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2008 OLYMPIC SILVER MEDALLIST HEATHER FELL MOVES ONTO MEDIA CAREER



Olympic silver medallist and former world number one Heather Fell has announced her retirement from modern pentathlon after 12 years competing at international level to pursue a career in the media.

The highpoint of Fell's illustrious career was a terrific performance at the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 when she became the fourth British athlete to win an Olympic medal since the sport for women was included on the Olympic programme at Sydney 2000.

Fell said: "I've had a wonderful career in a sport I love, I never imagined I would be able to do have the opportunity to train full time for my sport. I take so many happy memories with me. I'm now turning my attention to a new and exciting career alongside the different physical challenge of road cycling."

Jan Bartu, Pentathlon GB Performance Director, said: "I'd like to wish Heather all the best for the future. Her successes from her time as a junior up to Olympic, World Championships, World Cups and European Championships speak for themselves. It will be sad to see her go.

"Heather has been a very strong athlete and in many ways her competition performances often exceeded expectations from training. That's almost unique, it's something not many athletes can do. I would never underestimate Heather's desire and will to succeed, which have been inspirational."

Fell was inspired to take up the sport after watching Steph Cook win gold and fellow Devonian Kate Allenby win bronze at Sydney 2000. Having been a successful competitor in Pony Club tetrathlon she then learned to fence in her final year of school to make up the five disciplines required for the modern pentathlon

Fell, who has a Physiotherapy degree from Brunel University, burst on to the international scene when she won individual gold as well as team gold and team relay silver at the 2003 World Junior Championships in Athens.

But she had to show grit and determination after a series of shin injuries hampered her ability to train and she considered giving up the sport.

Training at her old school, Kelly College in Tavistock, Devon, she battled back to win a World Cup bronze medal in Moscow in 2007, an individual silver medal at the 2007 European Championships in Latvia, as well as World Cup gold at Millfield in Somerset and a bronze in the Czech Republic in 2008. An individual fourth place finish at the 2008 World Championships in Hungary ensured her place on the GB team for the Beijing Olympics.

After winning Olympic silver, Heather rounded off 2008 with another silver medal at the 2008 World Cup Final in Portugal to end the year ranked number one in the world.

Further successes followed, including an individual silver medal and team gold at the 2009 European Championships in Germany and a World Cup silver in China. Her last major medal was a silver at the 2012 World Cup Final in China.

Fell was consistently ranked in the world's top-10. The strength and depth of competition within the GB team – Fell was one of five GB women achieving the Olympic qualifying standard with only two places available - meant she wasn't able to achieve her goal of competing at a home Olympics at London 2012.

This gave her other opportunities outside of sport and has helped her to develop her career beyond.

Fell was elected and is an active member of the British Olympic Association Athletes Commission, as well as being an active member of the British Athletes Commission advisory board and the Team Bath forum. Since stopping training she has worked as an athlete mentor with the Dame Kelly Homes trust, Youth Sport Trust and Team Superschools.

She was an ambassador for the Bath 2013 Special Olympics and last summer she cycled from John O'Groats to Land's End to raise money for the Bath Rugby Foundation.

She has developed her media career alongside these activities and is now a regular columnist, feature writer, commentator and journalist.