



March 2020

Ben Clark, tetraplegic, trains for world-record-breaking 10km swim

Dorset swimmer Ben Clark's life was thrown on its head – literally – when in 2010, he broke his neck diving into shallow waves. The accident left Ben tetraplegic. At twenty years old, Ben was told it was unlikely he would move again from the neck down – a massive blow for a keen swimmer and lifeguard who had hoped to compete in the 2012 Olympics.

Today, Ben, age 29, is swimming again and is aiming to break a world record in September to become the first tetraplegic to swim 10 kilometres. The world record attempt is taking place at Eton Dorney Olympic Lake, near Windsor, Berkshire in aid of Regain Sports Charity.

Ben had his accident on Sandbanks beach and broke his neck at C7 level (just above the collar bone). It was most scary realising the severity of the injury but he found the strength to adapt to a new life.

“Before my injury, I was a professional swimmer, so I took the same approach to my rehab as I did to my athletic career, in the sense that I learned how to deal with failure and push myself to the limits.”

“My main inspiration to do the 10K swim is I love the challenge of it - the sense of training for a purpose and accomplishing something for myself. By doing it, I also hope to learn even more about myself and how I can manage my daily life and independence better.”

“Swimming has dominated most of my life and I owe a lot of my personality to my career in swimming. I was a sprinter, however, so I'm out of my comfort zone when it comes to doing distance and open water!”

Ben is working hard at his fitness levels over long-distance not just in a pool but also on a skiing machine and in the gym. He is also a big believer in pursuing happiness.

“Choosing to be happy allows me to stay positive and focus on the things that I love doing not dwell on what I can't do. When we are positive, we remain motivated to do things and to be successful in them.”

Ben is helping raise funds and awareness for Regain Sports Charity.

“Regain has changed my life, allowing me to be more independent and to remain positive. The charity offers grants and invests in people with profound sports injuries and helps them adapt and succeed.” With the help and support of Regain, Ben managed to achieve qualifications for swimming coaching and personal training, which helped him kick-start his career and business.



Funds raised at the 'In at the Deep End' event on September 27th 2020, will help Regain provide life-changing support for more people who have become paralysed in sporting accidents.

The event, supported by Olympic swimmer Mark Foster, will feature hundreds of people of different abilities swimming outdoors in support of sports tetraplegics.

Mark Foster added, "Ben is an inspiration not only to all swimmers and tetraplegics, but indeed to all athletes. His determination is incredible and we are right behind his world record attempt."

Open to everyone over 18, supporters can choose to swim one length (2.2km), one lap (5km) or 10km (two laps) of the open water course. There is a specially designed 1km course for tetraplegic participants. Ben, Mark and Regain are urging people to sign up here and support the event:

<https://www.dream-challenges.com/challenges/in-at-the-deep-end-2020/>

Ends

About [Regain Sports Charity](#)

The only UK charity helping people who have had a sports related spinal cord injury resulting in tetraplegia. Based in London. Aims:

- To help British sports tetraplegics lead independent and fulfilling lives
- To assist in providing equipment and facilities via grants to improve mobility, communication, education and employment opportunities
- To build networks and provide support for sports tetraplegics and their families
- To increase awareness of risks, educate & reduce the number of accidents resulting in tetraplegia
- To ensure equal opportunities for tetraplegics

About Mark Foster

As a five-time Olympian, World, European and Commonwealth Champion and holder of eight world records in a career spanning 23 years, Mark Foster is one of Britain's most successful swimmers.

<http://www.markfoster.co.uk/>

About Ben Clark

Ben lives in Poole, Dorset and runs *AdaptToPerform*

<https://www.facebook.com/AdaptToPerform/>