

Finlay ran the Manchester Half Marathon

Finlay Menzies (18) from Balerno has just run the Manchester Half Marathon, raising funds for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Charity.

This is no mean feat for the young man who has cerebral palsy and used a three-wheeled frame to help him balance, but he was focused on his goal for his own personal achievement and as a Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) Youth Ambassador. This accomplishment, as well as the training beforehand, will be part of his Bronze and Silver DofE awards. Finlay also coaches sports at the local disability sports class The Edinburgh Eagles and at Harmeny Athletics for the volunteering part of his award.

He completed the half marathon distance in a personal best time of 1 hour and 39 minutes.

Finlay said: "It feels amazing to finish this half marathon and I'm really proud that I competed it.

"I love the sensation of whizzing down a track as fast as I can. I have been racing and training for the last six years at different levels and I have never let my disability get in the way of what I want to achieve. I'm aiming to run a marathon next!"

Ashley Williams, UK Youth Engagement Manager at DofE said: "Finlay is one of many young people who have achieved incredible things through their DofE. As a charity, we're determined to put young people at the heart of everything we

do and to connect them with opportunities to make a positive impact on the issues they care about – and we can't wait to see what our new cohort of Youth Ambassadors achieve this year.

“As they navigate the ongoing after-effects of the pandemic and a severe cost-of-living crisis, it's more vital than ever that all young people get access to opportunities like the DofE, which let them have fun, grow their resilience and self-belief, and develop vital skills they can't always get in the classroom.”

Finlay joins a cohort of just 35 DofE Award holders aged 16-24 from all over the UK, who will advocate for young people by sharing their expertise on key issues impacting them. Together, they will make young people's voices heard by speaking at events, meeting key decision-makers in Parliament and beyond, and feeding into decisions to shape the direction of the DofE charity's work. He said: “I want to make the world more accessible for people who have disabilities, especially when their disability isn't visible. Watching para-sport on the television gives one view of how people living with a disability can succeed, but I want more people to understand that everyone can do their bit to make life more inclusive.”

DofE is open to any young person aged 14-24. Each young person builds their own DofE programme – picking their own activities and choosing which cause to volunteer for – in order to achieve a Bronze, Silver or Gold DofE Award. The DofE is run in schools, youth clubs, hospitals, fostering agencies, prisons, sports clubs and more, all over the UK. Find out more at [DofE.org](https://www.dofe.org)

