

A DREAM COME TRUE

(Part 1)

By: Pierre Meslet



THE OSTEOPATHIC CENTRE'S PIERRE MESLET, REGISTERED OSTEOPATH AND SPORTS MASSAGE THERAPIST, IS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES' MEDICAL TEAM. BELOW ARE HIS FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE DAZZLING INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENT:

Instantly upon arrival, the British capital is buzzing with Olympic Games energy: huge Olympic rings in St Pancras railway station, portraits of athletes designed in neighbouring fields at Heathrow airport, colourful flags and sports fans mingling in the streets of sunny central London.

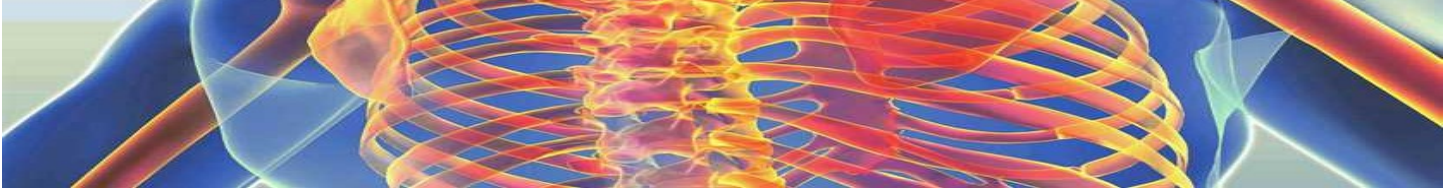
My first shift in the Athletes Village is bewildering. The security is impressive, with strong metal gates resembling those in airports, two ID checks at every entrance and CCTV cameras in every corner. The enthusiasm of the London 2012 Games volunteers or 'Games Makers' is contagious – they are strewn in all parts of the village, helping staff and athletes alike, always smiling. Walking through the brand new streets of the Athletes Village, De Coubertin Street or Liberty Bridge Road, I already feel very fortunate to be here, to be part of the most amazing sporting event ever, the XXXth Olympic Games. On the 24th July, the Village is still quiet – only 25% occupancy as yet. Those athletes who have already arrived

are spotted lugging their bags and equipment to their dorms, all the time wearing their countries' colourful tracksuits. Country flags have already been put up on the buildings' balconies and windows.

I am early for the first staff briefing. I sit down on the third floor of the state-of-the-art polyclinic, taking it all in. No athletes are queuing for treatments yet. As soon as the briefing starts, the other practitioners seem equally excited and are all staring down at the 20 treatment couches set on the level below, looking forward to them being full of athletes. It is difficult to concentrate on the presentation – I am too busy realising where I am and imagining the events of the next 10 days.

At 3pm, I am positioned next to the electric adjustable treatment bed I have been assigned to. There is plenty of space for practitioners to use and the decor, albeit quite plain, is clean and smart. My first patient, a 100m sprinter from Congo, arrives at the

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clinic and has specifically requested a French speaking practitioner. Some athletes and their coaches prefer to be treated by people speaking their mother tongue. Excellent communication between athletes and practitioners is an essential part of the treatment.

My first patient is quickly followed by other athletes from all over the world - Uruguay, Puerto Rico, Pakistan, Iraq, USA, Belgium, Egypt, Guatemala - competing in so many different disciplines: judo, taekwondo, track and field, shooting, long jump, volleyball...

During my 45min dinner break I have the opportunity to walk in the Village and am surprised to be surrounded by so many top athletes, most of whom I have never seen or heard of. There seems to be a commotion in a corner of the Village and I decide to walk towards the agitated crowd of athletes and volunteers alike. And, indeed, right under a large Jamaican flag, are Usain Bolt and the rest of the Jamaican team! He seems even taller in person!

At 11pm, I have finished my first shift at the London 2012 Olympic Games and it is now time to clear everything up and prepare the treatment rooms for the next shift starting at 6am tomorrow morning. What an amazing feeling to be part of this!

To be continued...

The Osteopathic Centre Pte Ltd

CENTRAL

Park Avenue Rochester, 31 Rochester Drive, Level 24, Singapore 138637
Tel: +65 6221 1977

CITY (CBD)

11 Collyer Quay, #06-05 The Arcade, Singapore 049317
Tel: +65 6221 4064

EAST COAST

20 Siglap Drive, #01-02 Bowmont Centre, Singapore 456192
Tel: +65 6446 7236