



Meet the Team: Wales' Ladies Triples

Between them this Triples team have a wealth of experience and will be ones to watch at the forthcoming Commonwealth Games. With a number of World Championship medals both individually and in combinations, national titles between them, they have a wealth of experience to capitalise on for their Gold Coast medal ambitions.

Hailed as one of the most experienced Commonwealth Games athletes 'on the planet' with five consecutive appearances since her debut in Manchester in 2002, Anwen Butten is more than familiar with the expectations and excitement in the lead up to the competition in the Gold Coast.

The Triples and Fours skip has achieved a great deal in her bowls career including two Commonwealth bronze medals, the first on her debut in 2002 and again in 2010.

She is now looking forward to capitalising on the experience and to represent her sport and Country at the Gold Coast,

'I'm absolutely delighted with my selection for Team Wales. To once again represent lawn bowls is a huge honour and I am very excited.'

Butten was inspired to play at the age of 13 years old when, having watched her parents play, she decided to have a go.

Anwen plays for Lampeter Bowling Club during the outdoor season and for Carmarthen Indoor Stadium during the winter, and she has

used this to help with her build up to the Games,

'It's impossible to replicate the conditions we will be facing in Broadbeach here in Wales but, indoor practice helps us slow our delivery down ready for the greens in Australia.'

Fitting everything in prior to the Games can be particularly difficult. Butten, a Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist with Hywel Dda University Health Board, gave an insight into her preparation,

'It's important I get a balance between my work, family life, bowls practice and maintaining fitness.

She continued,

It can be difficult to manage time effectively, but my preparation is going well.'

As well as indoor practice and league games, the build up to the Games has been busy with Squad practice days, team trials and test matches.

In addition, there has been the added benefit of fitness and well-being included in the overall training plan, Anwen explained,

'To ensure that I stay healthy in the build up to the Games I have been going to the gym at least 2 or 3 times a week.'

Following a superb performance at the World Outdoor Bowls Championship in 2016 which saw the Triples win the silver, the eyes of the Bowling world will be watching to see if this five times Commonwealth Games athlete can capitalise on her experience and achieve a hat-trick of medals.





Kathy Pearce (Ladies Coach), Laura Daniels, Jess Simms, Caroline Taylor, Anwen Butten, & Emma Woodcock

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

- Singles** **Laura Daniels**
- Pairs** **Jess Sims and Laura Daniels**
- Triples** **Anwen Butten, Emma Woodcock and Caroline Taylor**
- Fours** **Anwen Butten, Emma Woodcock, Caroline Taylor and Jess Simms**

Winning the Welsh Singles title in 2015 was the turning point in Emma Woodcock's bowls career.

In 2016 she was selected to represent her country in the triples combination for the World Championship in New Zealand and brought home the silver medal with her team mates Kathy Pearce and Anwen Butten.

Now, having been selected to represent Team Wales at the Commonwealth Games, Woodcock is achieving a life-time goal, she explained

'Being selected was a dream come true. I have been playing bowls for over 30 years and this had been on my to-do list for a long time.'

It appears that perseverance pays off with Emma. At the age of 10 she would go to her local bowls club with her father but could only spectate due to a minimum age limit of 16. After much cajoling, her father successfully applied to

the club to reduce the age limit and this future international's career began.

Emma had her first game on roll-down mats in Knighton Community Centre in 1996. The following year saw her start playing outdoors and, just two years after taking up the sport she was playing Home Nation International Bowls.

Now playing her outdoor game at Cardiff and indoors in Sully, Emma is focused on her training in the lead up to the Games, Woodcock said,

'As well as practising indoors to get used to the faster surface, I have been attending personal training sessions to help improve my strength and conditioning which will help out in Australia where the pace of the green can place extra strain on our thighs.'

In addition to her individual training regime, Emma has had regular get togethers with the rest of Team Wales,

'Preparation with the team has been going really well. We have regular get togethers which has been great in terms of getting to know each other as individuals and how we like to play.'

Whilst the build up to the Games has been busy for this full-time Financial Auditor, her determination to work and train hard is apparent and this will certainly go a long way to make this Triples team ones to watch in the Gold Coast.





Source: Wikipedia and Commonwealth Games Federation

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.

Caroline Taylor is no stranger to success and is an established name on the international bowls circuit.

She is a double World Championship medallist having won silver in the pairs in 2004 and a bronze in the triples in 2012.

This is Caroline's second appearance at the Games for Team Wales, having been selected for Glasgow in 2014. There she played alongside her coach, four-time Commonwealth veteran, Kathy Pearce.

Now playing at Berriew Club in Powys, Taylor was inspired to play at the age of nine by her grandfather who was a greenkeeper. She played for about 7 years before having a short break from the sport before returning to embark on a 15-year career as an International player for Wales.

Even though she has previous experience of the Games there is still huge excitement at being picked for a second time, she explained

'I'm very excited to have been selected. It is an amazing experience to go to the Commonwealth Games and to be part of Team Wales is such an honour.'

In the build-up to the Games Caroline's already hectic schedule gets a lot busier. Whilst being a mum, she is also a Director in a family business and looks to train up to four evenings a week, plus most weekends. But all this hard work is paying off, she explained,

'Preparation has been going very well. I have been bowling indoors to adapt to the speed of delivery, and I have been doing an increased level of fitness training.'

Trying to adapt to the different conditions in Australia has been a key focus for Taylor, she explained,

'I will have a lower, slower delivery which needs to be very controlled. A lot of concentration will be needed especially under the floodlights.'

With all the experience and determination they have, the Triples will certainly be ones to watch and a medal hopeful for Team Wales.

