

## Non Stanford

Non Stanford, School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences alumna and elite triathlete tells us a bit about herself.

So I guess I'm Non Stanford.

Yes, 'Non'. No it's not short for anything. Yes I'm 100% positive but thank you for inquiring.

I was born and bred in the sunny metropolis that is South Wales. Hence the name. Growing up it was always mum, dad, my older brother Rhodri and me. Oh and the rest of the family, honorary aunts and all. It was a fairly normal childhood. I went to school until I was 18, dabbled in cello and ballet, trained 7 days a week from the age of 12...

OK so I probably wasn't as normal as I like to think. From as young as I can remember I've had a passion for sport. At the tender age of 9 I asked my mum if I would ever make an Olympic Gymnast. She said no. A bit harsh maybe, but let's be honest in the long run she probably saved me a lot of wasted time and disappointment.

So next, hungry in my pursuit of Olympic glory, I thought I'd try swimming. Why I couldn't tell you. I was definitely the kid drowning mid lesson a few years earlier. I think the teacher was ecstatic when I got my 10m badge. But swimming it was, so dutifully my parents took me along to the local club. I actually wasn't too bad. After a few years of ploughing up and down a concrete basin I scraped my way into the Welsh Talent ID squad and finished 9th in my age group at the British Nationals.

In the mean time I made the big step to secondary school. As the novel sporty kid I was roped into the cross country team. Turns out I should have stayed on dry land all along. I loved running and was luckily pretty damn good at it. By the time I was 16 I had Welsh and British records and titles to my name and according to all sources, was the 'next big thing'.

Unfortunately, like most young super stars who are glorified from a silly age, I grew up. And out. And all about. I got injured and disheartened and spent a good 2 years on a physio bed trying to work out how to make it all work again.

Whilst agonising over the biomechanics of teenage girls, I started studying Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Birmingham. Probably one of the best decisions I'd made to date. I loved it. I loved my course, my new friends, the big city and my new way of life. I can honestly say that the University of Birmingham, along with the School of Sport and Exercise Science, shaped my future and made me the person I am today.

After all it was at University that I started Triathlon. Sorry I think I forgot to mention that. I should probably re introduce myself;

I'm Non Stanford. Elite Triathlete. And I guess I'm the closest I've ever been to fulfilling the dreams of that 9 year old girl...



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