



# youngandable



## Runaway Success

I had visions of a robust, muscular athlete primed to compete at the highest level and of writing about the small margins that make him a winner. Surely the wunderkid would stand out a mile at the running cycle session that I'd been invited to. Odd then, that on arrival I couldn't see him anywhere.

**Running cycles are a practical way of improving overall fitness, muscle tone and nervous and metabolic systems. Users with major physical disabilities can still use the bike for extended periods without getting tired and to help improve balance and motor reactions.**



Walking into the sports centre I noticed a young lad skittering around in a walking frame. Quite oblivious to the shifting and moving his dad, one of the organisers; he was just exploring the set-up. His tiny frame scooted to and fro and as people started to arrive he cocked his head to explore each and every face as if reading their individual characters. I was becoming intrigued. Would the running cycles that I had heard so much about help this young fellow too? In truth, I had doubts that he'd be big enough or sufficiently coordinated to stay astride one.

### Further and faster

I introduced myself to him with a delicate handshake. His dark eyes stared at me from his fair-skinned face. "I'm Peter by the way, this is my son Gavin; he doesn't speak." said his dad putting down another cycle and showing a thumbs-up to him. "Alright Gavin?" Gavin replied with his little thumb and continued to play with his older sister.

Running bikes are excellent for

disabled people that have some movement in their legs. The tricycle design means that riders require no sense of balance; concentrating instead, on having fun, whilst every foot-fall propels them further and faster.

I have seen running bikes before. Somebody had pointed them out at an exhibition but I'd thought nothing of it. The truth is that until I saw kids actually riding them, I didn't get it. In fact, it really only clicked once I got on one myself and started to cause my own breeze. Even for someone ambulant like me, I could immediately sense the opportunity and realised the greatness of the gift that running bikes represent. The sense of freedom, ease and gracefulness is consuming. If you get the chance, try it.

### The design concept

A meeting between two Paralympics legends Mansoor Siddiqi and Connie Hansen agreed on the concept of a running bike, missing pedals, allowing the rider's weight and foot-fall to