

## International Tetrathlon Exchange 2008

By Dylan McPhail



The Canadian International Tetrathlon Team was a bit of a scramble in the early stages, but once we all met up in our scandalously comfy and good looking uniforms at the Ottawa airport, our team chemistry clicked instantly. The team did a great job of representing all parts of Canada. Starting with the west side reps, the Canadian team was made up of athletes Jordan Maynard and Mercedes McLean from BC and Kirsty Edwards from Alberta. Then moving east representing Ontario, Mathea Stevens from SLOV, and Jean Eagleson and myself from WOR rounded off the team.

Faced with adversity from the get go, we were slapped in the face with huge over weight fee for our “modest” sized baggage. Without out a moment of hesitation our quick witted and fast talking chaperone/coach Sarah Read of Manitoba stepped in, haggled the luggage attendant to drop fees from upwards of \$300 Canadian per person down to nothing! I’m sure our east coast connection and run, swim, shoot, and life coach, Joseph Holownia from New Brunswick also had a hand in charming the baggage checkers into letting us Canadian athletes through free of charge.

We left home turf from Ottawa at seven at night and after a long flight with interesting meals served with shots of water and milk, we touched down in Gatwick England at roughly seven in the morning the next day. With six hours of our life lost to the flight and another 5 to the time change, we headed off to our host families wondering where the entire night’s sleep had gone.



While we were split into three host families we were quickly reunited for some great meals and fun activities including skelectric car racing and

visiting London for some sight seeing. We met many English members and their parents at barbecues put on by the local club and walked a very enticing cross country.

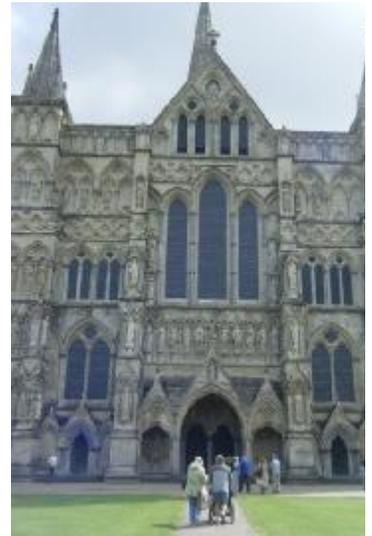




We were then off to our first competition, stopping at Stonehenge along the way. We stayed at Kings Bruton School with the US and Irish teams. We competed at the Wincanton race track. Our girls did especially well, beating the UK team for the first time ever while the men held their own, edging out the Americans with a hand from Peter Moralee and Will Parke of England. While Jordan, Joe and I headed off early after the competition to our new host family, I heard rumors of Jean having a great birthday celebration with all the other international athletes.



For the next few days the Canadian girls found themselves without their adorable male team mates as we were split into different families that were a good distance apart. While the girls and Sarah had a few quieter days, Jordan, Joe and I had a wild time as we headed down to Poole and spent a day on the ocean waterskiing and trick skiing. We also took a visit to the very impressive Salisbury Cathedral built in over roughly 30 years in the 1200s. We also got to try some skeet shooting and again the food was absolutely delicious as our host family, the Mullen's cooked with all their own food.



As our few days apart came to an end, we reunited and headed off to Hartpury College where we would have our second competition at the UK championships. The atmosphere for their championships was electric, rivaled only by the beautiful Hartpury facility and its amazing cross country course. We also had quite an exciting stadium ride in front of a capacity crowd. While the competition raged on, we still found a little time to let loose and have a good time with the other competitors from both the international competition as well as the UK national athletes. Even



the parents joined in the festivities.

As we headed away from the beautiful facility at Hartpury, we found ourselves in Tenby where we caught a ferry to the Republic of Ireland. With a bit of down time before the voyage, we enjoyed some local shops and a dip in the ocean.



After a choppy crossing of the Irish Sea, we met up with our new host families. In the nearby town of Killkenny, we were put on local radio station and had a small reception with Mayor.



From there, we were bused down to Mallow and the site of the Irish nationals. After all competitors swam, the international athletes were called

back for a 4 by 50 relay. The atmosphere for the women's relay was unbelievable to say the least. The rain stopped long enough for the ride and the run to go off without a hitch - a great wrap up for the competition. As our final night turned to day, we said our goodbyes and made off on a scenic trip to Shannon where we caught our flights home from an adventure of a life time.

