

Aviva Parallel Success launched by UKA



27 January 2009

UK Athletics is seizing the unique opportunity presented by the London 2012 Paralympic Games by officially launching Aviva Parallel Success, a programme to identify and support talented disabled people to take up athletics for the first time.

Aviva Parallel Success is supported by the NASUWT - the largest Teachers' Union - and the London Marathon. It will sit alongside UK Athletics' other grassroots athletics programmes, including Aviva Startrack and Aviva Shine Awards.

Aviva Parallel Success Ambassador **Dame Tanni Grey Thompson** said:

"I am delighted to be the Ambassador of this exciting campaign, which has the potential to have a huge impact on the sport and inspire a whole new generation of young athletes."

"The pathway to the Paralympic Games is not always obvious; this programme will develop a clear route for disabled athletes through education and opportunity so that the dream of competing at the Paralympic Games can become a reality."

London has been chosen as a pilot area for Aviva Parallel Success, before the programme is rolled out in partnership with the NASUWT across the UK from September 2009. From the end of January, 1400 mainstream schools will receive the new resource pack and posters to inspire disabled people to try athletics and give them a chance for glory at the end of the Paralympic pathway.

As part of the Aviva Parallel Success campaign, there will be taster days and classification clinics, athletics club open days, masterclasses with Paralympic athletes and workshops and seminars for teachers and coaches starting on 19 March.

Aviva Parallel Success incorporates new competition opportunities starting with places at the adidas Mini London Marathon Wheelchair race in April and further competitions for all classification groups in May.

Thanks to generous support from the London Marathon, UKA are able to support 25 potential Wheelchair racers to receive a Racing Wheelchair. They will then compete on 26 April in the adidas Mini London Marathon, at the event where David Weir got started. This fantastic opportunity is open to 11-17 year olds.

Double Paralympic Champion **David Weir MBE** said:

"I was lucky enough to be introduced to the sport at my primary school, Bedelsford School in Kingston. My teacher got an application for the London Mini Marathon and asked me whether I would like to race, so I first represented my school at the age of 8 in the London Marathon and loved it!"

"I know how important it is to have the right opportunities at school and have the chance to compete at an early age. Aviva Parallel Success can potentially provide hundreds more young people with the chances I had growing up. I hope to get involved with the campaign as it develops and inspire kids to take up athletics."

Tanya Veingard, Head of Sponsorship, Aviva said:

"Aviva is proud to announce the Aviva Parallel Success programme which will see us continue to work hand in hand with UK Athletics in identifying and supporting young, talented disabled people as they begin their journey in athletics."

"Aviva has been the team behind UK Athletics since 1999 with a significant amount of money invested in developing the sport at every level. Aviva Parallel Success is a key component in achieving our primary aims of getting 15 million children active by 2012 and continuing to support the Aviva GB & NI Team."

David Bedford, Race Director, The Flora London Marathon said:

"The London Marathon is very proud to be part of this programme, especially in identifying wheelchair athletes at the beginning of their career, and providing 25 racing wheelchairs. We are very committed to contributing to the long-term development of these athletes."

Chris Keates, General Secretary at the NASUWT said:

"The NASUWT is delighted to sponsor the Aviva Parallel Success Campaign. The NASUWT hopes schools will make full use of the resource pack, which supports teachers to help athletes get on the pathway and make the sport fun and challenging."

"Hopefully Britain will reap the rewards of this programme in 2012 when we see the next generation of Paralympians on the winners podium."

UK Athletics is committed to making Aviva Parallel Success the foundation level for encouraging disabled athletes to start their journey towards future Paralympic success. This is an ongoing programme that has been embedded into the structures of UK Athletics.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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