

## **Soccer Aid 2008**

Hi, I'm Tom; I work as a Sports Therapist at Emma James Physio. As a Sports Therapist my main role within Emma James is to provide sports massage and help compliment the physiotherapists with patient treatments. I have worked as a volunteer within various sports clubs, including Fulham FC, which led to the opportunity to work on this year's Soccer Aid 2008.

Soccer Aid is a charity event organised by Robbie Williams. It has now been running for a few years and involves an England team, made up of celebrities and retired professional footballers, versus a World select eleven based around the same mix of celebrities and ex-pro football players. This year the England team lined up with England football legends, Alan Shearer, Teddy Sheringham, Jamie Redknapp and David Seaman, supported by celebrities such as Craig David, Angus Deaton and Danny Jones.



When I got the call to help the Fulham medical team provide treatment to the England team during training before the event, I couldn't believe I was faced with this opportunity. Then, as the conversation continued I was told that the experience would climax with the opportunity to provide treatment to the players at the match venue, which this year happened to

be the new Wembley! As soon as I finished the conversation I had to persuade Emma James to let me have 3 mornings away from the practice. She was all for me going as this was a massive opportunity to develop myself as a professional and experience working at a major sporting event.

My role within the England Soccer Aid 2008 team was to provide sports massage to all the celebrities and ex-professional footballers as required. I was also involved in ensuring the players had strapping, ice and drinks available during the training sessions. Some of the players I had close involvement with included; Jamie Redknapp, Gareth Gates, Danny Jones (McFly) and Des Walker. At first this was very surreal but as time went on I found myself focusing on treatments and it was just like having my next massage appointment at EJ Physio.





EMMA JAMES

LIFESTYLE  
*Mind Body Soul*



At the match my role remained virtually the same except this time we were providing all our treatment from within the current England team's dressing room. We set up in the dressing room

and ensured the players were prepared for the match. Once we were fully content that the players were ready our next job was to make sure we had everything prepared in the dug-out and at pitch side. It was amazing to walk out in front of 50,000 at Wembley in England staff kit listening to the fans chanting and shouting, it is an experience I will never forget.

During the match there were various different injuries particularly as the England celebrities found themselves in an unusual environment playing an intense football match against 'Rest of the World' professionals such as Romario and Luis Figo (Inter Milan). The half time break was intense as players needed further massage and stretching to ensure that they finished the match. The match itself was very exciting and interesting to watch as the battle between the determination of the celebrities and the skill of the professionals on each team progressed.

Fortunately, England was victorious and my Wembley win record is 100%!!! This experience was amazing and has enabled me to work alongside top football physiotherapists in a match setting and also experience working under time limits and star struck pressure!!! This experience will definitely help me to develop as a professional and build my confidence even further as a Sports Therapist.

Now it's back to work, providing Sports Massage and exercise programmes to the valued clients of Emma James Physio back at the Boxmoor practice, not quite Wembley, but definitely rewarding for my professional development. Maybe I'll be working at Wembley again one day and I can continue my winning record!!!!

Thanks,

Tom.

September 2008