



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT – SUE DINGLE, GEAN O’NEIL,
CHRIS GRIMES, SHEILA MCGINNIGLE, GAYNOR
THOMAS, KARINA BISSON, GINA LE LONG



Bowling for Jersey

Hoping to win a medal at the Commonwealth Games next month will be Jersey’s Ladies Bowls team. Martyn White talks with team manager Sheila McGinnigle to find out more

Why is bowls so popular in Jersey?

The game of bowls – from beginner to expert – is a skilful game that requires level headedness, foresight and decision-making. Bowling has enriched my life through the opportunity of meeting people and developing my skills in a friendly yet competitive environment. Not only the thrill of delivering a really good bowl, but the vibrant and friendly atmosphere surrounding each club on the Island has kept me hooked on this wonderful game.

Tell us more about you. How do you view your role in Melbourne?

I see my role as supportive and will try to ensure that the players only need to concern themselves on their game. So I’ll be helping each player to focus on the routine of preparation and competition.

This is one of the world’s premier sporting events. How does knowing this affect your preparations?

Three of the team played in the Commonwealth Games in Manchester and all have played in other top level bowls competitions – World Bowls, European Championships, Atlantic Rim and World Champion of Champions. We have always done well and won medals or reached the quarter or semi-finals in major competitions.

What do each of the athletes in your team expect from their performances at the Games?

They will expect to be placed highly and are very motivated to win medals, as they have done so at similar levels within bowls.

But can they win a medal?

Gold medals for all of the team would be a dream come true and is not beyond the team’s potential.

How have the team prepared in the run-up to the Commonwealth Games?

Most of the team play indoors at least two or three times a week and we will increase practice frequency in the next couple of weeks.

In hindsight, if you could change anything about your preparations what would it be?

In a dream world the possibility of both a professional bowls coach and sport psychologist available for the team would aid the team’s ability to play on the big stage.

Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the team...

All the players are very strong in their own disciplines – singles, pairs or triples. They are very supportive of each other and do not have any weaknesses, although jet lag may have an unknown effect.

What do you know about Melbourne and the facilities?

The facilities look fabulous and I understand that the Melbourne Cricket Ground, where the opening ceremony is to be held, is absolutely outstanding.

The bowling facilities are a little way out of the city and the greens are a lot faster than we will be used to, but we will have a few days to acclimatise.

Who will you be star struck by should you see them there?

I will be looking forward to getting a glimpse of all the athletes that I watch on TV and would love to speak to British athlete Tanni Gray-Thompson, as I think she would be inspirational.

And will you be holidaying afterwards?

Yes, my husband is coming out for the Games and we are planning to visit Adelaide and Perth afterwards.