

## UK School Games 2009

UK school games are a great opportunity for young and up coming athletes of many sports including my sport volleyball, this gives the competitors a taste of what playing in the Olympics would really be like.

In order to reach the team to represent Scotland West at the UK School games, players attended several selection days and once selected attended further training camps this year at St Andrews University. The training for the games was intense for all those who took part, the players coaches and management team.



On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September the players and coaches met at Glasgow airport for the flight to Cardiff the excitement was building especially for the players who had never experienced UK School Games before.

The matches Started on Friday afternoon with Scotland West Vs England Central. This was a close game for us though we took the win by 2-0; this gave us a great start to the tournament which continued that day with a win over Scotland East.

Saturday was to be an early start for the team against Northern Ireland eventually started two hours late and this continued Scotland Wests winning streak beating them 2-0.

Our next opponents were one of the favorites to reach the final England North who like Scotland had some noisy supporters whose roaring and chanting really got the adrenalin pumping getting you ready for the tough game ahead. This was a difficult game against England North and saw the West team experience their first defeat. For many of the players this was the lowest point of the tournament. Sandra, Iain and Linda all worked hard that night to get the players focused and lift their heads for the important game ahead.



Sunday saw the last day of the games and our most important match yet, if we beat England South we would make the final so the pressure was really on us. In my opinion this was the teams best game, changes were made and players stepped up to the mark taking the final set to 24-26 though unfortunately the game was won by England South. The team had worked hard enough over the tournament to guarantee a bronze medal.

The afternoon saw more success for the Scotland West squads when the boys were narrowly defeated in the final tacking the silver medal and both teams had done enough over the weekend to secure the Regional trophy which was presented by Denise Lewis Olympic gold medal winner.

The UK School Games was a fantastic experience for all who took part and was a great result for me coming away with a medal as this was my third and last year at the games.