



Anna Watkins

Rowing champion, winning gold at the Olympics and setting an Olympic record

Olympic gold medalist and record breaker, Anna Watkins is one of the world's undisputed rowing champions.

Anna's biography

Anna Watkins' background

In 2012 Anna Watkins cemented her place in sporting history at the London Olympics, winning gold in the double scull event and earning the nickname 'Alchemist' for her ability to turn lesser medals to gold. As a scientist and mathematician, she reveals the analytics, data use and [sports](#) science behind her rapid rise from 18 year old novice to Olympian. She then goes further, exploring the special ingredients and psychology that enabled her to move from winning bronze and silver medals to a three-year unbeaten run, taking in two world titles, the Olympic record and World Rowing Crew of the Year, as well as the Olympic gold itself.

- Champion rower
- Won Gold in the double sculls at the London 2012 Olympics
- Mathematics PhD
- Former McKinsey consultant

Approachable, dedicated and multi-talented, Anna Watkins shares her experiences in order to [inspire](#) others, tailoring her talks to best suit each audience, and drawing on her corporate experience to ensure that clients gain real value from the event.

Anna's ten-year rowing career took in two Olympic medals, two world titles, and many other international medals. She has won world rowing crew of the year twice, in 2010 and 2012, and has been the holder of the world record for 5km on the ergo. She is still the fastest ever British woman to complete a 2km ergo,

in 6 minutes and 26 seconds.

Anna grew up in the Staffordshire Moorlands but was not a particularly sporty child. She first began rowing at Cambridge university, aged 18, and was immediately fast-tracked into the national squad through the World Class Start talent identification scheme. In her first international season (aged 21) she won the world U23 championships, gaining a place in the full senior squad the following season. Anna's success on the world stage improved incrementally and she first reached the world championship podium in 2007. The following year's Beijing Olympics she won a bronze medal in one of the tightest finishes of the regatta.

In the years leading up to the 2012 London Olympics Anna maintained an unbeaten run for 3 years, improving to silver and then gold. The process of this improvement – in spite of injuries and setbacks – is the focus of much of Anna's speaking work. Anna has raced in all boat classes but specialised in the double sculls, a two-person boat, which requires a particularly intense partnership.

Anna studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge and went on to complete a PhD in Applied Mathematics at Reading University. Professionally Anna worked in data science, advising on behalf of McKinsey to some of the world's largest engineering companies and sports teams on their data and analytics strategies. She is founding Patron of the Women's Sport Trust and a former director of the British Athletes Commission. She was awarded an MBE for services to rowing in 2013, has honorary doctorates from Keele and Staffordshire Universities, and is an honorary fellow of Reading University.

Now an accomplished public speaker, her confidence and approachable personality have made her a popular choice for organisations of all kinds. Some of her previous clients include Visa, Nationwide, The Sunday Times, Siemens, the NHS, the Chartered Management Institute and a number of county councils. She visits schools and charities, sharing her experiences and sunny disposition, and has appeared on numerous television and radio shows, including Womans Hour, Newsnight and A Question of Sport.

Anna has two children and lives on a farm. She enjoys practical hobbies including beekeeping, farm work, and working on her camper van conversion

Positions and Honours

MBE (2013)

World Rowing Crew of the Year – Womens Double Sculls, World Rowing Awards (with [Katherine Grainger](#)) (2010)

World Rowing Crew of the Year – Womens Double Sculls, World Rowing Awards (with Katherine Grainger) (2012)