



## Eddie “The Eagle” Edwards

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Michael Edwards, better known as Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards, was the first competitor to represent Great Britain in Olympic Ski jumping. Despite not winning in his sport, Eddie's heroic failures won the hearts and minds of the public.

With a love of skiing and stunts from a young age, Eddie started out in downhill skiing but switched to ski jumping when he realised that this sport had no other UK competitors. Holding the record for stunt jumping but with only a small jump under his belt, two years before the Olympics he began training. After representing Great Britain at the 1987 World Championships, and ranking 55th, Eddie qualified as the sole British applicant for the 1988 Winter Olympics. He was working in difficult circumstances however - he had no financial support for training and had to wear his glasses at all times, which fogged up to such an extent that he couldn't see while he was jumping. Eddie came in last in both the 70m and 90m events but he succeeded in winning hearts around the world. He became a popular celebrity, appearing on talk shows around the world and gaining the affectionate nickname 'Mr Magoo' from the press.

An entertaining speaker, Eddie shares his journey with characteristic charm and humour. He talks of his willingness to take risks, the importance of pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone and allowing yourself to fail but also to get back up and try again. He reminds audiences that success isn't always in the winning but in the trying.

In the midst of his public glory, he released a book and several songs (including in Finnish). Since then, he has done a synchronised dive with Tom Daley on ITV's Splash, taught celebrities to ski-jump on The Jump and danced as Rubber Chicken on The Masked Dancer. His story was made into a biographical film 'Eddie the Eagle' in which he was portrayed by Taron Egerton. He remains one of the best loved athletes today.