

**7th EUROPEAN TRANSPLANT
& DIALYSIS GAMES**

**ZAGREB, CROATIA
18-25TH AUGUST 2012**

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Monica Finn



Bridie Nicholson, Jimmy Servis and Harry Ward



Megan Fahy and Sarah May



Kalevi Ajalin (Finland), James Nolan, John McAleer, Geir Dagfinn Heggland (Norway), Merja Ajalin (Finland), Pekka Tuomola (Finland), Eoghan O'Neill, and Constantinos Petrou (Cyprus)



Catherine Murphy and Gordana Filipovic (Croatia)



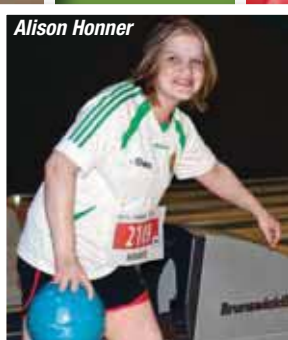
Back: Paul Prendergast, Peter Heffernan, Harry Ward, James Reynolds. Front: Lenny Ryan, Owen Kelleher and Colin White



Mojca Lorencic (Slovenia) and Linda Waters



Alison Honner



...smiling faces, lots of laughter, great friendship and a whole heap of

‘Yes we can!’

Two years on from hosting the last European Transplant & Dialysis Games in Dublin it was time to go on the road again and travel to Zagreb, Croatia to join 27 other countries in this biennial celebration of life through sport.

We had a great build up to our departure with letters of support from so many different sources. The personal message of support from members of the Irish Olympics team resonated well with our team and we were all ready to perform when we got to Zagreb!

With a team of 26 athletes and 21 supporters we were one of the bigger teams at the Games. The team was wonderfully diverse; ranging in age from 18 to 74 years old, with 6 people on dialysis and 7 members who had not travelled away with us before.

We received a warm welcome in Croatia with temperatures regularly reaching over 40 degrees throughout the week. Notwithstanding, the Irish team kept its cool to pull off some great performances. The presence of Yvonne Ryan, (our team doctor), and Clare



By **COLIN WHITE**
TEAM MANAGER

Hogan, (our team physiotherapist), was very reassuring for us all. It was Yvonne's third Games and Clare's fifth Games with the team and all who know them know how lucky we are to have them.

Harry Ward was team captain for the Games. What a guy, he was everywhere! He was there as a competitor in his own right and yet he was on hand to support everyone when they were competing and his humour kept the team smiling and laughing throughout the week.

The team was family to us all with great support at every venue. The Games experience goes beyond simple sports competitions. The bond, between competitors from all countries, was palpable and the united desire to express appreciation to organ donors and their families was humbling.

It is all well and good for our team to have had a 'great Games' but that is only half the battle. Once again, team members willingly shared their stories through the media with a view to

inspiring others living with organ failure, to show donor families the appreciation there is for the 'gift of life' and to encourage the general public to make the commitment to make a difference and carry an organ donor card.

Three people worked hard to help us tell the stories from our team. From home, Gwen O'Donoghue worked tirelessly to keep local and national media up-to-date with our progress. Sarah May continuously fed Gwen with the latest news from the camp and kept our team Blog up-to-date (see below) and Jimmy Servis captured all of the wonderful moments with his camera.

To sum up my abiding memory of this year's Irish team – smiling faces, lots of laughter, great friendship and a whole heap of 'Yes We Can!'

You too can 'Share the Feeling!' We are already planning for next year's World Transplant Games in Durban, South Africa and the team will be all the better if YOU are on board! Drop me an e-mail (colin@ika.ie) or give me a call (1890-543639).



DR YVONNE RYAN
Team Doctor



CLARE HOGAN
Team Physiotherapist

TEAM BLOG...

www.transplantteamireland.wordpress.com

WOW! What a week!

This year I was asked to be team captain and without hesitation I said yes! I knew it would be a tall order to fill Mick Dwyer's shoes in this role, but I would try my best to step into them.

