

Vienna Takes to the World Stage After Successful Kidney Transplant

Contributed by Liam Horan
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A Co. Donegal woman is off to Australia next month (AUGUST) as a member of the Irish team in the World Transplant Games – and, in their own eyes, all 19 team members are winners already by just getting to the starting-line.

Vienna White, Newmills, Letterkenny, is looking forward to competing in the life-affirming games, where, between them, the Irish team members have 13 new kidneys, five new livers and one new kidney-pancreas.

The squad will travel to Gold Coast, Australia, on Tuesday, August 18th. Vienna had a kidney transplant just last year, after spending 13 months on the transplant waiting list.

Now, thanks to the gift of life, she is looking forward to wearing the green, white and gold of Ireland at the 17th World Transplant Games, which will attract over 2,000 athletes from 50 countries.

“I was on Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) for 17 months, but thankfully I am now fit and well after the transplant,” explained Vienna.

“These are my first World Games with the Irish team, but I took part in the National Finals, and won gold medals in the 200m, ball-throw, and shot-putt. I also won a silver medal in Badminton.

“I took part in the UK Transplant Racquet Tournament in Manchester, where my colleague Deirdre Faul and I won the Badminton doubles. I was runner-up in the singles, and I also won a trophy for Best Female Achievement.”

Vienna will take part in Badminton, 100m, 200m and Long Jump events at the Games.

Like all who take part in these novel Games, participation is the biggest thrill of all, in light of the health problems all competitors have overcome just to be there.

“It’s not really about winning, it’s all about taking part. We honour our donors by showing that organ transplantation works. That’s a vital message to promote as the need for a life-saving organ transplant can visit a family with devastating speed, and at any age, even babies and children,” said team captain Mick Dwyer, who ten years ago had a kidney transplant.

Team manager Colin White paid tribute to the determination of the athletes taking part. “They have worked very hard to prepare for the Games, and they will help to show the world that you can enjoy a great life after receiving a transplant,” he said.

Vienna has received generous donations from Cowens New Holland tractor dealers, Manorcunningham; and Charles Kelly Ltd, Letterkenny. Family members and members of her local IKA branch have also rallied around her as she prepares for her appearance on the world stage.

The full Irish team is:

Paul Donohoe (Cavan); Michael Dwyer (captain, Dublin); Deirdre Faul (vice-captain, Dublin); Tony Gartland (Wicklow); James Hannon (Longford); John Loftus (Limerick); Philip Martin (Dublin); Tom Metcalfe (Dublin); Linda Meyler (Galway); Catherine Murphy (Cork); James Nolan (Kildare); John Paul O’Neill (Kilkenny); Paul Prendergast (Dublin); Orla Hogan-Ryan (Tipperary); Charlie Ryan (Cork); Leonard Ryan (Dublin); Angela Sherlock (Dublin); Harry Ward (Dublin); and Vienna White (Donegal.)

The team will be accompanied by manager Colin White; team doctor Emer Kilbride; physio Clare Hogan; and Mark Murphy, the CEO of the Irish Kidney Association, who is also a member of the World Transplant Games governing body. The team kit is sponsored by Shire Pharmaceuticals.

A special website has been built – www.transplantteamireland.com – where supporters can follow the team’s progress and send on messages of support. The site profiles each athlete and will carry daily updates on how the athletes are getting on.

For an organ donor card FREETEXT the word ‘DONOR’ to 50050.