

## SMA Road2Rio - February 2016

The SMA Road2Rio Athlete Sponsorship Programme has been in action for a few months and we're really excited to hear how this has been received by SMA members and the athletes they are working with. With therapists offering up to 50% discount for treatments it's a fantastic way to support our unfunded athletes.

We'd seen a great initial response from the launch back in Autumn 2015, when SMA members who had signed up to the programme were sent their welcome packs and polo shirts.

The countdown to Rio is well under way with trials fast approaching for final team selections. As the Official Sponsor to the SMA Road2Rio programme our team at Physique are really proud to be involved in such a beneficial scheme and thought it would be great to share the experiences of SMA members and their prospective Rio athletes.

SMA Member Lucie Spraggon has generously sent us the following article, it's a really inspirational piece and one we hope will motivate other athletes and SMA Members to get involved with the fantastic programme.

**SMA Member. Lucie Spraggon**  
**Soft Tissue Therapist in Glastonbury, Somerset.**

### Lucie's story...

After having an amazing experience working at the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympic games I was itching to get involved in some way again, this time with the Rio games. I have been working with international teams and athletes since 2012 for various matches, competitions, World cups and tours, but nothing quite compares to the Olympic and Paralympic games. This is the ultimate goal for all sports men and women.

I first heard about the Road to Rio programme by chatting to my former teacher at NLSSM Nick Mooney from the SMA. I thought it was a great idea and so many of our top UK athletes would benefit from this sponsorship. One name popped into my head straight away. Rob Holderness.

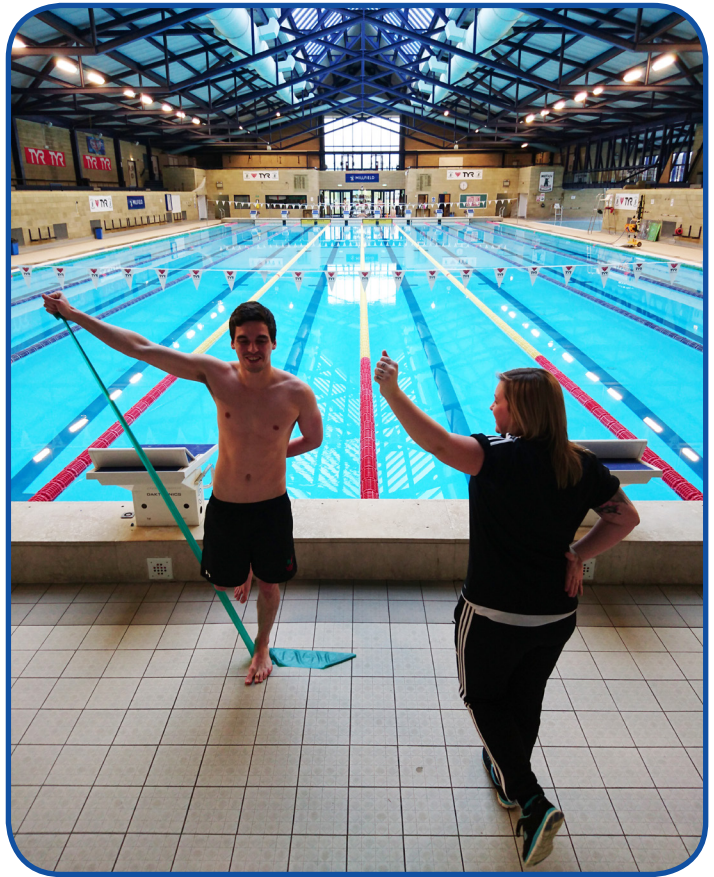
Athlete: Rob Holderness 25 yrs  
Swimmer - 100m and 200m Breaststroke.  
Country - Wales  
Club - Millfield Swimming, Street, Somerset  
2014 ranked 9th in the world  
Competitor for wales in the previous 2 Commonwealth Games

## **“Rob is unsponsored so receives no medical support or funding”**

I have known Rob for many years going to school in the same town and competing with him as youngsters, he has always been at the top of the rankings and continued in the sport. I wanted to help Rob as much as I could leading up to the GB swimming trials in April. Rob is unsponsored so receives no medical support or funding. The Road2Rio Sponsorship Programme gave me a chance to give my expertise to athletes like Rob.



SMA Road2Rio  
Athlete Sponsorship Programme



**“The programme is really fulfilling as a professional to be involved with.”**





## “Training up to 5 hours a day”

Rob is a Breastroker specialising in the 100m and 200m, representing Wales multiple times in the past two Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and Delhi. He was ranked 9th in the world in 2014 before training was put on hold to pursue a career in Accountancy. Rob has now returned to training up to 5 hours a day exchanging his career aspirations for clear goals on competing at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

## “maintaining the level of optimum physical fitness.”

The treatments are aimed at maintaining the level of optimum physical fitness that is needed for the intense training Rob has to do for swimming. 4-5 hours a day of training includes land training, strength and conditioning, mobility and flexibility work as well as in the water training. Recovery massage and maintenance treatment is important for injury prevention, and promoting the wellbeing of the athlete. Soft tissue therapy is allowing Rob to become more aware of how his body is reacting to training and recovery, boosting his performance and preparation for competition.

The programme is really fulfilling as a professional to be involved with. You are investing some time and sharing your expert skills into our best athletes who could be living in your town. The best achievement for me as a therapist would be to see an athlete I have treated and helped physically and psychologically through Soft Tissue Therapy appear on the TV competing for Team GB at this year's 2016 Rio Olympics.

## Good luck Rob!



## A word from the athlete...

“As an unfunded athlete, it can be extremely difficult to split my time between work and training. Thanks to the SMA Road 2 Rio program and especially Lucie Spraggon I no longer have to worry about the extra costs associated with my physiotherapy.

Lucie is a highly qualified Soft Tissue Therapist who has experience dealing with athletes, so to receive treatment from her for a fraction of the price means I get the support I need. Lucie works around my schedule as not to interfere with training and only lives a few miles away.

I have also recommended that a fellow Olympic hopeful Tristan Slater join the program, as I believe that any athlete needing help should make the most of what SMA are trying to do!”

**Rob Holderness**  
**Swimmer- 100m and 200m Breaststroke**

If you are an athlete looking for support with discounted treatments or you are a member of the SMA that would like to be part of the SMA Road2Rio programme visit [www.thesma.org/Road2Rio](http://www.thesma.org/Road2Rio) for more details.