

Hibs' Fit Fans take part in Tough Mudder this weekend



Members of the Hibernian Community Foundation's (HFC) health programmes will be stepping up their training programmes and entering next week's Tough Mudder challenge in Dalkeith on Sunday writes Ruth Jeffrey.

The exercise and nutrition-based programmes run by the football club's charity help clinically obese men and women get fit and improve their health. And now some of these participants have decided to enter one of the world's hardest cross-country obstacle courses as a team. 12 men, most of whom participated in the Healthy Hibeer and Football Fans in Training programmes, are raising money for the Hibernian charity through sponsorship.

Tough Mudder was originally designed by the British Special Forces to be a test of mental and physical strength. Obstacles on the 10-12 miles course include a freezing pit of water filled with ice, live electric wires over a field of mud, incline and decline monkey bars over a pool of cold water and high walls to climb covered in mud and butter. The refrain on the official website says 'Tough Mudder is probably the toughest event on the planet.'

The emphasis of the course is teamwork, something that HFC worker and previous Tough Mudder finisher Glenn Milne values: "There are certain obstacles that are designed so that you can overcome them if you work as a team, so it's not an individual thing and it's not a race. And that's the other important thing- it's not about your finishing time. It's about finishing, and finishing as a team is the key thing for me."

Milne is organising this year's HFC entry into Tough Mudder

and he said of their ambitions: "I wanted to take a group of our Football Fans in Training and give them extra training to get them round the Tough Mudder because I think that as an achievement that would be a significant one. Remember, these are guys who are over the age of 35 and are clinically obese and they've now got to a level of fitness and an ability that would let them do that."

The level of fitness reached by the entrants owes a lot to the HFCs health programmes. A combination of physical exercise and lectures on nutrition and healthy eating, the 12 week courses are about instilling good lifestyle values instead of implementing crash-diets. This emphasis on a long-lasting health means that the positive effects of the programmes are far-reaching, proven by this Tough Mudder entry.

Executive Director of the charity, Kris Von Wald, said that she believes in the benefits of their courses: "Our programmes have definitely helped a lot of men and women get fitter and healthier. We really believe that we make a difference in these people's lives and it's fantastic to see them now entering a challenging event like Tough Mudder. It's great that after we've helped them, they can raise funds for our charity and help us in return- things have gone full circle."

Extra preparations for Tough Mudder are built into the HFC's timetable, with upper body strength, core work, extra running and various obstacle-related exercises helping the men get ready for their challenge. Milne said that the satisfaction gained from completing the course is huge: "The sense of achievement on two of the obstacles in particular was quite significant. I got a real boost out of doing that, and to actually get across the finishing line was tremendous, one of the best experiences of my life so far!"

The HFC continues to run health programmes to try and help many more people in the local Edinburgh community get fit.

Details about how to support Glenn are here:
<http://www.justgiving.com/Glenn-Milne3>