



Meet the first woman with Down's syndrome to finish a sprint triathlon

By Eleonora Piastra | Published 21 July 2022



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At 35 years old, Jade Kingdom is a force of nature and the **first person with Down's syndrome to complete a sprint triathlon (female)**.

She finished the Sprint Triathlon distance (750m, 20km cycle, and 5km run) in an incredible 2hr 39min 55 seconds on 7th August 2021.

While breaking a record, she also raised a whopping £20,000 for her charity of choice, the North Devon Hospice, and aims to keep raising money for them with future challenges.

She was awarded a Guinness World Records certificate at the office in London by editor-in-chief Craig Glenday.

Fellow record holder Chris Nikic (USA), who holds the record for **first person with Down's syndrome to complete an IRONMAN® triathlon**, inspired Jade from the start of her training up until the very last seconds, when she crossed that coveted finish line.



"I stumbled across Chris Nikic training for his IRONMAN® attempt, and that was a big turning point. Chris' motto is to get 1% better every day, and that's what I employed in my day-to-day life and training."

She loves swimming and is naturally good at it, but never defined herself as a sporty person, so conquering the sprint triathlon was a big challenge.

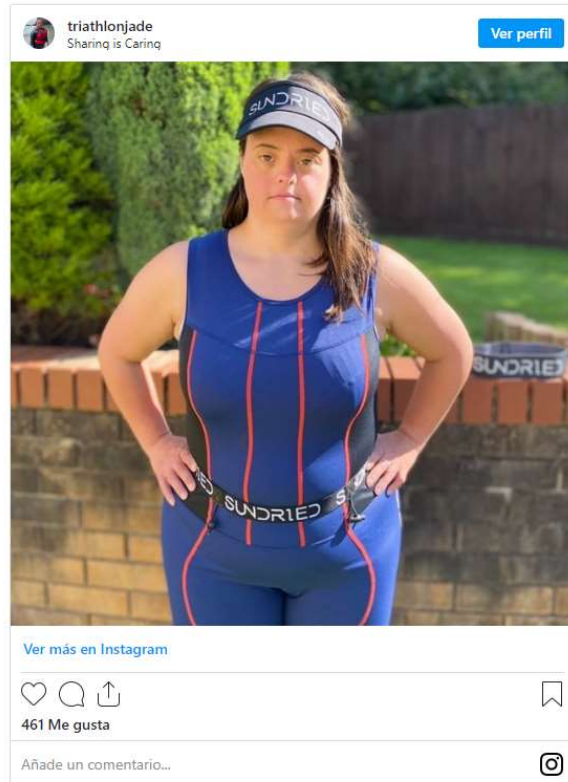
For the record, Jade had to step up from her usual super sprint triathlon distance to a sprint distance: roughly twice as far as she'd ever gone before.



Training for the challenge

Preparing for this epic quest meant a total change to Jade's training programme.

Through it all, her coach and brother-in-law Tom Mahoney (together with Jade's mum Judy) have been helping and encouraging Jade to always give her best.



Normally, Jade would run and swim once a week with a little bit of cycling thrown in for good mix, but for the record attempt her training ramped up to six sessions a week: two swimming, bike and run sessions each.

"I quickly found that consistency was going to be key to me having any chance of completing the distance."

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"The more I trained consistently the fitter I became, which in turn boosted my confidence and made me believe I could achieve anything. A big part of my record attempt was to also raise funds for good causes. In this instance, it was for the North Devon Hospice. The more the fundraising total climbed, the more determined it made me succeed."

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Jade also had to overcome a few challenges during the training, mainly when it came to running.

"Having Down's Syndrome generally means having numerous medical issues," she explained.

"For me, I struggled with the cardio-respiratory side of things. Having a small mouth and big tongue made it difficult for me to breathe."

Jade's feet also suffered from the running, due to her underactive thyroid which leads to weight gain.

In the water, however, Jade finds herself at home.

She much prefers swimming to running, and has decided her next projects will be water-based (although just as exciting and challenging) ones.



The record-breaking triathlon

"Finishing was amazing and I'll never forget running down the red carpet to rapturous cheering and applause," said Jade.

"It was the moment I felt total inclusion and at one with my fellow athletes."

According to Jade, the best part of her entire experience was raising 20 thousand pounds for a good cause. So many people showed support and kindness, uniting her community, which was also a highlight for Jade.

Now, Jade says that she gets recognized in the street and enjoys being part of such a big, supportive cycle of positivity.

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"At a time when we were just coming out of a long Covid lockdown, I felt that the whole of North Devon and beyond were united and willing me to succeed."

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Although the experience was overall an extremely positive challenge for Jade, it didn't come without bumps in the road.

"On the day of the triathlon, everything went to plan, apart from the last lap of the run where I fell apart both mentally and physically," recalled Jade.

"No one knows this, but I stopped. I began to cry and, for a moment, almost gave up!

"Luckily my coach gave me a few words of wisdom which made me realize that I had come so far in my journey, raising so much for charity that I just had to finish."

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"I broke this record to inspire others, disability or not. Anyone can achieve anything!"

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Her family are incredibly proud of Jade, and never stop supporting her, no matter how crazy the challenge might seem.

"Of course, sometimes they nearly choke on their food when I decide on a challenge, but they immediately get behind me and start working out how I can achieve my goal."



And, to all the people with Down's syndrome who would like to enter the world of sports, Jade encouragingly says: "just go for it."

"Anyone, disability or not can achieve anything with total dedication and the support of your family and friends. Just start small and you'll be amazed where your journey takes you - 1% better every day! Just don't ever listen to anyone who says you can't do something!"



Jade works as a waitress and likes to spend time with her mother Judy and her sister. In her free time, she also goes to the cinema, art class or the golf range. However her training never stops, and she has a lot planned for her future.

Without a doubt, her biggest challenge this year is attempting the [Swim Serpentine Super 6](#), which will take place in September. For this event, only open to 50 swimmers a year, Jade will dive into the London iconic Serpentine Lake, in Hyde Park, and swim for 6 miles, roughly 10 kilometres.

"It's going to be a huge challenge, as the distance is about three times further than I have ever swum before," she says.

We can't wait to see what distance Jade will conquer next.

In the meantime, you can find Jade in the new *Guinness World Records 2023* book, out in September 2022!

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"I can't wait to get hold of the Guinness World Records 2023 book – it will be something I will treasure for the rest of my life."

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