

### Dylan Fletcher Biography

We moved to Market Harborough when Dylan was 10 years old from Surrey and he initially attended Market Harborough C of E school at Fairfield Road, Market Harborough. As we were new to the area Dylan joined with a number of local community activities so that he could make new friends, such as those at Market Harborough Leisure Centre, holiday clubs, tennis, trampolining, gymnastics etc. He was a really sporty youngster and enjoyed everything as a result.

He took to sailing when he was 11 years old and introduced to it by Chris Wright, an RYA (Royal Yachting Association) voluntary sailing coach who still lives with his wife Sarah in Ashley to this day. Chris used to coach and encourage youngsters to sail at Brixworth reservoir and at Rutland, the nearest reservoirs to Market Harborough. He was absolutely instrumental in the early years of Dylan's racing career as a sailor, encouraging Dylan to enter local, county and regional regattas for young people. After his very first 'nationals' held at Brixworth reservoir, competing against sailors from all over the country, it was clear Dylan wanted to win.

Dylan moved up to Kibworth school and then later onto Robert Smyth School and subsequently their A-level course. During his years at Robert Smyth there were numerous national, European and international sailing regattas and regular Friday - Sunday training events that Dylan needed to attend. Robert Smyth school was especially supportive of these trips away, always agreeing to authorised absence to accommodate such trips, and always encouraging him to follow his dream. He had announced to us at around 13 / 14 years old that he wanted to win an Olympic medal.

Dylan was also very kindly supported by local businesses, the Rotary Club and Great Bowden charity to help him on his way.

Eventually Dylan was selected for the British Sailing Team when he was 18 years old in 2006, not long after he had left Robert Smyth. This did mean buying his first 49er, the Olympic class of boat in which he won a medal and an enormous trailer, both of which needing to be secure and off the road, and both of which did not fit on the drive of our house, or his Grandparents house in Market Harborough. So Although this did mean that we had to move up the road to Desborough to achieve such logistics, it meant he was able to take up his place in the sailing team. As his grandparents in Market Harborough gave up space in their garage to accommodate spare sailing kit and equipment, he was therefore able to spend his time between our two houses when he was not up and down to Weymouth to fulfil his place in the sailing team.

Eventually the demands of the sport meant that he had to move to Weymouth full time, so he bought his own house there in September 2012 and started his journey to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, and then onwards to winning his Gold medal this year, 2021, in Tokyo.

When time permits he always returns to Market Harborough. He has been back to Robert Smyth when invited and when the opportunity arises again he will return to visit once again, and of course remains in touch with his first local sailing coach, Chris Wright.