

Name: Freddie Knott

Sports: Mounted Games (Equestrian)

Representative Honours(achievements): U18 European Individual Champion 2023, Reserve British Team Champion 2023, U18 British Pairs Reserve Champion 2023

How did you get into your sport?

My parents competed and they met through the sport. Both of their families have always had ponies and my Grandad bought me my first pony as soon as I could walk. I always felt that Mounted Games was the most exciting equestrian discipline and it allows me to demonstrate my athleticism.

How did you get involved in riding and do you do any other sports?

I joined Pony Club to learn basic riding skills and then competed in local gymkanas and Pony Club games. As I became more competitive, I swiftly moved on to Mounted Games which is my real passion as it's fast and exciting.

I still enjoy playing rugby for Princethorpe and have been playing since I was 6 years old for Balsall & Berkswell, and Crackley Hall. My parents encouraged me to stay involved in team sports because they felt they were beneficial to my personal development. I was also in the Wasps Development Programme for a couple of years ago before horse riding took over.

I represent Princethorpe in the athletics events of hurdles and triple jump and have also achieved some success in these areas.

What does your training/week programme look like to compete at your sporting level?

In January I start getting my ponies fit with flatwork. By March I am in full training, practicing games individually during the week before meeting up for team training sessions on weekends. This can be tricky as my teammates are based all over England, but we need to have team strategy and race orders agreed when the season starts in April.

What has been the highlight of your season?

Winning the European Individuals, without a doubt. I had been riding a different pony at the start of the season but decided to take a risk and change pony for the British Individuals in May. I finished in 4th place at that competition but was a little disappointed despite being the youngest in the age group. I was determined to improve on that for the Europeans in August so I practiced almost every day.

I had never won anything of this magnitude before and had mainly been competing in team events so I was pretty nervous going into the final. I made sure I was concentrating on each individual job and being in the moment. I was really focussed as I knew if I rode as well as I could no one could beat me. I had a few wobbles along the way but kept my nerve and when I crossed the line in the last race ahead of my biggest competitor and knew I had given it everything and got the title! Tough to explain what it feels like when you finally achieve something like that, it was a real goal of mine to win a major title and I still smile when I think of it today.

What are your goals for this season?

I have a new pony for 2024 season so I'll be starting from scratch again but I'm not excited about our new partnership and hoping to travel to Italy for the World Individuals in July.

Who are your sporting role models?

My parents made me say David Beckham.

What advice would you give to young sports performers? Don't be afraid to fail. As long as you are learning from your mistakes you are developing. Also, anything worth winning shouldn't be easy, but if you work hard you'll get good results.

I practiced a lot - On foot, on a bike and on my pony. All helped me develop my skill and become a really effective rider.

Finally, even if you try your hardest you may not always win, but you can still enjoy the sense of achievement whatever the outcome.

