

# Aussies Take on the World

## Nations Cup - England

24/25th August 2023



The venue was the pride of English football, St Georges Park, just west of Derby, the home of football in England. An enormous wall of recognition bearing the names of England international greats over the years: Matthews, Moore, Charlton, Beckham, Kane to name a few.

The inaugural World Nations Cup welcomed 400 players and officials from all over the world organised by FIWFA showcasing walking footballs teams from as far away as Canada, Japan, South Korea and of course Australia.

Dr Lee Pepper and partner Kerryann Johnston, a formidable team off and on the pitch, had created a walking football squad to allow the Foreveroos (!) to enter the competition. Their effort in organising the 2 teams, a 50+ and a 60+, finding sponsorship, arranging kits and travel arrangements was nothing short of spectacular.



The tournament was hugely successful with 26 teams from 18 nations making it the largest ever international Walking Football tournament.

The Group stages of the competition took place on Thursday and Friday the 24th and 25th of August with the Aussie draw being:

**50s:** Foreveroos v Wales, Spain, Rwanda, Egypt, England and Czech Republic.

**60s:** Foreveroos v Nth Ireland, Caribbean, Italy, Wales and Czech Republic.

No we didn't make the finals but to keep things in perspective teams such as England, Wales, Nth Ireland, Italy, Spain are the nationally selected teams of these countries and have the opportunity to play together regularly with official coaching support. The Foreveroos didn't come out of such salubrious beginnings!

The Aussie sides played with real spirit and were very competitive. Other teams found the competition heavy going losing games by large margins. Not the Foreveroos!

In one memorable game of the 50s v Egypt we lost 4 -3 to a team that included a few ex internationals. It was a superb and exciting game and a special mention must go to Sid for some cracking goals and to Andy for a brilliant performance in goal!

England went on through the finals to win the competition beating Czech Republic in the 50s and France in the 60s.



Rui is also a special mention for taking on the task as coach, one of the reasons we performed so well. And last but not least, the support team!



Other points to note are that the Foreveroos were one of a handful of teams that arrived with both men and women in the squad, a great initiative that was duly noted by the tournament organisers.

The players were well supported by a fabulous and noisy (!) support team all wearing green and gold and often singing at the top of their lungs, "Come on Aussie Come On Come On"!!



See <https://www.fiwfafa.org/>