

DRAGON BOAT TEAM IS SUCCESSFULL IN BELFAST AT THE WORLD POLICE & FIRE GAMES 2013

On July 30th, 2013, members of the Philadelphia Police Boat Team flew to Belfast, Northern Ireland to compete in the World Police & Fire Games 2013. The Games are a biennial sporting event for active and retired police officers, firefighters, prison guards, and border security officers. It is the third largest sporting event in the world consisting of a wide range of individual and team sports. This year, there were 56 sports held at 41 venues across Northern Ireland with competitors from 67 countries taking part.

On Thursday, August 1st, the 2013 World Police and Fire Games (WPFPG) were officially opened by Mike Graham, the WPFPG Federation President. The opening ceremony was held outdoors at Kings Hall which included the traditional parade of athletes. As the members of the Philadelphia Police Boat Team along with other athletes from the United States walked into the hall, they held their heads high and felt amazingly proud to be representing their individual departments and the United States of America. Two

members of the PPD Boat Team carried an American Flag that held significant sentimental value to one of the members. What a wonderful experience that was!

The Philadelphia Police Boat Team (PPBT) is comprised of members from the Philadelphia Police Department, Philadelphia Federal Probation, United States Secret Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation (Florida and Ohio), Philadelphia Fire Department, Portland Fire Department, and the NJ Prosecutor's Office. They had the honor of being the only boat team to represent the United States.

The Philadelphia Police Boat Team was scheduled to compete in races over the next three days facing competitors from Australia, Germany, Singapore and Canada. The first

race was the Women's 10 person Dragon Boat. Team Captain Frank McClain said "All of the teams looked really impressive. I knew we were in for a dog fight!" During the first race, the women had a bad start and came in second place. In typical Philly style, that 'bad start' made the women really angry. They took that aggression to the water winning the next two



The Boat Team gather for a team picture

heats.

However, the winner of this race was determined by the fastest average race times so the PPBT was unsure who won overall. They could hear the Canadians celebrating in the background but as they walked to the podium, they heard the Philadelphia Police Boat Team announced as the Gold Medal Winners. The women were elated and graciously accepted their gold medals in the rain. Canada, however, accepted their silver medals with shrugged shoulders.

This would be the only medal of the games for the Philadelphia Police Boat Team. In the proceeding days, during the Men's 10 Person Race and the Mixed 20 Person Race, they were knocked out of the semifinals by some amazingly fierce competition. Team captain, Frank



all of you.”

With that said, the Philadelphia Police Boat Team is always looking for new members. They are a highly competitive team respected throughout North America, once earning the title of Eastern Regional Association Dragon Boat Mixed Premier Team Champions. They compete in both Dragon Boat and Outrigger Canoe races. Dragon Boat races have taken them to places like: New York, Canada, and China. Outrigger Canoe races have taken them to places like: Catalina Island, California, Maryland, and Virginia.

If you want to challenge yourself and experience a totally different cardio workout why not give the fastest growing team sport a try. Email team captain, Frank McClain Dragonppd@comcast.net for more information.

The team in the thick of it on the water in Northern Ireland

McClain said “No matter what the medal count, I couldn't be prouder of my team members. I have never felt that boat move so powerfully and in sync. They made me proud to be a member of the Philadelphia Police Boat Team. I told everyone that they should hold their heads high; they did their job. Coach Pete Vargas did his job. Just on this day, the other teams were a little better. Now we know how much harder we need to work for the 2015 World Games in Virginia.”

Team coach Pete Vargas offered his sentiments, “I think that Frank expressed what an amazing experience it was to have raced and shared our time together during the World Police and Fire Games. I just wanted to add that from a coach's prospective, I am very proud and elated at the way that everyone performed. The level of power, timing and determination that was demonstrated in our boat was unmatched. I am certain that the other teams are still talking about us and that is a good thing! In 2015, our women will have to defend their gold championship title and the team will capture gold in the other divisions. Thank you for allowing me to be your coach and trusting in my judgment. We have a lot to look forward to and I hope to do it again with

(Editor's Note: FOP President John McNesby and the membership of the FOP congratulate the Philadelphia Police Boat Team on their success in Belfast. On the water or just as representatives of the Philadelphia Police and your respective agencies you compete and act in the finest traditions of Police service and fraternalism.)



The Women show off their Gold from their 10 person boat race victory