



Team Ireland Sub Committee

AGM Report for 2024/2025

Committee Members

Chairperson: Seán Dempsey

Secretary: Vacant, formerly Elaine Kelly

Treasurer: Jamie Byrne

Executive Summary

The past 12 months has been a very challenging year for Team Ireland. This year saw the inclusion of the Northern Irish bowlers into the Team Ireland events as part of the 32 County NGB initiative. This saw an increase in the number of bowlers competing in Team Ireland which while successful created its own challenges. The biggest challenge for Team Ireland was the lack of volunteering and key positions being left open until the start of the 2025.

Key Highlights

TI Tournament Success: Throughout the 2024/2025 season, Team Ireland has arranged a total of 8 ranked tournaments – all of which have been concluded. During the season we saw a significant increase in participation in our tournaments, with an average of 20% increase in membership participation compared to the previous year. The largest Team Ireland event was the event in Charlestown on April 13th which saw 39 bowlers compete.

This growth reflects our efforts in reaching out to new demographics and engaging with our existing members.



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International Tournaments:

Adult Triple Crown: From Thursday 20th – Sunday 22nd September 2024 Team Ireland competed in the Vitality Membership Adult Triple Crown 2024, hosted by Northern Ireland in Dundonald International IceBowl. Official training started two months in advance of the tournament, having two official coaches on board to help train the 6 men and 6 women that would be competing in the event. The top 2 ranked men after the conclusion of the 23/24 ranking season were granted automatic spots on the team, the remaining places were granted to the top 4 finishers in the Adult Triple Crown Roll-Off held at the start of June 2024. At the 2024 AGM, a vote took place to amend the constitution regarding eligibility to represent Ireland in international events. This constitution change led to some challenges regarding eligibility of particular bowlers. More explanation will be provided under the “Challenges Faced” section of the report. No Roll-Off was deemed necessary for the women’s squad as out of the seven eligible players, one withdrew due to availability issues for the time of the event in September. This is still a notable improvement on the previous year where the women’s squad had to be comprised of an additional senior and two additional junior members. Team Ireland had notable success at the event but still faced some challenges on the lanes, details of which can be found in the manager’s report of the event. Some key learnings were taken away following the event and have been used to help shape the “NATIONAL RANKING TOUR Rules & Regulations and Selection Criteria 2024-2025”. Most notably, eliminating Roll-Offs as a selection method for the ATC squads. It has been found that roll-offs are a time consuming and unsuitable method of squad selection. The elimination of roll-offs should streamline the selection process and allow Team Ireland to start official training for the ATC sooner, following the completion of the Ranking season.

Team Ireland achieved a total of six medals at the 2024 ATC. Including; Gold in Men’s Doubles (Alan Bride/Taylor Williams), Gold in Men’s Trios (Alana Bride/Seán Dempsey/Taylor Williams), Silver in Men’s All Events (Taylor Williams), Silver in Men’s Team (Alan Bride/Anto Byrne/Seán Dempsey/Jason Byrnes/Taylor Williams), Bronze in Men’s Singles (Alan Bride) and Bronze in Ladies’ Doubles (Aimee Kellegher/Donna Brady). Team Ireland finished second in the overall shield, accumulating a total of 795.5 points. 352 contributed by the Ladies and 443.5 contributed by the men.



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European Men's Championships: Team Ireland fielded a squad of 6 men for the 2025 European Men's Championships due to take place June 4th to 15th, in Aalborg, Denmark. A successful fundraising was organised on May 10th in ALSAA bowl to help fund the cost of travel and accommodation. The team have been together regularly with 8 sessions already taking place.

U30's Euro Nations Challenge:

For the first time Team Ireland fielded a team to the u30s Euro Nations Challenge, consisting of 4 men and 4 women. As it was Team Ireland's first time sending a team, a criterion had not yet been set and so roll-offs were held to decide which players would make the squad for the tournament. Two official coaches were brought onboard and training for the event started 2 months in advance of the tournament. Hosted by Scotland in LA Bowl, Ayr, the competition ran from August 9th to August 11th and saw four nations competing. Scotland, Iceland, Ireland and Cymru. Team Ireland had great success in the tournament winning Gold in the Men's Singles (Seán Dempsey), Gold in the Men's Doubles (Seán Dempsey/Sean Staines), Gold in the Men's All Events (Seán Dempsey), Silver in the Men's Masters (Seán Dempsey), Silver in Men's All Events (Sean Staines), Silver in Men's Singles (Sean Staines), Silver in Ladies' All Events (Hannah Masterson), Silver in Ladies' Doubles (Hannah Masterson/Abby McKeever), Silver in Ladies Team (Hannah Masterson/Abby McKeever/Shaua Collins/Ciara Lawlor), Silver in Mixed Doubles (Seán Dempsey/Abby McKeever), Bronze in Men's Masters (Dillon McKeown), Bronze in Men's Team (Seán Dempsey/Sean Staines/Andrew Grant/Dillon McKeown), Ladies' Masters (Hannah Masterson) and Bronze in Mixed Doubles (Sean Staines/Hannah Masterson).

