



Erin Lindsay Donnelly

A race to the finish

It's nearly time for our race day jockeys to take the reins and race a mile on the flat! **Lauren Bilton** talks to **Erin Lindsay Donnelly** about her experience so far

Erin's love of horses started at age four, when she was gifted a little black Shetland pony named Peggy. She now keeps two lovely horses, Mr Echo (her "horse of a lifetime") and Marco (who'll be her next event horse).

In 2021, Erin was diagnosed with very acute Crohn's disease, which went from first symptoms to life-saving stoma surgery in three weeks. All she wanted after coming out of hospital was to see her horses. "The first day I was able to feed them their dinner, the first time back on, the first jump and the first competition were all milestones that shaped my recovery," says Erin.

Now, Erin prepares to race a mile on the flat at Wetherby aiming to raise £3,000 for BHS, helping shape a world where horses and horse lovers can enjoy the best possible life together.

Cue the training montage

Before the race day, our amateur jockeys have to go through rigorous training and complete a fitness test. Erin's found it enjoyable but challenging: "The parallel squat hold on the wobble cushions is a particular nemesis of mine but the four-

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minute plank is starting to feel a bit easier.” She's enjoyed watching her boyfriend, a bodybuilder, try and do the jockey fitness test and realise just how difficult it really is!

For the feeling

Her favourite part so far is riding out on a fresh racehorse who's loving their work.

She encourages those who are considering applying for next year. "It's cliché but if I can do it, anyone can! I can't wait for the feeling when I (hopefully) gallop across the finish line. Even if I'm last to cross the finish line, I'll be punching the air. This one really is about the journey not the destination.

"So much of my self-esteem, work ethic and confidence I can trace back to the bond I have with my horses. I think it's amazing that BHS are working to make this feeling accessible to more people."

Support our jockeys

Remember – these aren't professional jockeys. They're passionate BHS supporters, just like you. Every stride they take supports our work, from improving horse welfare to making riding safer and more accessible.

Their courage reflects the heart of

our community, and together we can achieve so much more – because this is your charity too, and every action you take helps us create a better world for horses and everyone who loves them. Head to **bhs.org.uk/jockeys** to show your support.