



WHEN all else failed in Beijing last year, US hurdles champion David Oliver ignored all the scientific advice about nutrition and salvaged a medal from the Olympic Games.

The US indoor (60m hurdles) and outdoor (110m hurdles) titleholder's Olympic campaign was down the toilet - literally - until he sought refuge beneath the ubiquitous golden arches.

"A lot of things went wrong for me in Beijing. I was sick for 10 days with the food, which knocked me out of training," Oliver said in Sydney yesterday, sparing us the details.

"From there, I got on 'the plan' and ate McDonald's and I was healthy from there. My body knows how to get what it needs out of those golden arches and I was fine from there."

Fine enough to claim the bronze medal in one of his slowest times of the year, 13.18sec - a still-scintillating time he expects to come close to already after an obviously healthy training phase back home in Florida.

He flew in from Stuttgart where he ran the equal world's fastest 60m hurdles indoor time for the year of (7.45sec).

Oliver is here to compete in the Sydney Track Classic at Homebush on Saturday evening, in the hope of collecting points to qualify for the IAAF/VTB Bank World Athletics Final, to be held on September 12-13 in Thessaloniki, Greece.

"I'm really excited to be here. If I run a decent time, that will set me up for the outdoor season including the Berlin world championships in August," Oliver added. "I'm looking to open maybe in the low 13.3 in this first meet. Of course if I had it all my way I'd run (it in) 12 seconds. I'm optimistic though. If I get on the (start) line I always feel I can run the world record. You can't run fast sitting at home. The best indication of how you're training is doing it in competition."

Oliver was just as shocked - but hardly as grief-stricken - as a billion Chinese after local hero Liu Xiang broke down at the start and could not defend his Olympic 110m hurdles crown.

But having been drained of energy due to his 10-day stomach upset, the 190cm and 93kg Oliver resolved: "If you're having a good day you challenge the world record. If you're not having a good day you still win the meet and when you're having a bad day you still make the podium - Beijing was the worst finish of the year for me."

He lost only two other races last year and has no intentions of starting his year with another loss on Saturday.