

Endurance prospect describes training background

■ Training

"MY training is very much aerobic-based and has always been planned around improving each year building toward senior training intensity.

"At Birmingham University, where I am based, I have an excellent group to train with, just as I have back home in Leeds, and value the importance of being pushed in sessions.

"I do, however, train by myself from time to time, especially when doing barrier work for the steeplechase. My favourite session is 12x400m with a 200m jog recovery in the same time as the reps and I find it a good indicator of fitness and performance.

"My least favourite session has to be long hills where the group use a hill which takes two minutes to run up and two minutes 30 seconds to come back down and we usually do nine reps.

"My goals are to qualify for next year's World Championships in Daegu, which is an outside chance, and then the same as countless others, the 2012 Olympics in London. I realise I am going to have to be in a position to run at least 30 seconds faster than my current PB in London and, although that may sound adventurous to some, I think I can achieve that. To do that I will work on improving my hurdling and also my flat speed, which has been slightly neglected, and I'm sure I can revise all my PBs dramatically."

■ THE sessions on the right are specific to the individual athlete and may not be suitable for other athletes. James Wilkinson was interviewed by David Lowes

Did you know?

LUCKY for some, James was born on Friday 13th and has a brother called Jonny Wilkinson! He has been running since he was 12 years old and is a keen Leeds United supporter, although he says he watched Barnsley for a couple of years when he went to their matches with a friend. He likes to listen to Coldplay and Jay-Z.

James Wilkinson



James Wilkinson: hopes to make a splash in the steeplechase in 2012

Mark Shearman

FACT FILE

Name: James Wilkinson

Born: July 13, 1990

Club: Leeds City AC

Coach: Phil Townsend

Major championships record:

2008 Commonwealth Youth Games 5000m 7th, 2009 World Cross Country Championships junior 85th, 2009 European Junior Championships 3000m steeplechase silver, 2009 European Cross Country Championships junior bronze, 2010 World Cross Country Championships senior 107th, European Team Championships 3000m 11th

Domestic championships:

2007 AAA U17 1500m steeplechase gold, English Schools Cross Country bronze; 2008 English Schools 2000m steeplechase gold, AAA U20 3000m steeplechase gold, English Schools Cross Country bronze; 2009 Inter-Counties junior 2nd; 2010 Inter-Counties 7th

PBs: 1500m: 3:47.02 (2010), 3000m: 8:11.37i (2010), 5000m: 14:35.99 (2008), 3000mSC: 8:49.05 (2009)

■ Typical training week:

Monday	60-minute easy/steady run. Faster in the winter, reaching 5:30 per mile toward the end. Often an acceleration run. In the summer the pace stays at around or just under 7:00 per mile. Followed by weights/circuits.
Tuesday	(am) 35-minute easy run. (pm) Track session, 3000m/1500m oriented, which includes a mixture of longer (1000m) and shorter (400m) reps, such as alternating 4x1000m/400m. The 1000m reps will be done in around 2:45 and the 400m reps in 60 seconds.
Wednesday	60-70-minute easy recovery run. Depending upon how hard the previous day's session was, the pace will vary from 7-7:30 per mile. Weights/circuits.
Thursday	(am) 35-minute easy run. (pm) Track session. Focus on 1500m pace, such as 2 sets of 400m, 800m, 300m (this equals 1500m) and I'll aim to run the reps in 60 seconds, 2 minutes and 45 seconds and this is usually a good predictor of what 1500m shape I'm in. Another session is a basic 8x400m with 60 seconds the target.
Friday	30-minute easy run, followed by drills and light plyometrics.
Saturday	(am) Track session, which often includes 800m-1000m reps over five hurdles in the summer – for example, 4x1000m over five hurdles, followed by some reps on the flat. These will be at 3km-5km pace (2:45). I often do a rep prior to the start without hurdles to induce some fatigue, which assimilates the conditions in a steeplechase race. These are probably some of the toughest sessions that I do and hardest mentally as most often I do them on my own. (pm) 35 minutes easy.
Sunday	Up to two hours easy/steady. Faster in the winter and down to 6:20-6:30 per mile toward the end. Shorter and slower in the summer with nothing much faster than 7:00 per mile. This run is used primarily for recovery and maintaining the endurance from the winter. Maximum of 1 hour 40 minutes in the summer.

"I will work on improving my hurdling and also my flat speed, which has been slightly neglected, and I'm sure I can revise all my PBs dramatically"

JAMES WILKINSON



James Wilkinson: won bronze in junior race at European Cross Country last year in Dublin

Mark Shearman