



Ray Capewell's Memories of Rio Olympics 2016

Some memories of my time at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, where I worked as a beach volleyball volunteer on Copacabana beach.

To compare the Olympics in London to the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro is almost impossible. I had the most amazing time, as the only English Volunteer in our team, in fact the only English Volunteer at the Beach event where I became something of a celebrity. Mr. Leicester City or Sir Raymond I was used in many different roles at the beginning because not many Brazilians spoke any English. Our group consisted mostly of Brazilian, two from Switzerland, one from Germany, one from France, lastly myself from the UK.



As a team our role was to make sure that the managers, coaches and players wanted for nothing. We had to look after three shower blocks, (male and female) to make sure that they were clean at all times, if not we got the cleaners to sort them out. The meeting rooms and the players lounge also had to be kept clean and tidy at all times, with the TV and computers switched on and working at all. We ensured that they were always stocked up with food and drinks. We had to also make sure they were training on the correct courts with balls, towels and drinks at all times, along with anything else that they needed.

As I was the only person who spoke good English it became my job to keep the athletes happy at all times and try to reduce the number of camera men that felt they had a right to the players, which was not the case. We were instructed that they had time with their coaches without the being bothered in any way, because of this I became very close to all the players, so from a personal point of view I had the most amazing time. I have made lots of new friends from all around the world, I had a very close relationship with all the medalists Gold, Silver and Bronze.

As a group we more or less organized our selves. Within a couple of days of settling in we realized that on some of our shifts there would be only two people working and on others far too many people. This brought us together as a team, after much discussions we managed to share our duties more evenly, allowing some to arrive late and others to leave early. It also allowed the Brazilian Volunteers a chance to see the teams playing on the centre



court. On my days off I managed to get some site seeing in, went on the cable car up to the Sugar Loaf Mountain also the Christ statue, with spectacular panoramic views of Rio, lastly some souvenir shopping for the family. On some days we became guides to help to get the spectators to their seats quicker, as everything was announced in Brazilian it became obvious other nationalities who couldn't speak the local language had problems finding their correct entrances to the stadium so those of us who could speak English used loud hailers to direct them in the right direction.

I have many great memories too many to mention here. The best was my time spent with all the players, sharing their wins and losses, with lots of tears from the loosing teams and fantastic joy from the winners. It is difficult to put into words my time as a volunteer, our group was brilliant always. We had time to try out our skills at different languages in between our specific jobs, which was great fun, with me being the worst. The Brazilian way is very laid back, don't worry it will get done some time and it usually did. This is very different to the European way, but we got used to it! Time keeping was not important to the local Volunteers 8.00am was usually 8.30am or even 8.45am if you were lucky. I will remember Rio with fondness, long hours with very early starts and late finishes. We often worked 16 to 18 hours a day, I will never forget my time spent with some awesome people, who have become friends for life.