



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of Birmingham students and alumni selected for Gold Coast Commonwealth Games

Six students and eighteen alumni have been selected for this year's Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia, across a broad range of sports and representative nations. For some it will be their debut Commonwealth Games experience, whilst others are continuing their successes from Glasgow.

Representing Team England in the 1500m, sports scholar Sarah McDonald is also a fourth-year medical student, taking time off from her demanding academic schedule to concentrate on her first Commonwealth Games. She secured her place after reaching the semi-finals at the August 2017 IAAF World Championships, and in February this year smashed her indoor personal best by four seconds at the New Balance Indoor Grand Prix in Boston, which saw her rise up the ranks from 26th on the indoor women's rankings to 9th in the world. Sarah said about her selection:

'I've wanted to go to a major games since I started in the sport - so I'm really excited about going and experiencing a multi-sport championship and being with the whole team in the athlete village. I've never been to Australia either so I'm very excited about that!'

Also taking on her first Commonwealth Games for England is 3000m Steeplechaser and alumni, Iona Lake, who qualified for the team back in 2017 when she competed in Zagreb and achieved a lifetime best of 09.39.03 - six seconds inside the Games qualifying time.

Birmingham-based Bethan Partridge, the Birchfield Harriers' highjumper who graduated with a Sport, Physical Education and Coaching Sciences degree in 2013, is returning to the competition, following an 8th place in the qualifying rounds at Glasgow 2014. Alumna Gemma Bridge will also be representing England in the 20km Race Walk.

In addition, six out of the sixteen-strong England women's hockey team heading to Gold Coast are UoB students and alumni. Following her silver success at Glasgow 2014, Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences student Lily Owsley MBE was selected to join the team for what would have been her second Commonwealth Games, but devastatingly, a recent injury has meant she will have to miss the Games. Fellow Rio 2016 Team GB teammates Sophie Bray MBE and Ellie Watton have also been selected, as well as alumni Sarah Haycroft, and finally Sport, Physical Education and Coaching Sciences alumni Anna Toman (graduated in 2014), Emily Defroand (2016) and Hannah Martin (2016), for whom it will be their Commonwealth Games debut.

Also preparing for their first Commonwealth Games are students Jordan Trebert and Elise Dixon, who will be representing Guernsey and Jersey respectively in badminton. Jordan, a third year Law student who will compete in singles and mixed doubles, has had his sights set on the 2018 Games since 2014, dedicating much of his time working towards meeting the criteria for selection.

First year Mathematics student Elise, who will be competing in all singles, doubles and mixed doubles with a focus on the latter, was delighted with her achievement at such a young age, and has been using the University's badminton club to challenge and push herself as a player. Lorraine Cole, Head Badminton Coach, says she is delighted for both players:

'They've worked extremely hard towards meeting the level set in the criteria, and are now fully utilising the University's facilities, with strength and conditioning training and encouraging their partners with whom they've been selected to come and do a preparation camp here at the University. It's fantastic that we have two academics that have balanced their workload and training to achieve this. I'm so excited for them!'

Selected for Scotland's Women's Hockey team is second-year Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences student, Amy Costello. She has been playing for the University of Birmingham Women's Hockey Club since joining in 2016, the same year she received her first cap for Scotland. Amy says The Commonwealth Games has been her target ever since she got that first cap.

'I was absolutely thrilled, proud, excited to be selected - and just felt like all the hard work and tough sessions in the gym and on the pitch had paid off!'

Also selected for Scottish representation in women's hockey is alumni and teammate Bex Condie, who will also be Scotland's Vice Captain. Bex was also a Sport and Exercise Science student from 2008 - 2011, but continued to play for the University of Birmingham's National League squad after her graduation and captained the side from 2014-2017. In her nine years playing for the University she played in three BUCS finals, winning two Golds and a Silver – and helping the side progress into the Premier League. Bex says she has dreamt of playing in the Commonwealth Games ever since she started playing.

"I was overwhelmed with emotion, all the hard work, sweat and tears were totally worth it. It truly is a dream come true to represent Scotland at a Commonwealth Games."

Hockey scholars Hywel Jones and Delyth Thomas will also be heading to the Games to represent Wales. Delyth is a second year Biological Science student and is an integral member of the women's hockey scholarship team, and Hywel has been a scholar since enrolling at UoB but only gained his first senior cap for Wales this year, so it is a phenomenal achievement to already be representing his country at the Commonwealth Games. Joining Hywel and Delyth in representing Team Wales are alumni Jonny Gooch, Xenna Hughes, David Kettle and Tina Evans.

The University of Birmingham also have a number of alumni representing Wales, including triathlete, Non Stanford, who despite winning the 2013 ITU World Triathlon Championship and representing Team GB at the Rio Olympics, will be making her debut appearance as Welsh Team Captain at the Commonwealth Games after missing out on Glasgow 2014 due to injury.

Also representing Wales will be Physiotherapy alumna and cyclist Ciara Horne, who will compete in the Team Pursuit; Chris Silver in the Mixed Triathlon Relay; and Joel Makin, whose squash career also allows him to play in the University's Premier Squash League team.

ENDS

For further enquiries: Harriet Cockill – h.cockill@bham.ac.uk / 0121 4147526 / 07738494099

Notes to the editor:

- The University of Birmingham is currently ranked in the top ten universities for sport in the UK.
- The University have invested in new indoor and outdoor sport facilities, including the £55 million Sport & Fitness Club which opened May 2017, new pitches and a pavilion.
- The University of Birmingham is ranked amongst the world's top 100 institutions, its work brings people from across the world to Birmingham, including researchers and teachers and more than 5,000 international students from over 150 countries.