

ISF WORLD ATHLETICS REPORT
NANCY, FRANCE
22 JUNE TO 5 JULY 2017

1. Gullivers Sports Travel

a. Planning

All planning for the tour was done through Gullivers Sports Travel. Initially with Ori, then with Delphine.

The Hosts originally recommended flying into Paris, then train to Nancy. However, Gullivers recommended a coach from Paris to Nancy. We took this option, as it was safer (less time in Paris airport) and more comfortable. It cost the same, took the same amount of time and we had the whole coach to ourselves.

Flights were booked with Cathay Pacific. This meant that we flew via Hong Kong. Coaches were booked through local providers used by Gullivers.

b. Paperwork

Gullivers required a passenger information sheet to be completed plus a copy of everyone's passport. I liaised directly with the teachers from the respective schools to have this completed and returned to me.

I kept a copy of all paperwork.

c. Head of Delegation Paperwork

Gullivers prepared a folder of information, including entry tickets and contact details, for me as Head of delegation.

2. Budget

a. ISF Charges

ISF has a standard charge of 40 euro levy plus 50 euro accommodation and meals per day levy. In addition, there is a 50 euro donation to the ISF Foundation for those attending the Gala Dinner.

This must be pre-paid prior to arrival.

b. Full Budget

The full budget was developed using the quotes from Gullivers Travels plus the required charges from ISF.

It is important to make sure international transfer fees are covered as well as some 'fat' in the budget for currency fluctuations against the Australian dollar, increase in airport taxes etc

Head of Delegation costs were also included as part of this budget.

There was approximately \$300 left in the budget after all payments had been made.

3. Team Selection

a. Liaison with Athletics Australia

As National Secretary, I liaised with Michelle James from Athletics Australia to gain approval for the 2016 Athletics Australia Schools Knockout Competition to be used, once again, as the selection trial.

I prepared a bulletin indicating:

- Selection Criteria – winners of the boys and girls Intermediate section
- Proposed Itinerary – from work with Gulliver's Travel
- Approximate Costs – based on the proposed budget
- Expression of Interest Form

Athletics Australia distributed this information as part of their bulletin to all schools competing in the competition. It was also distributed at the Technical Meeting prior to the start of competition.

Pymble Ladies College and Trinity Grammar School won their respective sections and were offered the place in the team.

b. Attendance at Schools Knockout

I attended the Schools Knockout competition in Canberra. I was able to speak to the teachers at the Technical Meeting and answer any questions. Attending the competition meant that I was able to liaise immediately with the winning schools, obtain the expression of interest forms and make an immediate start on the further planning required.

c. Confirmation by Schools

In order to confirm that the schools would be taking up the offer to attend the ISF Athletics Championships, I emailed each principal to obtain an email confirmation. This did prove a little difficult as these schools either had started their Christmas school holidays or were about to. The teacher contacts were able to chase this up for me. The Principals were able to confirm that Pymble Ladies College and Trinity Grammar would take up this opportunity prior to Christmas.

4. Uniform

a. Try on Kits

Try on kits were delivered to both schools with the appropriate ordering forms. There was some difficulty here as the full touring kits plus competition uniform was not initially delivered. When it did arrive, the competition kits did not contain all items. This caused some angst and did require both myself and Deneille contact Struddy's to rectify the situation.

This did mean that orders required shorter timelines to be completed. The schools liaised directly with Struddy's.

b. Delivery

Delivery dates were promised and not honoured by Struddy's. We are not sure whether dates were suggested to placate the teachers involved or they struck some manufacturing issues – it was never explained.

Finally, the last items were delivered to the schools the day before departure.

c. Quality

The quality of the tracksuit, shorts and polos were, on the whole, good. The design is dated and has features that are not practical eg tight elastic and Velcro tabs on the cuffs of the jacket, toggle on the inside of the tracksuit pants legs to tighten the cuff of the pants.

The boys competition gear was satisfactory and only one competition singlet had to be returned for a larger size! The girls competition gear, in the end, was OK and looked smart. However, the garments initially delivered were different material to the try on kit and actually had a different sizing. This meant that those garments had to be returned with the last pieces being delivered the day prior to departure.

5. Liaison with Schools

This all took place through the teacher contacts at each school:

- Acceptance Deposits
- Final Payments
- Gullivers Forms
- ISF Forms

A final teleconference was held with the Acting CEO of SSA, the Head of Delegation and the four teachers accompanying the team.

6. Liaison with UNSS France

a. Entries

Once the schools had confirmed their respective six athletes and their events, I entered this into the ISF online portal:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Country
- Email Address
- Dietary requirements
- Events and best performance.

