

WORLD WINTER GAMES TEAM RETURNS

Loud cheers echoed around Auckland International Airport on 18th February as our triumphant World Winter Games team arrived home from Boise, Idaho.

Medals and Ribbons were proudly worn and huge grins radiated on the faces of athletes and the families and supporters who were there to welcome them.

This was the biggest SONZ team to compete at a World Games, with six skiers, two snowboarders, a figure skater and six coaches. Competition was tough, with 110 nations competing, most from the wintery Northern hemisphere. It was cold in Idaho, especially for our team from mid-summer NZ. But it didn't dampen the enthusiasm.



First through arrivals - Jason, Tessa and Duncan

"We met athletes from all over the world and made heaps of friends," the athletes told us. "The people of Boise were fantastic hosts. There were over 4,000 volunteers, many of them taking time off work to help in every part of the Games. It was well organised, and great skiing, snowboarding and Ben Southern was skating in a huge ice-stadium. What experience for all of us - it was a trip of a lifetime!"



The New Zealand World Winter Games Team

After months of training and a week of competition, the team indulged in day trips to Disneyland and Universal Studios on their way back to New Zealand.



Snowboarder Robin Matthews (SO Auckland) proudly displays his gold medal

Winter World Games Medal Tally

2 GOLD MEDALS

5 SILVER MEDALS

1 BRONZE MEDAL

More than 2,000 Special Olympics athletes from almost 100 countries competed in seven Olympic-type winter sports at the 2009 World Winter Games: Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, snowboarding, figure skating, speed skating, snowshoeing and floor hockey. Special Olympics is not about "swifter, higher, stronger"; it is about achieving one's personal best. Athletes showed the benefits of months of training as they strived for new personal heights, and were rewarded by specially designed World Games medals.

Getting Ready for the National Games



Every four years Special Olympics holds its biggest New Zealand event – the National Summer Games.

They'll be held in Palmerston North from 2 – 5 December 2009, with 11 sports and more than 2,500 athletes and supporters.

It's an exciting and challenging experience for our athletes, and throughout New Zealand anticipation is mounting as they strive to qualify for selection.

Each athlete must have attended training sessions regularly, have competed in a Ribbon event and a

Regional Games in the 12 months from July '08 to June '09 in the sport they will compete in at the Games. Selection will be guided by athletes' attitude and physical and emotional ability to cope with five full-on days of travel and competition.

Club committees are anxiously fundraising to enable them to take their teams. Any and all support from local community groups will be welcomed with open arms! (See back page for contact information.)

PAPAKURA

- our New Upper North Island Club

We are delighted to announce the formation of a new club – Special Olympics Papakura.

Club chairperson Pennie Ball is enthusiastic about the birth and prospects for the club. "We started out with a tenpin bowling 'have-a-go' day and had a good attendance of positive people," she reports.

"We have a core group of ten athletes, but we expect it to grow as more people get to hear about us. Most of the athletes are from Rosehill Special School, but we have some adult athletes as well."

"As it's coming on for winter we're focusing first on tenpin bowling and football. We have the absolutely fabulous support of Papakura City Football Club. We have lots of people who are keen to start basketball and we've had our first AGM."

Auckland's, Howick/Pakuranga's, North Harbour's and Whangarei's newsletters and Up Top Special are available as pdfs on www.specialolympics.org.nz





From the Chair

Dear Special Olympians and Supporters,

You do not have to delve deeply into Special Olympics presently to

catch the flurry of activities and the urgency in training and competitions as we count down to our National Summer Games. Qualifying to attend is first priority. Getting all the registration forms correctly filled in, gathered up and sent off on time comes next and is no small task. Then the big question: *How do we fund our team's attendance?*

In confronting this question we should not forget why we do what we do. Sure, sport is the means, and keen and healthy competition is what we foster, but Special Olympics is more than that. It is all about improving the quality of life of our athletes and giving them opportunity that no other organisation provides. We know we are making a difference and this inspires us to work and try even harder for as many people with intellectual disability as we can reach.

We are also multi sport and this gives our athletes options. These options ensure that we can provide for our athletes as they grow through school age to well past middle age. We can show we are succeeding in the growth of participation and accordingly we are helping our wider communities. We are worthy therefore of community support. We just need to get the message out...

