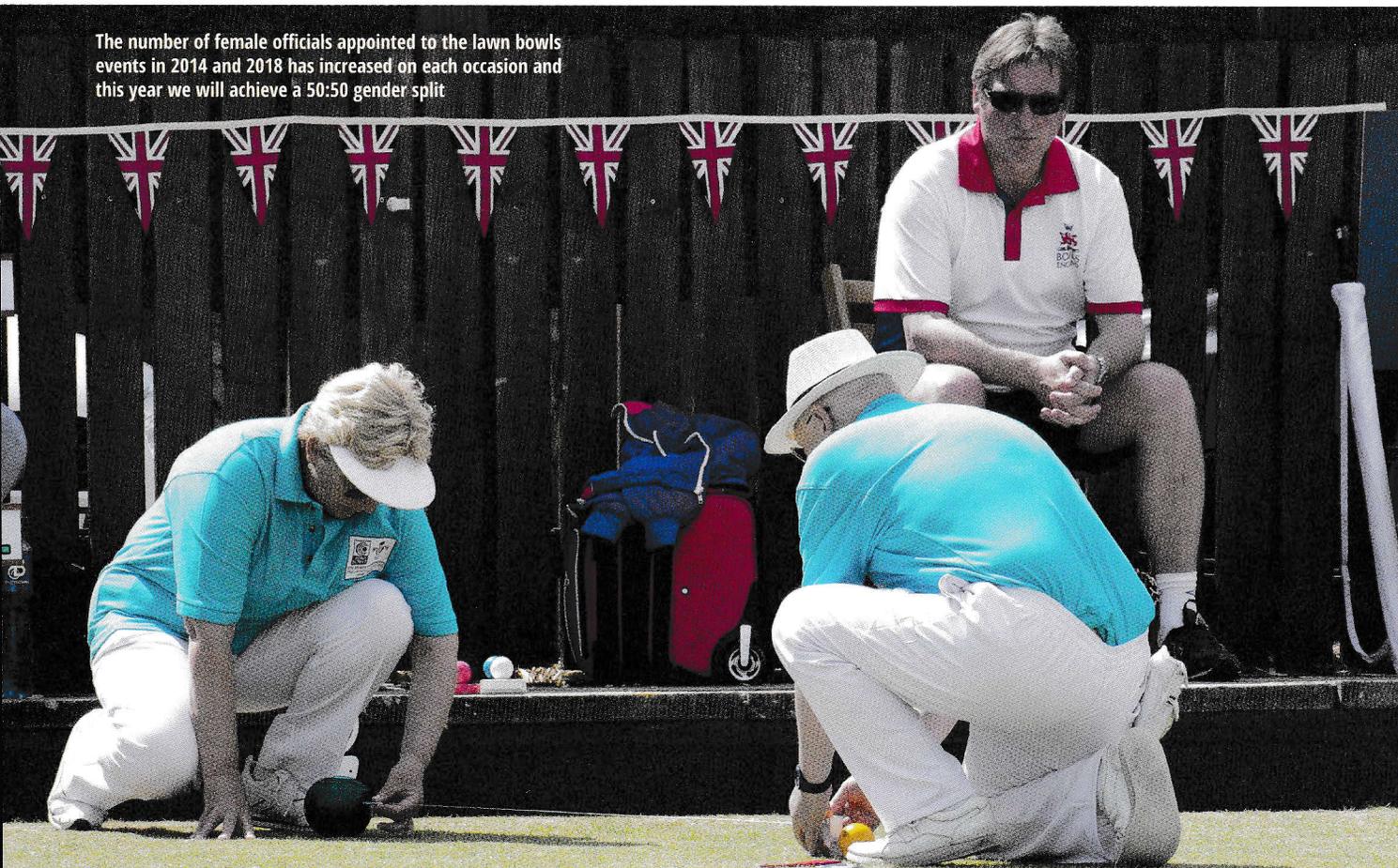




The number of female officials appointed to the lawn bowls events in 2014 and 2018 has increased on each occasion and this year we will achieve a 50:50 gender split



How ITOs are selected for Birmingham 2022

Twenty years since my first Commonwealth Games experience and with five consecutive games under my belt, I find myself approaching Birmingham 2022 as the Chief Technical Official. It is truly an honour to be leading a great team of International Technical Officials (ITOs) from around the world. There is a great team working for Birmingham 2022 who coordinate the technical official's administration which must be a mammoth task

The event will be held at the Victoria Park complex in Leamington Spa. In the past few months, I have been involved in discussions with the Birmingham 2022 management team and the technical delegate for lawn bowls. These have focused on equipment, including umpire kits, rink layouts, duties of the ITOs, conditions of play and familiarisation of the venue.

