



Junior Sport Star nominee  
Annabel McDermott

JUNIOR SPORTS STAR

# Ahead of the field

## ANNABEL CLAIMS SILVER AT WORLD CHAMPS

Lisa Herbertson

BEING a team player and showing strength, endurance and grit has helped Year 10 Abbotsleigh student Annabel McDermott to a silver medal in the World Schools Cross Country Championship in Israel.

Annabel, 15, began her journey to Israel seven months ago when her school cross country team, Abbotsleigh, won the NSW All Schools Competition.

Annabel, then 14, chose to run in the under-17s team event rather than pursue



her individual event and defied the odds by qualifying for the World Schools Championship with her individual time.

The Wahroonga runner is this week's nominee for Junior Sports Star, sponsored by Rebel.

"You don't know what to expect in cross-country,"

Annabel said. "Every race is different because every course is different."

"It's up to you to rise to the occasion at each event."

"For the race in Israel, it took us 30 hours to get there, so the athlete who could just get over the jet-lag hurdle was going to have the advantage."

"It was 30C and dusty on race day, which was good for us Aussies."

The World Schools Championship is organised by the International Schools Sport Federation.

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## Teen blows away competition in Israel

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The federation encourages contests between school students aged 14 to 17 and is aimed at promoting international understanding.

By finishing second in Israel, Annabel has

automatically qualified for a position at the same event in Hungary in 2016.

One person who couldn't be prouder of her efforts is her coach James Fitzgerald.

"I have never seen an athlete with such a marked improvement in their

discipline in such a short amount of time," he said.

"Without a doubt, Annabel is one of the most determined athletes that I have ever coached.

"On race day, she is mentally sharp and she executes her race plan well."