



**DATE: 28 JULY 2014**

## **SILVER SUCCESS FOR TEAM NI**

It was a joyous day for Sport Northern Ireland supported athletes, as the bowlers clinched a Silver, the country's second medal of the Commonwealth Games.

The Men's Triples team, Neil Booth, Paul Daly and Neil Mulholland, lost out to defending champions South Africa in the final 19-10, as a sterling comeback in the second half of the match came up just short but it was enough to secure the Silver.

It's a first Commonwealth medal for Daly and Mulholland but a fourth in five Games for Booth, a second silver to add to a gold and bronze. He still has one more chance to add to that collection in the fours this week.

*"You're always disappointed with silver or bronze but we can be very proud and hold our head high. We still have fours to go and can end on a high. I was telling the boys, 'It's the last time I'll play at a quarter to nine on a Monday morning'," said Booth.*

Northern Ireland had become known as the comeback kings as they'd managed to come from behind in a number of games including both the quarter and semi-final when they had found themselves 7-0 down to Wales.

Skipped by Bobby Donnelly the South Africans led 2-0 after two ends before Northern Ireland hit back to level two ends later. But lead Prince Neluonde and second Petrus Breitenback were in good form and they put a good run together by winning six of the next seven ends to take a 14-3 lead and it looked all over.

However, the Northern Irish trio responded by reducing the deficit to just four as they won the next three ends to make it 14-10. The 15th end proved crucial to deciding the match.

*Booth explained, "We dug in and we got it back to 14-10 and had a chance to turn a bowl out for three or four shots which would have gotten us right back in the game and hopefully put the nerves into them but I narrowly missed it and they drew for another shot and I think that sort of killed the game at that point. It was nice to come back and make a battle of it and we didn't lie down and die and that was the main thing. The boys played excellently for me."*

Daly, in his second Games after appearing in Delhi four years ago, commented, *"We're disappointed not to have won the gold but looking back a silver medal is a great achievement for all the games we've got through and all the opponents we've beaten and all the games we've come from behind, it's fantastic to win the silver."*



Mulholland his making his Games debut, added, *"I couldn't have asked for any better. The objective coming over was to get a medal and see what colour it would be of we were to get that far. We couldn't send Neil out with a gold but maybe it will come in the fours."*

However the women's triples of Catherine McMillan, Donna McCloy and Jennifer Dowds opened their campaign with an 18-12 loss to England. They can't afford anymore slip-ups in their last two group games if they're to reach the knockout stages.

After an opening victory in the men's singles on Sunday, Martin McHugh was beaten 21-7 by New Zealander Shannon McIlroy.

Team NI boxer Michaela Walsh made history tonight as she became the first female to fight at the Commonwealth Games, beating her opponent Mauritius' Thessa Dumas by unanimous decision. The 21-year-old flyweight is now through to the quarter finals on Wednesday where she'll face Jamaica's Joy Sarah Rae.

Speaking after her fight, Michaela said: *"It was brilliant to be the first woman to fight and win. I was just so excited to get in there, I was like a kid on Christmas morning. I came to the arena early to watch Paddy and Stevy and when they say Northern Ireland and you hear the crowd going mad, it's unbelievable."*

*She added: "I've got my family here to watch and I was trying to stay focused. I felt like I was winning the fight comfortably but I was getting caught with some stupid shots too so I'll learn from that and I'll move forward to my next performance."*

*"I don't know anything about her but she'll know something about me now. I do believe I can go all the way. I don't fear anyone at all, there's a new golden girl coming."*

Boxers Barnes, Conlan, Coyle and Donnelly continued their winning campaign, going through to quarter finals.

Paddy Barnes goes straight through to the quarter-finals after a strong win over Hamadi Furahisha. He defeated his Tanzanian opponent after a technical knock-out in the third round of the light-flyweight fight. The referee stopped the bout a minute left in the third round. He'll fight Papua New Guinea's Charles Keama on Wednesday.

