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News

'Winning tickets feels like Christmas'

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Wandsworth who said it "felt like Christmas" after getting two £50 tickets. It was a landmark day for the ticketing process as Games chiefs contacted 700,000 successful applicants to tell them which seats they had been allocated.

An emotional Mr Fuell, who will take his seat alongside his wife and twin six-year-old daughters, said he was "amazed" to receive the news in a 2am email alert.

He said: "It's going to be the most amazing time of our lives. The girls have been telling their teacher they are going to see the fastest man on earth."

PE teacher Rachel Corrigan, 27, from Merton, said she was overjoyed after getting pairs of tickets to the marathon, football, handball and volleyball, costing a total of £186 out of a £1,200 order. It was bitter sweet news for some applicants who received unwanted tickets

'We are going to have the most amazing time of our lives. My girls are going to see the fastest man on earth'

Tim Fuell

after over bidding in the ballot. Mick Collins, a sports writer from Greenwich, will get four top-priced tickets to take his family to the pentathlon while his wife Karen, who applied separately, also got four cheaper seats for the same session. "It's like taking business class seats on an airline and then doubling up on economy" he said.

It was a rare upbeat day for Games organiser Locog which last week was forced to apologise after official figures revealed that two thirds of applicants were left empty handed in the ballot.

With successful applicants receiving an average four to five seats each, critics said



Success stories: Alex Protoulis and Elena Louridas, left, have 100m final tickets. Below, British Olympic hopeful Jessica Ennis

Locog should have devised a fairer system so that if an applicant won tickets in one sport they were be sent to the back of the queue for applications to any other sports sessions.

The 1.2 million ticketless people will be given a second chance when the sale of 2.3 million seats remaining from the ballot go on sale at 6am on Friday.

Remaining seats for popular sports such as basketball, rowing and athletics are expected to be

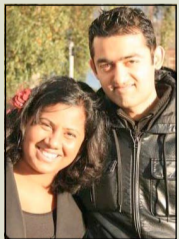
snapped up in hours while the 1.7 million seats for football and large numbers for men's volleyball may prove be difficult to shift. Games chiefs have held back a further 1.4 million tickets out of a total 6.6 million for public sale until next year when they finalise venue capacity.

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'IT WAS 50/50 BETWEEN THE OPENING CEREMONY OR TAEKWONDO'

ROB SWAN from Sittingbourne in Kent won a pair of the most sought-after tickets – £20 seats for the opening ceremony for him and his girlfriend Anya Mitchell, 20.



Mr Swan, 24, a sports writer in Canary Wharf, said: "I'm delighted."

However, bank worker Girish Suryawanshi, 30, from Hounslow, pictured with his wife Shruti Vasant, 28, knew they had a 50/50 chance of securing either opening ceremony golden tickets or taekwondo tickets, after £40 was debited.

The agonising wait ended this morning when they learned they will be watching martial arts on August 11. Mr Suryawanshi said: "It would have been nice to get the opening ceremony but we are really pleased. My brother is a taekwondo expert."

SABRINA BELL, 23, a marketing manager from Tadworth in Surrey, will take her parents Madeleine, 62, and Geoff, 61, and a friend to the Aquatics Centre on August 1, where she hopes to see Ian Thorpe battle against Michael Phelps.

Ms Bell, 23, said: "I applied for £5,000 worth of tickets and ended up with £380 worth. I bid for absolutely everything – from equestrian events to athletics, from swimming to archery. I thought the best strategy would be to hedge my bets because I knew how hard it would be.

"If the Games are happening on your doorstep then it's important to make an effort."

The tickets will give Ms Bell entry to a bumper session of events, including the men's 200 metres backstroke semi-finals, men's 100 metres freestyle final and ceremony, men's 200 metres breaststroke final, women's 200 metres butterfly final and women's 4 x 200 metres freestyle relay final and ceremony.

Ms Bell said: "I'm really happy."



STEPHEN HUNT, one of the biggest winners from today's announcement, was keeping a low profile after receiving hate mail.



The father-of-three from Hertfordshire, who specialises in fraud investigation and company liquidation, applied for £36,000 of tickets and secured £11,000 worth.

He said this month he had to increase his credit limit or lose the tickets. He was convinced the haul would mean his family would see the "big three" events, the 100m final and opening and closing ceremonies.

Mr Hunt's PA claimed he was "too busy" to talk, but a colleague said: "Stephen is really worried that if he tells people which events he's going to that his house will be burgled while they are out watching the Games."

Q&A

When will I get my tickets? Not until May or June next year. They will be sent by special delivery and the envelope will come with guides to the sports you will be watching and a travelcard to get you to the Games.

How can I offload unwanted tickets? An official online ticket exchange will open early next year. It will enable you to offer any unwanted tickets at cost price. Putting the tickets on the open market, such as via eBay, is prohibited. However private sales to friends and family will be impossible for Locog to police. Although the ticket will bear the purchaser's name, officials at the entry

points will not have time to check identities.

What if I have lost out in the ballot The 1.2 million ticketless people from the lottery can go online from 6am on Friday for a chance to buy the leftover 2.3 million tickets on a first-come-first-served basis. There will also be a third sale.

I did not enter the ballot, are there any other chances? Yes. Locog has held back until next year 1.4 million tickets, including 8,000 seats for the 100m final, while they finalise venue capacities. They intend to prioritise people who applied in the original ballot.