

Midlothian to compete at walking football tournament in Portugal



Midlothian Walking Footballers will join teams from throughout Europe to take part in a prestigious Walking Football Tournament at Brown's Sport and Leisure Club in Vilamoura, Portugal.

The tournament will run from 8-11 October.

The games will be five-a-side lasting 20 minutes with a five minute water break at half time. The tournament format will include group stages, quarter finals, semi-finals and final and the winners will receive medals and a trophy.

Brown's is a purposely built 55,000m gated private and secured resort in the Algarve, twenty minutes from the International Airport of Faro. The 3g synthetic pitch with pitch side villa accommodation, catering services and other sporting facilities are all onsite. There is also a Sports Bar which is perfect to analyse the games in the evening.

Top sporting teams from throughout the world use these facilities including most recently the Argentina Rugby Team in preparation for the Rugby World Cup.

Organiser Nick van den Hemel accepts that there will be a competitive aspect to the games, he hopes that everyone will have an enjoyable time.

He said: "Although we will have medals for the best teams, this is a tournament that is all about coming together, meeting new people, (there is a huge market of local people from the UK in the Algarve and we will have 3/4 local teams)

and having a great time in the sunny Algarve.

Midlothian recently reached the semi-final of the inaugural Scottish Walking Football tournament run by Age Scotland at Ainslie Park, only losing out to eventual winners Hibernian Football Fans in Training on penalties after going through the fixtures without conceding a goal. The players who are all over 50 play every Wednesday afternoon 2-4 at the Bayne Memorial Hall in Loanhead and every Friday morning between 10-noon at the Ladywood Centre in Penicuik.

The team have also been nominated for the Senior Team Award (STA) at the Midlothian Sporting Achievement Awards. The winners will be announced at a dinner later this month.

Eight players will make the trip, flying from Leeds and the group also hope to take in Scotland's Euro Championship qualifier against Gibraltar.

In preparation for their European adventures, the team will compete in the Blue Flame tournament in Newcastle.

Kenny McDonald (60) who also plays with Gala Fairydean Rovers Walking Football Team told the Edinburgh Reporter about the tournaments and also the benefits of playing the slower version of the beautiful game.

The Edinburgh Reporter will provide regular updates on the progress of the team.

Several of the team are pictured above with Hibs and Hearts' legends Keith Wright and John Robertson

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