

# Interview: Berkhamsted Half Marathon 2024 and Athletic Insights

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*Hi Zoe how are you?*

Yeah I'm good thank you. Fantastic.

*So Zoe you were involved in helping and handing out prizes at Berkhamstead Half Marathon on behalf of Everyone Active as one of their local sporting champions. What are your recollections from the Half Marathon and the 5 Mile Fun Run.*

Well it was a beautiful day, sunny, cold, they had a record turnout. Berkhamsted Rotary Club do an amazing job of organising the event every year. They've actually raised over £320,000 for many charities over the years. Everyone Active were also involved, made a really fun warm-up, it was a great atmosphere. My highlight was seeing so many local talented athletes make it onto the podium.

So the under-16 event of the five miles was won by Emily and Tom Ford from, brother and sister. They both went to English Schools in the 3,000 metres this year. Tom had a fantastic year with PBs ranking him number one in the 3,000 metres in the UK for under 15s and number three in the 1,500 metres. Leon Doran came second in the Male Five Mile event. He's an under 20 and had a great year, went to English Schools for 1,500 metres. Thea Gray, she went to English Schools in the 3,000 metres, very accomplished distance runner. She came second in the Women's Five Mile event, Lynda Hembury, who runs for Tring, she's come back from injury and it's great to see her running so well. She won the Under 70 Half Marathon. She's a Vet 65, in 2019 she was ranked number one in the marathon running it two for a 314 and um and it's great to see her back running amazing.

*Since the event in March how have your athletic competitions been going?*

My indoor season went really well. I was delighted to get two British records in the 8 and the Mile and two PBs in the 8 and the 15. I went to the European Championships and I won the 8 and the 15. My outdoor season was plagued by injury and didn't go so well but I'm back winter training and enjoying it and building for next year now.

*Fantastic do you have any course tips for those competing as well?*

Berkhamsted half marathon course is my long run on a Sunday and I've competed in it twice as well, so I know the course really well. My biggest tip is, respect the fact that it's a very tough course. It's very hilly, there's a lot of elevation, so don't even go off your watch when you're thinking about pacing, think about your effort level would be my biggest tip.

*What advice would you give specifically for Masters athletes in training for the half marathon or five mile races?*

So I was really excited to see that the winners this year of the Half Marathon were both Master athletes. Heather Hann who won the Ladies, she's a V35 and Justin Davis he's a V40; they've both got PB's in half marathons and marathons this year and Justin took four minutes off his time in the Berkhamsted Half Marathon to win it in 73 minutes from his time from the previous one. So I think it's a really good year for the Masters athletes. So, the first tip I would say is about mindset that really age is just a number, don't let it limit you and look at the two winners, they're still getting faster, it's really exciting. Second, I would say really think about your training in a strategic way, quality over quantity, think about looking after yourself holistically, nutrition, getting enough sleep, really taking your rest and recovery seriously. And thirdly, I would say strength training, get in the gym. It's really important maintaining muscle as we get older and yeah, just enjoy it.

*Fantastic. And finally, how has Berkhamsted Everyone Active and being part of their sporting champion programme helped you as an athlete?*

Berkhamsted Leisure Centre have been supporting me since 2017. So, right at the start of my journey as a V35. It made a huge boost in my confidence when they accepted me onto the programme as a Masters athlete, that they believed in me and have been along the ride with me. I've met some really special people through Everyone Active and they've given me a huge amount of support. They've seen me at my best and at my worst when I've been recovering from injuries, spending hours in the pool, in the gym and I'm very proud to be a sporting champion.

*Awesome, thank you so much.*

Thank you.