

# The tax return preparation cycle is a bit like the Olympics

By **Nick Brennan**

Well it is a cycle.

It starts as a marathon and ends with a sprint.

Along the way, there will be hurdles to face, targets and sometimes you will come across pools and penalties.

Coaching/training will be provided and some courses are sponsored.

It's all hard work and grafting to get clients to send in the information early.

Sometimes you just dive in, other times you may perform mental gymnastics with some of the tax rules which may necessitate weightlifting the yellow tax handbooks.

Yesterday, I hopped on the tube to go and see a client, skipped lunch and jumped into the preparation of his return which meant creating records on my lap-top.



**Nick Brennan**

You may need to box clever with “Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs” (HMRC) but be careful not to sail too close to abusive avoidance.

After five rings I give up calling HMRC.

When partner X enters the tax department  
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ment you know someone's for the high jump.

Certain tax return entries disqualify filing by internet which may mean posting the return to HMRC, Olympic House, 3 Olympic Way, Wembley.

The 31 January sees the finishing line.

I hold a torch for the days when you could run along to the tax office with a signed return to submit.

Then there is the HMRC enquiry work which includes taking random samples.

You need to pass the baton to the younger generation of tax return preparers.

I hammer home to staff the firm's gold medal standard of service to clients, but that there is no silver for second best.

And finally, the taxman takes your clients' money to pay for the Kinks' Ray Davies to perform at the closing ceremony.

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