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PENTATHLON STORIES COMPETITION WINNER: MICHELLE MATSON (GBR)



Head Coach - Wessex Wyvern Modern Pentathlon Club

Pentathlon has provided me with so many magical moments over the 25 years I have been involved with the sport. I started as a lifeguard at Wessex Wyvern Modern Pentathlon Club and within weeks was helping coach swimming. Fast forward a few years and I'm now the Head Coach of a very successful and amazing club. I have loved watching the club grow and overcome the changes that the sport has seen.

A dream came true when I was selected to be a Games Maker at the London 2012 Olympics for the Modern Pentathlon team and I was in the stadium on the night Sam Murray picked up her Olympic medal. I even managed to get close enough for a photo. Watching all the Union Jack flags flying around the stadium was a magic moment and made me so proud to be British.

Another amazing moment was when I took a team of young athletes to take part in a biathle world tour event in Italy. The excitement of putting on our GB kit for the first time and flying out as a team was just the best feeling. The team performed so well and even picked up some medals. I loved competing and representing Great Britain and still have a slight obsession with Union Jack flags! The whole experience was amazing.

I remember watching the 2018 World Championships on TV at home and the excitement of watching Jamie Cooke believing in himself and taking the title on the line was just awesome! What a moment and as a coach something to always share with the athletes. Actually one of our club members managed exactly the same feat last year in Madeira. I was watching live online while coaching a laser-run club at the school I work at. We were all shouting at him as if we were there, the Portuguese athlete celebrated far too early and Alex burst past him and won!



I was lucky enough to be able to take a team of athletes to the biathle and triathle European Championships in 2018. We had an absolutely fantastic time at the event site in Weiden, Germany and also shared many successes. I went on a road trip with one of my best friends and fellow coaches- Georgina, her daughter Amelie and another best friend's son Archie. It was brilliant

coaching leading up to the event and then being there to actually cheer in person and to be able to speak to them before and after their races was great too. As well as the competition we visited lots of different countries en-route - places I got to see because of Pentathlon. It was another life experience I'll never forget.

Last year I was able to go to the World Laser-Run Championships in Budapest - again with lots of club athletes. The setting was absolutely amazing and for the athletes to compete in the stadium where the Pentathletes were competing was just the best experience. Being there to coach them during the day and support them was great. It was also amazing to watch Joe Choong pick up the silver medal and to be so close to cheer was awesome! Also brilliant was when Phil Hobbs and Bill Bland the GB laser-run coaches introduced me and our littlest athlete Lily to the whole GB team after the medal ceremonies. Wow!

But it's not just the big international events that bring so much satisfaction to me as a coach. It's watching a child learning to shoot and them managing their first 5 green lights. Or watching a child that has worked so hard achieve a personal best and them recognising their hard work.

My favourite times are when we are together as a team - that could be at a big competition or even just at a fun run at home. We have been nicknamed the red army and I love to be out cheering until I lose my voice!

This year has made me realise even more so how important my club and Pentathlon are to me. It's been so hard not being able to compete and run proper training sessions and have the team together. However we have made the best of the way the world is and have branched out to try even more multisports. We have taken part in countless virtual competitions including the UIPM Home Laser-Run and these have helped us to stay together as a team.

We are lucky to have the support of up and coming GB athlete Bradley Sutton. He started his Pentathlon career at Wessex Wyvern as a 10 year old. It fills me with unbelievable pride to see how well he is doing and even more so that he is still involved with the club. He is an inspiration to the athletes and we love his support and to support him too. He set us a fab challenge over lockdown.

Without Pentathlon I would not be the person I am today. My experiences as an athlete and as a coach have shaped my life and provided friendships and memories that I will cherish forever.



Michelle Matson

Head Coach - Wessex Wyvern Modern Pentathlon Club