

CASE STUDY



2014 IPC Athletics European Championships
Swansea University Singleton Campus

THE WORLD'S FOURTH LARGEST PARA-SPORT EVENT



BACKGROUND

Following the successful hosting of the Mexico and New Zealand Paralympic teams during the London 2012 Olympic pre-games training, Swansea University was invited to bid to host the 2014 IPC Athletics European Championships, the World's fourth largest para-sport event.

The championships took place at Swansea University in August 2014 and formed part of a new strategy of hosting major sporting events, to build profile for the University, create investment in sporting facilities, and support the development of the Swansea Bay region.

CHALLENGE

The three key challenges for successful delivery of the competition were:

1 HOSTING AN ATHLETE-CENTRED CHAMPIONSHIP

It was a requirement that the competition and training facilities, technical organisation, and services such as accommodation and catering were appropriate for the event, accessible, and provided an excellent experience for athletes and volunteers.

2 RAISE THE PROFILE OF PARA- ATHLETICS IN WALES

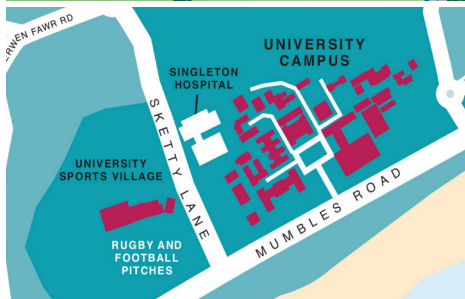
A key objective was to create a legacy in Wales that would encourage increased participation in disability sport, and highlight Wales' suitability for hosting such tournaments.

3 ACHIEVE LIVE BROADCAST COVERAGE

Live television coverage had never before been achieved for any IPC European Championship event, which was something that the organisers wished to change for the 2014 IPC Athletics European Championships.



- 1
 - A Local Organising Committee (LOC) was formed between Swansea University, UK Athletics Welsh Athletics, Welsh Government, City and County of Swansea and Disability Sport Wales to organise the Championship. They took responsibility for processes from event management and competition synchronisation to site building, de-rigging, and cultural programme coordination.
 - An Athlete Village, with appropriate disabled access, was established, utilising student residences (the number of adapted bedrooms and bathrooms suitable for people with disabilities was increased) to accommodate athletes and NPC officials.
 - The sports facilities were all located within 800 metres of the main athlete accommodation and included:
 - 8 lane 400m floodlit track
 - 500 seat undercover spectator stadium
 - Pavilion overlooking athletics facilities
 - 60m indoor running track
 - Floodlit Astro turf and grass pitches
 - Sports Centre, with gymnasium and changing facilities
 - Wales National Pool Swansea
 - Tennis and Squash Centre
 - Dedicated spaces for accreditation, reception and ancillary services such as physio, first aid and doping stations
 - Many partner organisations supported key aspects of the event, including the provision of transport to and from the ports of entry and reduced travel fees for volunteers and spectators.



- 2
 - The LOC engaged with hundreds of local schoolchildren with disabilities to create the event anthem 'Good as Gold' as well as a supporting poetry book.
 - Many of the children were encouraged to take up sports for the first time.
 - Funding was secured for a permanent Inclusive Futures Coordinator to work with Swansea Council's sports development officers to encourage maximum participation in disability sport.
 - Over 450 volunteers, assembled from the partner's networks, contributed to the success of the Championships. Supported by Virgin Media, the Official Volunteer Partner, a programme was put together to ensure that all volunteers had a rewarding experience.
- 3
 - The vision of the LOC impressed Channel 4 and following a number of meetings and site visits, they agreed to broadcast the competition live on More4.
 - This was important in the success of the commercial proposal submitted to sponsors, with 240% of the initial sponsorship target being achieved.
 - The games achieved mainstream news coverage in the UK and was broadcasted in at least 6 European countries.



RESULTS

THE 2014 IPC ATHLETICS EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS WERE AN UNDENIABLE SUCCESS, WITH THE IPC DECLARING THEM TO BE "WITHOUT QUESTION THE BEST IPC ATHLETICS EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS EVER HELD" A VIEW SHARED BY TEAMS AND OFFICIALS ALIKE.

THE IPC WEBSITE RECEIVED MORE HITS THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE LONDON 2012 AND THE SWANSEA2014.COM WEBSITE RECEIVED 13,090 UNIQUE VISITS PER DAY, LEADING TO THE IPC'S DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGER DECLARING THAT, "IN A NUTSHELL, THE EVENT WAS PROBABLY THE MOST SUCCESSFUL EVENT EVER OUTSIDE OF THE PARALYMPIC GAMES."

