

## 2018 Birmingham British Transplant Games

### *Race Report*

Last week I took part in my third transplant sport event, the 2018 British Transplant Games in Birmingham. Having been to two previous meets including the 2017 Malaga Worlds (which I wrote about last year) I felt a lot more comfortable in the competitive environment, ready to give it my all and just embrace the fantastic event that the Games are.

Birmingham put on a great show utilising the fantastic facilities the city and university has to offer. The opening ceremony took place just round the corner from Birmingham Blood Donor Centre where the 1,000 strong recipient athletes paraded from Victoria Square to the International Convention Centre. As well as watching some traditional Bhangra dancing and the return of comedian Jasper Carrot in the ceremony hosted by Sally Bee, we set the new world record of the greatest number of transplant recipients in one location at a time! The Games Village at The Vale also provided athletes and supporters a convenient place to stay close to the university's sports centre and pool.

This year I took part in five events over two days, the first of which were the 5K Time Trial and 10K Road Race at Stourport Sports Club cycling track on the Friday evening. Although I've trained on this course before, the hairpin bends still gave me a fright hurtling round them at speed. Nonetheless, I went on to win gold and get PBs in both events with times of 07.46 and 20.52 respectively.



**Climbing up the final straight in the 5K TT**

Saturday saw me take part in three races over two disciplines. I started in the pool with the 50m Butterfly, my least serious race of the Games followed by the 200m Freestyle which I needed in order to have a chance in qualifying of the World Games. Again, I meddled in both adding two bronzes to the haul however I had a very quick turn around with just an hour to make it from finishing my last race in the pool to the start line of the run.

My final race was the 3K Mini Marathon which the physios recommended I not take part in. Although organ donation completely transforms people's lives, transplant athletes are still slower to recover due to the medication we take. However, I was there to race and as heavy as my legs (and eyes) felt, I really wanted another gold! I set off fast and managed to maintain a good pace throughout to win gold in a time of 16.12.

I had a day off competing on the Sunday so headed to Alexander Stadium to watch the athletics; my favourite event of the day and one that got the biggest cheer was the 0-5 year olds 30m dash.

That evening, all athletes and supporters returned to the ICC for the celebratory Gala Dinner where individual athletes are recognised for their achievements and everyone can relax after all the hard work we put in. It was a lovely evening to end a great weekend and Bristol Adults were in for one last surprise when we won Best Overall Team for the second year in a row!



**Bristol Adults Transplant Team – Best Overall Team**

Having been to three events now, the people and atmosphere never fail to disappoint; the Games truly are incredible and so are my fellow athletes and supporters. Everyone is so grateful to their donors whether they know who they were or not, they are happy to have been given a second chance at life and really make the most of it and I am lucky enough to still have mine here to help me do that.



**Me and my donor, my mum!**

I'm now waiting to hopefully receive an invitation to compete for Team Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the 2019 Newcastle World Transplant Games so the training doesn't stop here! Not only would it be a privilege to represent my team on a home stage, it would be an honour to do it for those who were generous enough to donate their organs and make it possible for us to compete as a team in the first place.

*Follow Ella on [Twitter](#) to keep up with her training and post-transplant journey and find out more about [Transplant Sport](#) and the [British Transplant Games](#) here. Please remember to sign up to the [Organ Donation Register](#) and more importantly, have the donation conversation because #WordsSaveLives.*