



## AUSSIES THIS WAY



The final 200 Australians participating in the 18th Maccabiah experienced unique passport control booths after landing at Israel's Ben Gurion Airport yesterday...passport control booths restricted to "Aussies". A warm Israeli welcome for our athletes whose long journey/fatigue moods gave way to "nice to be here" smiles.

Photo: Yvette Shaw

### ROY VANDERSLUIS AUSSIE FLAG BEARER

by Henry Benjamin

Roy Vandersluis, a 62-yr-old Sydney-based golfer, will tee off next week as he starts his campaign for his ninth consecutive Maccabiah as a competitor, a feat never before achieved.

At the first full Australian team meeting, the head of the Australian delegation, Tom Goldman, announced that Roy had been selected flag bearer for Monday's Opening Ceremony.

This is not the first time Roy has been given this honour. In 1993, he was selected following his silver-medal win in the 1989 games where he missed out on gold by one shot...maybe gold now. He said: "This is a wonderful honour."

Photo: Peter Haskin

### TOWELS FIND THEIR WAY TO THE KIDS



Sandy Sher's project sanctioned by Maccabi Australia achieved its goal at last night's team meeting. Children from the Neve Michael home attended the team meeting to help collect the towels carried individually to Israel by teammembers.

## FINALS FRIENDSHIP

Two tennis-playing friends look like slogging it out for gold in the Junior Tennis event.

The quiet men of the Australian team have featured little in pre-Games publicity, but they are in fact two of the most highly-rated sportsmen in the Australian delegation..

David Sofaer from Sydney, will turn 18 on the day of the Opening Ceremony while Alex Sanders who is already 18, is likely to be playing his last tournament as a Junior.



David Sofaer [l] and Alex Sanders

But these are no ordinary juniors. Gold Coast-based Sanders was a member of the Junior Davis Cup Squad which beat Argentina to take out the 2007 competition...and both boys have made it to the Wimbledon Championships where Alex reached the Quarter Finals in the Doubles competition and David made the round of 16 in the singles. The boys have been friends since they were 12.

Currently ranked among the top 10 Juniors in Australia, Alex and David are ready for the transition to men's tennis already rated in the top 60 in the country.

They told Hayom: "It is highly possible we will be seeded to meet in the final of the singles and we are very confident of winning gold in the doubles."

For Saunders and Sofaer it seems the road from Junior Tennis to Seniors may indeed be paved with gold.

Story: Henry Benjamin Photo: Peter Haskin

## MIXED MEMORIES FOR GEORGE

by Daniel Garb

Today the entire Maccabiah team will experience a highly emotional visit to the awesome Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem... but for the oldest member of the 400-plus Australian camp, the trip will carry extra significance as he survived the sheer terror of the Holocaust



George Oshlack with the team's youngest member, 12-yr-old Morgan Baum

Photo: Peter Haskin

81-year-old Victorian George Oshlack is competing in the Masters squash team in what will be his 6th appearance at the Games since fleeing a Europe darkened by Nazi dominance .

His story of survival is simply astonishing. George and his brother sought refuge by escaping on a train and then jumping off into the dark surrounds of Poland's forests.

They were two scared young men living purely in hope after their entire family had been killed.

George and his brother beat the odds 1 only four people in their carriage of 200 managed to survive and George was forced to hide in the Polish wilderness for three years to avoid suffering the same fate of the 196 who lost their lives.

"When you look back at what really happened to me, what I went through and how we survived, it's amazing. I could have been killed hundreds of times," he said.

"When we were in the forest, we never knew if we were going to survive - but when we got through we just wanted to live like human beings and we achieved that when we were able to come to Australia."

That wish has been achieved in spades, as George is now viewed as one of the most revered figures in Australia's Jewish sporting community, having competed in the squash team in Israel 5 times and golf once, way back at his first Maccabiah in 1985.

And he says it is a feeling that will never fade. "I think this is one of the nicest things for me, I never believed that I would ever make it."

"It never wears off. Every time I feel special being here, especially after what I went through - to be in Israel is a feeling that's unbelievable to express," he said.

That thrill has been maximised by carrying the tag of the team's oldest member. "I love it. I just love the feeling of being alive, I never thought when we got liberated in 1944 that I would live until 80. No way."

George has gathered a swag of medals during his appearances in Israel and when you meet him it's easy to see why.

He doesn't look a day over 60 and has a vibrant, energetic view on life that was developed by living through a time whereby dying seemed a mere formality.

And he's confident of taking home yet another medal this time around despite having to compete against sportsmen some of whom will be 15 years his junior in the over 65's category.

"I can still beat them. Four years ago I had the same problem but I only lost one match ."

HAYOM is produced by Maccabi Australia's media team:

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