



UK SPORTS ASSOCIATION

For People with Learning Disability

NEWS RELEASE

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GREAT BRITAIN TEAM TAKE TEAM SILVER AT EUROPEAN CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sprinting their way to the finish line, the UKSA GB Team earned Team silver at the 7th Inas European Cross Country Championships this weekend.

The six GB Team runners put up a tough battle, succumbing to the strong Portuguese runners on both days.

James Hamilton (22) at his first international event took a strong individual bronze in the 3k on Saturday with a time of 9:09. Sunday saw him improve upon that by speeding his way to silver in the 6k, in a strong 20:52, just behind the Portuguese gold medallist.

Manager and Coach, Vic Collins commented: *“This GB Team was a great bunch of athletes who gave 100 percent the entire time. James Hamilton put in the strongest performance overall, but the whole team came together encouraging each other throughout the entire weekend”*



Left to right: Tony Collins, James Hamilton, Chris Lazenby, Dave Lazenby, Adam Wilson, Neil Collins

Chief Executive at the UK Sports Association, Tracey McCillen said: “Great to see the Team achieve the silver medal. A fiercely fought competition and exciting to watch. Tremendously strong individual performance from James Hamilton, but importantly as a Team they came together to achieve a good position for Great Britain.” McCillen went on to say “It was a pleasure welcoming our European colleagues, athletes and coaches to Wakefield. My thanks to them all as well as to the Local Organising Committee, our England Member Mencap and to all the sponsors including Wakefield Council and Shanks all of whom made this a successful weekend”.

Five countries competed at the Championships, Czech Republic, Portugal, Netherlands, Sweden and Great Britain. The races took place from the 19th-23rd February at Thornes Park in Wakefield, West Yorkshire. The Championships were hosted by UKSA's England member Mencap Sport in collaboration with the generous support of Wakefield Council.

UKSA promotes, facilitates and supports talented athletes with learning disability in the UK to train, compete and excel in national and international competitive sport. UKSA also manages the eligibility and classification process for UK athletes with learning disability.

For further information on the athletes, the GB Team and the event, contact the UK Sports Association.

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For further info, high res images and interview opportunities please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITOR

1.The UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability (UKSA) is the national disability sports organisation and umbrella body in the UK for sport and people with learning disability. UKSA promotes, supports and facilitates talented sports people with learning disability in the UK to train, compete and excel in national and international sport and is the body responsible for eligibility and classification of athletes from the UK. UKSA is recognised by UK Sport, is a member of the British Paralympic Association and is the official Great Britain member of Inas. See www.uksportsassociation.org

2.Mencap Sport believes that people with a learning disability should have the same opportunities to participate, enjoy and excel in sport at all levels. Mencap Sport works with the governing bodies of sport and other sports providers to promote opportunities for people with a learning disability at all levels. www.mencap.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/leisure/mencap-sport

3.Inas, For Para-Athletes with Intellectual Disability (formerly INAS-FID), founded in 1986, is a member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and is the body responsible for the international competition for athletes with intellectual disability. See www.inas.org

4.Learning Disability is a term used in the UK, with intellectual disability being used internationally. Both refer to the same group of athletes. Learning disability is a “hidden disability”. It inhibits how a person learns and performs every day functions that others take for granted. It also reduces communication, understanding, social, and living skills. In elite performance sport learning disability is defined as an IQ of 75 or less; significant limitations in adaptive behaviour and age of onset of the learning disability being in the development years, i.e. 0 -18 years. This definition adopted by Inas is from the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of learning disability (mental handicap) and is in line with other internationally recognised definitions.

5.UKSA and Inas are different to Special Olympics. UKSA promotes *performance led* elite competitive sport, has just one classification group in events and is focussed on the performance and winning gold. UKSA and Inas are part of the pathway to Global Games and Paralympic Games. Special Olympics are a year-round sports training and competition programme for adults and children with learning disability. Special Olympics competitions are divisioned so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in each sport. Special Olympics competitions are *non-elite* catering to all-ability levels. Special Olympics focus is on participation and improving an athlete’s quality of life. High sports ability athletes may progress to the Paralympic level through UKSA and Inas.

6.Great Britain Team Results

Name	3km Time	Place	6km Time	Place
James Hamilton	9:08	3 rd	20:52	2 nd
Chris Lazenby	10:03	7 th	23:27	8 th
Adam Wilson	10:14	9 th	23:45	9 th
Neil Collins	10:32	10 th	24:54	11 th
Dave Lazenby	10:41	11 th	24:04	10 th
Tony Collins	11:25	13 th	26:16	13 th

Full event results from Local Organising Committee