August 17th came; departure day, and as one by one the 26 strong team members met at the airport there was an air of anticipation and excitement. The bond we formed was instant, and was to last the whole week of the Games. We arrived in Zagreb in the small hours of the morning after a long road trip from Budapest.

The next day we all went to register and to attend the wonderful Opening Ceremony. On the Sunday the Games began and Team Ireland was willing and ready to take part as both competitors and supporters.

The week started with the temperature at 30 degrees plus and ended at 40 degrees plus! It was tough going for all of us, competitors and supporters alike, but we all looked out for each other and made

it through the week together with smiles and laughter and plenty of water and sunscreen!

The week was to end with Team Ireland coming 3rd out of 28 countries. Every night, at the presentation of medals, Team Ireland featured prominently on the podium. What can I say only, "wonderful, wonderful and well done to one and all." *(Harry's motivational talks played their part in the team's success! - Ed).*

I hope, above all, that it was an enjoyable experience for new team members and our old team members too! I want to thank our supporters and the people who looked after things so well behind the scenes, Colin, Mark, Yvonne, Clare, Jimmy and Sarah.

Once again thanks to all the team for your help and support to me and your lovely gift.



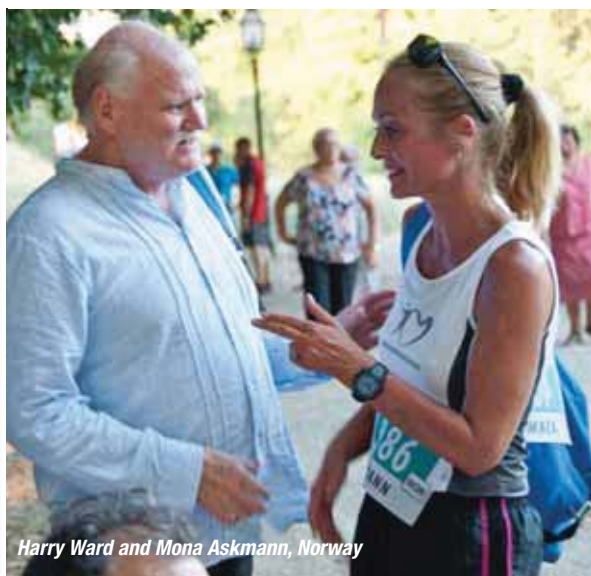
HARRY WARD
Team Captain

THE FULL IRISH TEAM WAS:

NAME	COUNTY
Monica Finn	Roscommon
Sheila Gregan	Tipperary
Peter Heffernan	Dublin
Alison Honner	Laois
Megan Fahy	Sligo
Owen Kelleher	Dublin
Mike Keohane	Cork
Declan Guing	Offaly
Shane Lafferty	Roscommon
Anne Lankester	Cork
John Loftus	Limerick
Robbie Lyons	Laois
John McAleer	Antrim
Niall McAuliffe	Laois
Noel McGeever	Donegal
Catherine Murphy	Cork
Bridie Nicholson	Sligo
James Nolan	Kildare
Eoghan O'Neill	Clare
Maura O'Sullivan	Kilcolgan
Paul Prendergast	Dublin
James Reynolds	Dublin
Charlie Ryan	Cork
Leonard Ryan	Dublin
Harry Ward	Dublin
Linda Waters	Galway



Declan Guing and Harry Ward

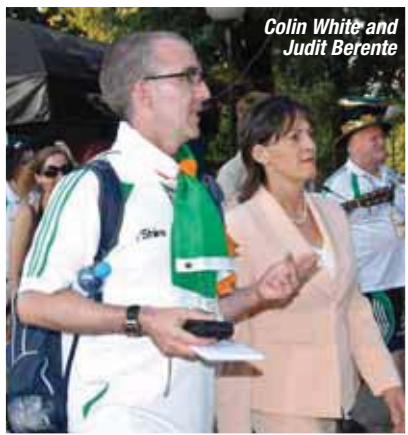


Harry Ward and Mona Askmann, Norway



Harry in action!

