

## **Eddie Izzard: Marathon Man**

### **Eddie Izzard to run 27 marathons in 27 days for Sport Relief 2016**

Eddie Izzard has today (Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February) announced that he will attempt to complete a staggering 27 marathons in 27 days across South Africa for Sport Relief 2016. This gruelling challenge will see Eddie aim to run over 700 miles in temperatures of up to 30°C.

The new BBC Three (which launches Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February on [bbc.co.uk/bbcthree](http://bbc.co.uk/bbcthree)) will exclusively cover Eddie's journey from his first marathon on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February to his last marathon planned for Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Eddie has chosen 27 marathons to reflect the 27 years that Nelson Mandela spent in prison. Throughout his journey he will explore the history of South Africa and Nelson Mandela as well as visiting communities, organisations and families that have all been helped by the work of Comic Relief.

This mammoth undertaking will culminate in Pretoria on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March, at the same time as the Sport Relief Games will be taking place across the UK.

Eddie's route will trace the story of Nelson Mandela's life; starting in his birthplace, before journeying to the school and university that he attended, then on to Cape Town and Robben Island where he was imprisoned. If Eddie completes all 27 marathons, he will end at the Union Buildings in Pretoria where Nelson Mandela gave his inaugural speech as the first democratically elected President of South Africa in 1994.

The challenge will be an important one for Eddie as he previously attempted a similar feat in South Africa in 2012, but had to pull out for health reasons. The 2012 attempt followed his fantastic effort for Sport Relief in 2009, when he completed 43 marathons in 51 days across the UK, pushing through both physical and emotional barriers to raise over £1.8m.

The money raised for Sport Relief from the Eddie Izzard: Marathon Man challenge will be used to help transform the lives of some of the most disadvantaged people both at home in the UK and across the world's poorest communities.

Eddie Izzard said, "I was inspired to run 27 marathons in 27 days for Sport Relief after seeing the film *Invictus*. The film featured a poem called *Invictus* - one of Nelson Mandela's favourite poems during his 27 years in prison. He used it to give himself determination to keep himself going and keep his spirit alive. It's a beautiful poem about being the master of your own fate and destiny. Watching the film I suddenly realised - I have to run in South Africa. I should run 27 marathons in 27 days as a salute to the great man. It is also a salute to all who struggled and fought against Apartheid. So I am delighted to be doing this for Sport Relief. But of course - 27 marathons in 27 days is nothing compared to what Nelson Mandela did by serving 27 years in prison. He was a great soul and leaves a fantastic legacy for the world."

"PS I tried to do this 4 years ago and failed. This time I will succeed. But if I fail, I will come back again and again and again until I do succeed. Because that's what Nelson Mandela would have done."

### **BBC Three**

BBC Three will document his progress every step along the way via its new digital and social channels:

- Each day, [bbc.co.uk/bbcthree](http://bbc.co.uk/bbcthree) will follow Eddie's progress on his gruelling journey, with a personal diary, and up to the minute reports on his adventure
- Live updates via BBC Three's social channels
- Virtual map of Eddie's progress
- On the Sport Relief night of TV on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March
- If all goes well Eddie will complete the challenge on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March

Damian Kavanagh, Controller, BBC Three said: "BBC Three is uniquely placed to cover Eddie's challenge on our new platforms and on social media - transforming the BBC's offer for young people means we should do whatever we can, wherever we need to, with whoever works best and whenever is appropriate, to tell amazing stories just like this one."

Kevin Cahill, Chief Executive at Comic Relief said: "Eddie is undoubtedly one of our Sport Relief legends, and we are absolutely thrilled that he is going to push himself to the physical limit once again. What he did for Sport Relief last time was truly astonishing and raised a staggering amount of money that has really helped to transform lives at home and across the world. We are beyond grateful for his continued support and will be with him every step of the way."

Eddie Izzard: Marathon Man was commissioned by Damian Kavanagh and Ruby Kuraishie. The Executive Producer is Nick Catliff for Lion Television.

**-Ends-**

For more information, please contact:

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **BBC THREE**

On Tuesday 16 February, BBC Three will switch from a linear broadcast channel to an online first destination. The new service will feature brand new original British comedy, contemporary British drama, innovative entertainment, thought-provoking documentaries and distinctive current affairs programming all made for BBC Three's 16-34 target audience.

### **ABOUT SPORT RELIEF**

Sport Relief brings the entire nation together to get active, raise cash and change lives. Since 2002, Sport Relief has raised over £262 million. The money raised by the public is spent by Comic Relief to help people living incredibly tough lives, across the UK and the world's poorest communities. It all leads up to the Sport Relief weekend and an unmissable night of TV on the BBC, broadcasting live from Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Sport Relief 2016 will take place from Friday 18<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016. You can run, swim, cycle or even walk yourself proud at events across the country. There's a distance for everyone in the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Games, whether you're sporty or not. Find out more at [www.sportrelief.com](http://www.sportrelief.com)

Comic Relief is a UK charity, which aims to create a just world, free from poverty. Since 1985, Comic Relief has raised over £1billion. That money has helped, and is helping, people living incredibly tough

lives, both at home in the UK and across the world. For information about Comic Relief and the work it carries out, please visit [www.comicrelief.com](http://www.comicrelief.com) Comic Relief, registered charity 326568 (England/Wales); SC039730 (Scotland)