

GO JO!

Fiona Bugler chats to Jo Pavey, a lifelong runner with a career that's been blighted by injury – but never beaten by it. Her bounce-backability has resulted in an impressive debut marathon of 2:28.24 qualifying her for the 2012 Olympic Marathon team...

Jo Pavey has been setting records and stretching herself as a runner for more than 20 years. Injury set-backs started when she was a junior in the 1990s, but so did her ability to fight them. It's as if, over the years, she's built up immunity to the negative forces surrounding injury. "I know it sounds corny, but I don't ever let injury get me down. I've got a lovely son, a lovely husband and I'm very fortunate to do what I do. Running is just running and injuries can be dealt with."

Head start

Thirty eight year old Pavey started as a 1500m runner and in 1988 set the under 15 record for the distance running 4:27.9. She made her Great Britain junior international debut at the age of just 15 in Athens.

But early injury problems led to a five year absence from the scene between 1991 and 1996. She kept training, and ran some low-key races, and it was in this period that she gained a degree in physiotherapy, which helped her tackle her own injuries.

Jo made her senior debut at the 1997 World Championships in Athens but missed the next two years, once again due to injury. She continued to prove to be unstoppable and ran 15:18.51 on her 5000m debut in 2000. She made the Olympic final in Sydney and ran PBs in 3000m and 5000m and got her 1500m time to 4:02.03.

In the 2004 Athens Olympic Games she was fifth over 5000m, and went on to win silver at the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games over 5000m. The move to 10,000m gave her fourth at the 2007 Osaka World Championships and at the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Jo placed 12th in a PB of 31:12.30.

She had hoped to make the step up from 10,000m to marathon last year, but the complications that followed the birth of her son, Jacob, in September 2009 prevented her from competing