As well as all the above medals, the men's squad won the men's overall shield and Team Ireland won the overall Men's and Women's u30 Euro Nations Challenge Cup. With 200 points contributed by the Ladies and 225.5 contributed by the men. A Great success to win the overall cup our first time competing in the event.

Team Ireland is sending a men's and women's team for the U30's Euro Nations Challenge 2025 from 31st July to 4th August, at LA Bowl in Ayr, Scotland. In Hope to defend our title as 2024 champions. The selection and eligibility criteria were relaxed this year due to lack of clarity on the requirements for U30s (see challenges for more information).



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Challenges Faced

At the 2024 AGM, a vote was held to change the constitution regarding eligibility to represent Ireland at international events. This change in the constitution was put forward so that some active Senior bowlers (who did not hold Irish passports) would be able to represent Ireland at international level. The vote was passed. It is now no longer a requirement to hold an Irish passport so long as one has been resident in Ireland/Northern Ireland for the previous 2 years and have not represented any other nation in international competition in that time. This change in the constitution was effective immediately following the 2024 AGM. The Team Ireland Sub-Committee at the time did not wish to amend the 23/24 selection criteria so late in the season. Because the selection criteria wasn't amended to reflect the change in the constitution, a player was passed up for an automatic spot on the Adult Triple Crown squad that they had earned. This player was offered a last-minute opportunity to participate in the roll-off which they declined. This ultimately led to the player playing for another nation in the tournament.

During the 2024/2025 there were several resignations from the committee, this led to strain and difficulties in completing vital work for the organisation and running of events. The Charlestown tournament in February needed to be cancelled and rearranged for April. Due to limited availability of dates, this event clashed with a Senior ranking event. The financial records for 2024 were not actively recorded and required the assistant from the Executive Treasurer to reconcile the year 2024 accounts.

The selection and eligibility criteria were issued too late for the season with 3 events already being completed before being published. This created issues with the U30's not understanding that Team Ireland event participation was part of the selection process. To address this, Team Ireland needed to relax the U30's selection process as a one off.

The rules for scratch and handicap changed throughout the season and this caused stress and confusion for bowlers. This led to complaints from bowlers feeling disadvantaged from the introduction then removal of extra 8 pins per game for female bowler, while handicapped bowlers did not believe that they had a fair chance to compete when handicaps were derived from 80% of 200. The Charlestown tournament rules was set up in a way to address these concerns and following from some positive feedback, we now believe we can strike a happy middle ground to satisfy the majority of competitors.



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Future Plans

Looking ahead, we are focused on several key initiatives to further strengthen our association and promote the growth of tenpin bowling.

1. Community Outreach – Moving into the 2024/2025 season Team Ireland aim to improve engagement with our members so that active members have a say in the running of events and giving non-active member an awareness of what events they are able to compete in
2. Team Ireland Coaching & Tournament Preparation – Implement the changes applied to the 2024/2025 Eligibility and Selection Criteria which will ensure panel members are engaged in training sessions and coaching in advance of team selection.
3. U30s Selection Criteria – Implement measures to ensure that U30s are aware participation in Team Ireland is a requirement if they want to be eligible for team.
4. Recreational Bowler Outreach – Reach out to non-members who bowl in leagues and want to know how to develop their bowling. This will help to boost membership and participation in development sessions and Team Ireland events.
5. Clear and consistent Team Ireland event rules – Implement at the start of the season clear rules for scratch and handicap positions. This is to include the extra pins available for women bowlers in the scratch section, the max ceiling and percentage for handicap. We will also look into whether tournaments averages should be used for events rather basing averages off best league average. The plan would be to put this to a vote from Team Ireland members over the summer.
6. Active recruitment for Team Ireland members with the goal of having members help support and run Team Ireland events throughout the season.
7. Development of a Team Ireland fundraising panel with the aim of supporting Team Ireland panel financially with international travel.
8. Implement a plan for the development of women in bowling with the expectation of sending a team to the European Women's Championship in 2026 10-21 June in Odense, Denmark.



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Final Thanks

Team Ireland would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have helped support the successful running of Team Ireland for this 2024-2025 season.

The Executive members

Score keepers Leanne Byrne, Emer Byrnes

Team Manager Gareth Shannon

Team Coaches Gillian Duignan & Gareth Shannon

ALSAA Bowl staff & Mark Delany

Charlestown Bowl Staff & Martin Smyth & Grainne Loftus

Blanchardstown Bowl staff & Nicola Staines

Dundonald Ice Bowl Staff, Mechanic Staff, Keeva Stewart & Eddie Best

We look forward to even more successful Team Ireland workings in the coming 2025-2026 season.

Yours in Sport

Team Ireland

Seán, Jamie