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## Badminton

# Shuttle start to Beijing

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Stuart Gomez is one step closer to his dream of representing Australia at the Beijing Olympics.

COWAN'S own Stuart Gomez is one step closer to his dream of competing at the 2008 Beijing Olympics after taking out the Australian Singles Badminton title at Sydney Olympic Park earlier this month.

The finals win over Victoria's Ben Walklate allowed Gomez to hang on to the number one Australian ranking he has held since March.

"At the moment I am the best-placed Australian men's singles player to qualify for Beijing," he said.

Australia's badminton squad for the 2008 Olympics is expected to be selected in April next year.

Before then, Gomez will compete in the Australian International Badminton Tournament in Brisbane from September 7-10, where he is hoping to dominate the competition.

"I would like to at least get to the semi-finals, or win," he said.

But Gomez' biggest test will be at the World Championships, being held in Madrid, Spain, from September 18-24.

"It will be my first World Championships so I am hoping to do well," he said. "My biggest challengers will be from New Zealand, Asia and Denmark."

The 23-year-old took up badminton at Hornsby PCYC at the age of five. "I started playing for fun because my parents played," Gomez said.

By the age of 15 he was representing Australia at both junior and senior levels.

Last year Gomez took-up full time training at the National Badminton Training Centre in Melbourne.



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