

Performance Driven: Peter Bol

20/12/2023 World-class athletes require meticulous preparation and the best resources to reach the top of their sports. Fuelled by Taycan-levels of energy, their dedicated pursuit of excellence often resembles the road Porsche has taken for 75 years. Porsche Cars Australia speaks to some of the country's most talented athletes to discover the essence of their performance-driven approach, and how they recharge to reach their next podium destination.

The road to the top of any sport is long but Olympic runner Peter Bol has travelled further than most. Born in Sudan, his family emigrated to Egypt when he was a boy before later arriving in the Australian city of Toowoomba, eventually settling in Perth on the other side of the continent.

“It feels like I've been traveling my whole life,” he says. “Growing up in Australia was quite cool because it was a different language and a different culture. I didn't speak English when I moved here.”

Most people might feel intimidated by such challenges. Not Peter Bol. The high-performance athlete has made Australia his home and the 800 metres race his quest, powering his way to record-setting times in one of athletics' toughest middle-distance running events. But Peter's journey almost took a different sporting path.

“I was playing basketball,” he says. “I have four brothers and I’m quite competitive. We were always playing and racing against each other to see who was the best.”

But an athletics carnival at school became a turning point after one of his teachers suggested he join an athletics club.

“Before I knew it, I was racing to be the best at school and then the state and then eventually the country, and now the world. It’s all been driven by competition and passion.”

Running quickly became what Peter calls a ‘passport to the world’ which he has been busy filling with stamps from international events. Along with his inner drive, running has taken him to the highest peaks of competition. He has competed at two Olympic Games, Rio in 2016 and Tokyo in 2020. He claimed a Silver Medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

He became Australia’s fastest-running 800-metre athlete in the country’s history, twice lowering the Australian 800-metre record at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics after just missing the podium in the Final. It was the highest finish by an Australian in the event in 53 years. In 2022 he won his third consecutive national 800-metre title.

Self-driving performer

His ever-expanding racing record is impressive and his burning need to constantly deliver high performance comes from the most personal of places.

“Self-improvement,” he declares. “It seems like running is all about the individual. To an extent this is true; it’s all on you to perform. If you fail, it’s all on you. If you succeed, it’s all on you. But there is a team aspect that many people don’t see. There’s a coach, a strength and conditioning coach, a running coach, and so on. Then there is the team you’re representing and the country you’re representing. Behind it all there is a need to keep improving.”

Peter’s mindset is a bedrock of strength and it helps define his view of performance.

“Performance means being at your best despite all the obstacles and hurdles thrown your way. It means finding ways to be a bit better every single day. That’s what performance means to me.”

His approach is evident in his training.

“For an Olympic Games, you need to prepare physically and mentally and that all beings at home. The easiest part is doing the training. You’ve got a coach, you turn up and you do the work. The most difficult thing is finding the one per cent each time, the piece that you add that makes you a better performer.

“Finding these ‘one percenters’ every single day is a challenge, both physically and mentally. Sometimes you find them, sometimes you don’t. When you do find them, you double-down on them and add them to your core belief that you can be the best.

“It's the discipline that carries you on each day. I want to be the best in the world.”

Such a method is essential in a race like the 800 metres. This gruelling running event, too long for a sprint but not long enough for a more comfortable ‘distance-oriented’ approach, is a deep test when competing against the world’s best. But there’s one fact Peter knows when he lines up for the start of every race.

“What appeals most about the 800 metres is every single race is unpredictable. Every competitor has a chance to win. Once all the preparation is done, if you can stay focused enough, you have it in you to be better than everyone else.”

Fully charged to win

Ask Peter how he refuels his energy and his reply is about risk and planning, not relaxation. The fact he studied Construction Management at university partly explains why. Then there is his vast experience training for the world’s biggest athletics events which have helped guide his highly refined preparations.

“Recharging is important because you gain when you come back the next day,” he says. “If you don't recharge and refuel correctly after a session then you risk the quality of the next training session. You can even increase the chances of an injury.”

His planning-based attitude has helped guide his progress to achieve continued success.

“In athletics you have a specific goal and a team and a plan to help get you there,” he says while leaning against the Taycan 4S Cross Turismo. “Construction is the same. Both worlds also have risk factors which need to be managed. In construction, it’s usually safety and quality. In athletics, it’s about avoiding injury.”

This carefully crafted approach is a quiet glimpse into Peter’s performance-driven life, both in athletics and his chosen career. It shares many similarities with the sportscars he admires, similarities such as efficiency and power and what it takes to become the best. The road to the summit of running is similar to the path Porsche has taken since the first 356 emerged, an achievement he describes as “the result of a leader following their dream.”

And his own next destination? “The 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.” It will be the next journey in his many travels and there is every chance his running passport will get its first gold stamp.

Info

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Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart