

WELSH NATIONAL CULINARY TEAM

RESILIENT WELSH CHEFS GO FOR GOLD AT CULINARY OLYMPICS

Immediate: October 14, 2008

Chefs from the Welsh National Culinary Team will be carrying the nation's hopes when they fly out to Germany on Thursday in their quest for a coveted gold medal at the Culinary Olympics.

The lead up to this prestigious competition, which is held in Erfurt every four years, has been one of the most challenging in the team's history.

A £15,000 cut in sponsorship curtailed plans to take a team of junior chefs as well as a senior team to compete in Germany, work and family commitments have ruled out several senior chefs and there was even a late transport scare.

Due to new rules for lorry drivers, Kevin Williams, a tutor at Coleg Meirion Dwyfor, Dolgellau, had to take a test to obtain his Class C licence, which he passed on Saturday – just three days before he was due to drive to Erfurt with teammate Mark Jones, a chef at Henbury Hall, Macclesfield. The pair leave today (Tuesday) with a lorry packed with all the food and equipment that will be used by the Welsh team.

With work commitments forcing the late withdrawal of one member, Sally Owens, a tutor at Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, Rhos on Sea, has been promoted to make her debut with the Welsh team in the hot kitchen element of the competition on Sunday.

She will be joined in the kitchen by team manager Graham Tinsley, co-owner of the Castle Hotel, Conwy and Nant Hall, Prestatyn, captain Wayne Roberts, head chef Portmeirion Hotel, Lee Jeynes, group development chef for English Lake Hotels, Dave Kelman, of Lower Slaughter Manor, Stow-on-the-Wold and Toby Beevers, freelance.

The support team includes Gennaro Adaggio of La Dolce Vita, Shrewsbury, Gareth Dwyer, of Hobart UK, Chris Owen, of The Castle Hotel, Conwy, Tom Middleton, of Hotel Maes-y-neuadd, Talsarnau, Harlech, Williams and Jones.

“Despite having to overcome a series of obstacles, we are heading to Germany in good spirits and hope to win at least silver medals, which would be a great achievement,” said Tinsley. “This will be my fourth Culinary Olympics and it’s the toughest of all the competitions because the judging standards are set so high.

“Having won gold medals at the World Cup and World Championships, it would be lovely to bring back an Olympic gold. I think our best chance is in the hot kitchen.

“We did a recent trial run of the hot kitchen menu at the Waterhead Hotel, Ambleside, where we were promoting Wales outside the Principality, and the food was fantastic.”

The Welsh National Culinary Team is sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government, C&C Catering Equipment Ltd, Brakes, Unilever Foodsolutions UK, Hybu Cig Cymru/ Meat Promotion Wales, Gourmet Classic Ltd, Villeroy and Boch, Friedr. Dick, Germany, Metcalfe Catering, All Clad and S. A. Brain and Co.

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