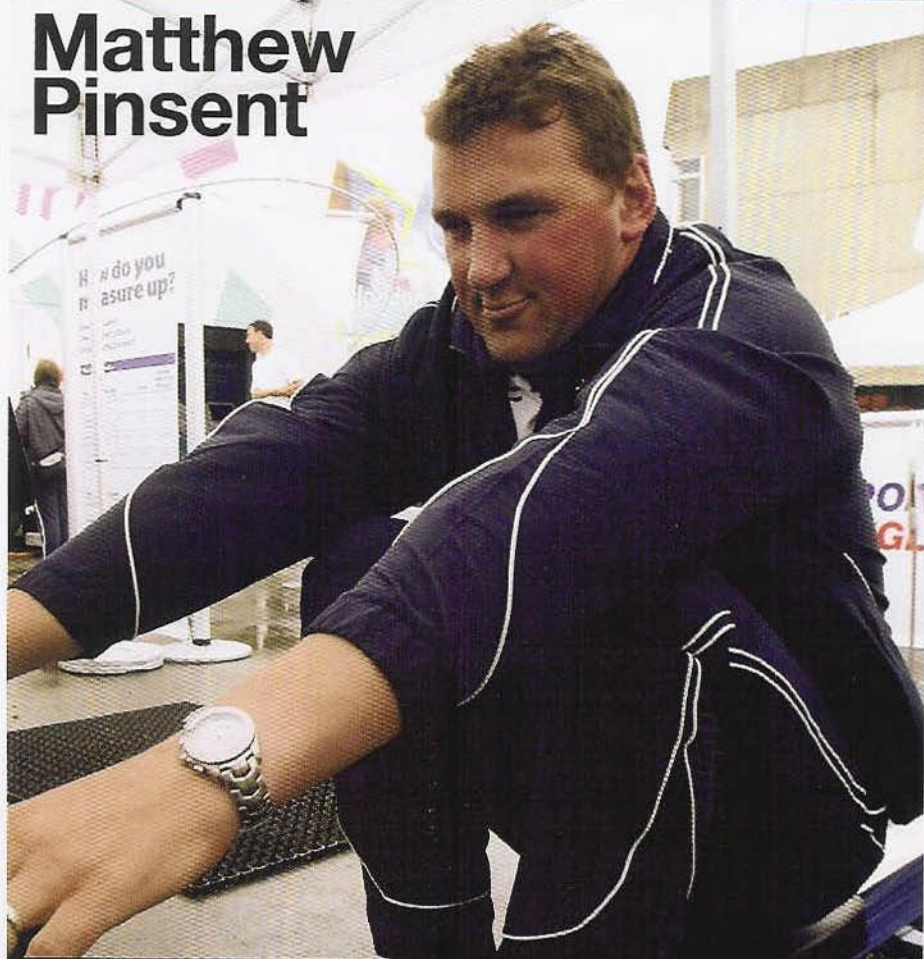


Father on the phone...

Matthew Pinsent



Matthew Pinsent is the world champion and four-time Olympic gold medallist rower. He retired in 2004 and now reports on sport for the BBC. He and his wife had twin boys in 2006 and have a new baby on the way.

FQ Are you conscious of spending time with your children?

MP "Retiring has allowed me to do all the things I couldn't before, including starting a family. I'm lucky now in that I don't work a five day week, which allows for more family time. I know plenty of people who work a more standard week and their children are asleep when they leave and asleep when they get home..."

FQ Do your fitness levels help you with your children?

MP "My wife left me to look after the boys alone for a long weekend once and I was so glad to get back to work on the Monday morning. That was knackered. I can't say that rowing has prepared me in any significant way for parenthood, though I'd hope to still be fit enough when they're mobile to run around with them. But it's not the tiredness that's tough about parenthood. It's the lack of time..."

FQ Would you like your children to be into sport?

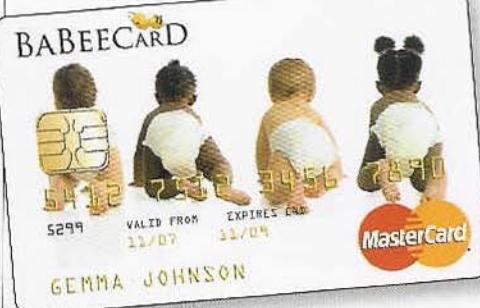
MP "I do hope they find something that energises them, that requires the pursuit of excellence. But it doesn't have to be sport. If they were prime minister or a Nobel Prize winner, I'd be happy with that. It would be nice for them to undergo that journey of finding something that captivates you. It's been great for me."

FQ Do you think there is enough emphasis on sport in schools?

MP "It's sad that so much of our sporting infrastructure has been left to decay. But there's never been a better opportunity than with the London Olympics to do something about that. If everyone gets their tennis racquets out during the two weeks of Wimbledon, this will be an absolute magnifier of that. The bigger issue is whether those efforts will be maintained after the Games and my feeling is that they will probably slip back again."

Kiddy card to save cash

A new pay-as-you-go MasterCard has been created specifically to help new parents manage their finances and save hundreds of pounds off their day-to-day expenses. The BaBee card costs just £14.95 a year and gives parents access to hundreds of discounts, from baby-related items to everyday essentials like groceries and petrol plus big ticket items like holidays. Available via www.babecard.com friends, family and partners can also add funds to the card from any location in the UK – via online bank transfer or SMS if using the BaBee Top-Up Card.



Full of ideas for family fun

A brand new, family-friendly exhibition – The Kids Fun Ideas Show – launches this month in Manchester. Aimed at helping those looking after children aged two to twelve to find fun-filled activities to keep them entertained during weekends and the school holidays, the show is a day out in itself featuring live entertainment from dance workshops to science shows and activities including a treasure hunt and goody bag worth £100 for each adult. For more info go to www.kidsfunideasshow.com

wise words



"If I'm more of an influence on your son as a rapper than you are as a father, you've got to look at yourself as a parent." Rap artist Ice Cube puts himself down.