

Case Study



From participant to leader: my running journey by Tamsyn

Getting into running

Running was always something that I wanted to try but somehow I had convinced myself that I would not be able to do it. Then one magical day I was on social media (Facebook) and I remember seeing an advert for Bower Hinton, Ash and Martock (BHAM) runners. The founder of the group, Neil, had set up a Couch to 5K (C25K) group and after enquiring, I was shocked to discover that this was a free local course for all abilities.

With massive anticipation and nerves I remember showing up for the first session. I was hesitant to get out the car and even texted my girlfriends to ask them why I was doing this. Instantly I was put at ease by Neil, and everybody who attended most probably felt exactly like me. I am so lucky that the group I am in is full of such wonderful local people. Not only is running a great way to get fit, it was also a fantastic way to meet local people and see my village from a different perspective, by not being behind a wheel of the car.

Becoming a run leader

Neil asked the whole group if anybody would like to become an additional run leader as he wanted to grow the group and make sure that there were different styles of leader to help motivate and support everyone.

I know he particularly wanted a lady leader, especially as the groups are mainly female but I wasn't sure at first, and didn't think I was a good enough runner to lead. Neil convinced me that it wasn't about being a great runner, but more about being able to empathise and support people as they start their running journey, so I went for it!



Being mentored

Working with Neil has been a great stepping stone to becoming a run leader. Without his faith in me I would never have considered attending a run leader course. He has pushed me outside of my comfort zone and I am forever grateful for the opportunity he has given me. It has also led to me coming out of my comfort zone in other aspects of my life as well. Having a good team leader changes everything and keeps you motivated to attend - for example we had a graduation for the group passing C25K, that meant so much to me and I hope one day I can inspire others in the same way.



Getting qualified

I really enjoyed the Leadership in Running Fitness (LiRF) course - it was a jam packed day and our tutors were fantastic. I have to say being rather naïve, I did not realise the amount of work that went into planning and preparing for a session! The course was so informative and had a good balance of practical also. I came away brimming with ideas and met up with Neil straight away to discuss some of them. Everybody on the course was fantastic and it was great to get new ideas and share best practice.

'If I can inspire one person that they CAN do this, that they can run and that they can break down their own barriers, then I will go away a very happy lady. I love being around people and seeing them develop will be so rewarding. I just want to give back and watch people flourish' - Tamsyn

Stepping out of my comfort zone

If you had asked me when I first started with the running group 'would I end up leading it' I would have said absolutely not! Not in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would attend a run leadership course and more importantly enjoy it. To be honest, at the start of this journey, I couldn't have pictured myself running more than two minutes at a time.

The growth of my own development from day one to now is unrecognisable and this is consistent within BHAM runners. Each and every one is achieving PB's and the only person that they are in competition with is themselves. It's wonderful to observe.

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