7th EUROPEAN TRANSPLANT & DIALYSIS GAMES



*Colin White and
Judit Berente*



Transplant Team Ireland in the parade to the Opening Ceremony



*Traditional Irish music featured prominently
at the Opening Ceremony*



*Mark Murphy, Monica Finn
and Maura O'Sullivan*



Clare Hogan, Trish Loftus and Sheila Gegan



Traditional dance at the Opening Ceremony



*Mike Keohane, Colin White, James Reynolds,
Robbie Lyons and Dee Keohane
Seated Eoghan O'Neill and Peter Heffernan*



John Loftus, Monica Finn and Charlie Ryan



Noel McGeever



Megan Fahy, Joana Bakula (Poland) and Frédérique Granier (France)



Charlie Ryan, Catherine Murphy, Clare Hogan and Mike Keohane



Declan Guing



Anne Marie Lankester, Antonina Prignitz (Germany) and Sheila Gegan



Robbie Lyons, James Colbeck (UK) and Eoghan O'Neill



The Irish taking a break at Track & Field

'That week will always be remembered by me, not for winning medals, but as the week I made great new friends.'

About four weeks before the Games I went to the ALSAA Sports Complex for the final team meeting before we flew out to Zagreb, Croatia. I was introduced to all the team members and they all, without exception, seemed so nice, friendly and welcoming but little did I know just how fantastic this group of people would turn out to be.

I am currently receiving haemodialysis treatment in Midlands Regional Hospital in Tullamore. I only started my treatment in January 2012 so it is still relatively new to me. I must say that I was a small bit apprehensive about getting dialysis in a hospital in a different country but I am glad to report that the dialysis treatment that I and the others from the Irish team on haemodialysis received was absolutely second to none. The nurses and other staff in the hospital were excellent and they treated us so well.

When we were on our way to the Opening Ceremony, I was informed by our team captain, Harry Ward, that I was selected to be the flag bearer for the Irish team in the Opening parade. What an honour that was for me to carry our national flag.

I didn't think that the week could get any better after that. Well it did. I took gold in my darts competition and a silver medal in the bowling. The support and



NIALL McAULIFFE
(Abbeyleix)

encouragement that I got from my team mates was magical and without a doubt got me over the finishing line.

During the rest of the week I realised just what it means to be part of the

Irish team. I learned that it doesn't matter about the colour of your medal or if you even won a medal. It was about supporting each other, cheering each other, helping each other and looking out for each other. It was about staying together as a unit and competing and hopefully winning as a team. That week will always be remembered by me, not for winning medals, but as the week I made great new friends.

The great thing about the Games was that it brought people with similar medical issues together. I met some truly inspirational people on our team. People who showed me that anybody can do anything, that you can achieve bigger goals in life than winning a medal.

The very fact that some of my team mates even compete, never mind win medals, was truly inspirational and for me humbling.

Special thanks go to the backroom team; Colin (manager), Yvonne (doctor), Claire (physiotherapist), Sarah May, Gwen O'Donoghue and Jimmy Servis (PR) and Harry Ward (team captain) for looking after us all so well.

Finally, thanks to all my team mates who welcomed a complete stranger into their fold and made me and my wife feel so very welcome.

Thank you all.



Shane Lafferty, Niall McAuliffe, Lenny Ryan, Fabien Toutlemonde (France) and Philippe Coquel (France)



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
LAFFERTY	7	1	9	8	5	4	6	2	7	1	8
	11	30	48	63	72	80	88	96	105		
MC AULIFFE	6	2	7	2	7	8	X	7	7	2	X
	8	20	22	29	49	69	86	95			
RYAN LEONARD	13	33	53	72	81	85	101	107	115		

‘.....I want to show the same spirit of generosity to others that they have shown to me.’



Paul Prendergast, Lenny Ryan, Sheila Gregan, Peter Heffernan and Eoghan O'Neill

They say that lightning does not strike twice, but I have just come back from the 7th European Transplant and Dialysis Games with the same feelings I had on my return from my first European Transplant & Dialysis Games experience in Germany in 2008.

On both occasions I enjoyed a wonderful feeling of excitement, optimism and determination to keep myself as well as possible having spent the week with a wonderful, exciting and inspiring group of people that make up the participants in Games. As in 2008, this year I have made new friends who are now part of my extended family in Transplant Team Ireland.

