

Second Wind ...



At the age of two, Nick Condon was diagnosed with a heart-breaking disease that causes progressive disability and premature death.

Despite the reassurance given to his parents that sufferers of Cystic Fibrosis often survive into adulthood, they were absolutely devastated to learn of the fate of their firstborn.

Nick's life was burdened with obstacles and challenges and, at the age of 7 he endured daily physiotherapy sessions and consumed a cocktail of drugs. In spite of this, Nick enjoyed competing in various sporting activities and was determined to continue participating, achieving medals in football, basketball, golf and cricket.

Despite a strong will and determination to partake in the sports in which he clearly excelled, his inability to maintain the same level of fitness exhibited by his friends, became all too apparent as he frequently experienced severe breathlessness as the condition of his lungs worsened. Remarkably, Nick went on to continue to achieve academically, attending the University of Bath, where he earned a 2:1 in Economics. Despite several setbacks in his health; a collapsed lung and frequent bouts of coughing up blood, Nick went on to qualify as a Chartered Accountant in 2003. Although Nick's certificate took pride of place on his wall, he was unable to pursue a career in accountancy as his health took a turn for the worse and his condition deteriorated dramatically.

In January 2007 Nick's condition reached an all time low due to a life-threatening bout of pneumonia, which saw him hospitalized for a prolonged period of time. Mercifully, physio, IV's and blood transfusions enabled him to begin to recover, and it was at this point that the possibility of a double lung transplant went from being a distant possibility, to a life-changing reality. However, without a suitable match Nick was given just 18 months to live. In Nick's words "This was, undoubtedly, the darkest day of my life."

After an initial false alarm and, alongside a great deal of false hope, after only 23 days on the transplant list, Nick received the incredible news that was to change his life forever – he was to undergo a double lung transplant - his life was about to change radically.

In a short space of time, Nick has gone from being someone who required four, 40 minute sessions of physio every day, who slept on a ventilator needing multiple nebulizers, inhalers and swallowing tens of thousands of drugs every year, to being someone who could dream about doing the things that other people take for granted. Indeed, the transformation resulting from the transplant meant that Nick could, once again, enjoy the sporting activities he missed so dearly.

Just 28 months after undergoing a life-threatening double lung transplant, Nick's achievements can only be described as purely outstanding.

Nick recently represented Great Britain in the European Heart and Lung Transplant games in Sweden, winning gold medals in 100m, 4km and tennis, in addition to silver in the 4x100m relay and bronze in both 20km cycling and golf. Such achievements are beyond the imaginings of most people, let alone someone who has been through Nick's experiences. He is truly inspirational, and the determination and talent that shines through his story is extraordinary.

Nick can now enjoy a healthy lifestyle and look forward to the future – a future without an illness preventing him achieving his dreams. Nick is determined to enjoy life to the full and grasp every opportunity given to him. He knows only too well that without the foresight and thoughtfulness of the organ donor to whom he owes his life, none of this would be possible. While 90% of people in the UK say they support organ donations, only 27% have joined the NHS Organ Donor Register. Nick is one of the lucky ones; there are thousands of other people not so fortunate, those who don't survive because, sadly, there aren't enough donated organs to go around. Please spare your family the need to have to make a decision after your death, at a time that is very distressing for them. Make your wishes known today and register your details online at www.organdonation.nhs.uk or by telephoning 0300 123 23 23 - you can improve the chances of survival of others by donating your organs after your death.

Nick, who lives in Northamptonshire, works part-time for MacIntyre Hudson LLP – Chartered Accountants and business Advisers - one of the top twenty accounting firms.

During the ups and downs of the past few years, Nick has been supported by the Chartered Accountants' Benevolent Association (CABA).

Kath Haines, Chief Executive at CABA, said: "Nick is an inspiration to us all and we are really pleased that we were able to help him."