

2023 World Champions New Zealand Blackjacks Women
Emily Belton (Coach) Tayla Bruce, Leeane Poulson,
Selina Goddard, Val Smith, Katelyn Inch, Gayle Melrose (Coach)



High Performance Strategy 2025-2028

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2023 World Champions Para Pair
Teri Blackburn + Julie O'Connell



our vision

To develop world class athletes who achieve consistently on the national and international stage

our mission

to ensure the right people
are working with the right talent,
within the right environment,
at the right time



2023 World Champions Para Pair
Teri Blackburn and Julie O'Connell



2023 World Silver Medallists Women's Triples
Tayla Bruce, Val Smith, Leane Poulson

our approach

- people and performance driven
- athlete led
- coach supported

2022 Commonwealth Games Bronze Medallists

Tayla Bruce, Val Smith, Selina Goddard,

Nicole Toomey, Katelyn Inch



our goal

Supporting our people to consistently succeed at pinnacle events



our investment

THE RIGHT TALENT

An investment in the right athletes, through a robust identification and selection process, utilising effective succession planning tools and ensuring alignment of development and performance programmes.

THE RIGHT PEOPLE

An investment in the right people to lead and deliver our world class programmes, on and off the green.

THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

An investment in the right culture and environment that challenges and celebrates success.

THE RIGHT TIME

Ensuring the right talent and the right people are consistently working together at the right times, to prepare, progress and perform.

Bowls New Zealand will make an investment in the right talent (athletes), through a robust identification and selection process, utilising established succession planning tools. This will ensure alignment of structured development and performance programmes, and an effective athlete performance plan process with the athletes.

the right talent

THE PATHWAY

Bowls New Zealand has a clear pathway for aspiring Blackjacks. This illustrates the pathway from Club Champion to Blackjacks World Champion, and has set clear performance tiers from which athletes can be identified and evaluated.



SUCCESSION PLANNING

Our World Class programme has a succession planning tool to manage change, predicated by athlete retirement, injury or loss of form.

ATHLETE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

To assist both coaches and selectors, a set of performance indicators has been created that ensures a clear, transparent, and objective way to select athletes.

These provide the Selectors and Coaches with a tool to identify, select and develop athletes for the Wider Training Squad. This includes Blackjacks, Development and Under 26 teams. The **Picture of Performance** is a simple but effective Talent ID matrix, outlining key attributes in identifying and confirming talent.

This **Picture of Performance** selection tool is invaluable in our communication strategy ensuring all athletes are aware of the requirements to make the squad and areas they may need to work on.

Technical ability with a minimum of 55% shot effectiveness	Tactical ability to read the head, green, opposition	Preparation on Northern Hemisphere greens
Supportive Network	Work Ethic	Work/Life Balance
International Experience (including loss)	Compatibility	Physical Health (particularly Para)
Quality Planning + Preparation	Ability to Reflect + Grow	Mental Strength + Resilience
Grit + Motivation	Current Performance	X Factor

Bowls New Zealand will continue to invest in the right people to lead and deliver our world-class programmes and campaigns, both on and off the green, leading to the 2025 World Cup, 2026 Commonwealth Games, 2027 World Championships, and 2028 World Cup.

the right people

NATIONAL HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM

Investment will continue in developing world-class Bowls New Zealand HP support personnel.

With support from Sport NZ and HPSNZ, we will continue to evolve the Bowls New Zealand performance coach academy and series of workshops that advance our coaches from technical and tactical advisors to world-class. Each of the national coaches will have personal development plans, similar to an athlete's performance plan. These plans will guide their progress and challenge their thinking. The Coaching Team is led by the National Head Coach, who supports and mentors the group of five Performance Coaches within our structure. Each of these Performance Coaches have responsibility for managing the progress of the Wider National Training Squad.

Our current lead coaches are: Mike Kernaghan, Gayle Melrose, Kevin Smith, Emily Belton and Graeme Rees.

Our High Performance Management team will lead the delivery of this strategy and campaign plans. This group currently includes:

- HP Manager – Julie Blake
- Head Coach – Mike Kernaghan
- CEO – Mark Cameron
- HP Consultant – John Quinn
- HP Mentor – Paul MacKinnon

NATIONAL SELECTORS

Four national selectors select the Wider National Training Squad, the Blackjacks, Development and Under 26 teams who will represent New Zealand at International events. Selection will be based on the balanced feedback of the performance coaches using appropriate Talent ID, Selection and Succession Planning tools (see section on 'Right Talent'). The Selection Panel utilises additional Talent ID support through a network of talent scouts based around New Zealand and Australia. The National Head Coach is the Convenor of Selectors.

