

Mr. Spencer Cox said earlier that I spoke a couple of years ago on life after Tetrathlon. Well I would certainly say that there is. I joined The Pony Club aged 10 without a pony so maybe I was the basis of The Pony Club centres you were talking about earlier. The first event that came was the Triathlon which is the winter version of Pentathlon and as I didn't have a pony some people said do this, you can compete in this because you haven't got a pony. So I went down to the shooting club and somebody gave me a gun in my hand and aged 10 I was on the range going "ugh its horrid"!!!

Then the summer came round and somebody found me a pony very kindly and I entered the Tetrathlon, having won the first Triathlon, I'm not sure who entered me but I went home with my first blue medal, rosette as you got then. So I found a pony and I entered my first Tetrathlon, unfortunately I didn't win that one because I kept falling off. Thanks to all the rallies I went to I went away and learnt to ride and was back again winning with in a year or so which was fantastic.

Then I went up to the Championships and staggered myself by becoming third at my first attempt. That is when I first realised that maybe I could go a little bit further in this. I progressed through The Pony Club and managed to win the Championships a couple of times, which was quite enjoyable. Anyway, probably what you want to hear about is what happened down at the Olympics, the behind the scenes. I'm not going to tell you all of it!!

We were one of the last teams to fly down to the Gold Coast, which is where the British Olympic Training Camp was because our event was on the last day. In the first week there were about 400 athletes down there when we arrived and in the first week I think they all thought we were on a holiday camp because they had all gone through the acclimatisation programme and had the rest before you start upping your training before you wind it down for the Games.

On the first week we went Helicopter riding and on speedboats and tree top walking and everyone said are you actually here for the Olympics or are you on holiday? Because we were on the last day we were lucky enough to be able to fly down to Sydney for the day for the Opening Ceremony - that was an absolutely staggering experience. I walked into the Stadium with 110,000 people screaming their heads off at you. I stopped dead in my tracks on the track and just looked around me for a second. There was a tiny little hole just above me where there was daylight everywhere else there was just people. Walking round the track waving at all the British Flags and the amount of support was absolutely fantastic. That was the most fantastic moment of my life, walking onto the track behind Matthew Pinsent who was holding the Flag.

We then flew back up to the Gold Coast because the Olympics was all about competition and we were still heavily into training, so we wanted to go back up to the Gold Coast to train. We did a little bit more training than we had the week before and a few people took us a little bit more seriously. We went back down to Sydney on the Tuesday before our competition in the second week. Our competition was on the Sunday. We arrived on the Tuesday and we were lucky enough to bump into Denise Lewis who was cycling round the Olympic village on a bicycle in high heels. I was lucky enough to meet her a couple of times before we went out so she recognised me which was nice and she came up to me and she said 'Kate' and took my hand 'I've won my medal - lets do it for multi event, go and win yours', and she walked off. I felt incredibly inspired by the fact that firstly she had recognised me and secondly by the fact that she had stopped and had a few words and really inspired to go out into the competition.

The Wednesday, having arrived in the Village, we went to do the Press Conference, which I felt I was getting quite good at because I passed all the difficult questions on to the team manager.

Thursday we were all involved in vetting control passing, because all our weapons had to pass through stringent tests, I don't whether any of you have heard of a guy call Onna Chenkow? Who switched boxing gloves in 1976 when they won a Gold Medal well they switched and I didn't have any of those but my weapons all passed.

Then on Friday we trained on the venue which was really nice because you wander around the Olympic Village, we were only a team of two myself and Steph, and you feel a little bit overawed by the whole experience and it was really nice to get on to the venue because you felt more at home there and all the athletes you are competing against and you know very very well and so you walk on there and you think 'Oh my God I'm here this is what I am here for and now I feel uncomfortable' because wandering around the Village I was a little in awe of everything. Things like that, it's scary wandering around with those sorts of people around because of the reputation that they hold.

We went to the venue and trained on the venue and I was immediately a lot more relaxed and then on the Saturday the day before the competition, I didn't want to have anything to do with the Olympics, I wanted to get the hell out of the Olympic Village and rather than sit in the ring and twiddle my thumbs thinking 'I've got to compete tomorrow'. So we got up at 4.30am in the morning for the competition and we were on the range by 6.45 and I shall now say for the record that I was absolutely terrified for the shooting event. I had been shooting in The Pony Club since I was 10 since that day I had had the gun in my hand and I tell you I still don't get over the nerves now. I stood on the range and my hands shook and my shoulders shook, and my legs shook and the whole of me just shook. I don't know how I managed to get 20 shots on the cards. But I ended up in 12th place, which was nice. I would like to tell you a little bit about the fencing but to be honest I can't remember any of it. I think the coaches might actually call it being in the zone or something like that. I know that I was trying to make myself appear as scary as possible so people might be scared of me and I might be able to stab them. I do remember however in the fencing event that I did stab a few people which I was quite pleased with. One person in particular, we went on a training camp just before we went down to the Olympic, in the Hungarian Camp, the Hungarians are the best in the World, and I normally come home from Hungary with a whole load of bruises down my left hand side where they stabbed my arm. There was one girl in particular who I do absolutely struggle with, I have never hit her in an International competition before and I thought right, OK this is my opportunity, this is my chance to go out and see if I can work out how to hit her so I can hit her in the game. Well, she's really thrashing me, 15-1, 15-0, 15-0. So you can imagine I was a little bit scared going onto the piste against her at the Games. It was on the show piste at the end, we had 8 piste around the hall and one of them was raised about 6 foot high where all the people with TV cameras were and all the lights were and I was really chuffed that I was fencing her on that piste.

