



News Release

AFA, PO Box 1219, Chew Magna, Bristol, BS40 8WB, UK

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Registered Charity Number 1122442

Heart rhythm patient qualifies to represent Great Britain in the European Triathlon Championships

YORK, OCTOBER 2011: A heart rhythm patient from Yorkshire has qualified to compete for Great Britain in the European Triathlon Championships, which take place in Israel next year.

38 year old Martin Harman, from York suffers from Atrial Fibrillation. He was diagnosed following an operation in 2006 which was believed to have caused the first episode of the illness.

Since diagnosis Martin has learnt how to manage his condition and after a period of time was able to return back to work and slowly start excising again.

Martin took up the sport three years ago after a gym instructor mentioned how well and fit he was looking and that he would be participating in a triathlon next. After six months of training, Martin competed in his first triathlon in Driffield, Yorkshire and raised a magnificent £1000 for the Atrial Fibrillation Association. He said, "It was such an emotional moment and I had enjoyed it so much I thought I would do another one!"

His ambitions were delayed however, after he suffered a serious ligament injury that required surgery and rehabilitation.

Since then, Martin has resumed training and is thrilled to qualify for the European Championships which take place in **Eilat, Israel on 19th April 2012**. He also hopes to represent his country at the World Championships in Auckland New Zealand in Oct 2012. The qualifiers for these are in June/July 2012.

Martin competes in the Olympic distance which consists of a gruelling 1500m swim, 40km cycle and a 10 km run.

Martin said, "The reason why I participate in Triathlons is that whilst I thoroughly enjoy the challenge of the sport, it is also my way of proving to myself that Atrial Fibrillation may well live with me, but it will not live 'for me'".

Martin is now looking for sponsorship to help cover travel costs to get him to the Championships as well as raise vital money for the Atrial Fibrillation Association. Unlike other sports there is little funding and the British Triathlon World Class lottery funding only supports a small number of athletes who are either performing at international level or who have the potential to compete at the highest level in the events beyond the 2012 Olympics.



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Martin has set-up a blog detailing how his training is going <http://triwithrhythm.blogspot.com/> and a Just Giving page for sponsorship and donations <http://www.justgiving.com/mharman>.

ENDS

Notes:

1. Atrial Fibrillation Association (AFA), an international charity which provides information, support and access to established, new or innovative treatments for Atrial Fibrillation (AF).
2. Atrial Fibrillation (AF) is the most common arrhythmia – heart rhythm disturbance. It occurs when chaotic electrical activity develops in the upper chambers of the heart (the atria). As a result, the atria no longer beat in an organised, regular rhythm, so the patient's pulse is irregular and as a result, the pumping of the heart is less efficient.
3. Across the UK approximately 1.2 million people suffer with Atrial Fibrillation.
4. The AFA website is at <http://www.atrialfibrillation.org.uk>
5. For more details, please contact Fiona Ahearn at Fiona@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk or telephone 01789 451 826
6. Martin's coach's website is at <http://www.yorktriathloncoaching.com>
7. Follow AFA on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/atrialfibUK>
8. The AFA Facebook page is at <http://www.facebook.com/atrialfibrillation>