Our National Summer Games, arguably our most important event and what we build up to every four years, provides the pinnacle of participation for our athletes. We judge its success not by the colour or number of medals won but by the number of athletes who successfully compete. This is what makes us unique.

On another note, it is with much pleasure that we welcome five new Clubs to our regional fold and the greater family of Special Olympics. These Clubs, namely Warkworth, Bay of Islands, Greenhithe, Hibiscus Coast and Papakura, are testament to the good work being done by our Regional Sports Coordinators who have helped these clubs get up and going. We wish all five every success.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to our recently retired Treasurer of the UNIRC, Colin Smith. Colin has stood down after many years of very dedicated work with the Council and he will be sorely missed. Colin you have well and truly earned your "retirement" and we wish you all the very best.

Sincerely

John Borkin
Chairperson, Upper North Island Regional Council

WHAT'S GOING ON UP T



Auckland, winners of the game against North Harbour

Raising the Curtain for the Breakers

Again this year Upper North Island Special Olympics teams played the five curtain raisers at the Australian National Basketball League series at North Harbour Special Events Centre.

Rosehill and Mt Richmond Special Schools were first on December 18 and in following weeks teams from Auckland, Whangarei, Manukau, Howick/Pakuranga, Counties, North Harbour and Waitakere enjoyed the tremendous support and encouragement of the crowd. The noise - music, drums and cheering created a different and exhilarating experience for our players.

Bocce Beats Bad Weather

Bocce and bad weather don't mix. Special Olympics Manukau's Bocce Regional Games were postponed to the end of February, and the weather still looked extremely doubtful as the weekend drew near. However after some last minute phone calls the Far North team travelled down through the storm on the Saturday, and *Sunday dawned clear and fine.*

Competition was fierce, with Far North taking home gold medals and fourth place ribbons; Thames Valley, silver; and Manukau, bronze.

All who played thoroughly enjoyed the weekend, including a social game at the end which included volunteers, staff, athletes and supporters!



Manukau's Julie Hunter bowls, David Kilgour watches

Schools Programme Rocks



Taking off - the 100m run



Flying high - Jonathan Christini from Otamatea College



David Larkin thrilled with his softball throw
Photo: Onehunga News

The Special Olympics Schools programme goes from strength to strength. Growing numbers of Greater Auckland schools and students are involved, and now the programme has taken off in Northland.

Term 1 was Athletics. Throughout the term teachers and students at special schools and special needs units trying - and succeeding - at running, walking, softball throw, shot-put, standing long-jump running long jump, assisted walk and wheelchair races.

By late in the term they were ready for the big event - hundreds of students gathered to compete at the interschool Ribbon Days. Numbers have grown so much that we now run FOUR Schools Ribbon Days at: Whangarei, North Harbour, Central and West, and South.

Now the Term 2 Football programme has started. The students enthuse that 'Special Olympics ROCKS!!' and they're looking forward to four more Ribbon Days near the end of the term.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: *For the first time there'll be wheelchair football at one (maybe more) of the Ribbon Days.*

Sporting Excellence Acknowledged

Congratulations to Special Olympics athletes and volunteers who were nominated for 2008 Sports Awards.

Veronica Maynard from Manurewa High School was recognised in the *Athlete With a Disability* category at the recent ASB College Young Persons Sports Awards. Veronica achieved a great deal throughout the year, and it's worth noting that there are 102 secondary schools involved in sport in Auckland!



Fiona Strong

Fiona Strong (SO Counties) was one of three recipients of the National Downs Syndrome Achievers of the Year awards for her achievements in swimming.

Two long serving and very deserving Special Olympics Club volunteers, **Laurinne Laing** and **Clare Lingman** from Howick/Pakuranga club were finalists in the Counties Manukau Sports awards.

North Harbour chairperson **Joan Fairhall** took the *Sports Administrator of the Year* award at the Harbour Sporting Excellence Awards, and her name was then put forward by Harbour Sport for the Greater Auckland Regional Award, which she also won.



Joan Fairhall

TOP?