Concern was expressed about why ISF needed email addresses, so it was decided that parent email addresses were entered rather than student email addresses (for privacy reasons)

As the portal was new, the events and performances had to be added at a later time as this section was not available until I alerted ISF of the problem.

Also entered via this portal was:

- Travel and arrival times
- Team officials details
- Head of Delegation details

Entries via the portal were easy to complete and update as necessary until entries closed.

b. Bulletins

Bulletins were received both from ISF Athletics (also available via the ISF website) and from the Nancy organisers. These were emailed to the School Sport Australia email address, so sometimes took a few days to get to me.

The bulletins were forwarded to the teachers from Pymble and Trinity as well.

I still found that the bulletins didn't answer all my questions, so found it necessary to email the host organisation to find out more. Serge Rainieri was very accommodating in answering my questions.

In Australia, we are used to Bulletins having all the information we require concerning things like –training times, program, excursions, technical meetings, buses etc

Some scheduled meetings for Heads of Delegation were cancelled, so we went to things like the Friendship Relays not quite sure what was going to happen!

7. Departure

All team members met at Sydney International Airport for an early check in. We were able to check in as a group, which sped things up immensely. Nick from Gullivers Travel was there to say hello and make sure we checked in without any fuss. Cathay Pacific was very accommodating and interested in what the team was and where we were going.

Immigration was speedy and hassle free, so we all had time to explore the duty free shops and get some lunch.

Flights took us via Hong Kong (change planes) to Paris. Only issue was Connor leaving his passport on the plane, but Cathay staff soon retrieved it and we were on our way. The coach was ready and waiting for our four hour bus trip to Nancy with a stop on the way for more food!

8. Championships

a. Arrival

Australia was the first to arrive and were welcomed by the local TV station filming our arrival for the evening news! Our two captains – Kristie and Bert – were also interviewed. We were the only team that travelled in excess of 30 hours to get there!

b. Accommodation and Meals

All teams were accommodated in 3 star accommodation and provided with breakfast at their accommodation. Heads of Delegation were accommodated at another hotel and also provided with breakfast.

Lunches and dinners were provided at the local school close to the track. This meant easy access during competition as it was walking distance. It did mean we sometimes had to get the Championships shuttle to the school. Some meals were also provided at the venue of the event eg Evening of Nations.

The accommodation for the team was adequate, although no air conditioning. Meals were also adequate, although they couldn't provide adequately for the athletes who had dietary requirements (eg gluten free).

The athletes concerned made sure they purchased food at the nearby by supermarket. The Pymble teachers also did some catering of their own to make sure the girls had eaten properly prior to competition.

Shuttle buses were provided to and from the accommodation. These were very efficient, but there were a number of timetable changes that made it hard to follow!

We were lucky enough to have Maggie, a senior student, as our Liaison Officer. Her English was excellent and nothing was too much trouble. Our athletes really made her feel part of the team and was sad to say good bye to her. We left her with some gifts from Australia including our Boxing Kangaroo mascot.

c. Ceremonies

The Opening Ceremony was held at the Nancy Opera House. A magnificent old building on one side of Stanislas Place in the centre of Nancy. The ceremony took a while to get underway and, of course, was long and everyone had to give a speech. Unfortunately, the translator was not given a copy of these speeches and was translating 'on the run'!

There was also some musical items to break up the speeches! Finally, the ISF Flag was lowered to the stage in dramatic fashion to the ISF anthem of '2001, A Space Odyssey'!

ISF really need to bring in some protocols around Opening Ceremonies – they are far too long and not really interesting to the majority of athletes. Unfortunately, there was no parade of nations this year and that, I feel, is what the athletes really look forward to – entering the arena as a team.

The Closing Ceremony and Medal Presentation was held at Nancy Sports Hall, walking distance from our accommodation. To start the proceedings, the ISF flag was carried into the hall followed by the national flags and Heads of Delegation of the 25 competing countries. Presentations were made to the winning teams in each section, record breakers and the team receiving the ISF Spirit Award. Pymble Ladies colleges received their medals and trophy for winning the Girls Schools Section.

d. Championships

The Championships were held at Raymond Petit Stadium in Tomblaine. They were well run and well staffed with adults and Youth Judges. The organisers had undertaken to train about 90 local students in the art of officiating and conducting an athletics meet. It was very refreshing to see students running a meet for students. The Youth Judges were very professional and efficient. I did not hear one complaint about them.

