

Meet the team: Wales Mens Fours

With two bronze medallists from Glasgow 2014 alongside a recent World Junior Championship finalist and

a vastly experienced international skip, the Welsh Mens Fours has a great chance to go all the way in an event Wales has not tasted Gold since 1986.

They line up in Section A alongside New Zealand, Canada, Papua New Guinea & Cook Islands

Lead: Ross Owen

Since discovering bowls at the age of four via his Grandfather, Ross has always been destined for big things in the game.

From Mountain Ash in the Cynon Valley, Ross grew up around some excellent players at the Nixons Club before gaining his first Junior International honours from the Harlequins club, Aberdare in 2010, at the age of 16.

A leading player at Under 25 level regularly skipping in the Welsh team both indoor and outdoor, Ross has developed into a superb versatile player comfortable in any position at elite level.

2017 has been an excellent year in particular, winning his first outdoor national Under 25 title and skipping clubmates Jordan Davies, Phil Carpenter & Jarrad Breen to the fours crown.

He will also be looking to use recent knowledge of the Broadbeach greens having reached the final of the World Junior Championships this month. The second Welshman to do so in successive seasons.

When asked about his selection, Ross added: "I was delighted, overwhelmed and really excited for the opportunity to compete in my debut games."

"Preparation is going really well and just returning home from playing on the Commonwealth Games surfaces in the Youth Championship has given me some extra training."

Ross is also currently representing Wales at the indoor Home International Series at Paisley, Scotland Ross, a keen Cardiff City supporter is described as a brilliant role model for younger players through combining a work/life routine alongside maintaining fitness levels. Personal training sessions on the build up to the games will see Ross in tip top shape heading to the games.

Ross, lining up for photographs at a recent squad day in Cardiff





Marc Wyatt, Dan Slamon, David Harding (Team Manager) Jon Tomlinson, Steve Harris, Ross Owen

The Gold Coast will see four medal opportunities for Mens combinations, these being:

Daniel Salmon Singles

Pairs Daniel Salmon and Marc Wyatt

Ross Owen, Steve Harris and

Jonathan Tomlinson

Ross Owen, Steve Harris, Marc Wy att and Jonathan Tomlinson

Second: Steve Harris

One of the most popular players on the international circuit, Ebbw Vale's Steve Harris is preparing for his first Commonwealth Games.

"I was really pleased and proud when I got the call" said Harris. "Representing Wales is a great honour but it's a bit more special at a major event like this—my first Commonwealth Games"

Bowls in the genes for Steve. The love of the game passed



down three different generations, Steve taking up the game when he was 14. and has been playing for 28 years.

Harris brings a vast amount of trainer at a local gym. The International experience, capped over 30 times outdoor in the Home International Series over a 12 year period.

Steve is no stranger to experience at elite level, having played in Test Matches against New Zealand & Australia as part of the build up to Glasgow 2014 before his first major international selection for the Atlantic Rim championships in Cyprus 2015, quickly followed by World Bowls in Christchurch. New Zealand 2016.

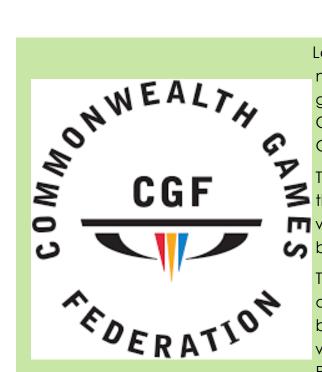
As with other team members, preparation has been key. "we've had various sauad sessions with both the mens and ladies teams. Also, we have been getting together as much as possible to practice in our combinations"

Steve has also benefitted from the use of a personal busy schedule will be a test for all players mental and physical stamina.

Steve will be playing right up to the Commonwealth Games indoors, representing Wales in the indoor Home international Series in Paisley.

When asked about adapting to the southern hemisphere conditions: "We've played at the Broadbeach venue early 2017 in a test match, so we sort of know what to expect green and facility wise . Personally I enjoy the hard fast surfaces to play on . Not sure how we handle all that sunshine mind coming from a summer snow area!!"

