



In June this year, I had the opportunity to represent Ireland in the World University Games in Naples, following my selection for the Mens Association Football Squad. It was a profound honour for me to represent my country on the international stage and I am indebted to the hard work and dedication of the Ad Astra Academy, which has presented me with the ultimate platform to develop in my sport and achieve my goals. The Ad Astra programme encourages me to develop both physically and mentally and I have benefited greatly from the support provided by the academy through its emphasis on academic mentoring. I am most grateful to Student Sport Ireland, the Football Association of Ireland and the Ad Astra Academy for the financial support provided to me to facilitate my participation.



The opportunity to represent Ireland in Naples was truly a once in a lifetime experience. Following my selection, I entered a thoroughly professional environment, which prepared myself and my team mates for the task ahead. During the three weeks prior to departure we



had two intense training camps in Waterford and Limerick. On arrival in Naples we were accommodated with all of the football athletes from the participating countries in a specially prepared athletes village at the University of

Solerno. Daily training sessions prepared us for the five games that we were scheduled to play. The management and backroom staff assisted us in every way possible to handle the intense heat in the region.



The opening ceremony for the games took place on Wednesday 3rd July in San Paolo Stadium, Naples. The event was attended by a sell out 50,000 spectators and was screened live on FISU TV,

with Andrea Bocelli as a special guest. It was a memorable night and a great thrill to be announced as we entered the stadium.

The football tournament consisted of 12 nations from all around the world including Korea, Uruguay and Russia. Having qualified for the quarter-finals by topping our group, we were narrowly defeated 1-0 by Russia following a penalty in the 6th minute. Ultimately, in the 7th/8th place playoff, we were defeated in a penalty shootout by France. We competed on equal terms in all five games and with a bit more luck we could well have qualified for the final, at least. On a personal level I played in the second half versus Russia and completed full games versus Ukraine and France. I am extremely proud of my achievement.