So as you can imagine I was trying to make myself feel as scary as I could and I stood on the piste absolutely quaking in my boots but trying not to show it and she turned round and we did all the weapons flex that we have to do beforehand and then Norma turned round to me and made me jump out of my skin. The referee said start so off we went and after that 20secs she comes thundering round the piste at me and I am giving one good fight and there was a big clash of swords and I'm not really sure what happened after that because I shut my eyes and when I reopened my eyes the fight was over and my light was on. I thought thank

goodness for that. Anyway that was a fluke, complete luck I would like to say. We went on to the swimming pool and there I was wearing my sexy swimsuit which comes down to here and up to here and down to my ankles like a wet suit, but that makes you swim fast.

We went over to the riding. I was really excited about the Riding Phase, because the horses were bought 3 years before the event and trained by Charles Stewart University down in Sydney especially for the event and they were a fantastic family.

The course was very very tricky, well I thought it was, and as an example of what the course was like you jumped one with an oxer, jumped two on the left hand to an upright and if you went on the track that looked the correct track you landed and jumped on 6.5 strides. And that was jump number 1 to jump number 2. So you can imagine what the rest of the course was like.

I was thinking, praising Good for the fact that I had started riding at 10 in The Pony Club. The Sport is an Eastern European Sport and a lot of Eastern European start with fencing and take up riding as their last sport and when I ride over in Easter Europe I do actually tend to take my long spurs and my big stick. The Eastern Europeans I knew were going to struggle with the course and I knew that that was going to play right into my hands. I got a lovely horse and made a couple of silly errors. But you know, that's competition, and if you didn't have competition you wouldn't make mistakes.

Anyway, I did the riding and finished up in 2nd place, so I knew that if I had good fencing event, a good riding event, that would set me up to being a bit closer in the run. I started behind USA's Emily Durreal who has actually beaten me by 14 seconds at the World Championships. So I know I had a tough first run ahead of me. My race plan was to go out and catch her up by the end of the first phase, run with her on the second and break from her on the third and run away from her. Well, it all went to plan for about 1500 metres, she realised I had my own plan. I don't know if any of you watched Paula Radcliffe and how she runs, she tends to run right from the front and created little surges so she runs away and relaxes.

We were about 1500 metres with this Paula Radcliffe thing going on in front of me and Emily was surging and relaxing, surging and relaxing and I got to about 2km and 'I'm tired now'. Emily began to pull away after about 2km, by about 2300kms, I realised that Steph was closing in on me fairly fast and by about 2.5km the only word that went through my head was 'bugger'.

This blonde Steph came flying past at 100mph, I glanced up over my shoulder to see that the American who was in 4th place was actually rather a long way behind, so I know that the bronze medal was mine and it was unlikely that I was going to catch up the 10 secs that Emily had now stretched out to. So I ran in. Crossing the finishing line was the combination of so many years of hard work and dedication to the sport and to what I wanted to achieve and even though I won Bronze Medal, it was a fantastic experience and I'm planning on being there in 4 years time.

I think without Pony Club Tetrathlon, I would never have discovered this sport and with out all those Instructors who spent all that time with me when I was younger, when I kept falling off and putting me back on again and giving me a slap around the face!!! A whole 1000% of what I have done in Sydney I would like to dedicate to The Pony Club just because if I hadn't discovered Triathlon and Tetrathlon back when I was 10 years old I would never have got to the Olympics.

We have got the World Championships in Britain next year at Millfield School in Somerset, so if any of you fancy practicing some shouting over the winter then I know I compete better when more people are shouting. So if you would like to come down to Millfield School next July, I know that there's a web site which might actually tell you all about it.

I would like to finish by saying Thank you very much to The Pony Club, I would never have got the Bronze Medal if I hadn't joined The Pony Club.

## Kate Allenby's Biography

- From - Devon .
- Pony Club Branch - Spooners and West Dartmoor
- Joined The Pony Club at 10 years old with no pony, did a Triathlon in first year and won it. Decided to loan a pony and progressed into competing in Tetrathlon.
- Couldn't ride and so 1st year in Tetrathlon was not very successful. Learnt to stick on pony round X-C and started getting noticed.
- Picked for Branch Team 1989 PC Championships
- Selected for British Tetrathlon Team in Ireland 1990
- Selected for Canada Touring Team 1992, Won everything
- At 17 years old, Father persuaded her to get into fencing, and therefore try Pentathlon.
- Went to the Junior Worlds in 1994 and got a Bronze medal, again in 1995 and got Silver.
- Then went to the World Championships to see if the large gap from Juniors to Seniors could be bridged successfully, she got a Bronze.
- Went on to win the Europeans in 1997, The World Cup in 1998 and 1999, leading up to Bronze at Sydney 2000.
- World Championships 2001 Team Relay Gold, Team Gold and Individual 4th place. (Other GBR team members Stephanie Cook, Georgina Harland and Sian Lewis)