

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ROTORUA

REPORT ON NATIONAL SUMMER GAMES 2021 (2022)



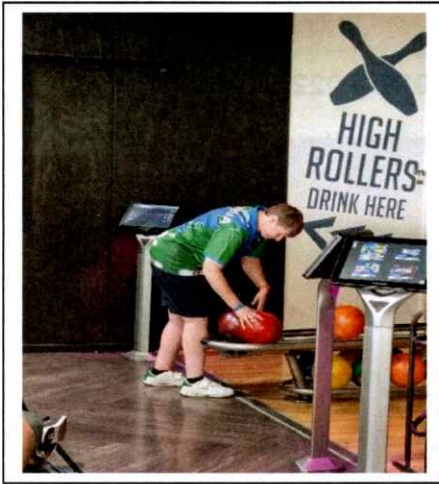
The Freemason's Special Olympics New Zealand National Summer Games were held in Hamilton from 8th to 12th December 2022, having been delayed for a year due to Covid. This event brought over 1,400 athletes and coaches and 600 volunteers coming from across New Zealand to compete in 5 days of competition in 10 sports across 8 venues in Hamilton. Our team from Rotorua consisted of 44 athletes and 17 volunteers, competing in five sports and looked so smart in uniforms we were able to provide thanks to fund holders. We were lucky to have the local bus Company Town & Country drive us to our accommodation at Wintec Student Village in Hamilton. We were the only team staying at the village, which meant we were able to relax a few rules, and allowed the athletes a bit more freedom. Unfortunately, the accommodation was not ready for us when we arrived so thank goodness for the facilities at the village with a Common Room having a pool table, table tennis and big screen TV as well as outdoor covered deck, which was used a lot over the Games with wet, humid conditions. We were then transported to Claudelands for lunch and to get as many athlete's as possible through the Healthy Athlete's program. The is a programme that exams athlete's eyes, ears, teeth and feet as well as Health promotion, taking athlete's blood pressure, BMI, encouraging healthy behaviours. If they require glasses they are provided free of charge, those that do not receive free sunglasses. If any major issues are detected in any areas families/whanau are rung immediately or recommendations made which we bring back to them. Specialists give their time and it is a great learning facility for students in those areas of health. With the help of our van (funded) and volunteers that took cars we were able to get most athlete's through the majority of the areas.



Opening Ceremony

It was then onto the Opening Ceremony which was at the same venue. This time we did not walk in due to issues in the past with delays but had allocated seating. Each team was announced and shown on the big screen. Rotorua were one of the most vocal. Jackie Clarke was a great MC and had everyone singing and dancing. It was then back to Wintec for dinner. The catering was off site and although Special Olympics New Zealand provided some transport we worked with them to transport athletes to and from accommodation and venues to the Gallagher Centre to eat. It was a long day

and athletes we pleased to get back to their accommodation, into bed ready for the first day of competition, the next day.



Ten Pin Bowling

Once again tenpin was our biggest group with eighteen athletes competing in teams and doubles. For three of these athletes, it was their first time attending the NSG and due to our football team having to drop out we were lucky to pick up four more athletes enabling them to still attend the games. One of our athletes flew in from Australia to compete as his family moved back to Australia a couple of months ago. He thoroughly enjoyed catching up with everyone. Unfortunately, tenpin had lots of issues as the people who run Skycity Social bowl came down with Covid on the first morning of competition, so we started two and a half hours late and many of the normal bowling conventions were not followed. These issues were very unsettling for the athletes, especially those who are more



experienced bowlers, but I was extremely proud of how they managed themselves despite being thrown out of their bowling routine. Sadly, the scores reflected their true stress levels. Due to Covid hitting, Papakura needed an extra bowler on the 3rd morning and Angela who was only doing doubles stepped in to help as she had come along early in the morning to support her teammates. She came away with a gold medal for her effort and this to me reflects the true spirit of the NSG. 450 bowlers from throughout New Zealand competed and for the first time ever we had a pair in the 1st Division who placed 8th and then in the teams they came 5th so an outstanding effort. Our medal haul was

a lot smaller this time with only a 2nd place in the doubles in 13th Division. We came away with 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th placings but above all what stood out for me was the athletes support of each other, smiling and encouraging their teammate when they were having a bad game. Team was Matthew Gibbs, Caseylee Raston, Jesse Snowdow, Simon Gillies, Nadia Ngeru, Esther Miller, Angela Francis, Kelly Faulkner, Adrian Rowe, Delarnie Smith, Angela Malcolm, Bailey Dunbar, Shannon Cooper, Amelia Reeve, Marcel Kessels, Gregg Hyde, Lionel Boielle, Dominic Bowen.



