



EUROPE 2023



4 months | 6 countries | 8 house swaps | 10 journey legs

Pre tournament warm up

Today was the fourth session of team practice for the Walkeroos 50s and 70s in the lead up to the IWFF Winter Nations Cup. It's been an interesting time testing strategies, testing out players in different positions, working on options for corners and free kicks and coping with the blood freezing weather. It is approaching winter here in London after all.

Barnet Football Club provided us with strong, appropriate, necessary and valuable competition. Many of the local players have expressed admiration that we have come all this way to play walking football. They are honoured to be able to play against Australian sides.

Gradually over the last week both Walkeroo teams have grown in confidence and played some attractive football. Games have been won, many have been drawn and only a small number have been lost. The goalies have been given quite a workout but have acquitted themselves admirably.

The 70s have had to mix it with players sometimes 20 years their junior. Each of the games have been suitably competitive with the usual issues of running and tackling variably handled by official referees. A number of opposition players have noted that they be meeting us in the tournament in Cardiff - playing for England.

Although the weather has been bitterly cold at least there has been no rain. The sun did come out occasionally which cheered everyone up a bit. The after-game socialising with like minded players is part of the reason why we all play walking football. It's a language we all understand.



Last Two Days in London

Yesterday and today we were invited to a nearby suburb to play a number of friendly sessions against teams based at Barnet Football Club. For us WOOFs (Wives Of Old Farts), it was absolutely freezing having to stand on the sidelines. I even stole Sigs woollen socks today to keep my toes from getting chilblains - it was 4c degrees today according to the forecast. The friendliness of our hosts was very humbling. They even provided us with an English treat for lunch both days - "Chip Butties." For the uninitiated that is chips in buttered rolls.

At the end of the games yesterday all team members were presented with a medallion to remember the day. The teams were also presented with a remembrance plaque. The grounds were fabulous — large fields and also smaller ones designed for walking football. All were of synthetic turf. There was also a huge reception/canteen area.

This afternoon we went on a tour of Wembley Stadium. It was actually quite entertaining. As with Stamford Bridge a few days ago, we were able to view the change rooms, the press area and the tiered seating area. Wembley had the added feature of the Royal Box. One interesting fact we gleaned is that Wembley Stadium holds the world record for the greatest number of toilets in any one building - 2680 loos! The place is huge, not just the field area in the middle of the stadium but the areas surrounding the stands where patrons can eat and drink (and go to the toilets). Obviously with 90,000 spectators coming and going, space to move in and out and milling about is important. The place reminds me of a modern colosseum.

The salubrity of the dressing rooms was very evident. They are huge and can cater for many different sports although football figures highly with images of the England team over the ages.





The ball skills of this ex Algerian international player was simply breathtaking.

