

Mo Farah

Name: Mohamed Muktar Jama Farah

Born: 23 March 1983 in Mogadishu, Somalia

Childhood

At the age of 8, Mo arrived in the UK from Mogadishu, with his parents and twin brother, speaking very little English. He grew up in West London and began running at school when his talent was spotted by his PE teacher. He didn't always dream of a big career in athletics. Instead, Mo's main ambitions were actually to become either a car mechanic or to play for Arsenal football club. In his teens, he joined the Borough of Hounslow Athletics Club and became a very successful junior athlete. He won the European Junior 5000m title in 2001 before breaking into the senior GB athletics squad in 2006.

Achievements

In May 2008, Mo claimed the fastest UK men's time for eight years in the 10,000 metres and easily qualified for the 2008 Beijing Games. However, in Beijing, much to Team GB's and Mo's disappointment, he was knocked out of both of his events in the qualifying rounds and did not make it to an Olympic final. This spurred Mo on to train even harder for the next four years so he would be able to have another attempt at fulfilling his Olympic ambitions. On the 4th August 2012, Mo finally accomplished his dream at the London Olympic Games. This time, with the unwavering support of his home fans in the Olympic Stadium, he easily made the finals for both his events. In his first final, Mo won the 10,000 metre gold. This was Great Britain's first ever Olympic gold medal in the 10,000m and came just after two other gold medals for Great Britain in the same athletics session. The night was later dubbed 'Super Saturday'. A week later on the 11th August 2012, Mo completed an athletics double by also winning the 5000 metres. This meant Mo joined just five other athletes in the entire history of the Olympic Games to win the 5k/10k double and the only athlete ever to do it on home soil. Mo famously celebrated his wins with his unique, celebratory dance pose that he went on to call the 'Mobot'. Four years later, at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, Mo successfully defended his Olympic title and won gold in the 10,000 metres and in the 5,000 metres again. In doing so, Mo became only the second man to ever win those races in two consecutive games.



Olympic Games and Medals

• 2012 London Games:

2 gold medals
(10,000 metres and 5,000 metres)

• 2016 Rio Games:

2 gold medals
(10,000 metres and 5,000 metres)

Life after the Olympics

Following his 2012 successes, Mo was given a CBE in The Queen's 2013 New Year Honours List. He also has a lasting reminder of his achievement in his hometown of Teddington, West London, where a post box was painted gold to commemorate his Olympic victories. After competing at the 2017 World Championships, where he won a gold and silver medal, Mo decided to retire and has since switched his attention to marathon running.

Despite his advancing age, Mo is still a major competitor in international athletics and, as recently as 2015, he repeated his long-distance gold medal double at the Athletics World Championships. He also does a lot of charity work for The Mo Farah Foundation, which helps provide life-saving aid to some of the millions of people facing starvation and disease in Mo's birthplace of Somalia. Very generously, every time anyone posts a YouTube video copying his 'Mobot' pose, Mo donates £2 to his charity!

On 14th November 2017, Mo was honoured by The Queen with a Knighthood in recognition of his services to athletics.

Amazing Fact!

Mo's secret training weapon is his underwater treadmill which he runs on while wearing scuba-diving equipment. He uses this machine three or four times a week when he's in competition training!

Questions

Answer the following questions using full sentences that give as much detail as possible.

1. Did Mo dream of athletics success from a young age?

2. What was the name of the athletics club that Mo joined as a junior?

3. Why did Mo have a major disappointment in 2008?

4. Why did British people go on to call 4th August 2012 'Super Saturday'?

5. Give TWO reasons why Mo's Olympic double win at the 2012 London Games was so special.

6. Choose TWO adjectives to describe Mo Farah's character. Explain your choices.

I think Mo is _____ because... _____

I think Mo is _____ because... _____

7. Where does the charity money raised by 'The Mo Farah Foundation' go to?

Why do you think this is?

8. Mo's secret weapon is his underwater treadmill training. Do some research on the Internet to find out why running in water is beneficial to athletes.

Answers

1. Did Mo dream of athletics success from a young age?

No, he actually wanted to become a mechanic or an Arsenal football player.

2. What was the name of the athletics club that Mo joined as a junior?

In his teens, he joined the Borough of Hounslow Athletics Club and became a very successful junior athlete.

3. Why did Mo have a major disappointment in 2008?

He failed to qualify for either the 5000 or 10,000 metre Olympic Finals at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

4. Why did British people go on to call 4th August 2012 'Super Saturday'?

It became known as 'Super Saturday' because Mo and two other GB athletes won gold medals during the same athletics session.

5. Give TWO reasons why Mo's Olympic double win at the 2012 London Games was so special.

Mo's double Olympic win was so special because he was one of only five athletes to have ever done it. He is the only person to ever have done it in his own country (home soil).

6. Choose TWO adjectives to describe Mo Farah's character. Explain your choices.

I think Mo is _____ because...

I think Mo is _____ because...

Pupil's own responses.

7. Where does the charity money raised by 'The Mo Farah Foundation' go to? Why do you think this is?

The money raised helps provide life-saving aid to some of the millions of people facing starvation and disease in Somalia. He feels compelled to use his fame to help the people in the country he was born.

8. Mo's secret weapon is his underwater treadmill training. Do some research on the Internet to find out why running in water is beneficial to athletes.

Water is a great medium to exercise as it decreases stress on the joints and is much less damaging to the body than running outdoors. Running through water forces muscles to work harder than running in air, so athletes don't have to run as fast or as far to get the same level of workout.