILABLE**

- Junior Soccer
- Junior Netball
- Ladies Daytime Netball 5-a-side
- Babysitting available
- Birthday parties - bowling machine
- Social bookings
- Sports nights - 4 sports + BBQ

For more information check out our website [www.bankstownindoor.com.au](http://www.bankstownindoor.com.au)