



Loughborough Students Men's Volleyball Team head out to Croatia next week to represent Great Britain in the European University Sports Association (EUSA) Championships.

After proving themselves in the British Universities Championships with sterling performances against the countries top university teams, Loughborough Students qualified for the prestigious event this year held in Rijeka, Croatia. The tournament will be held from the 16th – 24th July at the Mladost Sports Hall in the centre of Rijeka in front of the 2,500 spectator capacity. With the groups not drawn yet, Loughborough will be hoping for a tough draw against the tournament's favourite teams such as The University of Latvia and Malaga University from Spain.

Coach Darren Lewis described his Loughborough team as "determined and hard-working" as he took time out from their final preparations for the trip. The draw for the competition takes place in Rijeka next Monday when all the teams arrive. Despite not knowing Loughborough's opponents Darren added "it will be very hard for the team as we will be facing up to opponents have played in senior international teams with some players having representing their nations in World Championships and even Olympic Games. We have never come across this kind of skill level before but are relishing the chance of causing a shock upset."

Team Manager and Head of Delegation, Phil Cobb, who helped with the organisation of the World Student Games in 1991 said "For most of the team this is a chance of a lifetime experience. A couple of the players have played at Junior International level but this will be totally different like the World Student Games were in Sheffield. Hopefully this will also put Loughborough back on the map and help to attract students to the University if they know they could be a part of something special."

The 'Road to Rijeka' has been a long and tough journey. Matt Rogers has worked tirelessly getting the administration and planning right for the trip. He added "It was a big project with over £6000 needed to be raised within 3 months. Plenty of fundraising events have been held raffles, barbeques and auctions. One notable effort has been from Team Manager Phil Cobb. He is using an exercise bike and the University swimming pool to cycle and swim the equivalent of the 891 miles, the distance from Loughborough to Rijeka. He is hoping to raise £1 a mile and splitting the money equally between the travel fund and the wishes4kids charity."

Team List:

James Cooper (captain)
Robert Flay
Phil Ebner
Thomas Lord
Ben Hall
Matt Rogers
Bastian Maass
George Protrakos
Chris Stott
Stuart Dove
Andrew Riding (libero)

*For more information about the event please contact Phil Cobb at phil.a.cobb@btopenworld.com .
If you would like to sponsor the team in Croatia or for next season please contact George Petrakos,
Loughborough Students Volleyball Club Chairman at georgep666@hotmail.com 07922845987.*

