

Miracle bub continues to defy the odds

When Tom Roach was born 29 weeks premature, the doctors told his parents his odds of survival were slim.

But just over a decade later at the age of 11, the Kew youngster is preparing to represent the state at the School Sport Australia track and field championship on September 18 in Darwin, showing the doctors he didn't just survive, he thrived.

His dad, Andrew Roach, said he and his wife, Jennifer Williams, were blown away by their son's progress.

He said his son's determination to achieve his goals was second to none.

He said Tom didn't let his cerebral palsy hold him back from anything, including his goal to walk to school unassisted on his first day of prep at Kew Primary School five years ago.

"Never in our wildest dreams did we think this was going to happen. We were

Rebecca Di Nuzzo
rebecca.dinuzzo@news.com.au

told he would never be able to walk on his own. This little man, through a lot of hard work, is now running across the sport oval," he said.

"He's very determined, very goal driven ... when he walked through the front gate on his first day (of school) I cried."

And while Tom said his condition makes training tough, he said when he needed inspiration he liked to draw from one of his favourite movie characters, Dory, from *Finding Nemo*. "I just think I can do it," Tom said. "The same as Dory, just keep swimming, but I think, 'just keep going'."

And while he said he hopes to win awards in the medley relay, shot put and his favourite event, discus, he said the main thing he wanted to do was try his hardest.

Nicole Johansen, of Kew Little Athletics, said she'd coached Tom for the past year and his hard work and progress were an "inspiration". Sport was a great way to build strength and co-ordination for children with cerebral palsy, she said, and it also provided a great opportunity for children to interact, which was perfect for Tom who she said was a social butterfly.

"Both Tom and I are still learning, developing and modifying his technique to fit with his abilities.

"We are still playing around with what he can do, and what he may not be able to do just yet," she said.

As for future goals, Tom said he'd like to represent the country at the Olympics, and when his professional sport career was over he'd like to work as a mechanical engineer specialising in rollercoasters.



Tom Roach will be representing Victoria at the School Sports championships in Darwin. Inset: Tom training with coach Nicole Johansen in Kew. Pictures: Enrique Ascui



More bench
More storage
More style
More features
More finishes
More choice
More experience
More kitchen
More WOW!
Less \$\$\$\$\$

Free consultation
Ph: 9755 4888

Showrooms Open 7 Days 9-5
Doncaster 860 Doncaster Rd
Rowville 889 Wellington Rd
Oakleigh 1430 Dandenong Rd

www.smithandsmith.com.au

Registered building practitioners and
Members of: HIA & CMA

Beautiful made to measure kitchens at friendly prices.
Direct from our workshops to your home



© Copyright Smith & Smith kitchens 2018 Reproduction in any form is prohibited, all right reserved.