As a result of these Championships, a wonderful legacy has been left for athletes in that area.

The athletes from both schools were well prepared. Pymble certainly had done their homework on points required to win the competition and picked their 6 athletes and their events accordingly. The girls performed to the best of their abilities with a number of them obtaining personal bests in these events. This is outstanding considering that Australia competes out of season compared to all the other countries competing at the Championships.

The Trinity boys learnt a lot throughout the competition, although some didn't perform quite as well as they would have liked.

However, all athletes came together as a team and supported each other both on and off the field of play.

Pymble Ladies Colleges won the Girls Schools Section and Trinity Grammar School came eighth in the Boys Schools Section.

e. Cultural Activities

These included:

- Evening of Nations
- Cultural Scavenger Hunt
- Friendship Relays

The Evening of Nations was held in Pepiniere Park. Each country had to bring some things to share that is unique to your country. Of course, we took vegemite, Fredo frogs and Tim Tams! Each country also had to prepare an item (usually musical) to perform during the evening. Pymble and Trinity got together prior to leaving Australia and out together an item to 'Home Amongst the Gum Trees', 'I still Call Australia Home' and 'We are Australian' compete with actions and typical Aussie gear (footy jumpers, Olympic uniform, surf life saving tops), the Boxing Kangaroo and Australian flag. The evening drew to a close watching the light and laser show in Stanislas Place.

The Cultural Scavenger Hunt started in Pepiniere Park, but took us all over the old town of Nancy following clues and to answer questions about the old town.

The Friendship Relays were held in Carriere Place which provided an excellent 600m circuit for the relays. Teams were made up of athletes from different countries as well as teams of coaches. After an aerobics style warm up, the relay race got underway. It was great fun and all our athletes thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The team then had the afternoon off to explore, shop and generally enjoy the town of Nancy.

f. Gala Dinner

I attend the Heads of Delegation Gala Dinner held at the Town Hall located in Stanislas Place, Nancy. Once again, one of the magnificent old buildings that border Stanislas Place. A dinner of fine French food and wines was enjoyed by everyone finished with a dessert that is unique to Nancy. The evening was capped off by watching the magnificent light and laser show in Stanislas Place.

g. Stanislas International Meet

The Stanislas International Meet, an annual meet in Tomblaine, was included as part of the ISF Championships. All teams were guests of the meet and watched a number of international athletes compete as part of their preparations for the forthcoming World Championships.

Athletes from the ISF Championships were selected to compete in a 'Top 8 Meet' prior to the start of the main meet. From Australia, seven athletes were selected to compete:

Kristie Edwards (100m, Long Jump)

Connor Murphy (200m)

Imogen Breslin (100m Hurdles)

Albert Swann (110m Hurdles)

Imogen Gardiner (800m)

Edita Grinsberg (800m)

Georgia Duncan (Shot Put)

h. Departure

The team departed, by coach, early on 30 August. All rooms had to be cleaned, rubbish collected and checked before we were allowed to set off! The athletes said their good byes to Maggie (Liaison Officer), jumped on the bus and we headed off. The bus trip to Villers-Bretonneux took about 2 hours and it really didn't stop raining!

9. Educational Tour

a. World War 1 Battlefield

The first stop was at the town of Villers-Bretonneux, the Victoria school and museum and the World War 1 graves and memorial. It was a pity it was raining as it meant that we couldn't spend as much time walking around reading the head stones.

The next stop was Le Hamel – another significant battlefield and memorial to Australians and Canadians who fought and died in World War 1

Again, the rain cut down our exploring time. However, the significance of what we were being told, saw and felt was not diminished by the rain.

Our guide, Reg, was a fountain of knowledge and was able to engage everyone in his re-telling of the battles, their significance to the history of the area and the association with Australia.

We then headed to Amiens for the night – again another amazing French town with its own history. The next day we headed into Paris, again in the pouring rain!

b. IAAF Diamond League Meet, Paris

We were fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time. 2017 is the first time the Paris Diamond League meet has been back on the IAAF calendar. So, we ventured by train, tram and a short walk to the Charlety Stadium.

The French Championships were paraded around the stadium in vintage cars and the program was full of track and field stars from around the world. We had the pleasure of cheering three Australians as they competed. They came and spoke to us after their event as it is very unusual for Australians competing in the Diamond League events to have a cheer squad!

A very special evening for our young aspiring athletes.

c. Disneyland Park, Paris

After breakfast, another coach trip to take us to Disneyland Paris! The day was spent there on rides, seeing shows, watching parades, shopping and generally enjoying ourselves. The evening finished with a magnificent laser and light show and fireworks with a special tribute to the 25th anniversary of Disneyland Paris.

