

12th European Heart & Lung Transplant Games
21st to 26th June 2008

Team Managers Report

With a cloudless blue sky day the Games began. Temperatures soared to over 30C and sun screen, sun glasses and sun glasses were required. What a glorious start.

The accommodation for the GB-Team was the Ibis hotel in the centre of Vichy. Participants began arriving as early as Thursday before the Games even started. What a beautiful city Vichy is. Wonderful architecture thanks to Napoleon III who built in a variety of styles from Tradition French to Swiss chalets to English country houses. Vichy is renowned for its health giving spa water. The central baths which were within sight of our hotel offered visitors a sample of Vichy water in a building where the external frieze was an intricate purple thistle design dedicated to the Bourbons.

As the participants arrived at the Ibis hotel my wife Ann & I gave out Sports packs, new GB-Team shirts and general information. This was typical of the days that followed as we continuously fed the Team with sports details, bus timetables Games certificates, press release wordings and food vouchers.

Unlike the previous Games Vichy was very well organised. Buses did turn up on time, meals were served on time and sports started more or less on time and finished almost on time too.

Lunches provided a welcome midday rest. The selection and quality of food was excellent and free water, juices and wine by the box meant everyone was satisfied.

The Opening Gala dinner was a real treat of traditional French cuisine and each evening meal that followed was equally spectacular.

Trips to the volcanoes, French villages and winery, guided tours of Vichy and treatment in the spa baths were much appreciated by all who participated.

Although the teams were in a mixture of hotels it did not take long to renew old friendships and by the end of the Games to have made many new ones. The camaraderie among participants was this year extra special and there was a very friendly atmosphere pervading the whole five days.

The GB-Team of transplant athletes had a wonderful time. They all looked very smart in their new GB-Team polo shirts thanks to the generosity of Keith Woods. Taking part in a huge variety of events and trying to beat their opponents they succeeded in bringing home a total of 125 medals – 64 Gold, 37 Silver and 24 Bronze. This table just goes to show how fit, competitive and talented they are.

Notable highlights happened at almost every event. Here are a few. The men's 4x50m swimming relay team that finished half a length ahead of their nearest rivals. The men's 4x100m running relay team that finished 50 metres ahead. The ladies 4x100m running relay team where Jade Carr clinched Bronze medal for the team by 0.03 seconds, having started the final leg 30 metres behind the Dutch team. In horse

racing the term would be 'won by a nose' and a very small one at that! Malcolm Pollitt, who having fallen forwards over the oche at the Shot Put and injured his ankle such that he needed a cold compress and heavy bandaging went on to do a standing Ball Throw (no run up) and win a Gold medal at his second attempt. What fantastic spirit. The all round performance in multi-disciplines, by John Barnes (Super Veteran), gaining 5-Gold medals in Golf, Tennis, Long Jump, Shot Put and Ball Throw to win Best Sporter of the Games. The irrepressible, Adrian Woodcock (Super Old Boy) who won 4-Gold (Badminton and Tennis, Singles and Doubles) and 1-Silver (Table Tennis Singles) to win the Geoff Finnigan Trophy for Racquet Sports for players over 60.

It was great to see newcomers to the Games winning medals too: Lynda Morrison (Adult) Silver (50m Backstroke), John Sheehan (Veteran) Bronze (Long Jump), Justine Laymond (Senior) 2-Silver (100m& 4x100m Relay) Jamie Woodhouse (Adult) Gold (Tennis Doubles) Silver (Tennis Singles) Bronze (100m) and James Griffin (Senior) 3-Golds (Table Tennis Singles, 400m, 4x100m relay) 1-Silver (100m) 1-Bronze (Badminton Singles) Derek Airey, who returned after too long away, Silver (50m Breaststroke) and Bronze (100m Breaststroke).

Other great individual medal winners were: Jade Carr (Jnr) 4-Golds and 1-Silver, Matthew Barton (Jnr) 5-Golds and Howard Waters (Old Boy) 6-Golds.

The person who had to wait longest for their medal was Joan Whitney (Super Old Girls). Her event the 4k Cross-Country was the final one on the program. "It was worth waiting", said Joan who won Gold.

The GB-Team did themselves proud and are a wonderful testament to the benefits of transplantation.

Finally, we must all thank a very special group of people without whom it would not have been possible to compete. The donors and their families, from all the GB- Team a huge "Thank You"