SPORT SCIENCE

Supporting our world-class programme is a small group of sport science specialists (resource) that ensure we have the right bespoke environment supporting our coaches and talent. Delivering in the areas of mental skills, conditioning, nutrition and lifestyle factors, and performance analysis personnel.

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

Blackjacks campaigns, at Tier One and Tier Two level, have a designated leadership group of no more than five athletes. This athlete leadership group is encouraged to voice concerns to the CEO, HP Manager and Head Coach (Convenor of Selectors). A guidance workshop on how to operate as the leadership group will be established.

the right people

WIDER TRAINING SQUAD

Up to 45 athletes are invited into the Wider National Training Squad. This shall comprise (approximately) 20 male, 15 female and 10 para-athletes: with the squad being the main selection group for further Blackjacks honours. The athletes are selected for this squad by the National Selectors in conjunction with the Performance Coaches. All athletes own their individual performance plan and regularly communicate these with their coaches. This squad is reviewed annually, and the Selection Panel have the ability to add athletes they deem suitable during this time.

A culture of self-accountability will be promoted for this wider training squad.

PARA BOWLS

Para athletes have been fully immersed into the Bowls New Zealand world-class programme, which targeted the World Championships and Commonwealth Games for medal success. All performance coaches provide specific support for the Para athletes, including managing the role of Director for the vision impaired selection(s). Bowls New Zealand continues to cast the net wide for potential Para athletes that are not already identified in our system.



2023 World Champion winning moments



the right environment

Bowls New Zealand prioritises investment in building capability through the following:

1. Better use of modern sports science tools: mental, conditioning, nutrition and lifestyle factors, athlete performance plan, technology (coding and video), leadership, pre and post event reviews, debriefs
2. Develop the culture of performance coaching: professional development, performance analysis, technical and tactical support/expertise
3. The athlete pathway
4. Athlete communications
5. Recognising and supporting the wellbeing of athletes

TRAINING CAMPS

Bowls New Zealand will continue to adopt purposeful athlete and coach development training camps alongside short event preparation camps on greens. One aspect of these camps is to develop the mental side of the game for both the athletes and coaches, along with preparing disciplines for key events.

As we prepare for a World Champs and a Commonwealth Games in the United Kingdom, it is critical that we deliver a training environment on these slower grass greens. This equally applies to Hong Kong (2025 World Cup) which will be played on slow greens.

As we build and deliver these campaigns, access to the wider HPSNZ network would be appreciated. This includes: sports science, nutrition, lifestyle, conditioning guidance, leadership, medical access to sports doctors/physio, and para support.

MENTAL SKILLS

Each high performance coach has access to the Bowls New Zealand mental skills specialist. The role of this individual is varied, but ultimately aimed at ensuring a coach has the tools to ensure an athlete is mentally strong and focused on success. Where necessary, the mental skills specialist will also work with selected athletes.

LEADERSHIP

Bowls New Zealand will invest resource to build leaders within our high performance environment; through dedicated team building and leadership training opportunities. Lack of, and understanding of, leadership on the green and coaching at critical moments under pressure continues to be key areas for improvement.

CONDITIONING / NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE

Athletes are responsible for their own conditioning, nutrition and lifestyle programmes as part of their performance plan. Each athlete provides regular reporting to their HP coach. Annual up-skilling workshops will be made available to Performance Coaches via specialist resource.

ATHLETE PERFORMANCE PLANS

All athletes own their Plan and provide these to their respective high performance coach on a regular basis. The format and style of the Plan is suited to the athlete, appreciating it needs to cover key criteria.

the right environment

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Bowls New Zealand continues to invest in a simplified coding tool (app based) suitable for use by all high performance coaching staff during games. Bowls New Zealand will seek to invest in video analysis tools suitable for use by all high performance coaches and athletes to utilise at training and games.

PERFORMANCE COACHING

High performance coaches and athletes will buy-in to a culture whereby coaches are proactive in their feedback and communication with athletes. This is especially applicable on green, where coaches are encouraged to engage with athletes during a game, providing real time feedback; in short, effective intervention.

PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

Playing for New Zealand means our athletes will need to support themselves financially. Bowls New Zealand will endeavour to allocate our top athletes with funding for travel, accommodation and food, as available funds dictate. Bowls New Zealand will also seek commercial support for our campaigns and HP athletes, along with any individualised funding available through HPSNZ (either TAPS or Elite Training Grants).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE COACHES

Bowls New Zealand endeavours to invest in the professional development of high performance coaches, as directed by the coaches individual performance plans.

ATHLETE PROGRAMME AND PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES

Each identified athlete, with their high performance coach will produce an athlete programme. This shall include targeted events that Bowls New Zealand may support within its limited resources. An athletes programme needs to challenge the athlete in a variety of conditions and opposition. Each athlete's performance at events will be centrally tracked and available to the national selectors for review.

COMMUNICATION

A communication framework will be designed to ensure channels and policy are adhered to. This framework will clearly outline who communicates with whom. This is a work in progress.

WELLBEING

The relationships formed between athletes and management build trust and honesty when incorporating rest, recovery, and personal interests. Maintaining a healthy balance between training, competition, and personal life (including full time employment and/or study, plus family commitments) is essential for sustainability in achieving long term goals.

Wellbeing check points will include:

- Individual plans supporting athlete on and off green goals
- Regular coach check-in's (including Athlete Plans)
- HP Manager check in on individual wellbeing
- Vitae Services additional support

PRIOR LEARNINGS

As we build towards new medal success, it is important we reflect on learning from prior events and campaigns. The 2022-24 cycle delivered the following reflections:

- Achieved an athlete led culture within women's section, which delivered 4 medals at the World Championships (including overall women's Gold).
- The new selections in the men's disciplines brought one bronze medal at the World Championships. There is still work to be done within the men's culture; which currently evidences a clear lack of natural leaders.
- Widening the search for para-athletes led to a World Championship gold medal, with the inclusion of Teri Blackburn and Julie O'Connell.

Key themes from prior campaigns (2022-24):

- Player led culture
- Inclusion (not separation) of para-athletes
- Pre and Post each campaign at major events, our players and HP support staff will be surveyed on key aspects of campaign delivery, performance and wellbeing.

the right environment

CAMPAIGN PLANS

A dedicated campaign plan will be developed for the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Scotland and 2027 World Championships in England once inclusion and formats are confirmed. Each campaign plan will articulate how the performance components are to be executed, i.e., how Bowls New Zealand will achieve the targeted performance at the Commonwealth Games and World Championships.

Each Campaign Plan will consider the following areas:

- Objective and Targets
- Milestones
- Resourcing
- Identification and support of key athletes
- Campaign Risks, Gaps and Mitigation Strategies
- Findings from previous campaigns
- Expectation of athletes
- Expectation of management
- Budget

Key risks for the 2025-2028 cycle include:

- Bowls not being included in 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games
- Not enough international competition for the wider training squad
- Not enough preparation time on overseas greens.

Key campaigns are:

- 2025 World Cup (Hong Kong)
- 2026 Commonwealth Games (Scotland)
- 2027 World Championships (England)
- 2028 World Cup (TBA)

As we build and deliver these campaigns, access to the wider HPSNZ network would be appreciated. This includes: sports science, nutrition, lifestyle, conditioning guidance, leadership, medical access to sports doctors/physio, and para support.

Event	Date	Team	Target
Oceania Challenge	2024-2028	Under 26	3 medals
Trans-Tasman	February 2025	Blackjacks & Development	2 trophies
World Cup	December 2025	Blackjacks	2 medals
Trans-Tasman	February 2026	Blackjacks & Development	2 trophies
Commonwealth Games	UK summer 2026	Blackjacks	1 medal
Trans-Tasman	February 2027	Blackjacks & Development	3 trophies
World Championships	UK summer 2027	Blackjacks	3 medals
Trans-Tasman	February 2028	Blackjacks & Development	2 trophies
World Cup	December 2028	Blackjacks	2 medals

the right time

Investing in the Right Talent, the Right People, and the Right Environment all must align with the Right Time.

Ensuring the right people are working with the athletes on their own individual plans when they need them, at the right time (micro view).

Aligning preparation for pinnacle events with key tournaments and training camps (macro view).



2023 World Champions

Teri Blackbourn, Tayla Bruce, Julie O'Connell



2023 World Bronze Medallists Men's Fours

Lance Pascoe, Tony Grantham, Sheldon Bagrie-Howley, Chris Le Lievre



2023 World Bronze Medallists Women's Fours

Val Smith, Leeane Poulson, Katelyn Inch, Selina Goddard

medal success

Commonwealth Games, World Championships and World Cup

