

Josh Kerr – back to his roots with Edinburgh Athletic Club

Between winning the world 1500 metres title in Budapest and New York's 5th Avenue Mile Josh Kerr returned to his roots, visiting Edinburgh Athletic Club at their refurbished Meadowbank base.

And the man who also won bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics was keen to acknowledge help and support received when setting out in the sport.

"The pathway in Scotland was so good for my own journey" said Josh who went on to tell 'Scottish Athletics'.

"I came in at eight years of age and started making teams at about under-15.

"But it was never a smooth ride, there are always ups and downs along the way. Bodies develop in different ways when you are all kids and young teenagers.

"Having support from Edinburgh AC and from Scottish Athletics – with volunteers taking you on buses to the likes of the London Mini Marathon – that's why and how I stayed in the sport.

"And that is key. Staying in when things get tough is the hard part. I cannot thank EAC and Scottish Athletics enough for helping me with that.

“It’s a tough sport: training can be hard at times, the weather might not be great. If you don’t stay in the sport, you don’t enjoy the success.

“Everyone goes through it in the sport, the difficult moments, but just stay on the path if you can.

“I’ve huge affection for EAC.

“Every couple of weeks we would be off to the Young Athletes League meetings or races around the UK – be that track or cross country.

“This was a big family feeling to me. I was really enjoying my running but was also surrounded by like-minded people – talented young athletes and good coaching.”



One of these coaches was Eric Fisher, also credited with developing Jake Wightman, immediate predecessor of Josh Kerr as world 1500 metres champion.

Eric said: "I don't think there had ever been back-to-back champions in the same event from one country so for them both to be from EAC was tremendous for the club and for Scotland,

"To think one athlete can maybe emerge and win medals at a World Champs is amazing in itself – but to have two, well, it is quite unbelievable and we are so proud of Jake and Josh and their roots."

Sibling rivalry was maybe at the heart of Josh's development, Eric recalled: "Josh came to EAC following the footsteps of his elder brother, Jake. Jake won medals around that time and Josh was very keen to copy that. He had a lot of respect for his brother but slowly that changed and he went beyond him, really."

Eric referenced Frank Dick (also from Edinburgh) in making it clear he shared a philosophy with the former National Director of Coaching in helping to make champions of the future.

Frank Dick said coaches should be with younger athletes (because) anybody can hold a watch for a senior developed athlete.

"Really the person who is working with the younger ones, trying to correct any faults and gain the best out of them is vital."

That approach seems to have worked well....

· Not only did Josh Kerr, who was supported at the Meadowbank visit by his sponsors, Brooks Running, win the 5th Avenue Mile but fellow Scot Jemma Reekie took the women's race.



Photo credits: Gary Leek