Big & Little Football League

We're delighted to now have THREE football club groups in the greater Auckland area. North Harbour's soccer squad formed five years ago and now has around 20 adult Special Olympians. Their A Division Gladiators team flew to Palmerston North in April for a Regional tournament (thank you Pub Charity), a qualifying tournament for the National Games.

The weather was fantastic for the matches against teams from Hawkes Bay, Waikato Manawatu. North Harbour came second to the strong Waikato team again.



Coach Zac with Levi, Molly, Toby and Lennox

AND – now a brand new Special Olympics Greenhithe Club has started with a fledgling group of around eight 8 – 10 year olds, the Greenhithe Grasshoppers. Training is on Saturdays at Greenhithe Primary school (see back page). They 'competed' for the first time in the skills competition at a Ribbon Tournament hosted by the North Harbour in early April and all went happily home with a ribbon

"They're thoroughly enjoying learning new skills in an environment where they 'fit', making friends and being part of a team," says Coordinator Janine Scott. "We'd love to have more athletes and we welcome young players from anywhere in Greater Auckland."

And Warkworth. They've had only three practises, but already have approximately 15 athletes attending, ranging – from 5 to 26 years old. The athletes love it and are looking forward to hosting a ribbon day in the near future.



Coach Kevin, Hyung Hwa, Troy and Mark, and (front) James, Jeremy and Anthony

Hibiscus Coast Happy Hosts

The recently formed Special Olympics Hibiscus Coast club held its first Swimming Ribbon Day at the Stanmore Bay Leisure Centre in March.

Primarily to enable swimmers to qualify to compete at Regional Games, this was a small and friendly event with only around 20 athletes – a great mix of 'old hands' and 'first timers'. Athletes travelled from as far as Counties – and one from the new Bay of Islands club.

It was all over in two hours, and deemed by everyone a huge success, and a wonderful introduction for new swimmers to Special Olympics competitive swimming. Now they're all looking forward to competing at the Auckland Regionals in June.



Still Riding High

The Equestrian group has had to jump a few tricky hurdles this year. North Harbour Coordinator Lisa Messenger had to step down for personal reasons, which meant the group was no longer able to use the facilities at RDA Greenhithe. Three of the riders were from Hibiscus Coast, so Equestrian has moved to that club, riding and training with Ti Tree Horse Treks in Waiwera with Rebecca's mum Leanne Wootton as coordinator (and Lisa available as equestrian guru from time to time).

As several riders from both SO Warkworth and Hibiscus Coast train during school hours, it was decided to have a ribbon day between them. Eleven riders raced around the barrels and manoeuvred around an obstacle trail. Greatly enjoyed and likely to become an annual event.

A Regional Games for Equestrian was held on the 2nd of May at Sonshine Ranch in Clevedon. This was the only qualifying event for those wanting nomination for Nationals.



Hibiscus Coast's Drew, Jessica and Olivia proudly display their ribbons

Coaching the Coaches

In March and April Indoor Bowls New Zealand ran a series of coaching clinics for players from Ngongtaha to Balclutha, and extended the invitation to Special Olympics coaches too.

IBNZ Regional Coach Craig Whiteside and Executive Member Stewart Chilton took the North Island seminars, and gave plenty of sound advice on coaching, identifying and correcting wrong techniques, and a heap of handy hints, followed by a practical hands on session and a competition.

Present were some of NZ's top Indoor Bowlers, but it was Special Olympics Manukau's Elaine Lauder who took the prize for the most accurate bowl!



SO Warkworth's Georgina Parks bowls as JP Edwards discusses coaching with Craig Whiteside. Craig, as well as his IBNZ role, is proud to be the coach of SO Tauranga's teams.

Treasured Treasurer

Two years ago Colin Smith attempted to step down from the position of Special Olympics Upper North Island Regional Council treasurer.

He didn't succeed. The Councillors (which includes coordinators of the UNI clubs) couldn't do without his knowledge, wisdom and advice and because Colin is such a teddy-bear, he didn't leave us floundering.

However, at the 2009 AGM, on his third attempt, they conceded that Colin really does deserve to live his retirement dreams. With deep regret and many eulogies his retirement was reluctantly accepted.

