



# GOING FOR GOLD!

Four years after Ireland successfully hosted the Special Olympics, Rehab athletes were among the thousands who travelled to China to participate in the spectacular 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games

**I**T SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY, but it's been four years since Ireland triumphantly hosted the Special Olympics World Summer Games. The whole country "shared the feeling" in 2003 as over 7,000 athletes travelled to Ireland. It was a truly magical event, one that captured the imagination and hearts of the nation.



*Pictured left:* National Learning Network Sligo double medal winner Tony Lynagh (left) with coach Padraig Staunton (centre) and Irish team-mate Ian O'Donnell from Co. Mayo at the closing ceremony for the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai

Four years on, it was the turn of China this year to welcome Special Olympics athletes from all over the world as Shanghai played host to the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games. Among the 164 squads to make the long journey to Shanghai was Team Ireland. With 143 competitors, the Irish team was one of the largest in the competition. Only the host nation of China, and the United States, fielded larger squads.

Among the Irish team were no fewer than 12 athletes with Rehab Group credentials. With a medal haul that included three gold, three silver and five bronze medals, the athletes who attend National Learning Network and RehabCare and who work for Rehab Enterprises, competed with courage, skill and great sportsmanship to make an outstanding contribution to Ireland's final tally of 119 medals in 11 sports.

But Rehab athletes were not only represented on the Irish team. Momentum service-users Leanne Wolfe, Jackie Boyd and David Yuill proudly represented their native Scotland. Leanne and Jackie won fourth place ribbons in the basketball arena, while David Yuill also earned fourth place as a member of the Scottish football team.

Also competing on the soccer pitch were John Cousins of Rehab Recycle Tallaght and Oliver Boyle from National Learning Network

## Destination: Shanghai, China



*Pictured above:* RehabCare Castlebar bowling star Deirdre Garvin pictured with Hollywood heart-throb Colin Farrell at a reception for Special Olympics athletes and volunteers prior to the Games



*Pictured above:* Momentum athletes and members of Team Scotland, David Yuill, Leanne Wolfe and Jackie Boyd prior to heading off to Shanghai

Letterkenny, who joined their team-mates, including Gareth Egan, a former learner with National Learning Network in Letterkenny, in celebrating victory for Ireland in the soccer competition. Having won all of the matches in their pool, including an amazing 12-0 victory over Australia, the talented Irish team lined up against France in the final. Following a dazzling display of skill and commitment, the Irish team delighted the “olé, olé” singing supporters by winning gold and beating the French side by a staggering 7-0.

Meanwhile, National Learning Network learners, Joseph Regan, William Lawlor and Joseph Maher secured fourth place in the five-a-

side competition. But, it wasn't just the men who enjoyed success on the football pitch. Bernadette Carr, from RehabCare Castlerea, joined her team-mates in the Irish female five-a-side squad in celebrating their bronze medal-winning success in the competition. And it was certainly a case of “girl power” as Deirdre Garvin, from RehabCare Castlebar, won a bronze medal in the ladies team bowling competition.

Ireland has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the world's top equestrian countries and Dessie Gonoude, a learner with National Learning Network Tullamore, continued this tradition by winning a bronze medal for Ireland in the equitation event.



*Pictured above:* RehabCare Ballyfermot's own sporting star Joe Nagle pictured competing in the long jump competition. Among his many accolades, Joe won silver in the shot put event and fourth place in the long jump



*Pictured above:* Gold medal winners John Cousins of Rehab Recycle Tallaght (right) and former National Learning Network learner Gareth Egan (second right) celebrate yet another goal with their team-mates

On the golf course, Buncrana man, Oliver Doherty, a former learner with National Learning Network Letterkenny and recipient of a Donegal sportsperson of the year award, won silver in the men's 18-hole competition. Also celebrating success in the golf competition was RehabCare Dún Laoghaire's Rita Dunne. Rita won a silver medal in the ladies 18-hole competition.

China is undoubtedly the home of table tennis, where it is considered the national game, but RehabCare's Gerry McCormack showed no signs of being intimidated when he won gold at the table tennis singles' competition. Gerry, a service-user with RehabCare Sligo, secured his medal following an afternoon of spectacular table tennis in which he won two matches before comprehensively beating his Greek opponent 3-0 in the final. Gerry's victory in the singles' competition followed his bronze medal success in the doubles' competition earlier in the week.



*Pictured above:* Oliver Doherty, who won a silver medal in Shanghai

## 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games Medal Table



Team Rehab	Division	Sport	Medals
Joe Nagle	RehabCare Ballyfermot	Athletics	Silver – Shot Put/4th – Long Jump
Rita Dunne	RehabCare Dun Laoghaire	Golf	Silver
Bernadette Carr	RehabCare Castlerea	Five-a-side	Bronze
Deirdre Garvin	RehabCare Castlebar	Bowling	Bronze
Gerry McCormack	RehabCare Sligo	Table Tennis	Gold (Singles)/Bronze (Doubles)
Dessie Gonoude	NLN Tullamore	Equestrian	Bronze
Joseph Regan	NLN Portlaoise	Five-a-side	4th place
William Lawlor	NLN Portlaoise	Five-a-side	4th place
Joseph Maher	NLN Portlaoise	Five-a-side	4th place
Tony Lynagh	NLN Sligo	Walking	Silver (400m)/Bronze (800m)
Oliver Boyle	NLN Letterkenny	Soccer	Gold
John Cousins	Rehab Recycle Tallaght	Soccer	Gold
Leanne Wolfe	Momentum (Scotland)	Basketball	4th place
Jackie Boyd	Momentum (Scotland)	Basketball	4th place
David Yuill	Momentum (Scotland)	Soccer	4th place

### Former Service-users

John Ryan	NLN Portlaoise	Five-a-side	4th place
Gareth Egan	NLN Portlaoise	Soccer	Gold
Oliver Doherty	NLN Portlaoise	Golf	Silver (Golf Level 5 – 18 hole)

On the athletic field, RehabCare Ballyfermot's very own sporting star, Joe Nagle, won a silver medal in the shot put competition and also fourth place in the long jump. Meanwhile, Tony Lynagh added to a bronze medal in the 800m walking competition by winning silver in the 400m event. Tony's fame is set to increase when he appears on the front cover of the 2008 Eircom Telephone Directory for the 07-09 region!

Congratulations to all of Rehab's competitors in Shanghai and to all Special Olympic athletes who train and compete so hard throughout the year. As the sun sets on Shanghai, and on another spectacular Special Olympics World Summer Games, preparations are already well underway for the next games, and with their skill, passion and determination, the athletes of Rehab have already got Athens 2011 in their sights! ■

### Who to contact

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