*"It was an easy enough fight, I couldn't take it lightly going in there, everyone is a danger. When they were announcing the names he was standing with his arms folded and looked like he didn't want to be there. I knew then he wasn't going to be a danger," explained Barnes.*

*He added: "For me, all I need to do is my best. I think we have such good boxers because of our self-belief. We fear nobody and believe we can beat everybody."*

*"I still feel there should be a lot of medals here, we have every chance of getting medals in every weight. Before the third bell started I felt like it would be better if they had pulled him out, I don't think his coach liked him, he let him come out again!"*



*Barnes said: "I'm happy with my fight, especially because I've no injuries to the head. I came out unscathed."*

Boxing star Michael Conlon is also through to Wednesday's quarter finals after beating Indian opponent Shiva Thapa, the world's number 3, in the men's bantam.

*"That performance wasn't my best. I was a bit nervous going into that fight. But there is a lot more to come from me," said Conlon.*

Speaking about his fight, Conlon said: *"He tried to come in and be a bit of a roughhouse which doesn't really work for him. It works more for me. He was quite dirty and rough today so I'm just happy to get the win.*

*He added: "Our boxing team is inexperienced but we are all in reach of medals. The training and work we have put in has been top notch. It's been brilliant, I'm really happy to get the win today and get that match over me. I believe we can do the business, I think there are medals on our team. Anything else but gold would be a major disappointment for me. Gold's the only thing I want. Gold's the thing I'm going to get."*

Conlon sustained a cut to the head in his previous fight but hasn't let it stop him: *"It's only a wee cut on the head. I've probably had bigger cuts shaving and I don't even shave!"*

Connor Coyle secured a win in his round of 16 middleweight against Guyana's Dennis Thomas by unanimous decision. He goes through to the quarter finals on Wednesday, when he'll fight South Africa's Siphwe Lusizi.

*"It was good, I enjoyed it. I fell asleep sort of in the second round and I knew I had to pick it up in the last round. I just felt the pace a bit but I just had to dig deep and push on. I got the win over me so I enjoyed it and I'll just progress more and more as the tournament goes on.*

*"The support in the arena was massive and that helped me to dig deep today. I can't wait for the next fight now, another win and it's a medal. The motivation in the team is electric, you can't ask for better motivation. We push each other on and when someone comes home after a fight we support them and cheer them on.*

*"I think women's boxing is brilliant. There are a lot of great female boxers and they should get the opportunity to perform like everybody else does. Michaela has a lot of support from us and from her friends and family. Everybody respects what she does."*

It was a unanimous victory for Ballymena boxer Steven Donnelly as he took on Tonga's Oscar Finau on Monday night. He goes through to Wednesday's quarter final against Canada's Custio Clayton.

*"It was good. Another three rounds done and it prepares me for the business end of stuff now against the Canadian. I'll just relax tomorrow now, I have a wee training session just to make the weight," said Donnelly.*



*He added: "I am confident I trained hard for this, it has to happen for me this time. I try not to put too much pressure on myself but it's always there you know. I have the talent to do it. Overall, we're going brilliant. Big Stevy Ward was unlucky to lose. He's a gentleman and I feel he deserved to win. He'll come again and he'll join in with the team and keep the spirits up."*

Sporting a black eye, Northern Ireland's netball star Noleen Lennon delivered the knockout blow to Saint Lucia in an historic 61-40 triumph at the SECC on Monday.

Lennon scored 32 goals from 35 attempts at 91 per cent accuracy to help Northern Ireland record its first victory in women's team sport at a Commonwealth Games. She had copped the black eye from a knock during her team's 65-34 loss to Jamaica on Friday.

*"The plan was to take it quarter by quarter. We maintained control of the ball well. This was a must-win match for us. We were never going to win the match in the first quarter. But I was happy with our consistent play," said coach Kate Carpenter afterwards.*

Winless Saint Lucia remain anchored to the bottom of Group A while the Northern Irish restored some pride with a morale-boosting victory ahead of their encounter with host nation Scotland on Wednesday.

*"We know a lot about Scotland, we are feeling very confident going into the game and hope that we will be the right side of the result. But it will be close," said Caroline O'Hanlon.*

In shooting, David Calvert lies in seventh place going into the final day of competition in the full bore rifle individual. Calvert has shot 252 and is two points behind a five-way tie for the lead.

