

## Edinburgh Fringe 2015 Review: Tether

Elastic theatre about a blind athlete and her guide provides for exemplary acting, but a run-of-the-mill plot disappoints reviewer [Amy Wong](#)

Sunday 23 August 2015



Image: Lost Sock Company

★★★☆☆

**Venue:** Underbelly (Cowgate)

Isley Lynn's *Tether* is a welcome addition to the sports drama genre that's surprisingly unsentimental. The play revolves around former Olympic hopeful Mark (Lee Drage) and blind marathon runner Becky (Maisie Greenwood) who must learn to trust each other when Mark agrees to be Becky's running guide.

Mark's selfish optimism and Becky's cynicism make them a perfect pairing and Drage and Greenwood have great chemistry. There are plenty of laughs to be had as Mark and Becky clash and Becky's candid accounts of being blind are also unexpectedly funny. Both actors give effortlessly natural performances, making their characters feel believable even though they're overly familiar at times. *Tether's* predictability is its biggest flaw. There have been far too many dramas about failed sports players attempting to fulfil their un-lived dreams of Olympic glory vicariously by coaching a newcomer who shows great promise but has a bad attitude. Mark and Becky even have the token argument when they're forced to confront the fact that they both want different things. Thankfully, Mark and Becky's consistently platonic relationship means *Tether* avoids ticking off another box on the clichés list, although a flimsy subplot involving Mark's girlfriend Gemma is a little dull.

One of the best things about *Tether* is the way it handles Becky's blindness. The play isn't a sentimental story about an inspirational runner battling against the odds. Becky's disability does play a big part in *Tether* but it's not the only significant thing about her. The ending is pleasantly realistic with no overly dramatic, drawn out battle to the finish line. *Tether* is about learning to accept that you'll never fulfil your biggest ambitions no matter how hard you try as much as it is about persevering and staying determined. It's a refreshing message in a genre that often suggests that self-belief is the answer to everything and will always guarantee success.

While the running scenes come dangerously close to becoming repetitive, Drage and Greenwood display an impressive amount of stamina considering that they have to run while saying their lines for the majority of the show. Most of the running scenes are skilfully executed, with Drage and Greenwood being connected to a bungee cord to give the impression that they're actually running. The only exception is the big race scene at the end which is a bit of a let-down. The way it's done would have worked better on screen and makes a messy ending on stage.

*Tether* is by no means a ground-breaking piece of theatre, but some spectacular performances make it worth watching.



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