



**Day 7 wrap: World Bowls and IIBC Indoor Championships,
Guernsey Indoor Bowls Association, April 21-27, 2024**

Ceris Hewlings, *Bowls International*, provides a daily wrap-up and results from today's play:

Four new world champions have been crowned at the World Bowls and IIBC Indoor Championships.

Welsh-born Jason Greenslade gave the spectacular showcase of bowls a fairytale finale for the hosts Guernsey – winning the men's singles at his home club of Guernsey Indoor Bowling Association after moving to the island in 2022.

The 54-year-old lifted one of the most-sought after titles in the sport, alongside Nor Farah Ain Abdullah, who won the women's singles, and Australia's Samantha Atkinson and Ray Pearse who clinched the mixed pairs.

Let's take a look at how finals day unfolded.

MIXED PAIRS

Australia retained the mixed pairs for the second year running courtesy of Samantha Atkinson and Ray Pearse.

After suffering a shock defeat to Namibia husband and wife, Yvonne and Carel Aron Olivier, in the sectional rounds, the winners of the Australian indoor singles bounced back finishing second in their group with four wins out of five and were randomly drawn as the team to avoid having to play in an extra knockout match moving straight through to the quarter-finals.

In their last eight encounter, they ousted defending women's singles champion Julie Forrest, who was also winner in 2021, and her partner, 2022 men's singles champion Michael Stepney, while in the semi-finals they were out for revenge against Malaysia's Nor Farah Ain Abdullah and Izzat Shameer Dzulkeple, who had ended the singles campaign of both Aussies the day before, powering passed them 9-2, 11-3.

As defending nation following the exploits of Kelsey Cottrell and Aron Sherriff 12 months previously, Atkinson, 30, who bowls for the Richmond Union Bowls Club in Victoria, and 39-year-old Pearse, a member of Taren Point BC in Sydney, claimed the silverware after a tie-break decider in a match billed as the Ashes of bowls – their opponents being England's Rebecca McMillan and Harry Goodwin.

England opened the scoring with a single, but it was the Australians who were 'Razor' sharp and scored on the next six ends storming to a 9-1 win. England hit back in the second picking up a five and three on the opening two ends which set the pace for their 9-2 win to set up the one-end shootout.

But despite their best efforts, Goodwin's hopes of becoming a double World Bowls Indoor Championships mixed pairs winner – having won the Under 25 event in 2022 were dashed when Australia took that all important shot for victory.

"It's my first time on the international stage for Australia and to win a gold medal, I am short of words other than brilliant," said Atkinson, while Pearse added: "It's been a big seven days. I knew coming here was going to be tough, but to win one out of the two titles on my debut in a world event is a dream come true."

WOMEN'S SINGLES

While this was the 'senior' event of the World Bowls Indoor Championships – there is also an Under 25 event – interestingly both finalists were under the age of 30.

Twenty-three-year old Nor Farah Ain Abdullah, who only started bowling in 2012 and won gold and silver medals in this year's Asia Championships, was a 6-2, 6-3 winner over Malta's Connie Rixon, three years her senior at 26, in the final.

Abdullah, making her first appearance internationally for her country, is the second winner of the competition from Malaysia – the first being Siti Zalina Ahman in 2015.

Although, Abdullah finished second in her group, like the Aussies in the mixed pairs, she was randomly drawn out for direct entry into the last eight.

In that round she beat Australia's Samantha Atkinson in straight sets, 6-5, 9-1, while the semi-final saw her return an 8-4, 7-7 winning scorecard against Linda Ng from Canada. Ng herself enjoyed a particularly successful week and was one of four players in the hunt for the double success as she was still involved in the mixed pairs with partner Mike McNorton when the day's play began.

Rixon, who lives in Australia, is the current World Bowls Championships women's pairs silver medallist. She topped her section in the group games before eliminating event favourite Tayla Bruce, of New Zealand, 7-4, 4-5, 1-0, and ending the Kiwi's quest to hold the World Bowls Championships indoor and outdoor women's singles titles at the same time. In the semi-final, Rixon, who bowls at the Bangara club, knocked out Scottish international Natalie McWilliams who was bidding to retain the title for Scotland for the third year in succession after Julie Forrest was successful in 2022 and 2023.

"I feel very excited to have won," said Abdullah after the trophy presentation.

"I feel very small coming here representing Malaysia for the first time, but I made it."

MEN'S SINGLES

Guernsey Indoor Bowling Association staged a spectacular showcase for the championships and club member Jason Greenslade certainly gave the home crowd plenty to cheer about on the green.

Winning one of the three ultimate prizes at the seven-day event, was 'a dream come true' for Greenslade.

"It's what I've always wanted in bowls. I feel so at home here in Guernsey and very proud to wear the Guernsey flag."

Greenslade's road to the podium saw him first top his section winning all five of his group matches before chalking up wins against Spain's Peter Bonsor in the quarter-final, New Zealand's Shannon McIlroy in a semi-final tie-break, and Malaysia's Izzat Shameer Dzulkeple, 6-5, 9-3, in the final – dashing Malaysia's hopes for double singles glory. Malaysia nevertheless finished as the top performing country winning the women's singles gold, men's singles silver and mixed pairs bronze.

Dzulkeple, current World Bowls Championships pairs bronze medallist, meanwhile won four out of five section games to win his section. He then knocked out two big guns - Ray Pearse (Australia) in the quarter-final and England's Harry Goodwin, 5-5, 7-2, to earn his place in the final.

Greenslade, a former British Isles singles winner and holder of three WBT titles, came close to the final stages of the mixed pairs too – he and partner Rose Ogier however bowed out to England in the knockout round.

The trophies and gold medals were presented by Hazel Wilson, director of World Bowls, Alison Merrien MBE, president of the IIBC, whose club the event was staged, awarded the silver medals and Steve Desperques, president of Guernsey Indoor Bowling Association, gave out the bronze medals.

RESULTS

MEN'S SINGLES

Semi-finals: Izzat Shameer Dzulkeple (Malaysia) bt Harry Goodwin (England) 5-5, 7-2; Jason Greenslade (Guernsey) bt Shannon McIlroy (New Zealand) 5-2, 3-4, 1-0.

Final: Jason Greenslade bt Izzat Shameer Dzulkeple 6-5, 9-3.

WOMEN'S SINGLES

Semi-finals: Connie Rixon bt Natalie McWilliams (Scotland) 1-7, 8-1, 1-0; Nor Farah Ain Abdullah (Malaysia) bt Linda Ng (Canada) 8-4, 7-7.

Final: Nor Farah Ain Abdullah bt Connie Rixon 6-2, 6-3.

MIXED PAIRS

Semi-finals: Samantha Atkinson and Ray Pearse (Australia) bt Nor Farah Ain Abdullah and Izzat Shameer Dzulkeple (Malaysia) 9-2, 11-3; Rebecca McMillan and Harry Goodwin (England) bt Linda Ng and Mike McNorton (Canada) 8-3, 8-3.

Final: Samantha Atkinson and Ray Pearse bt Rebecca McMillan and Harry Goodwin 9-1, 2-9, 1-0.

MEDAL TABLE

1st: Malaysia - 1 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze

2nd=: Australia - 1 Gold

2nd=: Guernsey -1 Gold

4th: England - 1 Silver, 1 Bronze

5th: Malta - 1 Silver

6th: Canada - 2 Bronzes

7th=: New Zealand - 1 Bronze

7th=: Scotland - 1 Bronze

Photo caption:

The trophy winners with Alison Merrien MBE, IIBC president (left) and Hazel Wilson, director of World Bowls (right). Credit: Sporting Highlights

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