

# Casey takes setbacks in her stride



Knees up ... Casey Dellacqua works out at Bondi Beach with sprint coach David Wright; (below) in winning form of last year's Australian Open.

Photos: Anthony Johnson, Vince Calipari

The former top-ranked Australian is working hard to overcome injury, writes ADRIAN PROSZENKO.

ABOUT 17,000 kilometers from the strawberries and cream of the All England Club, Casey Dellacqua is having sand kicked in her face.

But it's the sight of the French Open and Wimbledon on her TV set that has got her hot and bothered.

This time last year Dellacqua was the highest-ranked woman in Australian tennis. But until recently the Perth player could barely lift her arm, let alone hit a ball, after going under the knife in February to repair a troublesome shoulder injury that ruled her out of the final three grand slams of this year.

Now, after relocating to Sydney to work with fitness guru Nathan and Giselle Martin, Dellacqua is fitter than ever as she prepares for her [www.assisted.com/buck](http://www.assisted.com/buck)

"It's been pretty hard. A few times I get a bit bitter that I'm not there and I get a bit angry," Dellacqua said of her absence from the French Open and Wimbledon.

"Obviously I can't help it. I needed to get my shoulder fixed ... but I had such a good Wimbledon and French last year.

"It's OK, it's pretty motivating to get out there. I know that next year I'll be there. It's upsetting and motivating at the same time."

The *Sun-Herald* joined Dellacqua for a gruelling workout at Bondi Beach on Friday afternoon. There among the posty Poms and Kiwi backpackers, the 24-year-old was put through a sand session by sprint coach David Wright. It's part of Team Dellacqua's quest to get her

from her current ranking of 172 back near her career-best 39.

"I'll probably play some lower-level tournaments in September, providing the shoulder holds up over the next couple of months," Dellacqua said.

"By the time the Aussie

Open rolls around, hopefully I would have played enough matches, played a lot of tennis. That's the plan.

"Initially I'm going to want to get my ranking back inside 100. I have got protected rankings and I'll use it next year to get into some tournaments."

Dellacqua is one of the

most maligned players on the women's tour for her fitness. Coach and commentator Roger Rasheed criticised her for carrying "excess baggage" during the Australian Open this year. What wasn't apparent at the time was the lingering shoulder problem that plagued her preparation for more than a year.

But after working with the Martins she is in the best shape of her life. The left-handed baseliner is regularly running a brisk 12km as part of an exercise regimen that includes

weights and squash. "It's the best shape I've been in," Dellacqua said. "When I can get back on the court and use my arm completely things will improve even more."

Nathan Martin said critics of Dellacqua's fitness weren't aware of how much her shoulder problems inhibited her preparation. "Everyone has their opinion and some people voice them differently. But I don't think it's warranted," he said.

"If someone comes out and says something about someone I'm training and they have no idea or concept behind their statement, it's a bit disappointing."



**'It's been pretty hard. A few times I get a bit bitter ...'**  
**CASEY DELLACQUA**