

Curling – Aitken defends doubles title with new partner

Gina Aitken from Edinburgh expects quality opposition when she defends the Scottish Mixed Doubles Curling Championships in Perth.

The 26-year-old formed a partnership with Scott Andrews (pictured) two years ago but this will be the first time they have contested the nationals together as the 2014 Olympic silver medallist was forced to withdraw from last year's event through injury.

He could only offer support from the sidelines as Aitken claimed her fifth Scottish title partnered by late stand-in Duncan Menzies.

Andrews said: "There is no doubt that it is the strongest field yet and we will need to be at our best."

The opposition includes Scottish men's championship winning skip Bruce Mouat who partners Jen Dodds, part of Eve Muirhead's Scottish women's championship winning team.

Mouat has a proven track record of mastering the ice at the Dewars Centre venue and said: "We have had some good practice."

Muirhead ices with Bobby Lammie and said: "Bobby and I are both coming off wins at the Scottish Championships, but so are three of the other pairs that are playing, so it will be exciting to see how that works out."

“Claiming the Aberdeen title with Bobby has given us a lot of confidence and shows us that we are capable of beating all the teams that we will face this week.

“We also put in a good performance when we played together at the (Ryder Cup style) Continental Cup for Europe against Canada beating Ben Hebert and Rachel Homan who are both strong players.”

Former Scottish Mixed Doubles Champions Jane Stirling and Fraser Kingan are also in the line-up.