

# Press Pass Gazette

## Forever in the Fast Lane

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Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne, An Daingean

Temple Street Children's Hospital has played host to many a victorious team in its time with young patients enjoying posing with silverware and newly crowned All Ireland champions. Little do they know however that a man in scrubs who passes them daily was at one time the fastest Caucasian in the world!

With his flying stethoscope and squeaky soles, Dr. Paul Hession, a man one place from running in the world record breaking Olympic 100m final of 2008, takes time to talk to me about life as an Olympian and his post racing career.

*'I was a short whisker away from greatness. The week of the Olympics was a great experience. I qualified in my heat easily and lined up in the quarter-final against some of the favourites. I ran my second fastest time ever, winning the race. In the semi-final I ran my third fastest time ever and missed out on the final by one place, so close to making the Olympic final (where Bolt ran the World Record.) It was still a real highlight in my career and probably my proudest moment.'*

What kind of sacrifice is required to be an Olympian?

*'To prepare for the Olympics every facet of my life was affected. I trained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week because everything I did was with my sport in mind. When I wasn't on the track or in the gym I*

*had to learn to properly rest and relax so that I was ready for my next training session. I had to learn how to eat properly and transform my diet to a healthier one. My whole week was planned in advance, from what I would eat to when I would take a nap between training sessions.'*

I put it to Paul that such dedication was bound to have an impact on personal life.

*'I was a medical student when I started to really succeed in sport. In order to get the best out of myself I decided to take a sabbatical of 6 years in total from my studies. This was a huge commitment. While my peers were getting on with their medical careers, I was putting everything into becoming as good an athlete as I possibly could.'*

After the peak of Beijing 2008 to London 2012, Paul felt his time was up. Luckily, his earlier studies stood him in good stead.

*'My career came to a natural end and I was lucky to have a medical career to walk back into. I'm currently working in the Intensive Care Unit in the hospital. It is not an easy life, working 24-hour shifts that are challenging and exhausting. I am surrounded by hugely talented and hard-working individuals, just like I was when I was an athlete.'*

Married to Ciara and with a 2 year old daughter, Paul Hession has found his niche. Still Ireland's fastest man, he races to provide children with the gold medal of health and life.