When I attended my first Games I was on dialysis, this time around I am transplanted. I received the 'gift of life' from my donor and their family last year. Is there a difference in attending the Games whilst on dialysis or as a transplant recipient? There is the obvious practical one of having to dialyse and not having to dialyse. Beyond that, the answer will probably vary from person to person.

I believe that there can be a difference in what you personally take away from the Games when you are on dialysis and when you are transplanted. After my first Games I came away not feeling alone, I was always very active in participating in sporting activities and realised that I could continue being active while on dialysis and have participation in the Games as a goal.

On returning from Zagreb my focus is different again. In attending the Games I have realised that, like my fellow competitors, I need to try to keep myself as fit and active as possible and honour my donor by trying to live



PETER HEFFERNAN
(Dublin)

as full a life as possible in all that I do. In relation to my donor and their family, I want to show the same spirit of generosity to others that they have shown to me.

At the core of the Games experience there is a friendship amongst all

participants that goes beyond the simple 'hello' and an empowering air of goodwill exists that encourages everyone to achieve their best.

The challenge of the competition, whether it is in just completing the course, or competing against your fellow competitors, is about being the best YOU can be. We will all remember Lenny completing the 50m freestyle as one of the highlights of the Games for the team. With Transplant Team Ireland you can rely on there being support throughout the week of the Games and beyond.

The shared experiences and goals of the team are a great unifier. This year's team of 26 competitors and 21 supporters came from diverse backgrounds but the common desire to be the best we could be and to promote organ donor awareness bonded us quickly. This is what I believe the Games are all about and would encourage anybody, whether on dialysis or transplanted, to join us and participate.



Our Swimming Relay Team:
Eoghan O'Neill, Sheila Gregan, Peter Heffernan and Paul Prendergast



“As a newcomer to this outing I remember most of all the comradeship among the group”

I went to Croatia as a supporter for Transplant Team Ireland and loved it. When my husband John asked me to go with him I was at first hesitant, now I am glad I went.

John was participating in his second European Games and I had not been involved the first time round. I am pleased that I went to Croatia. I have good memories; the people I met, the sporting events, the new places and the warm sun of Croatia.

My journey began at Dublin Airport. On arrival at the airport that was my first sight of the team members dressed in their colourful team gear. I had not expected the media interest, and was surprised by the amount of interest in the team's departure for Croatia.

We flew to Budapest and then travelled onwards by bus to Zagreb which was to be our base for the week. We arrived late in the evening at our hotel and were glad to get some rest. It was not until the day after our arrival in Zagreb that I began to get to know some of the team members and supporters. I had to go to the Games registration for John who was away doing dialysis and that was my first real opportunity to get to know some of these new people in my life.

By the end of the week in Zagreb I had met every member of the team and



Bridget and John McAleer

all the supporters. I am full of admiration for the sporting efforts of the Ireland team. They came third in the overall medals total. I particularly remember the day by the open air swimming pool. In the hot sun of Croatia the Irish swimmers put on a marvellous show collecting many medals along the way.

As a newcomer to this outing I remember most of all the comradeship among the group. If you did not know what was going on you could always

ask Colin or Harry; always on the ball looking after things. Harry, the team captain, could always be relied upon to inject a measure of humour at the right time. Colin, the solver of problems, had a message which I personally will not forget, when you travel abroad always keep your passport next to you. But I'm sure they would not have left me standing on the Croatian-Hungarian border – would you Harry?

Thanks to all for a wonderful time.

BRIDGET MCALEER



Lenny Ryan & Fabien Toutlemonde (France)



Megan Fahy and fellow track competitor



Maximilian Lang (Austria) and Mike Keohane

Celebrations at Dublin Airport on arrival back in Dublin with Gwen O'Donoghue and John Loftus



Shane Lafferty with his nephews



Paul Prendergast with some of his grandchildren



Mick Dwyer (past Team Captain) was at the airport to greet the team on its return and is pictured with Peter Heffernan



James Reynolds, Owen Kelleher, David Hickey and Lenny Ryan (South County Dublin athletes) with David Hickey



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