



“At these Games, some competitors have won gold, some have broken records and some of you have even soared like an eagle.”

Frank King, President of the Organizing Committee speaking at the closing ceremony of the 1988 Winter Olympics



Resilience and Perseverance

Character quality | April 2024

continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition : the action or condition or an instance of persevering : steadfastness.

Michael Edwards, better known as Eddie “The Eagle” Edwards qualified for the Calgary Olympics in 1988. He enjoyed skiing but to realise his dream of qualifying for the Olympics he switched to ski jumping. Ski jumping was easier to qualify as there were no other British ski jumpers with whom to compete for a place.

Eddie the Eagle had limited access to funds; he worked as a plasterer, slept in a disused Finnish hospital for a short time and had to wear six pairs of socks as his ski boots did not fit. He was renowned for his very thick glasses, as he was long sighted, which would steam up during ski jumps!

He first represented Great Britain at the 1987 World Championships and was ranked 55th in the World. As he was the sole British applicant for ski jumping he qualified for the 1988 Winter Olympics. He became the British ski jumping record holder despite finishing last in both the 70m and 90m Olympic events. Eddie was famously mentioned in the closing ceremony of the Games “some competitors have won Gold, some have broken records, and some of you have even soared like an eagle.”

Eddie is famous for personifying the Olympic spirit and for his determination to represent his country despite the qualifying requirements being changed to work against him. He also lacked any external funding.

Shortly after the 1988 Olympics the entry requirements to compete were strengthened in what is known as The “Eddie the Eagle” Rule to make it impossible for someone to qualify unless a competitor was placed in the top 50 competitors. Undeterred Eddie continued to train but despite making massive improvements, failed to qualify for the 1992 Winter Olympics.

Google ‘Eddie the Eagle’ to find out more.