However, within the tied scores, the top five are separated by the number of perfect target hits, which puts Barry Le Cheminant from Jersey in the lead with 32 perfect hits.

On the last day of shooting competition, the athletes will complete the third and final stage, shooting at targets 900 and 1000 yards away, which will decide the Queen's prize individual champion.

In other shooting news, Gary Duff was 7th in the 50m Rifle Prone final while Samuel Kelly was 15th in qualifying. In the women's event Claudia McClung was 18th and Louise Alken 20th. Kirsty Barr made the semi-finals of the women's trap but missed out on the final after a shoot-off and ended up sixth.

After the first day of competition in the men's trap, the Melbourne 2006 silver medalist David Beattie lies in 8th place and David Henning 21st.

In athletics, Peter Glass goes into Day 2 of the Decathlon ranked 14th overall with a score of 3721. Following his first event this morning (100m) he said the following:



*"I was really happy with my start which has been good all year. While I was the fastest out of the blocks I did tighten up a bit in the last 20 metres when I was caught by 2 athletes. I am glad to get the first event out of the way as I was really nervous beforehand as these are the Commonwealths."*

Amy Foster finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the semi-final of the Women's 100m, with a time of 11.54 seconds but didn't qualify for the final.

*"You can work off people close to you but that didn't happen tonight. I tried to stay relaxed but the semi-finals are a massive step up,"* said Foster.

She added: *"My race was much better than Delhi in 2010 and I am delighted to have made 3 major championships this year. I am looking forward to the Europeans in Zurich next month."*

Dempsey McGuigan qualifies for tomorrow's (Tuesday) final after finishing 11th overall in the Men's hammer with throw of 66.16m in Group A.

*"I am over the moon with my performance, it is all due to my coach Alan Bertram who passed away last year. 66.16 metres is my fourth best ever performance and I only wish that Alan was here to see this. I fouled my first throw and a year ago I would have been a nervous wreck trying to qualify with two remaining throws, however, Alan taught me to focus and adapt to such circumstances and it has paid off."*

*"I was anxious at the start of the competition particularly as my parents and 5 brothers and sisters are all here to see me. It is just great that everything has worked out well!"* said McGuigan.

After the first day of competition in the women's team event the Northern Ireland women's gymnastics team lie in 10th place.

The four girls – Nicole Mawhinney (18), India McPeak (18), Sarah Beck (17) and Ciara Roberts (16) competed on the vault and bars and with the best three scores to count they put together six solid routines with no major mistakes.

Nicole led the way on vault with a score of 13.266. "My vault went really well, I got a very good score but I made one mistake on the bars and lost quite a lot on one of the moves but the atmosphere was terrific," she said.

"I really want us to finish in the top eight. There is a lot of good competition but I feel it is possible - if we all stick our routines."

Sarah, who top scored on the bars (11.466), added, "I've enjoyed the experience especially with all the support we've been getting from the home crowd but you still have to concentrate on what you're doing and keep focused."



Ciara commented, "I like coming out here and competing. I didn't do as well as I could but it was a learning experience. It's been really cool being in the village and meeting athletes from other sports."

India has been hampered by a knee injury sustained in training. "The adrenalin took over but it did stop me competing at my best." However she was delighted to have competed in front of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

"I didn't know that, I'm quite glad I didn't know that because I might have found it hard to concentrate."

The girls will complete the competition on Tuesday on the beam and floor with a top eight finish the target.

"I think the girls did very well and they came together as a team and helped each other along and I'm very happy with them and we're looking forward to the beam and the floor. Beam is India's best apparatus and Nicole loves going out there and dancing," explained coach Kin Kensett-Friar.

Sarah Beck lies 25th and Nicole Mawhinney 26th overall with the top 24 moving on to the all-around final.

Meanwhile, Northern Ireland's two male gymnasts were also in action. Luke Carson and Matthew Cosgrave were taking part on the pommel horse.

