

Stars in eyes for Hayes, Westcott

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The saying goes that success breeds success so when you've got Herb Elliott, Steve Moneghetti and even the Prime Minister in your camp, things are looking up.

Especially when you're a 17-year-old wannabe marathon runner.

Any time Sydneysider Shane Hayes feels he needs some direction, he can pick up the phone and ask Moneghetti or Elliott for advice.

The two Olympic greats are Hayes's mentors in Prime Minister John Howard's talent identification program for marathon runners.

Spurred on by his backbencher and former ultra marathon runner Pat Farmer, Mr Howard launched the mentoring program to help aspiring distance runners make the elite levels.

Each year five up and coming runners who have the potential, desire, attitude and talent to excel at the international level are selected to be part of the Prime Minister's Team.

They're teamed up with a sporting and business mentor to help them achieve their goals.

Hayes hooked up with four-times Olympian Moneghetti as his sporting mentor and Olympic champion Elliott as his business mentor when he was picked for the program after winning or placing in his age group in 68 consecutive races.

He said it was like having an encyclopedia on running at his finger tips.

"I combine what they tell me with what I already know so I can train harder and better," said Hayes, who has a 10-year plan to achieve Olympic gold in the marathon.

Elliott is a firm believer that success comes from attitude and sees his role in the mentoring program as one of directing his charge's mental attitude.

"The best people to learn from ... is people who've been world beaters," he said