

WELSH NATIONAL CULINARY TEAM

SECOND SILVER LINING FOR RESILIENT WELSH CHEFS AT CULINARY OLYMPICS

Immediate: October 22, 2008

The Welsh National Culinary Team has won a second silver medal at the Culinary Olympics in Germany, the premier competition for chefs around the globe.

Team manager Graham Tinsley, who had optimistically set the chefs a target of winning two silver medals before leaving for Erfurt last week, admitted he was “chuffed to bits” with the result.

“When you see other top teams, like defending Olympic champions Sweden and Singapore, also winning silver medals, it puts our result into perspective,” he said. “This is my fourth Culinary Olympics and the best we had done previously was bronze medals, so it’s a fantastic achievement against all the odds this time.”

Their first silver came in the hot kitchen element of the competition on Sunday, when they produced 110 covers of a three-course meal. The second silver followed on Tuesday in the cold platter show, which entailed creating a range dishes, including appetizers, main courses, complete menus, desserts, cakes and showpieces, for a table display on a weddings theme.

However, the resilient Welsh chefs had to overcome a catalogue of problems to win their silver medals. First there was the loss of £15,000 sponsorship, which prevented Wales from taking a team of junior chefs, then two senior chefs withdrew because of work commitments just a couple of days before the team was due to leave for Germany.

The problems continued when a ferry strike delayed a lorry carrying the team’s food and equipment, then chef Chris Owen from the Castle Hotel, Conwy was held up for a day because his passport was inside a knifebox on the team lorry.

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The lorry was forced to divert to Cologne airport where a courier was waiting to fly the passport to Manchester to meet up with Owen on Friday morning. The young chef flew to Frankfurt before catching a train to Erfurt to finally join up with the team.

The problems did not end there, however. The tailgate on the team's lorry developed a fault when it arrived in Germany, making it difficult to load and unload heavy items. The lorry was not repaired until 6pm on Monday night, which prevented the chefs from transporting the display tables to the competition venue the night before they were due to compete.

The result was that the chefs had to erect the tables and arrange the display and dishes in two hours on Tuesday morning. To add to the team's problems, pastry chef Toby Beevers was bed-bound with flu on Tuesday.

"It was all a rush on Tuesday morning and we made a couple of stupid mistakes, which may have cost us a gold medal," explained Tinsley, co-owner of the Castle Hotel, Conwy and Nant Hall, Prestatyn. "After all the obstacles that we have had to overcome, I think I should write a book."

The chefs will receive their medals tomorrow (Thursday). The Welsh team comprises Tinsley, 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, Toby Beevers, freelance and Sally Owens, a tutor at Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, Rhos on Sea.

The support team includes Gennaro Adaggio of La Dolce Vita, Shrewsbury, Tom Middleton, of Hotel Maes-y-neuadd, Talsarnau, Harlech, Chris Owen, Kevin Williams Coleg Meirion Dwyfor, Dolgellau and Mark Jones, Henbury Hall, Macclesfield.

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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For more information please contact Graham Tinsley, Welsh National Culinary Team manager, on 07765 404950 or Duncan Foulkes, public relations consultant, on 01686 650818.