

A SPORTING legend



Sir Steve Redgrave may have retired from professional rowing, but life's as busy now as it was at the height of his sports career

How does it feel to be the most successful British rower of all time?

I've all sorts of different titles over the years. I'm slipping back down from most decorated Olympian, as Bradley Wiggins and Chris Hoy have gone past me. It's a huge honor – the scary thing is it was over 14 years ago – almost a rowing lifetime ago!

How did you first get in to rowing?

I first started in 1976, at nearly 14. I went to the local comprehensive and the head of department used to help out on sports days. He loved rowing and asked a group of us if we would like to have a go. It was during school time, so it was a no brainer really.

Other than rowing, what is your favourite sport to watch and take part in?

I've done a lot of sport over the years, including a lot of cycling, through training and a couple of silly races across America, but I have never cycled round a Velodrome track, an indoor one, I'd like to do that on a proper racing bike. At the Olympics and at meets ever since I have been commentating for the BBC, and I love to go and watch the track cycling if I get time. Any of the sports, when you're seeing the level they are at, are absolutely amazing. Even though a lot of people complained about

not getting their chosen tickets for the games in 2012, it didn't really matter – every event was a spectacle to watch.

How does it feel as a gold medallist to watch so many other British athletes achieving golds?

I came through during an era that we weren't that successful in. In Atlanta we only won one gold medal, then we got 11 in Sydney, nine in Athens, 19 in Beijing, then the 29 in London was amazing – there was just so much talent. It's also down to the infrastructure of sport and how that has changed – the more money spent, the better you can get. Basically if you can get the funding you need you can achieve great things.

Can you tell us briefly about the Steve Redgrave Fund?

It all came about when I retired 14 years ago. I announced at the time that I would try and make £5 million in five years, which we were able to achieve. We support lots of community-based projects across the UK, children's charities and schools. We have raised a total of £7.5 million over the 14 years. We've since scaled things back slightly, as it was taking over my life a little and I wasn't left with time to do much else.