

Adult slowpitch softball in Ireland is “almost unique in the fact that it is played as a mixed team game. It is a sociable sport to play on a long hot Summer’s day or evening, preferably with a few cold drinks at hand on the sideline with friends or family cheering you on. You can take part irrespective of your athletic ability and gradually become fit over the Summer while meeting new people and generally having a good time” advises their Federations’s website. In 2006 some of the Irish players decided it was time to take “the fun” on the road so when they heard about the 2007 World Vintage Games planned for New Zealand, the idea spread. The requirement to get on the roster was simple, if you had the money to pay for the travel you were on the team. Expenses were estimated to be \$5K per person, what with flights, tournament costs and accommodations. It did not take long and the Wild Rovers were organized and in training and looking forward to the trip down under.

One of the players, Alacoque McMenamin shared their experience with SportsBreak. “All of the players that signed on had played mixed slow-pitch in Ireland for at least 10 years. We come from six different teams, the Usual Suspects, the Flyers, Dodder Dynamos, Oddsox and the Castkenock Wildcats. We had all played against each other at some time or another. Practices were held in wet and rainy Dublin twice a month from September 06 until February 07 and we trained in the mud, cold and freezing weather all thinking of sunny New Zealand.

Niall Perry was going to join the team from Australia, he had originally played in Dublin but a canny Aussie girl snatched him for our shores in 2005. Wade Burrell from the UK would also join as the UK was not putting in a team. He was cycling from Christchurch to Rotarua. We all came separate ways and arranged to meet in Auckland on St. Patrick’s day, the 17th of March, spend two days there then drive up to the tournament.

Adrian, Alacoque, Marian, Cora and Sam went to Australia first for five days of vacationing. Derek and Janice stopped off in Hong Kong on the way down. Brian, Nadia and Rasheeda flew directly to Auckland. We found some wonderful apartments, the Princes Wharf Apartments on the waterfront. We met in an Irish Pub and watched the final game of the Rugby Six Nations where Ireland beat Italy. We then flew, drove or cycled to Rotarus. We all arrived in Rotarus on the Sunday evening ready for the opening ceremony.

The Opening Ceremony was fantastic and we were very impressed with the wonderful welcome we received. We played nine games and ended up second in the round robin only losing one game to the Public Missiles. We then played the Easy Riders in the semi-finals and lost out. We were voted the Fun Team of the tournament. We really enjoyed every game, every event and

every team in Rotarus. We departed on our separate ways after the tournament.”

The Wild Rovers are now looking forward to playing in the 2009 World Vintage Games in Hawaii. For more information about the team, contact Alacoque at alacoquem@elrcom.net