Thomas – My Sporting Journey Part 2

Getting into RaceRunning

In August 2013 I went with my Mum to watch some cerebral palsy athletics at Gateshead. I saw RaceRunning for the first time and I was captivated and badgered my parents to let me try it! RaceRunning is running on a three wheeled trike with a saddle and no pedals and the athlete propels the RaceRunner forwards down a track.

In late 2013, I went to a few taster sessions for RaceRunning and I was desperate to participate in RaceRunning every week. I got my wish and that is how I first became involved with the Douglas Bader Foundation. They so kindly supported me in helping to fund my very first RaceRunner of my own and we could not have done it without them and some very kind supporters who helped fund the RaceRunner. Here it is!



I will also never forget that thanks to the Douglas Bader Foundation I got to fly for the very first time with Bader Braves! I got to have a whole day of flying at RAF Waddington and I even took control of the place myself. How brilliant an opportunity is that? I'm not sure my Mum was so sure as she had to ride in the back of the plane when I took the control and quickly dipped the aircraft but we had a brilliant instructor and I loved every minute. I really felt I was following in the footsteps of Douglas Bader that day!



Starting to train and compete in RaceRunning

In November 2014 Lincoln Wellington Athletics Club agreed that I could join their club and start to train seriously as a RaceRunner.

My first competition was in May 2015 in Manchester and I ran the 100m, 200m and 400m – I was so nervous but excited as well!



I competed throughout the 2015 season and I became under 11 national champion for 100m, 200m and 400m. I also won a national award for endeavor and my District's Young Achiever of the Year award. I am so grateful to everyone who helped me in my first year competing including the Douglas Bader Foundation and especially my Mum & Dad and little brother Mattie.





I competed as a National RaceRunner throughout the 2016 season in a number of wonderful places across the UK including Doncaster, Rotherham, York, Nottingham Gateshead and Stoke Mandeville – the spiritual home of the Paralympic Games. I really loved the thrill of competitions and taking part and best of all I met a whole new group of friends that were just like me and had cerebral palsy.

I have always found it easy to talk to adults (cos remember I can talk for England!) as most of my young life has been spent talking to doctors or physios or OTs. But I did find it hard making friends to start with when I went to school as I was so different from everyone else. But when I started competing in RaceRunning – everyone was like me. It didn't matter if we wobbled a bit and couldn't talk easily, we all really got on from day one and they are truly my best friends now!







The 2016 European Championships

In July 2016 I had the honour of representing England at the European RaceRunning Championships in Denmark. Before I went out I got a lot of local press coverage and was interviewed by our local radio station. It was a tough few days as it was a Training camp and classification and then two full days of competition.

I was so proud that I won gold for the 100m, 200m, 400m & 800m in the Under 13 Juniors. I loved the whole experience of travelling overseas for the first time as a team and representing my country and wearing the England RaceRunning kit. I got my international classification at the Europeans too which enables me to compete internationally and I was classified as a RR3 RaceRunner. I also think that I really grew as a person as I had the chance to visit a new country and meet new people and importantly make new friends from across the world.











In September 2016, I became under 13 national champion for 100m, 200m, 400m and 800m. I was pleased as I had got a little bit of an injury out in Denmark and had torn a hamstring on my leg. I'd managed to recover quickly enough to compete at the Nationals and take home four titles!