His accounting expertise and his passion for Special Olympics have contributed hugely over many years. He coordinated ASB Trust Funding applications, has applied to various trusts for equipment and provided patient guidance to coordinators and treasurers throughout the Region. He is sorely missed!



Council Chairman John Borkin presented Colin with a voucher for a fabulous fishing trip.

Every Week, Everywhere

See the back page of this Up Top Special for a full list of sports offered in the regions, and when and where they are held.

If you would like to enrol a new athlete, or volunteer an hour or so of your time to coach or help, please contact your local coordinator (see list back page) via Upper North Island office (09) 630 8062

LOOKING FORWARD - EVENTS CALENDAR

- MAY**
- 2 Basketball Ribbon Day, Whangarei
 - 2 Basketball Regionals, Waikato
 - 2 Equestrian Regionals, Clevedon
 - 3 Athletics Ribbon Day, Waitakere
 - 17 Tenpin Regionals, Waikato
 - 23-24 Indoor Bowls Regional Games, Manukau
 - 24 Athletics Ribbon Day, Waitakere
 - 30 Tenpin Regional Games, Whangarei
- JUNE**
- 6-7 Aquatics Regionals, Auckland
 - 10 Football, Schools, Papakura
 - 16 Football, Schools Ribbon Day, Kerikeri
 - 11 Football, Schools Ribbon Day, North Harbour
 - 13-14 Basketball Regionals, HowickPak/Manukau
 - 17 Football, Schools Ribbon Day, Okaihau
 - 23 Football, Schools Ribbon Day, North Harbour
 - 25 Football, Schools Ribbon Day, Wairaraka Park
 - 25 Football, Schools Ribbon Day, Te Atatu Peninsula Park
 - 28 Aquatics Ribbon Day, Waitakere

June 30th is the end of the 'qualifying period' for the 2009 National Games.

By then everyone who is hoping to compete at the Nationals in December must have qualified in their sport at both (1) a ribbon event, then (2) a Regional Games.

Events from June onwards give us a good chance to aim at being at peak performance by December.

2009 National Summer Games, 2 - 5 December, Palmerston North

2011 World Summer Games, Athens, Greece.

2009 What, When and Where

Special Olympics sports training sessions are held weekly in most areas, except public holidays and school holidays in some areas. Groups break around the first week in December and resume in early February. All greater Auckland athletes have access to **golf** (at North Harbour or Manukau), and **equestrian** (at Hibiscus Coast) and all UNI athletes have access to **skiing and snowboarding** (at Snow Planet / Mt Ruapehu).

