

VIVO Defence sponsors military athletes in their UK bobsleigh bid for gold

3 years ago



[VIVO Defence Services](#) is sponsoring RAF Corporal John Stanbridge in his team bid to gain gold as part of the Great British Bobsleigh team.

Avionics instructor John, 33, is the pilot of his sled team – one of three British teams competing at international level in the European Cup.

Team Stanbridge is five strong, consisting of pilot John and four brakemen, including Private Callum Dixon of the 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment, based at Colchester, Essex.

John, who is based at RAF Cosford, in Shropshire, is currently with the team in Latvia for pre-season training ahead of the European Cup races in December.

This season is not only crucial for John and his team, but extremely significant as John received a severe neck injury while racing in Germany in November last year.

The following day John – who is originally from Luton, Bedfordshire – had Anterior cervical discectomy and fusion (ACDF) surgery, which involved cutting open and removing two discs from his neck and fusing three vertebrae together.

Since then, he has taken the time to recover before starting serious training and, amazingly, gaining back his strength and being ruled fit enough to compete again this October.

If Bob Team Stanbridge are successful at the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF) European Cup tour 23/24 they will have an opportunity to compete on the World Cup stage as part of their

journey to reach the Winter Olympics in 2026.

Winter sports and adventure training is used by the UK military to push armed forces personnel outside of their comfort zone and make them prepared for any eventuality.

John sled for the first time in 2013 at Igls, near Innsbruck on the Austrian North Tyrol, with the air force and he was immediately hooked to the adrenalin-laced sport.

The RAF sport pathway has allowed him to develop through from a complete novice to interservice level and onto the GB development squad in 2020. Representation at elite level as a high performing athlete alongside his full-time work shows an incredible story of commitment and dedication.

Before going to Latvia, he and his team have been training six days a week – A mix of power and strength sessions in the gym and speed focused sprint sessions at the track – to ensure they achieve at the perfect fitness level.

This level of training virtually turns them into a hybrid combination of sprinter and weightlifter, meaning they can push the bobsleigh off at pace and control it on the icy curves as it speeds along at between 80 and 95 mph depending on its size.

During his military service, John has completed three tours of Afghanistan for the Chinook fleet as part of the downed aircraft recovery team and used to work at RAF Waddington on the E-3D Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) airplanes before they were decommissioned.

John, whose team competes in two and four men bobsleigh races, used to be involved in football, rugby and athletics as a youth athlete.

He said: “Bobsledding is a really tough sport, both mentally and physically. It certainly pushes those that compete outside of their comfort zone and for military people this is great as it helps us to adapt and overcome in an operational environment.

“It is also a real asset when it comes to team building as everything has to be timed perfectly. Basically, we win or lose races by a hundredth of a second and this ensures you really heighten your skills when working with others.

“It was gruelling work regaining my fitness after my accident, but I am so proud of what I have achieved and can’t wait until we start competing again.

“I’d like to thank VIVO for coming on board and sponsoring us as every penny really counts. We have to self-fund entirely, and we are in further need for more sponsors, hopefully

VIVO’s actions will inspire others to come on board and support the team as well.”

Jerry Moloney, VIVO Defence Services Managing Director, added: “John is truly inspirational. The way he has fought back to fitness to get back with his team and compete is quite something. How could we not get involved and sponsor somebody who is truly a military marvel.

“I hope John and the team do really well and all of us at VIVO will be backing them.”



For more on Bob Team Stanbridge and how you can sponsor them go to www.gbbobsleigh.com or email john_bobsleigh_stanbridge318@outlook.com.