

Derek Redmond

In 1991, Derek Redmond, Great Britain's best runner in the Men's 400 Meter event broke his own record (set in 1987) by 1/100th of a second. It was a National record that he held going into the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. Derek's life goal was to win a Gold Medal in these games. The day came for the semi-finals in the 400 meters and Derek knew this would be the race of his life. Up against the world's best runners, he knew that he had to do his best. When the gun sounded Derek got off to a great start. Then tragically, the right hamstring tore in his leg, sending him tumbling to the track surface before a packed stadium and a worldwide audience watching on television. Paramedics rushed to assist him as he lay writhing in pain on the ground.

For most runners the race would have ended there. But not for Derek Redmond. In agony, Derek struggled to his feet and immediately felt the pain of the torn muscle surge through his body. Then, unexpectedly, he began hopping crazily toward the finish line. As the paramedics approached him, he waved them off, grimacing in tears. The stunned crowd could not believe what they were seeing. Then the drama took a new twist.

A man in a cap and t-shirt bound out of the stands. Security guards tried to stop him, but the large man flung them out of his way. He went straight for Derek. Approaching his son, Jim Redmond put his arm around the hopping runner and said, "Son, you don't have to do this!" "Yes, I do, Dad," Derek replied, fighting through the tears and agony. "Then we'll finish this thing together," the father said. And that's what the two men did. "Keep me in Lane 5!" Derek shouted, as the crowd rose to its feet. Derek's father did just that. With Derek's head buried in his father's shoulder, the two men made it to the finish line. The audience cheered and cried as they gave them a standing ovation.

Derek didn't win an Olympic Gold Medal, but he came away with something more valuable. Life often throws pain at us. Many times we surrender and allow the caretakers to run to our aid and give up on our goal. But Derek Redmond had two things working for him that day: the desire to run the complete race; and a father whose love for his son surpassed any obstacle in his way. When life knocks you down, what keeps you going? Who believes in you enough to rush to your side in front of the throngs of onlookers? No matter how bad things appear, we still love someone finishing the race. Too often we surrender to life's circumstances and quit.

Derek Redmond showed us that the importance of reaching a goal will help you to not only finish the race; but you can inspire others to help you in reaching your goal. His father taught us to push everything aside that stands in the way of helping someone reach their goal. Teams are made of this spirit! What goal are you striving for? What is hindering you from reaching it successfully? Who can you help overcome their obstacles? You'll find that the crowd will stop jeering and start cheering you on. People cheer winners, but love finishers as well.

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