

# PLAYER PROFILES

## CLARE McCAUL

*21 year-old Clare McCaul thinks bowls is a game which suits her personality.*

Prior to her entry into bowls, McCaul was a top class squash player in Wellington – good enough to rise to a B2 grading and represent her province at senior level. It also suited her lively personality.

But, through the college sport, she had a go at bowls and found it suited her fine.

So, while squash lost one of its top youngsters, bowls gained a youngster who has become the latest young female player the New Zealand selectors have taken notice of. So much so, in fact, that McCaul was named in this year's national training squad with all eyes looking ahead to the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in 2010.

Clare is the type of young woman who gives everything a go but even she admits that it became a bit busy when she played both sports and attended university. "It got a bit busy trying to juggle two degrees and squash, as well as bowls," she said. She has gained her Bachelor of Science and she is currently doing honours in Applied Statistics.

From her very earliest days on a bowling green, McCaul showed talent and quickly elevated into the usual pathway of playing well at secondary school and Kittyhawks (under 20) level. "In my first year in a club, I played in the Youth Commonwealth Games," she said.

McCaul admits that she has been surprised at the rapidity with which she's risen through the ranks in bowls. "I didn't expect to be where I am today, but I am highly ambitious; I'm very competitive – I always have been," she says. "I'd love to represent New Zealand as a Black Jack and carry on for many, many years." Even at this early stage of her career, McCaul has had a taste of international competition and found that the keenness of competition, especially in her Trans-Tasman outings against Australia, has suited the competitive side of her nature.

What happens to McCaul in the future, is entirely up to her. Like the other young members in the national squad, she's been told she has been picked for her "raw talent" and to give her a chance to learn about the high performance expectations, if she is to progress as a fully-fledged international player.

She accepts this situation and there's a steely determination in her attitude which suggest that we'll all hear a lot more of Clare McCaul, the "pocket battleship of New Zealand bowls" in the years to come.



## JAMIE HILL

*When Jamie Hill (28) calls upon his experience to help him while representing New Zealand, his background is so expansive it ranges from playing on club greens from the age of "eight or nine", to the intense international competitiveness of professional bowls in the United Kingdom.*

Hill says his upbringing and allegiance lies with New Zealand bowls. "I was pretty much brought up with bowls," he said. "I started when I was about eight or nine. I used to play cricket or soccer in the park and then Dad would go to the bowling club. When I was finished, I'd go over to the club and roll some bowls down the green."

"Dad" is Neville Hill, who is acknowledged as one of the real bowling talents in the country, meaning that young Jamie always had the pedigree to perform. "I joined Okahu Bay when I was 13," he recalls. "My first Club Championship was with Rowan Brassey, Ross Haresnape and Joe Posa, as lead, so it wasn't too bad! Richard Girvan, myself and the ol' man won the Auckland Champion of Champion triples. It was my first centre title and I'd just turned 15!"

As a youngster he shot through the grades. Hill won full New Zealand representation in 2003 as part of a tour which included the English Bowling Association's centennial championships and again for the Asia Pacific Championships. Later, he teamed up with Steve Posa and Russell Meyer at an indoor test tri-series at Tweed Heads, against Wales and Australia in 2005.

Hill says his PBA experiences have stood him in good stead for any international bowls he might play (he rose to a PBA ranking of 15th). "I don't fear any of those guys and I know I can compete with them," he says. "It helped to get a lot of rubbish out of my head – all you have to worry about is getting your bowls close, not about who you are playing."

Hill is part of the national training squad and his direction is aimed at regaining his place in the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games team. That ambition is also driven by the fact that he didn't enjoy the success expected of him when he led for Brassey in the pairs at the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games. "I had a crack last time and that turned out to be a disaster. I want to put it right", he said. "I hope I get the chance, I've got one foot in the door".

Hill, who is greenkeeper at his own Rawhiti Club in Auckland, loves his job and emphasises that much of his lifestyle revolves around the sport of bowls.