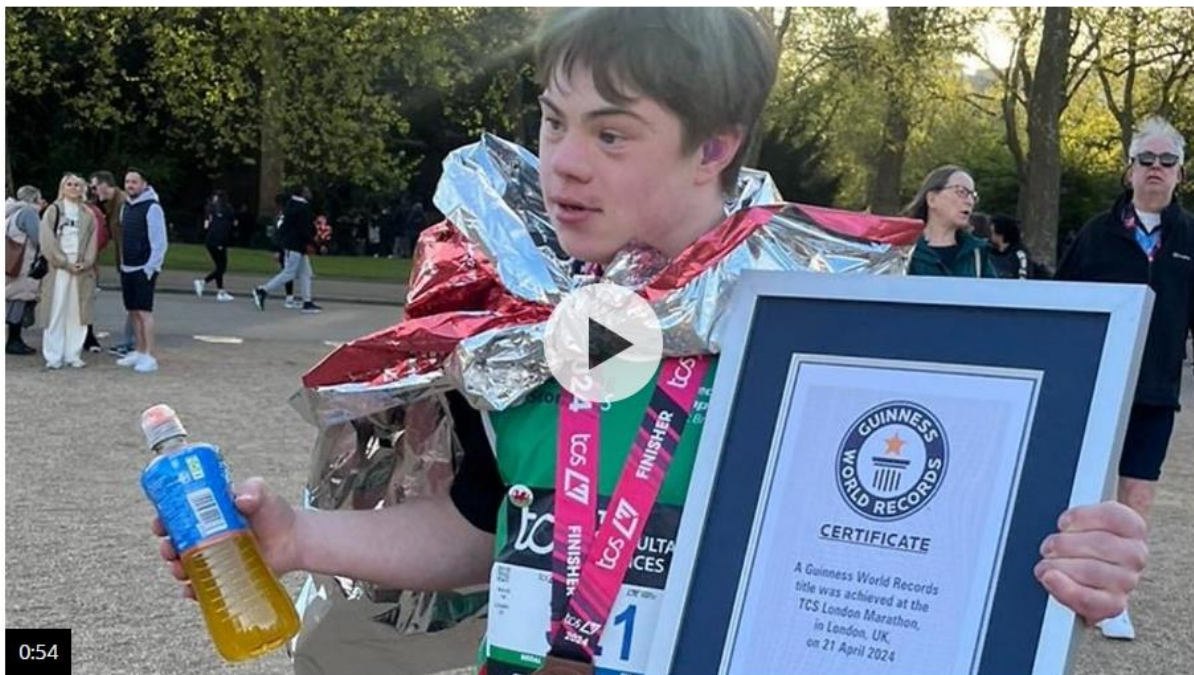


London Marathon: Runner with Down's syndrome gets youngest record

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By Paul Pigott, BBC News



Lloyd Martin was awarded a Guinness World Record certificate after the race

A teenage runner with Down's syndrome has made history as the youngest person in his learning disability category to complete a marathon.

Lloyd Martin, 19, whose family is from Cardiff, completed the London Marathon with his mum as his guide.

Guinness World Records created the challenge for Lloyd and awarded him a certificate at the finish.

"In Lloyd's words, it's achieving his dream," said his mum Ceri Hooper, 54.

"Really anything is possible if you put your mind to it," she said. "With a bit of work, you can achieve it."

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Lloyd is the youngest person to complete a marathon in the intellectual impairment category (II2).

"It was absolutely amazing," Ceri said. "He ran continuously for 14 miles [22.5km] which is the longest he's ever run before.

"There was a bit of walking after that, but he was great."



Ceri and Lloyd at the start of the race on Sunday

"He got the crowd going, cheering for him," she added. "It was tough, but we had a ball."

She said Lloyd's achievement was important for people with Down's syndrome.



Lloyd Martin underwent training to prepare for the London Marathon

"We did not say a lot when we crossed the finish line," she said. "We just both burst into tears."

Ceri is the perfect coach for Lloyd, having represented Wales since she was a teenager in cross country and track races.

She has run the London Marathon four times and also completed the Boston and Chicago races.



Lloyd has been in training for about five months

Getting Lloyd marathon ready in just five months was a challenge.

He had more than 30 Parkruns under his belt, but until Christmas the weekly 5km (3 mile) timed run was the furthest distance he had ever completed.

Ceri had to create a bespoke training plan including a weekly long run to get Lloyd used to the rigours of being on his feet for several hours.



Lloyd and his brother Finlay have previously cheered on Ceri at the London Marathon

The Special Olympics GB helped Lloyd secure a place in the marathon, and he is also a gymnast and footballer with the organisation.

He is the third Welsh Special Olympics athlete to run the London Marathon.