Arguably, the most important process from my point of view to date has been the selection of the team of ITOs.

Applications for selection were distributed to the 120 World Bowls ITOs in September last year. Inevitably, there have been concerns over the ongoing effect of COVID-19 and the various restrictions applied to travel by individual countries. It was of no great surprise that some individuals chose not to apply for those reasons.

Officials for the Commonwealth Games are nominated by World Bowls to the Commonwealth Games Federation, and it is ultimately their decision who is selected.

The CGF issued a very clear directive that we should aim to achieve gender parity in our selection criteria. This was an additional criteria to those contained in the World Bowls selection policy. The number of female officials appointed to the lawn bowls events in 2014 and 2018 has increased on each occasion and this year we will achieve a 50:50 gender split.

Any selection of individuals, be it players or officials at all levels of sport, inevitably leads to both joy and disappointment. The allocation for these games was just 36 so with 68 applications from around the world there was bound to be some disappointed officials. There are several reserves on the list, and we have also considered the

impact of COVID-19 by having a list of national officials on standby.

So, with the final list of 36 appointments made in February it was time to start processing accreditation and travel arrangements. There is a great team working for Birmingham 2022 who coordinate the technical official's administration which must be a mammoth task.

Next steps for me are to work alongside the competition and technical operations managers to ensure the officials requirements are linked to the sport requirements. This includes ensuring the provision of the right equipment for the greens, for the umpire kits, for scoring and for venue operations.

It's a big jigsaw puzzle being put together by a big team.

Once all the athlete entries are received, it will be time to start conducting the draws for the 11 disciplines and then, for me, the allocation of the five roles that the ITOs will undertake in each session. So, some busy times to come in the run up to the arrival of officials in Leamington Spa at the end of July.

FEEDBACK

Thank you to those of you that took the time to write in following my April article on laser measures and the actions of a marker in singles when things change in the head.

It is encouraging to hear your thoughts on laser measures and it clearly highlights the split in opinion on their use, but then I guess that is the same with any new initiative. In my opinion, we will see a day when the accuracy, speed of use and trust in these units will mean they are accepted more readily at all events.

I was also pleased to hear your comments about a marker in singles indicating to a player the change in shot when they have not noticed it. It is one of those situations that comes from perfecting the art of marking.

It is absolutely correct for a marker to work closely with the players and keep them informed of changes that may influence their next shot.

I would encourage everyone to partake in a marker training tutorial or seminar to hone your skills. I hope you managed to watch some of the excellent streaming from the new

"Next steps for me are to work alongside the competition and technical operations managers to ensure the officials requirements are linked to the sport requirements"



World Bowls Tour event held at the end of March.

I was not able to be at the event due to a clash with a conference I was attending. However, my WBT

colleagues Francis Fletcher and Bernie Hill were joined by Malcolm Rammage and Mary McGroarty from Scotland and Greg Brown from England.

The additional rinks used during the qualifying stages into the top

32 playdowns presented a challenging schedule for the officials.

These events are a great opportunity for the WBT team to seek new officials for the panel and boost our numbers

to allow us to cover new events such as these.

Conditions of play were essentially the same as those you see during the World Indoor Championships on the portable rink.

Some new initiatives such as background music, players choice of clothing and bowls colours has of course been met with positive and not so positive feedback from viewers.

We have to progress in this sport. There can't be many people now that disagree with that and so each event that is held must look at ways of moving forward.

As always, let me know your thoughts on any of the topics covered.

In particular, I welcome any of your questions on the laws of the sport or the practicalities of umpiring and marking. Please get in touch with your queries.

Top:
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Bottom:
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