

Eilidh's London 'imposter' fear

Scottish athletics legend Eilidh Doyle has told how the London Olympics was a "horrible experience" after she got imposter syndrome around stars like Sir Chris Hoy and Sir Andy Murray.

The former 400m hurdler is Scotland's most decorated track and field athlete ever with 17 medals from the Olympics, World Championships, European Championships and Commonwealth Games.

But she said she wasn't yet ready for podium finishes in London and felt "totally out of place" among her peers in the athlete's village.

Doyle, 36, told the Working Class to World Class podcast it was a "really terrible experience" but working with a performance psychologist later helped her overcome her mindset.

She said: "I went to the Olympics in really good shape but when I got there I just was overwhelmed by the whole experience.

"Just being in the village, seeing these famous athletes – people like Chris Hoy or Andy Murray – and just feeling totally out of place.

"I understood later it was imposter syndrome, that feeling of 'I don't belong here, I shouldn't be here'.

"It was horrible and that was my first ever Olympic Games. I remember thinking back to the young Eilidh when I was starting at my club and I just loved sport, and thinking 'what the hell happened?'

"I'd managed to get to an Olympics – my home Olympics as well, not just any Olympics – and I really didn't like the

experience.

“It was just a mindset. I went into it seeing other athletes as being way above me and feeling low self esteem and low confidence.”

She said working with the psychologist was “almost like therapy”.

She added: “I worked with him my whole career – even after I retired I still would chat with him about things because it was understanding mindset and what it is to get the best out of a performance.

“You can train the mindset just like you train your body to go and perform. It’s something I learned in the middle of my career but I look back on it now and think that was so important.”

Doyle, who trained in Edinburgh to be a PE teacher, only became a full time athlete in 2011.

After London, she enjoyed regular successes and was the poster girl for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014.

She retired in 2021 as one of only a few athletes to have won medals at every major championships. But she admitted she didn’t appreciate her achievements until after she retired.

She told podcast host Lynn Lester: “When you win medals and you have success you sometimes don’t really get time to enjoy it because you’re going through that process.

“It probably wasn’t until I retired when I could just stop and say ‘that was brilliant, all those medals’.”



https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eilidh_Child.jpg#mw-jump-to-license 2012 Summer Olympics