

## 50km run to raise funds for Diabetes Ireland

Olivier Griseti was 12 years old in 1993 when he was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. A keen cross-country and track runner, Olivier was told his burgeoning athletics career was over. Just recently, aged 44, he ran a 50km race in Donadea, Co Kildare, raising €1,315 for Diabetes Ireland.

"I was diagnosed in November 1993 and I was very active at the time. I was doing a lot of athletics like running and shot putt and throwing and jumping," Olivier recalls.

"Then over the course of about six weeks, I had lost a tonne of weight."

Olivier, from Grenoble in southeastern France, also remembers feeling very tired, needing the toilet a lot and drinking lots of water.

"I was sent by my GP to a lab to do some blood tests, and I can't remember the exact numbers but my HbA1c was well above the norm. My blood glucose levels were also two to three times the norm."

Olivier came to Ireland 10 years later in 2003 as part of an Erasmus exchange with the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG).

"I was studying industrial engineering in NUIG for six months 22 years ago. So it's been a long six months!"

Olivier, who lives in Claregalway, Co Galway, briefly returned to France to complete his studies there before returning here to work for a company in the west of Ireland. By 2007, Olivier had decided to take back up athletics, realising that the advice his GP had given him in 1993 was long outdated.

"I signed up for the Galway half marathon out of the blue and I've been running ever since."

He remembers during that race having to regularly stop to prick his finger and check his blood glucose levels.



"I also had a spare insulin pen in my pocket and I remember injecting and checking my blood glucose at the same time during the run."

Today, Olivier uses the Medtronic 780G insulin pump with the Medtronic Guardian 4 continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) sensor. This is known as a closed-loop system, which works by linking an insulin pump and CGM sensor with a computer algorithm that can calculate the amount of insulin someone needs, based on blood glucose readings, and adjust the basal dose automatically.

"This has really enabled me to run longer distances and move up to marathons and ultramarathons," Olivier says.

"Without having that closed-loop system and access to my blood glucose levels at any given time, I wouldn't be able to run half as much."

Olivier has been wearing the pump since 2013 and adopted the CGM sensor more recently. Before these developments he had relied on how his body felt and intuition during a long run, which for Olivier can last for up to five hours. Now, however, he can pre-empt lows or highs during the race without having to take a lengthy break.

"Initially I was reluctant to get the pump as I felt it would be more of a hindrance than a help, but since the day I moved to the pump, I have never looked

back. It's obviously much better than the injections."

### Donadea 50k

Olivier says diabetes, while still challenging to manage at times, is no longer a limiting factor in his running, as evidenced by his recent participation in the Donadea 50k, a race which takes place annually in Donadea Forest Park in Co Kildare.

"You run a 5km loop of the park 10 times," Olivier explains.

"So the format is also ideal for people with diabetes like me because you're never running more than 5km and you can get back to your little base and have your sugar, have your drinks as well as your spare sensor and spare equipment."

The environment is not always as accommodating for Olivier's condition, however, as he will often go trail running, which can involve running for kilometres on end in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

"I will always have a trail vest with me with sugar and spare equipment."

Last year Olivier took part in a 'backyard' ultramarathon in Leixlip, Co Kildare, which involved running a 6.7km loop every hour on the hour until you have to stop.

"I ran about 56km, but it's not continuous. Let's say you do those 6.7km in 45 minutes, you have 15 minutes to rest before the next hour begins," he explains.

Olivier says he plans to run another of these ultramarathons this year. He will also be taking part in the Irish Life Dublin Marathon on Sunday, October 26.

Everyone at Diabetes Ireland would like to wish Olivier the very best of luck in the marathon and thank him for his outstanding fundraising in 2025 so far.

If you would like to follow Olivier's progress, see [@the\\_diabetic\\_runner](https://www.instagram.com/the_diabetic_runner) on Instagram.

