



## Meet the Team: Wales' Ladies Pairs

Whilst this might be the first Commonwealth Games for the Ladies Pairs combination, they certainly won't be fazed by the spotlight, indeed having won gold in the pairs at the World Championships in December 2016 the dynamic duo of Jess Sims and Laura Daniels will certainly be the ones to watch in the Gold Coast.

Jess Sims began playing bowls at a school taster session at the age of 11 and her passion for the sport has continued since, she explained,

'The local club were visiting all the local primary schools in my area and mine was one of them.

I had a go and I was instantly hooked. I honestly can't remember what life was like without bowls.'

Jess has many achievements to her credit. Selected to compete in the World Junior Championship in Australia in 2014, where she returned home with a bronze medal in the Ladies Singles.

More success followed 2016 when Sims teamed up with partner Laura Daniels in New Zealand and came away with the world title.

Jess credits much of her success to her first ever coaches Geoff Writtle and Alan Price who have been by her side

ever since she first attended the junior section at Radnorshire.

She now plays outdoor bowls for Llandrindod Wells Bowling Club and heads to Radnorshire to play indoor throughout the winter.

Having been selected to represent Team Wales in the Gold Coast, Jess was delighted, saying

'I'm over the moon! It has always been a dream to play at the Commonwealth Games. I still can't believe it has actually come true.'

Since then preparation for the games has been taking place in earnest, Jess explained,

'I have been attending sessions with a personal trainer and attending a number of practice days with the rest of the team.

Playing wise I have been competing in indoor leagues with my club and at a variety of international events.'

Whilst everything has been going well in training, Jess is very aware that the greens in Australia are much quicker than those she is used to, she explained

'Some of the shots we play here aren't really suitable for the southern hemisphere greens so I'm ensuring that I put in a huge amount of practice on the right type of shot.'

Jess can't quite believe how quickly the time has gone in the build up to the Games, but she is well prepared and will be one of Team Wales' medal contenders.



The sport of Bowls is hotly billed for this years Games. The element of competition and skill has been captured perfectly by the host nation,

'It's all about precision, judgement and strategy as players strive to exert their dominance on the green.

To the eye, these athletes exude calmness and composure, but on the inside they are determined to win gold.

They are lawn bowlers with a mission to compete right here on the Gold Coast.

Lawn Bowls is a hotly contested sport right across the Commonwealth so the action at Broadbeach Bowls Club will be close, will be competitive and will be unpredictable.'

Teaming up with Jess for the Pairs is her World title winning partner Laura Daniels.

Born in 1985 in Neath, Laura began playing short mat bowls at the age of 12 under the guidance of her grandmother Rita. Whilst she moved codes a few years later, she truly understands the great start this gave her,

'I enjoy all aspects of bowls and pay homage to the foundation short mat provided me at such an early stage in my game.'

Having moved to play both the indoor and outdoor game Laura has achieved success in many top-class competitions including two World titles, Laura explained her love of the game,

'Growing up playing bowls was not necessarily deemed as cool, in fact I was constantly asked why I wanted to play old man's marbles! But, I didn't really care as I enjoyed myself.'

Having achieved her second World title in November 2017, when she was crowned World Singles Champion of Champions at the Commonwealth venue in Broadbeach, she turned her attention to the upcoming Games,

'I felt honoured and privileged to be chosen to represent Wales at the Commonwealth Games. It is something I have been working towards for many years and to reach my goal is a very fulfilling feeling.'

Having already successfully competed on the greens in Australia, Daniels has the confidence needed going into the Games as one to watch,

'I am at an advantage of knowing how different conditions are compared to the UK greens and am able to adapt my training regime around this.'

As well as increasing the intensity of her bowls training, Daniels has also implemented a fitness

training programme and more balanced diet, she explained,

'The fitness regime allows for me to prepare and strengthen my body to withstand the increased pressure placed on it from holding a lower and more controlled delivery.'

Given their intensive training programme combined with their playing credentials, both Laura and Jess will be strong competitors out in the Gold Coast, with the Ladies Pairs one hotly contested competition.