Bocce

This was the first time we took a Bocce Team to Nationals, having only started the sports three years ago. We had a team of eight players, playing in pairs and fours. This was a learning experience for this team and coaches. Our coaches asked lots of questions of the organisers and learnt so much to take with them for the future. We hope to invite some of the NZ technical team to Rotorua for education. The teams were placed in Divisions 1 to 5 and had to play some very experienced players. To our surprise the athletes rose to the occasion and won two golds in the pair divisions, one silver and a 4th placing. In the fours event we achieved a fourth and fifth placing. This is one sport we hope to grow in the future and with the enthusiasm of the coaches this sport has an exciting future. Team Heaven-Lea Cooper, Sean Morrison, Maureen McLeod, Conor Allely, Paige Sullivan-Hona, Madison Edwards, Emilija Berry, Anthea Glasgow.





Basketball

This year's Games allowed a few of our first time NSG athletes to combine with our-old hand basketballers and field a team inside Division 2. This division fielded teams such as Waikato, Mana, Hutt Valley, Tauranga and Manawatu/Taranaki. Our round robin games enabled our team to search and play teams close to our own team basketball skills.

Although our Rotorua team played hard fought battles and accepted some crucial challenges, we were able to vie for 3rd or 4th place. The 3rd place medal (bronze) was won admirably by our Rotorua team and was exciting for our coaching staff to allow all players to have maximum time on court. Congratulations to all our players and our coaching and management team. You all rock! Our team Brent George, Ruamoko Pukepuke, William Hawker, Richard Waterus, Bodie Stanley, Kris Roguksi, James Lock, Keyarn Pulford, Corvette Welsh and Leo Coleman.



Indoor Bowls

This was only the second Nationals for our Indoor team and was reduced to one fours team as Special Olympics NZ announced after the last Summer Games Indoor Bowls would be phased out.

We made a decision to move some of our Indoor bowls players to Bocce. After divisioning on day one we had the fours entered in Division 1 and our Number 1 pair in Division 2 with Number 2 pair in the third division.

The fours were outstanding in winning Gold in their first time appearance in Division 1. The pairs saw the Number one pairs win another Gold and Pairs number 2 win bronze.

The Team exceeded all expectations in a higher division and we hope the sport will continue in the 2025 Games. Team was Troy Stampa, Jordan Dittmer, Chris Ramlose, Allan Carroll.





Swimming

This Games saw our swimming team double in size to a team of four. Swimmers are ranked in divisions based on their times entered and disabilities to ensure they are swimming against the same disabilities. A highlight for Bailey Conlon, was his almost 4 second personal best (PB) time in the 100m Individual medley where he won gold. Bailey went on to win a further two golds in both the 400m Freestyle and 50m Breaststroke with BP's. Tui Martin won gold in her 25m and 50m Freestyle, with silver medal in her 25m backstroke. Harema Miki won silver in her 25m backstroke and two bronzes in her 25m and 50m Freestyle. Natalie Birch won gold in her 50m backstroke and silver in her 100m Freestyle. For the first time Rotorua were able to field a relay team and did themselves and Rotorua proud to win bronze in the 25m Freestyle relay. In all our swimmers brought home a total of 15 medals and 1 ribbon. A great achievement all round. We hope to have a bigger team in the future. Team mentioned above Bailey Condon, Tui Martin, Harema Miki and Natalie Birch.



Coaches



Swimming – Robyn Conlon & David Blackmore



Basketball – Lorraine & Keiha Pukepuke



Ten Pin – Shona Gibbs (seated on the right)



Bocce – Chris Brewer & Michelle Douthett



Indoor bowls – Nicholas van der Broek

Unfortunately Covid hit the Games on Sunday and although teams were able to complete their events and have prizegivings the Closing ceremony and Disco were cancelled. We were lucky that the bus Company brought our team home Monday afternoon. We had some very tired but happy athletes. It was a first experience of the Games for several of our athletes and possibility of a final Games for some.



Thank you

Our attendance at the Games was reliant on support from many fundholders, businesses and individuals. Many thanks to the Freemasons, Rotorua Trust, The Southern Trust, Pub Charity, One Foundation, Aotearoa Gaming Trust, Rotorua CT Club, Rotary East Lions, Red Stag, Ray White Real Estate and to all the wonderful local individuals and firms. We couldn't have taken one of the largest teams to the National Games without your support. Our athletes would not have had this amazing experience without your support.

Lastly we thank our volunteers who worked tirelessly before, during and after the Games to ensure the athletes had the best care for the week to enable them to reach their goals. We shed a few tears and had many laughs at the success of our athletes and the joy of their endeavours.

Special Olympics Rotorua thanks you all. Please visit us on our Facebook page for photos.

LET ME WIN, BUT IF I CAN NOT WIN LET ME BE BRAVE IN THE ATTEMPT
(Special Olympics Motto)

From Special Olympics Rotorua

Chairman: Shona Gibbs

NSG Manager: Jill Allely

NSG Assistant Manager: Kylie Stampa