

# Team Scotland Mark 1 Year to Gold Coast

## *Team Scotland celebrate 1 Year to Commonwealth Games with Volleyball Challenge*



Today (Tuesday 4 April) marks one year to go until the next Commonwealth Games get underway in Gold Coast, Australia, where Team Scotland will be aiming for its most successful ever overseas Games. In the region of 220 athletes will be proudly flying the flag for Scotland down under, with qualifying events continuing throughout 2017 and early 2018.

Amongst the 18 sports to be contested will be the new sport of Beach Volleyball (men's and women's Pairs) designed to show off the Gold Coast's 'trademark' beaches and Scotland is aiming to be represented in both events.

Despite us having some of the finest white sandy beaches in the world, unlike Australia, Scotland is not often viewed as the 'natural home' of Beach Volleyball. However, Scottish Volleyball is thrilled to see the sport included on the programme for the very first time and is making great strides with preparations.



Two new permanent courts have recently been installed at the iconic Portobello Beach near Edinburgh by Edinburgh Beach Volleyball Club with support from the local community and City of Edinburgh Council. And leading the charge for Scotland is the London 2012 women's volleyball captain of the indoor game, Lynne Beattie (Edinburgh) and partner and former British champion, Melissa Courts (Edinburgh), who have re-focused their training on the pairs, beach version of this exciting sport.

The duo have recently returned from a strong show of form in Sydney, Australia where they recorded Scotland's first-ever win in the first round of the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour against strong opposition from Australia, New Zealand, USA, Japan and Germany.

Excited about the new challenge in her life, Beattie, who also works as the sport's regional development officer, said: "I think it's every sports person's dream to compete at an Olympics, and to do it at home and to be captain was an unbelievable experience," she said, "But I would also love the opportunity to represent Team Scotland at the Commonwealth Games, something I never thought would happen.

"Last year when the news came out that Beach Volleyball was being included in Gold Coast 2018, is when we really started to work hard. Mel and I both work, so we have to fit in training sessions in the cold and dark or whatever the weather, but it is great to have this permanent facility here at Portobello.

"We've set Gold Coast as our goal and we hope the win in Sydney last month is just the start of it. We're going to play in as many events as we can this summer and try and qualify for the Games."

Also aiming for selection for the men are the top Scottish pair of Robin Miedzybrodzki (Edinburgh) and Seain Cooke (Perth).

Amongst the other firsts for Gold Coast is the parity between men's and women's participation, with the same number of medal events for both sexes. Likewise the Para-Sport programme has been given a further boost from the enhanced programme offered by Glasgow, to a total of 35 events across six sports (Swimming, Athletics, Cycling, Lawn Bowls, Triathlon, Powerlifting).



Team Scotland Chef de Mission, Jon Doig QBE, who will lead the team at the Games, said: "It is really exciting to celebrate one year to go until the next Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast and to think that this time next year our team of around 220 athletes will be marching into the Carrara Stadium for the Opening Ceremony.

"Scottish athletes from all the different sports love the opportunity to come together as Team Scotland for the Commonwealth Games and we believe our strong team ethos plays a big part in the team's overall success.

“We are aiming to have our most successful ever overseas Games, winning more than the 29 medals achieved at Melbourne 2006. We believe this is a realistic and ambitious target, given that there are largely the same sports as on the 2006 programme and at the same time of year. We believe our plans are well on track and already we are seeing some exciting Scottish performances as athletes bid to meet the rigorous selection standards set at top six in the Commonwealth.

“Overall we are confident we will have a strong and highly motivated team and we are looking forward to what we are sure will be a fantastic Games in Gold Coast next year.”