

PE REVIEW at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics

Team GB finished their Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic campaigns with an impressive medal haul. A number of the team who contributed to the success in Tokyo have featured in PE REVIEW over the years

Diving

The Tokyo Aquatics Centre witnessed Matty Lee (interviewed in Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 32–33) and Tom Daley (Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 22–24) overjoyed at their gold medal synchronised diving success in the face of fierce Chinese competition. In addition to winning gold in the synchro event, Tom also won a highly creditable bronze in the individual 10m competition. A highly publicised method of therapy/relaxation for Tom in between his events was to knit, with him producing a medal pouch and a Team GB cardigan to auction for charity. Many athletes at the Games talked about the pressures of elite sport and the mental toll it took on them, including US gymnast Simone Biles. Against this background, Tom remained positive before, during and after competition, and his hobby of knitting obviously worked for him.

Gymnastics

Over in the Ariake Gymnastics Centre, Alice Kinsella (Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 2–4) was part of the women's all-round team, who fought to the last to earn a well-deserved bronze medal. With an average age of just 17, achieving a bronze under extreme pressure through to the end was an exceptional achievement. Similar to many other medallists, the team thanked UK Sport and National Lottery funding for investing in them and allowing them to focus full time on their sport.

Cycling

Dame Sarah Storey (Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 2–4) became Britain's greatest ever Paralympian when she won her 15th gold medal in the individual pursuit. Later on in the games, she equalled Team GB's record for Paralympic gold medals, convincingly winning the time trial. In her final event, the road race, Storey surpassed swimmer Mike Kenny as Britain's most decorated Paralympian of all time by winning her 17th gold. A truly momentous achievement, and who knows what might happen in Paris 2024...

Swimming

Alice Dearing (Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 18–20) became the first black female swimmer to represent Team GB at the Olympics. She competed in the 10 km marathon open-water event in Tokyo, swimming for just over 2 hours and achieving a top-20 position in her first games.

In 2020 Dearing co-founded the Black Swimming Association (<https://thebsa.co.uk>) with a key aim of tackling the barriers preventing people from African, Caribbean and Asian communities participating in swimming. Dearing's post-Olympic message was that swimming is open to all and 'no matter what your race or background, if you don't know how to swim, get in and learn to swim'.

Hockey

Team GB hockey player Susannah Townsend (interviewed in Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 4–5) was quoted as saying that the delay to the Games was 'probably the best thing that could have happened to me'. After the highs of winning gold as part of the women's hockey team in Rio 2016, like many other elite athletes she experienced the lows of injury problems, which challenged her love of hockey and caused her to question her commitment to another training cycle prior to Tokyo.

Lockdown allowed her time to reflect, and the enforced break gave her body and mind time to relax and refresh. Following Team GB's bronze medal success, after defeating India 4–3 in an exciting encounter, Townsend posted on Twitter that she couldn't be prouder of what Team GB hockey had achieved.



Sarah Storey

