

## **Portugal come out on top**

Portugal were the top nation at this years Cheshire Building Society sponsored Boccia International Championships held at Robin Park Indoor Sports Centre in Wigan over the weekend 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> May. They won the trophy awarded to the Nation with the most points overall.

In the Team event Final Portugal (European) beat Great Britain (Paralympic Champions), Norway came 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Portugal lost to Belgium in the BC3 Pairs Final with England 1 achieving 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Great Britain won the BC4 Pairs played in a round robin format with Czech Republic 2<sup>nd</sup> and Slovak Republic 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Boccia, which is similar to French boules, was originally designed to be played by people with Cerebral Palsy, but is now enjoyed by athletes with a range of disabilities in more than 40 countries.

Brian Allen of Cerebral Palsy Sport England, and joint organiser of the event with Sandra King, commented: "This event is now established as one of the major Boccia events in Europe and this year attracted 12 teams. The assistance of Wigan Council and the Leisure Trust along with the companies we used for accommodation and airport transfers made it an excellent event. We will start planning for 2011 in Wigan when the date for next years Boccia World Cup is decided. Our thanks go to Cheshire Building Society for its continuing support. The Cheshire Building Society who are now part of the Nationwide group of companies have pledged to continue its support through to 2012 which will really help the home Nations athletes train for the Paralympics.

Boccia fans and regulars at the championships are the Mayor and Mayoress of Wigan, Cllrs Mark and Karen Aldred. Cllr Aldred said: "Once again we are thrilled to welcome these fine sportsmen and women to our borough. It was another excellent contest and, as ever, the true winner is the good name of disabled sport."

**ENDS**