

THE LEVERKUSEN CUP- GERMANY

7th-8th OCTOBER 2016



Six Gymnasts were selected to represent England at the prestigious 2016 Leverkusen Cup. The competition was held in Leverkusen- Germany on the 8th October and the gymnasts selected were:-

- England team 1 – **April Maslen** (The Academy), **Lottie Smith** (Huntingdon) and **Erika Magpantay** (Marriots).
- England Team 2 – **Victoria Ashworth** (Bristol, School of Gymnastics), **Tomique Gibson** (Harrow) and **Isobel Hilliard** (Leatherhead and Dorking).

Team coaches were Michelle Guiseris Flemings and Nia Edwards.

7th October 2016. The meeting point for coaches and gymnasts was Heathrow Airport, for the 12.10pm flight with “Euro wings” to Dusseldorf. A snack was provided on the plane: water, sandwich (cheese or chicken) and a small bag of Haribo.

A taxi collected the team from the airport and took the team to Leverkusen to the Bay Arena hotel.

The gymnasts were allocated their rooms and had time to unpack and prepare for podium training at 4pm. The team’s rooms were all on the same floor, next door to each other.

The gymnasts raised an issue with regards to England kit. Unfortunately the girls did not have all the correct kit; mainly they had received the wrong sizes. The biggest problem was that Vicky Ashworth was given a competition leotard that was too small.

The competition arena was just across the road from the hotel. Podium training went well, the equipment was Spieth, and the floor was a coil floor, which was greatly appreciated. There was no set warm up timings: it was an open session so once the teams were happy they moved onto the next apparatus. On bars Erika whilst trying to “feel” the bars, executed a few mistimed pacs, and hit her hips quite hard on the bar, but recovered well to continue the session.

Straight after podium the team attended dinner inside the arena. Plenty of choice: pasta, noodles, cheese, bread, pumpkin soup and fruit. The gymnasts took a few bottles of water back to their room. In the hotel, ice was obtained for Erika’s hips and Vicky’s feet.

Brendene Hardy and Christine Bowker (MBE) arrived in time for dinner from their flight from Manchester.

8th October 2016 Competition day.

Plenty of choice for breakfast: cereals, breads, cooked breakfast.

After breakfast, the team went to the arena for a short session: tension, landing drills, floor line work. The issue of competition leotards was raised, and it was decided that both teams would wear short sleeve leotards in the competition, and change into their long sleeve for presentation at the end. The girls were disappointed with this decision, but the coaches felt, that it was unfair to allow Vicky to wear a leotard that she sub-consciously would be worrying if it became “indecent” during the competition.

The team then had lunch at the arena. After lunch the team went back to the hotel to prepare for the competition.

Competition all around warm up commenced at 3.30pm for the eight teams. Competition started at 5pm. There were teams from Germany, South African, Italy, and the Nederland's.

Competition

England 1, placed 5th all around.

April Maslen – The most experienced athlete from both teams. Put her hands down on her first tumble: double back, over rotated and fell on vault, and fell on beam and had no acro series.

Lottie Smith – Fell on bars on the shoot down to handstand. Fell on beam on the flick pike back and had no leap series.

Erika Magpantay – beautiful floor to take the silver medal, missed the Jaeger on bars, and two falls on beam: flick layout and free cartwheel. Placed 7th all around.



England 2, team silver medallist

Isobel Hilliard – Steady competitor with one fall on beam on the flick layout. Placed 6th all around.

Vicky Ashworth – Great 3 pieces, some unfortunate falls on beam.

Tomique Gibson – Executed a mo on bars to a dead hang. But this was her only mistake, taking the gold medal on beam and vault, and the bronze medal on floor. To add to her medal total, Tomique also took the silver all around medal. Great performances!



The banquet was held back in the hotel, after the competition. Chicken curry and beef stroganoff was available with plenty of vegetables and cold meats.

The girls exchanged gifts with the other gymnasts.

9th October 2016

After breakfast the girls just past the time in their rooms, packing in preparation for the 12.30pm taxi collection.

Taxi was on time and delivered the team (including judges) safe and sound to the airport. No problems with the flight; again the teams were served with a snack on the plane, same as the outbound flight. All parents were at the airport to collect the gymnast.

In summary, the trip was successful and hassle free. The gymnasts were a delight to take round, and bonded well with each other. For many of the gymnasts it was their first international, and I believe nerves were at play during the competition, but experience was gained by all.