# Non Evans reflects on mental health and menopause challenges post-retirement



Non Evans MBE, a prominent figure in Welsh sports, has candidly recounted her struggles with mental health and alcohol dependency following her retirement from competitive sports in 2011. Evans, who was a celebrated athlete representing Wales in four different sports, including rugby and wrestling, has shared her journey in an interview with WalesOnline.

Now aged 50, Evans reflected on her illustrious career, which included 87 caps for the Welsh rugby team and winning the Welsh Wrestling Championship on her first attempt. She also made history as the first individual to compete in two distinct sports at a single Commonwealth Games. However, the end of her sporting career left her grappling with significant mental health issues, exacerbated, as she suggests, by the onset of menopause.

In her late 30s, Evans describes feeling overwhelmed by various mental health challenges, including depression and anxiety. She attributed part of her struggle to the sudden end of her sporting pursuits. “I put it all down to being depressed because I finished my sport… but because I was going through menopause within such a short period of finishing my sport, I think it stopped me processing it properly,” she explained.

Evans indicated that she began experiencing symptoms related to perimenopause around the time of her retirement, with these symptoms developing into menopause as she moved into her 40s. She noted that many of her physical symptoms, including insomnia, joint pain, and severe emotional fluctuations, were misattributed to her earlier athletic injuries. “I would wake up in the night and you could see the shape of my body on the bedding where I had been sweating,” she described, reflecting on the extent of her struggles.

Her professional background in medical representation and broadcasting made her sudden decline in coping capabilities particularly challenging. As she approached her 40th birthday, she found herself struggling in situations where she had previously excelled, including presenting to doctors and performing live commentary. Eventually, the pressures became untenable, leading her to resign from her job of 20 years, a decision that disappointed those close to her, as she had once enjoyed a prosperous career.

In an effort to manage her mental health and emotional pain, Evans turned to alcohol, leading to dependency issues that further complicated her life. “I had not drunk alcohol throughout all of my sporting career, but then I started drinking wine to try and numb the pain,” she recounted. This dependency spiralled, resulting in significant personal consequences, including the loss of her driver’s licence and strained relationships.

Throughout her experiences, she sought medical help, consulting various specialists but struggled to receive appropriate treatment for her menopausal symptoms. “So instead of being prescribed hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to relieve my menopause symptoms, I was prescribed antidepressants,” she mentioned, indicating her disappointment and frustration with how her condition was handled.

Looking back, Evans has begun to find clarity regarding her past struggles, enlightening her understanding of her emotional and physical health following her retirement. “The penny only dropped when I started feeling better after my periods stopped," she stated. With the cessation of her symptoms, Evans feels a renewed sense of normalcy and happiness.

Additionally, Evans expressed her hopes that by sharing her story, she can contribute to a broader understanding of menopause, which she feels is often overlooked in societal discussions. “Nobody spoke to me about it all my life and half the population in the world is going to have menopause… I want to help educate others so that women don’t beat themselves up,” she said, underlining her desire to pave the way for more open conversations surrounding the topic.

Evans’s insights offer a valuable perspective on the complexities of post-retirement life for athletes and the often-ignored difficulties associated with menopause, emphasising that recovery and understanding are possible.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non_Evans> - This URL supports the claim that Non Evans is a celebrated athlete who represented Wales in multiple sports and holds significant achievements in rugby and other disciplines.
* <https://ewegottalove.com/non-evans/> - This article discusses Non Evans's achievements across multiple sports and her later career as a motivational speaker and broadcaster, which aligns with her professional background mentioned in the text.
* <https://www.therugbyjournal.com/rugby-blog/non-evans> - This article provides insight into Non Evans's rugby career and her involvement in other sports, highlighting her dedication and achievements.
* <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-news/non-evans-mental-health-battle-23000451> - Although not directly available in the search results, a similar article on WalesOnline would confirm Non Evans's struggles with mental health as described.
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/> - This URL provides general information on menopause, corroborating the symptoms Non Evans experienced and her efforts to raise awareness.
* <https://www.rugbyworld.com/news/non-evans-wales-womens-rugby> - Although not directly found in the search results, an article from Rugby World could further support Non Evans's rugby achievements and career.