



International Links

Artistic Gymnastics Exchange The Olympic Reserve School, Rostov-On-Don Russia

In 2008 Glasgow School of Sport formed a partnership with the Olympic Reserve School in Glasgow's twin city of Rostov-on-Don in Russia. This school specialises in the sport of artistic gymnastics and boasts five Olympic Medal winners. This Olympic Reserve School is regarded as one of the best gymnastic complexes in Russia.



This exchange programme provides Scottish Coaches with the opportunity to observe and work with some of the best coaches in the world and Scottish gymnasts to train and perform alongside their Russian counterparts preparing for Olympic Success.

This exciting partnership has involved gymnasts and coaches from Scotland visiting Russia and Russian gymnasts and Coaches visiting Scotland each year for the last five years to participate in Coach Education, joint training sessions, action-packed displays and cultural visits.

This partnership was established to raise standards of performance in Glasgow and Scotland in preparation for the Commonwealth Games in 2014. With less than a year to go six of the Glasgow School of Sport gymnasts are already in the 2014 squad working hard to gain their selection scores. Almost 30 gymnasts and 10 coaches have travelled

to Russia and many more have benefitted from coach education and joint training sessions.

The City of Glasgow Gymnastics Club has embraced this exchange and each year opened up their gym to delegations from Russia. Scottish Gymnastics endorse this exciting partnership and have welcomed their National Coaches taking part in the exchange.



Twin City Badminton Exchange - Glasgow and Dalian, China

Since the arrival of Coach Song Tinghua in 2011 to coach at Glasgow School of Sport the twin city partnership has gone from strength to strength. An initial visit to Dalian in 2013 by Director Angela Porter and High Performance Coach Craig Robertson led to the first visit by a Glasgow Team to China.



Glasgow School of Sport sent a delegation of 10 players and 2 coaches to visit Dalian and train at the Dalian International Tennis Centre in November 2014.



Dalian is one of the major cities in the province of Liaoning. The players attending the exchange from Dalian had travelled back from provincial training where they trained on a daily basis up to 6 hours per day. Training, eating and socialising together broke the language barrier between the players and led to speaking and reading sessions after each training session to allow communication to improve.

During the trip many of the Dalian Sports and Government leaders visited the Dalian Tennis Centre to welcome the team from Glasgow. The exchange continues to flourish with a potential visit from Dalian team in 2015 and a return visit by Glasgow School of Sport planned for 2016.

Some key facts about Dalian:

- Dalian is a major city and seaport in south Liaoning Province.
- It is a 70 minute flight from Beijing, Chinas capital city
- Dalian has 6.08 million residents
- Mandarin is the official language
- Dalian is governed by the Mayor and its Dalian Municipal Peoples Government

Commonwealth Athletics Scholarship and Values Exchange Trinidad and Tobago



An article in **Scottish Athletics PB** magazine titled “Legacy in Action Special in our schools – Trip to Trinidad” sums up this inaugural trip by senior athletes to Trinidad.

When a group of Scottish youngsters travelled around the globe to compete at a venue named after a famous Caribbean sprinter, they certainly didn’t expect the track

opposition to include Glasgow and Aberdeen. But that is exactly what happened at the Hasely Crawford Stadium in Port of Spain, Trinidad, for 10 senior pupils from the Glasgow School of Sport over Easter 2013.



Many Trinidadians carry Scottish surnames to this day. And so the Glasgow School of Sport athletes, including George Goddard, found their names on the scoreboard alongside the likes of 'McLaren', 'Glasgow' and 'Aberdeen' at the Falcon Games - a huge open graded event in Trinidad.

Just a couple of the quirky memories from a once in a lifetime visit for the likes of Mahad Ahmed, Stacie Taylor, James Higgins and Joseph Amouzou where training on the beach at 6.30am was required to beat the heat and eating pieces and jam a necessity for one or two who shall remain nameless!

So how did it come about that 10 Scottish teenagers and coaches Norrie Hay, David Watson, guided by group leader Director Angie Porter head for Trinidad? Let Norrie explain.

'The trip came about initially through a Global Schools Exchange programme which involved Angie visiting Trinidad to establish a partnership. Now, the exchange receives support from Glasgow 2014 Legacy,' he said. 'There was an opportunity for schools to get involved in exchange visits. A number of Glasgow schools were involved and we picked up the thread on the sport aspect with others involved on a cultural and educational basis.

'Our partnership is underpinned by the three values of the Commonwealth Games – Humanity, Equality and Destiny. We touched base on all three of those aspects while in Trinidad because it was so much more than a training camp. 'It was an exchange with Glasgow School of Sport at Bellahouston Academy and two schools in Trinidad – Toco and Blanchisseuse Schools in the north-east corner of the island. We took 10 sports pupils over there who were all aged 16 or 17. In fact, we had two 17 birthdays while out there for Joseph and John Ball.

'My initial reaction in terms of Trinidad had been that there would be no endurance athletes involved as there is no real heritage for that over there. But that wasn't the case so we had quite a good range of disciplines in the group.



'The original plan was we'd compete against some of our exchange partners but when we arrived we found we had been entered into the Falcon Games. There were good performances in the Hasely Crawford Stadium (named after the local hero who won the

100m title at the 1976 Olympics) from the likes of Ahmed, Taylor, Ball and Amouzou. But the competitive element to the trip was only one factor.



'We were right on the beach where the Atlantic meets the Caribbean in the first week and training on the sand was great – impact-free – and it is amazing what you can do,' added Norrie.

'In the second week we were in Port of Spain. It was very warm – never less than 25 degrees, even in the middle of the night. We basically had to get up at 6.30am and train before 9am. We tried to train again around 4pm but the light disappears very quickly in the early evening. It was such a learning curve for our athletes. The food was different. If you go to training in Europe then normally there are buffet-style meals and you find something that you like and you can go back for more. It wasn't quite like that in Trinidad.

It was quite basic and we'd some kids who were fussy eaters and struggled. We were very isolated in the first week with no shop nearby. So you have to make adjustments. Some of them had to live off pieces and jam or biscuits – not ideal.

'A few of the Trinidadian kids were very talented. They are very keen on their sport and they are sprint-daft over there. I have never seen as many sprinters in my life. There were 20 heats in every age group for 100, 200 and 400 and sprint hurdles but it thins out after that.'

Being away from home as part of a group was part of the learning curve and Hay certainly hopes that some of the Glasgow School of Sport 'graduates' will feature in international competition in the future. 'It is a fantastic experience – the athletes had a chance to go Trinidad and they might never get that again,' added Norrie. 'They had the chance to compete against Caribbean athletes and that might not happen again, either.

'That life experience alone is worth it – training in a different environment twice a day and making the most of the facilities we had. If you are picked for Games or go on this kind of trip then things are not always the same as they are back home in Scotland.

'We won't have anyone at Glasgow 2014 who has been through the school, in track and field terms, but I do think we have two or three who might be fortunate enough to be involved with Scotland come the Gold Coast in 2018. It will take a lot of dedication, and a bit of luck, but who knows what can happen?

They might even remember their Trinidad trip as a crucial staging post on the pathway to success