

Juniors Shine at Worlds

Youth World Archery Championships, Legnica, Poland, August 2011

Rachel Hughes (CWC)

Cramped planes, 40 hours of travelling and little sleep wasn't enough to slow our Kiwi Girls down when they took on the world at the Youth World Archery Championships in Legnica, Poland, in August.

Our NZ team of two Cadet Women (Rachel Hughes and Elizabeth Randle) and Manager (Sandy Hughes) spent 11 nights in the beautiful old city of Legnica, an hour and a half drive from Wroclaw in the centre of Poland. Surrounded by Gothic churches and buildings, cobblestone roads and colourful flags of the participating countries hanging from the streetlights, it was a great setting. We weren't quite prepared for the heat, expecting mid 20s, but got mid 30s and very humid weather instead.



Over 560 athletes took part from 56 countries. The grounds weren't far from the Hotel and for practice days it was an easy walk, so archers carrying bows on shoulders through the streets became a common sight. Australia were lodged at the same Hotel, so having another English speaking country with us was great, and we spent a lot of time together.

The girls got plenty of practice in and adjusting to the heat at the range, so come qualifying day they were in fine form. The Cadet Women (field of 38 archers) started after lunch with a qualifying round of 72 arrows at 50m. With 4 per target Rachel and Elizabeth shot with Poland, India and Croatia, so apart from arrow calls very little English was spoken. Both ranked highly for the first 6 ends featuring near the top of the leader board, only to slip off the pace near the 72 arrow mark. At the end of the day Rachel ranked 15th and

Elizabeth Randle (CWC)

Elizabeth 18th. Very few points separated the field.

In the first round of the Individual Eliminations both archers got a bye, only to face each other in round 2! (That wasn't the plan.) After probably the toughest match for both of them, Rachel eliminated Elizabeth 143-139. Rachel went on to face the #2 ranked Canadian – Sydney Watson. Rachel took an early lead and kept it, eliminating the Canadian 143-142. Rachel was onto the quarter finals the following day.

Her next match was against the #7 ranked Mexican, Sonia Villafan. Once again Rachel took the lead, and was shooting well until shooting an unexpected 7, putting Sonia into the lead. Unfortunately this meant she ended up beating Rachel by 140-138, ending NZs chances of a medal. Sonia went on to the medal matches, taking Silver.

As Manager, learning how things worked at that level was



a great experience. Both Archers I hope gained great tournament experience that only this type of event can provide, and both coped with the pressure extremely well. They had the opportunity to renew friendships and make new ones that they can retain through their archery lives. We got to visit a country that we would never have dreamt visiting. The venue was excellent, the organisers very accommodating, the hotel great, (although the food sucked!) We couldn't understand half of what people said as their English was bad, but the scenery was fantastic, and we had a great time. Overall the tournament was a great experience for all of us.

Sandy Hughes
Manager

Next up - 2013 Youth World Archery Championships in Wuxi China!