It ended up being a late return to Paris as our original coach driver had handed the job off to another company and we didn't know! Fortunately, we found a driver waiting patiently to take 17 people to Paris! I think everyone feel asleep on the ride back to our hotel!

d. Walking Tour of Paris

Our final day in Paris took in an impromptu walking tour of the major sites. These included:

- Eiffel Tower (and a climb to the second 'floor')
- Galleries LaFayette Department Store (shopping)
- Arc de Triomphe
- Champs Elyees (more shopping and walking it's length)
- Place de Concorde
- The Louvre Museum
- Notre Dame Cathedral
- Seine River

All accessed via the Metro or on foot! It was interesting to see all shops had security on the doors who checked bags and large presence of armed police and military wherever we went. The infra structure of the Tour de France was being bumped in whilst we were there as well!

10. Return

We were picked up by coach for the trip to the Paris Airport. Check in was smooth and we had a lot of time to kill whilst waiting for our plane to Hong Kong. Another couple of hours wait in Hong Kong, then our final leg to Sydney. Cathay pacific once again provided excellent service on both flights.

All families were waiting to greet us as we emerged from customs with the Pymble families with banners and balloons!

11. Thank You

Special thank you to:

- Deneille Sutton (SSA) for her work with International Tours and making sure all the invoices went out and payments made on time
- Ori and Delphine from Gullivers Sports Travel who made the planning of the tour so easy and I knew I could leave everything in their capable hands
- Serge Raineri and his Organising Committee for the magnificent Championships
- Maggie, our Liaison Officer, a wonderful young lady who became one of the team
- Deb and Katie from Pymble and Andrew and Brad from Trinity who prepared their respective teams so well, were dedicated and clearly had the respect from all their students
- The six girls and six boys who did the hard work, competed the best they could, supported each other and made the team such a joy to be with.

12. Recommendations

- i. That School Sport Australia accept the invitation to compete in the 2019 ISF Athletics Championships in Split, Croatia
- ii. That the National Secretary approach Athletics Australia to, once again, use the 2017 Athletics Australia Schools Knockout Competition as the selection trial.
- iii. That the National Secretary prepare an intention to tour now as the 2019 ISF Championships is scheduled for January 2019
- iv. That Gullivers Sports Travel be approached again to plan the tour including an extra few days for an educational component to the tour.
- v. That, if a new uniform supplier is not in place, Struddy's clearly understand the needs of the sport and the importance of keeping material consistent between try on kits and final garments and keep to delivery dates.
- vi. That the colour of the competition uniform singlet/crop top be changed to a brighter colour (yellow?). It is very hard to pick out our athletes in a race when sitting in the grandstand. The darker colour tends to blend in with the background. Also, a bright colour is easier to 'find and read' on a the photofinish!

The Team and Performances

PYMBLE LADIES COLLEGE, SYDNEY					
Kristie	Edwards	100m	12.11	Long Jump	5.57 (PB)
Imogen	Breslin	100m Hurdles	14.56	Long Jump	5.36 (PB)
Edita	Grinbergs	800m	2:14.94 (PB)	Discus	31.28
Nicole	Freestone	High Jump	1.63	400m	63.12 (PB)
Georgia	Duncan	Shot Put	12.17 (PB)	100m Hurdles	15.23
Imogen	Gardiner	800m	2:12.34 (PB)	Long Jump	4.30 (PB)
Medley Relay	Imogen Breslin	Georgia Duncan	Edita Grinbergs	Kristle Edwards	2:17.60
Final Points	756	Place:	First		

Team Captain: Kristie Edwards

Teachers : Katie Edwards, Deb Walsham

TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL, SYDNEY					
Albert	Swann	110m Hurdles	14.27	Long Jump	6.16
Louis	Dennison	Long Jump	5.58	100m	12.37 (injured)
Alex	Kolesnikoff	Discus	52.73		
Nathaniel	Davies	800m	2:03.58		
Angus	Clark	High Jump	1.81	200m	23.81
Connor	Murphy	Triple Jump	13.95	200m	23.25 (PB)
Medley Relay	Angus Clark	Connor Murphy	Nathaniel Davies	Albert Swann	2:05.84
Finals Points:	729	Place:	Eighth		

Team Captain: Albert Swann

Teachers: Andrew Murphy, Brad Woods

Files accompanying this report:

- Official Team Results
- Newspaper Article
- Photo of Presentation to Pymble