



Special Olympics
New Zealand



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For immediate release

Media release

Final day of World Games lifts New Zealand's medal count

During the final day of competition at the World Summer Games in Los Angeles, New Zealand athletes excelled in the pool, on the bocce court, in the equestrian arena and on the track.

Matthew Slone (Special Olympics Waikato) and Stephen Moody (Special Olympics Horowhenua) were both gold medalists in the pool in the 50 metres butterfly final and the 200 metres breaststroke final respectively. Matthew was the fastest qualifier heading into the final against very tough competition from India and China but he pulled out all stops to achieve a personal best and a gold medal. Stephen came from behind in a powerful final length to take out the gold in his event against Macau and Latvia. Equally impressive in the pool today was Sam Muir-James (Special Olympics Counties) in the 800 metres freestyle final. This was a very fast division and Sam finished a credible 6th place in the final.

Nikolas Taris (Special Olympics Tamaki) added to his medals by securing silver in the working trail at the Equestrian Centre at Griffith Park.

Our Unified bocce team, comprising Monique McEwen (Special Olympics Manawatu) and Unified partner Olwyn Humphreys (Special Olympics Manawatu) took out the silver medal in the final at the Los Angeles Convention Centre. "Both Monique and Trevor Hetherington (Special Olympics Wellington) have played out of their skins and haven't relied on their Unified partners. (The partnerships) were evenly matched and so they were very good combinations", said Head Bocce Coach, Lyn Ryan.

Jacob Osborne (Special Olympics Counties) in very warm conditions took out the silver medal in the 1500 metres and knocked 9 seconds off this time to achieve a personal best in the final.

New Zealand's achievements on the track today were marred by a controversial decision to disqualify the New Zealand relay team in the 4 x 100 metres relay after Japan forced our runner to step over his lane on the final leg of the race. The team comprising Raymond Smith (Special Olympics Canterbury), Justene Noyer (Special Olympics Tauranga), Patrick Donovan (Special Olympics Hutt Valley) and Jacob Osborne (Special Olympics Counties) were robbed of their silver medal. The New Zealander supporters all looked on in disbelief and while the management of the team lodged a protest, there was insufficient evidence to overturn the decision. All our New Zealand athletes while extremely disappointed as they ran so well in the final were gracious in defeat and congratulated their fellow competitors on the podium. There is no doubt that all members of this 2015 New Zealand team are true Ambassadors for their country even in the face of adversity. Four teams were disqualified in this race for the same reason so only 2 medals were awarded.

Our New Zealand team has performed extremely well at the World Summer Games with a total of 32 medals (11 gold, 12 silver and 9 bronze) awarded over 8 sports.

Special Olympics New Zealand

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Our New Zealand team will enjoy a well-deserved rest day tomorrow before the Closing Ceremony that will start at 6pm local time at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

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