Pictured is Steve at a recent squad session at Cardiff IBC



Lawn Bowls is classed as a core sport for the Commonwealth Games having been on the programme since the inaugural event in Hamilton, Canada in 1930 at the pre-named British Empire Games.

The only time that the sport has not appeared on the programme was in 1966 when the Games were held in Kingston, Jamaica due to there not being enough greens available for play.

Team Wales have won a total of 26 medals in all and lie in 7th place in the all-time medal table for bowls. This includes the gold the Women's Fours won in 1986 by Linda Parker, Linda Evans, Joan Rickets and Rita Jones.

Source: Wikipedia and Commonwealth Games Federation

Third: Marc Wyatt

As the picture suggests, Marc Wyatt is one of the more flambuoyant characters on the international circuit.

A bronze medallist at the Glasgow 2014 games alongside Paul Taylor & Jonathan Tomlinson in the Mens Triples, "Sparky" will be looking to add to his already impressive bowling CV.

With almost 50 outdoor international caps Marc, a sales manager with Dalziel, is the most experienced player in the mens team having sampled Commonweath action in 2010 & 2014.

"I felt very proud and honoured when I heard I'd been selected for my 3rd Commonwealth Games. I felt very excited to be given the chance to represent Wales at the highest level once again."

As his international record

suggests, Marc is a household name in Welsh Bowls. "I started bowling in 1989 at Caerphilly Town Bowling Club and still play for them now."

Marc took a familiar route into ty to suss out the different the game being introduced bowls and the greens. The to the Caerphilly green by his few days will give us the chance to adapt to the

"My grandad played and my dad played. I liked playing sport from a young age and my Dad used to take me to the green. I decided to have a go one day and have never looked back."

Marc as with the other players have been preparing hard for the Games: "I have been practicing quite a bit, 3- 4 times (6-10 hours) a week, whilst trying to fit work and family life in. Looking after a 4 year old boy keeps me on my toes!! I have also been doing exercise at home after work when I get a spare 30 minutes."

When asked about the conditions in Australia

"The practice before the games start will be key as this will give us a good opportunity to suss out the different bowls and the greens. These few days will give us the chance to adapt to the warmer climate and to the quicker surfaces before we go in to the main event."

"Sparky", striking a familiar pose at a squad session





Commonwealth Games—Did you know?!

Only six teams have attended every Commonwealth games – Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales.

The first commonwealth games type event was called the 'Festival of Empire' and was held in London in 1911. This event was organized to celebrate the coronation of King George V.

The most successful nation in the history of the Commonwealth games is Australia. They've won 803 gold medals and have a total medal count of over 2,000!

Between 1990 and 2002 the Nauruan weightlifter Marcus Stephen won twelve medals – seven of which were gold. In 2007 he was elected president of Nauru.

Source: The Guardian

Skip:

Jonathan Tomlinson

The Tomlinson family are one of the most well known bowling families in Wales.

Hailing from the small village of Glyncorrwg in Neath Port Talbot, Jonathan Tomlinson now living in Newport is one of Wales' most experienced international players.

"Tomo" at a recent squad day at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff



Jonathan – an engineer by trade – is certainly one to watch. He won a bronze medal in the men's triples in Glasgow four years ago alongside Marc Wyatt and Paul Taylor. More recently, in 2016, he won a silver at the World Champion of Champions event – a hugely prestigious event on the international bowls circuit, attracting all the national singles champions from around the globe.

Jonathan comes from a long line of bowlers, with both his dad and grandad playing and competing for Wales.
Jonathan's younger brother, Rhys & Alex are also regulars on the Welsh bowls circuit.

Jonathan's other brother Ross a former national singles champion and runner-up, is now living in Cambridgeshire

and has been part of the Bowls England setup.

"Tomo" has switched indoor clubs this season playing his trade at Cynon Valley, and has regularly played alongside lead Ross Owen, providing excellent preparation for the event.

He is a popular member of the team and is well respected throughout the game for his sporting and gentlemanly conduct on and off the green.

Stay tuned to updates from Bowls Wales on Social Media throughout the Commonwealth Games to track the latest results, reports and an insiders view of life in the athletes village.

