



World Short Mat Bowls Championship 2018

This week sees Short Mat Team Wales heading out to Stromstad in Sweden for the World Short Mat Bowls Championship which begins on the 16th March and concludes on Sunday 18 March.

The World Short Mat Bowls Championship is a biennial event which began in its current format in 2006 and is run by the World Short Mat Bowls Council.

Over the years Wales have done well taking the title in the fours in both 2006 and 2014. Additionally, Stephen Williams has won the singles title in both 2010 and 2012.

Having taken the runner up titles in both the Singles and Triples in 2016, Secretary of the WSMBA Wyn Jones explained the hopes for the Welsh team in 2018,

'The teams ambition this year is to come home with at least a gold and some silver.'

He continued,

'Our closest rivals are Ireland, although there are some players from England,

Belgium and Sweden that will compete.'

The game is growing at an incredible pace. This year will see fourteen competing countries including participants from India and Italy, as well as full teams from Canada and Norway who had just five players at the 2016 Championships.

The competition itself is a round robin system, followed by knock out rounds. There are Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours competitions and, because there is no team event, countries are allowed two entries in each discipline.

Competitors from Wales hope to bring back a few medals and will certainly be one's to watch over the Championships.

A brief history....

There are different stories about the origins of short mat bowls. The first is that it was began by two South Africans living in South Wales who were fed up of not being able to play bowls because of the wet climate so decided to simulate the game indoors.

The story goes that they later moved to Northern Ireland where

they introduced the new take on the game.

A similar story goes that the game originated in Northern Ireland when an outdoor team had their match rained off and, having taken refuge in the church hall, started playing to pass the time.

One of the earliest photographs of Short Mat Bowls is from 1929. It shows the minister of Ballymacar-

ret Presbyterian Church, NI, bowling on a 3ft wide carpet.

The Welsh Short Mat Association was formed in 1987 to introduce and develop the game across Wales. Although County Associations were formed before this with the earliest being Clwyd, followed by Gwynedd and Montgomery.

Source: Worldshortmatbowls.com, WSMBA & Wikipedia