Cosgrave, from Belfast and competing in his second Commonwealth Games but first for eight years, performed a clean routine and recorded a score of 13.133 but Carson, who competed in Delhi four years ago, lost his balance and came off the pommel and the penalty incurred left him with a score of 11.533.

Cosgrave finished 12th and Carson 34th. The two men will be back in action on Tuesday on the asymmetric bars.

In swimming, Curtis Coulter was 14th overall in the men's 50m freestyle after swimming 23.02 in his semi-final which was another personal best for a Northern Ireland swimmer this week, the tenth for the team going into the final day of competition. David Thompson 23.79 (21st) and Conor Munn 23.88 (24th) missed out on the 50m freestyle semi-final earlier in the day.

Danielle Hill was 13th in the women's 50m backstroke in a time of 30.87. In the women's 200m butterfly Sycerika McMahon was just outside her personal best in finishing 14th overall (2:15.53) with Gemma Kane 17th in 2:18.39.



## **COLLATED RESULTS:**

### **LAWN BOWLS:**

Men's Triples (Paul Daly, Neil Mulholland, Neil Booth) Gold Medal Match, Northern Ireland vs South Africa, 10 – 19

Women's Triples - Sec. C, Rd 1, Match 2, (McMILLEN Catherine, DOWDS Jennifer, McCLOY Donna) England vs Northern Ireland, 18-12

Men's Singles - Section C, Rd 2, Match 1, McILROY Shannon NZL vs MCHUGH Martin NIR, 21-7

Men's Light Fly (49kg) Round of 16, BARNES Paddy NIR vs FURAHISHA Hamadi Omari TAN, W - L(TKO)

### **ATHLETICS:**

Men's Decathlon 100m, GLASS Peter, 11.20

Men's Decathlon Shot Put - Group A, Peter Glass, 9th

Men's Hammer Throw Qual. Round - Group A, Dempsey McGuigan, 11<sup>th</sup>, 66.16

Men's Decathlon Long Jump - Group B, GLASS Peter, 6th

Men's Decathlon High Jump - Group B, 5<sup>TH</sup>

Women's 100m Semi-final 3, FOSTER Amy, 11.54

Men's 50m Freestyle Semi-final 1, COULTER Curtis, 14<sup>TH</sup>, 23.02

Men's Decathlon 400m – Peter Glass, 3rd



### **BOXING:**

Men's Bantam (56kg) Round of 16, THAPA Shiva IND vs CONLAN Michael NIR, 0 – 3

Men's Middle (75kg) Round of 16, COYLE Connor NIR vs THOMAS Dennis GUY, 3 – 0

Men's Welter (69kg) Round of 16, DONNELLY Steven NIR vs FINAU Oscar TGA, 3-0

Women's Fly (48 - 51kg) Round of 16, WALSH Michaela NIR vs DUMAS Thessa MRI,

### **SWIMMING:**

Men's 50m Freestyle, Conor Munn, 24<sup>th</sup>; David Thompson, 21<sup>st</sup>, 23.71; Curtis Coulter, 7<sup>th</sup>, 23.23

Women's 50m Backstroke, Danielle Hill, 14<sup>th</sup>, 30.77; Bethany Firth, 26<sup>th</sup>, 32.80

Women's 200m Butterfly, Sycerika McMahon, 14<sup>th</sup>, 2:15.53; Gemma Kane, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2:18.39

Women's 50m Backstroke Semi-final 1, Danielle Hill, 13<sup>th</sup>, 30.87

### **SHOOTING:**

Trap Men's Qualification - Day 1, BEATTIE David John (8), HENNING David (21)

50m Rifle Prone Men's Qualification, DUFF Gary, KELLY Samuel , 5, 15

Trap Women's Qualification, BARR Kirsty, 3RD,

Trap Women's Semi-Finals, BARR Kirsty, 6TH

50m Rifle Prone Women's Finals, AIKEN Louise Kathryn, McCLUNG Claudia, 20, 18

### **NETBALL:**

Netball Pool A Match 10, N. Ireland vs Saint Lucia, 61-40





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