Special Olympics weekly training sessions

			Contact
Far North	Bocce Indoor Bowls	Every 2nd Sat 10-11.30am. Kaitaia Bocce courts (summer) Every 2nd Sat 10-11.30am. St John Hall (winter)	Snow Bray
Bay of Islands	Swimming	Thurs 4.30-5.30pm. Kawakawa Pool	Eileen Bedford
Whangarei	Athletics Basketball Indoor Bowls Swimming Tenpin	Mon 4.30-6pm. Kensington Park, Whangarei Tues 5-6pm. Kensington Park Stadium Thurs 7-9pm. Kamo Scout Hall, Whangarei Wed 6-7pm. Whangarei Aquatic Centre Sat 10am-12noon. last Sat of the month. Whangarei Tenpin Centre	Andrew Langford
Warkworth	Indoor Bowls Football Golf	Tuesday 1-2pm. Warkworth RSA Mon 4-5pm Shoesmith Domain, Warkworth Tues, 3-4pm Warkworth Golf Course. Phone to confirm time (fortnightly)	Sarah Christini
Hibiscus Coast	Tenpin Bowling Swimming Equestrian	Sat 10am-12. Whangaparoa Tenpin Centre Sat 3-4. Stanmore Bay Leisure Centre Thur 4-5pm (fortnightly). Ti Tree Horse Treks	Janet Uitzinger
North Harbour	Athletics Basketball Golf Football Swimming: Tenpin Indoor Bowls	Fri 6.00-7.30pm. Westlake Girls gym (summer) Sat 9-10am. Westlake Girls gym (winter) Every Sat 2-3pm (except last of mth). Waitemata Golf Club Sun 2.30 - 4pm. Hato Petera College, Northcote (winter) Sun 6.15-7.30pm. Takapuna Aquatic Centre Sat 9.30-12am. Tenpin Takapuna Wed 6.15 - 7.15pm. Albany Hall, Albany (winter)	Carolyn Pape
Greenhithe	Football	Saturday 12.30 - 1.30pm. Greenhithe Primary School Hall	Janine Scott
Waitakere	Athletics Basketball Swimming Tenpin	Tues 4.30-5.30pm. Trust Stadium, Douglas track (summer) Mon 5.30-6.30pm Trust Stadium, Central Park Dr Thurs 6.45 - 8pm. West Wave Aquatic Centre Sat 10am-12noon. Westgate Bowling Alley	Suzanne Larmer
Auckland	Athletics Basketball Indoor Bowls Rollerskating Swimming Tenpin	Sat 3.30-5.30pm. Phone to confirm venue (summer) Sat 3.30 -5.30pm. Marcellin College (winter) Mon 7.00-8.30pm. Ranfurly Care Hall, Epsom Thurs 5.30 - 6.30pm, Avondale College, Avondale Sun 4.30 -5.30pm. Tuesdays, 7-8pm Cameron Pool, Mt Roskill Sat 9.30-11.30am. Henderson Super Strike	Joce Sweney
Howick/Pakuranga	Athletics Basketball Swimming Tenpin Table Tennis	SSat. Tower Track, Mt Smart. Phone for time (all year) Thurs 6.30-7.30pm. Howick Rec Centre Sun 6.45-7.45pm. Lloyd Elsmore Pool Sun 10am-12noon. Panmure Superbowl Sun 4.00-5.00pm. Pakuranga Hall	Laurinne Laing
Tamaki	Tenpin Indoor Bowls Swimming	Sat 10am-12noon. Panmure Superbowl Thur 7-9pm. Panmure Community Centre (winter) Sun 5-6pm. Lagoon Fitness Centre	John Borkin
Manukau	Athletics Basketball Bocce Golf Indoor Bowls Tenpin	Thurs 5-6pm. Omana Park, Papatoetoe (summer) Mon 6-7pm. Otara Leisure Centre, Otara (winter) Wed 5.00-7.00pm. Manukau Sports Bowl (summer) Every 2nd Saturday 2-3pm, The Grange Golf Club Wed 5.30-6.45pm. Mangere Central Hall (winter) Sat 9.30-11.30am. Manukau Tenpin Bowling Centre	Caroline Leong
Papakura	Starting up	Hope to establish Tenpin, Football, Basketball, Athletics, Indoor Bowls	Pennie Ball
Counties	Swimming Athletics Basketball Indoor Bowls Tenpin	Tues 5-6pm. Franklin Sport & Swim, Pukekohe Wed 5-6pm. Growers Stadium, Pukekohe (summer) Thurs 6.30-7.30pm. Pukekohe High School (winter) Tues 7-10pm. Pukekohe East Community Centre Mon 4.45-5.30pm. Pukekohe Cossie Club Centre	Rowena Massey

To enrol a new athlete or if you want to volunteer with Special Olympics, please contact the Local Area Co-ordinator via -

Kay Harrison	Regional Coordinator: 09 630 8062 027 563 7088 kayh@specialolympics.org.nz Far North, Bay of Islands, Whangarei, Warkworth, Hibiscus Coast, North Harbour, Greenhithe
Mel Giles	Regional Coordinator: 09 630 8062 027 455 0062 melg@specialolympics.org.nz Auckland, Waitakere, Tamaki
Dave Beattie	Regional Coordinator: 09 630 8062 027 505 4673 daveb@specialolympics.org.nz Manukau, Counties, Howick Pakuranga, Papakura

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Vice Chair: Laurinne Laing
Treasurer: Colin Smith
Trustee: Robin Sheffield
Trustee Rep: Margaret Hallenberg

All Upper North Islands Clubs are represented on the Council. See contacts above.



Special Olympics
New Zealand

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