

# SA ends third on medals table at World Transplant Games

**Hermann Steyn**  
Executive Secretary  
South African Transplant Sports Association



**S**outh Africa once again shone at the World Transplant Games which took place in Malaga, Spain from 26 June to 2 July 2017.

At 52 members, the team took on far bigger teams than themselves, but still managed to finish third overall with 76 medals. Of those medals, 35 were gold, 23 silver and 18 bronze medals.

The World Transplant Games are held every second year, and brings thousands of transplantees together on the sporting field to celebrate the second chance they received after a life-saving solid organ transplant.



**South Africa's 2017 World Transplant Games Team**

This year 2 200 athletes from across the world competed in a variety of sporting codes that included athletics, road running, petanque, tennis, squash, swimming, cycling, golf, badminton, ten pin bowling and table tennis.

Among the highlights for the SA team were winning the awards for most outstanding senior and junior female. These went to Lisa du Plessis in the senior ladies category, who won five gold medals and set five new world records in various swimming events.

The junior ladies category was won by Kristen Henry. She won five gold medals, achieved two world records in the swimming events, and collected a bronze as part of the South African women's 4x100m relay team.

The team went to Spain with a clear objective: Finish in the top 10 and ensure that the message of organ donation is spread far and wide. In order to secure a top 10 finish, all athletes had to qualify twice for the World Transplant Games.

The first qualification opportunity was at the South African Transplant Games in 2016 that took place in Johannesburg. Athletes then had to qualify again before the start of the World Transplant Games. This qualification process and a training camp before the World Transplant Games ensured that South Africa sent the best possible team to the Spain.

The Transplant Games are unique, in the sense that all athletes have received a life-saving organ transplant. Although most athletes are in top form and fit, there is always the possibility that a medical emergency can occur due to the nature of some athlete's conditions.

Executive Secretary & Team Manager of the South African Transplant Sports Association (SATSA), Hermann Steyn said that this event was the perfect platform for athletes to compete at the highest possible level as well as celebrating a second chance at life with more than two thousand people from different nations experiencing the same feeling. At each event he sees reconnecting and forging of friendships characterised by unconditional acceptance.

Hermann also added: "We intend to maintain the high quality of competitiveness and improving on our 3rd position by continuing to maintain the high qualification standards and conducting at least two national training camps after our National Games in 2018 in order to prepare for 2019 World Games in Newcastle/Gateshead, England in August 2019."

**For further information on other activities at SATSA, please go to [www.transplantsports.org.za](http://www.transplantsports.org.za).**

**To register on the Organ Donor Foundation, please go to [www.odf.org.za](http://www.odf.org.za) to register online. Most importantly, please discuss your wishes with your family and friends – thank you.**