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II Commonwealth Tenpin Bowling Championships, Cyprus - February 2005

CYPRUS was simply sensational. With a unique blend of Mediterranean warmth and hospitality, fantastic food and entertainment and a Bowling Championship that ran like clockwork, participants, officials and supporters were unanimous in their praise for the event.

Along with Cosmic Bowling Centre proprietor, Yiannakis Anthimou and a team of local and international volunteers, the CTBC Organising Committee of **Marinos Papadopoulos, Roger Christofides** and **Marios Nicolaidis** presented a memorable tournament, described by WTBA President, **Heikki Sarso** as a “strong step forward for bowling”.

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Commonwealth Tenpin Bowling Federation and CTBC

Following a successful inaugural Championship held in Stirling, Scotland in August 2002, a dedicated organisation was formed with its prime focus being to successfully stage biennial Commonwealth Championships that will ultimately meld into the official Commonwealth Games program. There are 72 countries in the Commonwealth, representing over a third of the world's population.

The second Commonwealth Tenpin Bowling Championship, hosted by the Cyprus Bowling Federation, was held from 14 -19 February at the state of the art Centre in the coastal city of Paphos. Originally scheduled for late 2004, the Championship was rescheduled to February 2005 following the sport's inclusion on the program of the Commonwealth Youth Games, staged in Bendigo, Australia in December 2004.

At the Cyprus Championship, bowlers from 16 Commonwealth nations contested officially sanctioned Commonwealth Games Federation Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in Men's and Women's Singles, Men's and Women's Doubles, Mixed Doubles and Teams. All Events totals determined the 6 top-placed male and female bowlers eligible for the Masters Final.

PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BOWL !

Inspired by bowling's unofficial motto, recently coined by WTBA President, Heikki Sarso – PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BOWL ! – the Organising Committee invited all non-participants to a light-hearted house shoes, house ball 2-game tournament on the night before Official Practice began.

The competition saw some unexpected bowling talent emerge, but high game honours and the trophy was snared by none other than WTBA President, Heikki Sarso, with consistent 190, 189 games.

The following evening, the II Commonwealth Tenpin Bowling Championship was officially opened in a colourful ceremony by guest of honour, Cyprus Minister of the Interior, Mr. Andreas Christou.

An impressive march-out of teams from the sixteen countries present and an entertaining presentation of both traditional and modern Cypriot dance, including a memorable rendition of Zorba the Greek by 10 dancers in bowling shoes, were highlights of the Opening ceremony.

Day One – Singles

Former World Masters Champion, Ann Maree Putney led throughout the first event of the Championship, earning a convincing win in the Women's Singles. Lines of 181, 247 and 221 in the first block on short oil, followed by another strong 640 in the remaining three games on long oil clinched the first Gold medal for Australia. Canada's Caroline Lagrange settled for Silver on 1222 while Singapore's Evelyn Chan Lu Ee thwarted Malaysia's medal hopes by finishing a single pin ahead of Shalin Zulkifli on 1191.

Billy Nimick from Belfast seized the first, and what proved to be the only Gold medal for Northern Ireland in the Men's Singles finishing with 1247, a mere 4 pins ahead of Malaysia's Zulmazran Zulkifli, with Jason Walsh from Australia a close third on 1238.

Day Two – Doubles

Singapore duo Jennifer Tan Bee Leng and Evelyn Chan Lu Ee maintained their strong performance on the morning's Short Oil pattern to overtake the first block leaders, Australia and win the Gold medal with a 2426 6-game total in the Women's Doubles event.

Canada's Caroline LaGrange and Samantha Wong also bowled consistently with almost identical averages for both blocks to slip past the Aussie pair of Ann Maree Putney and Jayde Flanagan by just four pins to win Silver, finishing on 2368.

Malaysia's Zulmazran Zulkifli and Alex Liew streaked to a decisive win and the Men's Doubles Gold medal. After overtaking the Scottish pair, Mark Hutton and Frank Margiotta who lead after Game One, the Malaysians held grimly to the top spot for the rest of the match, finishing on 2473.

Strong finishes in Game 6 by Northern Ireland's Billy Nimick and Kevin Horton elevated them into second place on 2451, relegating the Canadian duo of George Lambert and Tyrel Rose to the Bronze with 2434. It was the second CTBF Silver for the Northern Ireland pair in Men's Doubles, after finishing runner-up to England in the 2002 Championships in Stirling, Scotland.

Day Three – Teams

The Malaysian team stormed home with a stunning 917 series in Game 6 of the Teams event to clinch the second Gold medal for Malaysia. A spirited 863 final series by the Canadian team earned the Canadians Silver with 4873, while Australia had to settle for its third Bronze of the tournament with a 4866 final score.

It was a decisive win for the Malaysians, with a comfortable 144 pin margin ahead of the runners-up. "Overall, we bowled well – adjusted well to the lanes" said Malaysian National Champion, Shalin Zulkifli.

Coach, Chris Batson, added his view – "I know what changes these four bowlers made to get where they got, and it's not little things, it's big things" he said. "Alex changed the way he follows through, Wendy changed her approach, Zul changed his release and Shalin made the biggest change of all, to one hand on the ball" said Batson that evening,... "these things aren't easy to do", he added.

Day Four – Perfect finish to Mixed Doubles

A perfect game by Malaysia's Zulmazran Zulkifli provided a storybook finale to the Mixed Doubles event. An exuberant crowd of players and spectators were momentarily hushed before erupting into cheering and applause as the 21-year old Zulkifli threw the final Strike, while dozens of cameras also captured the record-breaking achievement.

Earlier, teammates Alex Liew and Wendy Chai had top-scored in Group A on 2433 with Singapore's Lee Yu Wen and Jennifer Tan Bee Leng second on 2375 and Malta's Sue Abela and Raymond Falzon Reale third with 2372. The Group B pairs from Canada, Malaysia and Australia edged out Singapore and Malta, with the final medal line-up in the Mixed Doubles shared between Malaysia (Gold and Bronze) and Canada (Silver).

It's the sixth 300 game for 2003 World Tenpin Team Cup Gold medallist Zulkifli, who has been bowling for seven years. "This is the first one in an offshore

tournament and it's part of my job to entertain the spectators – I think I did a good job today” he said, smiling.

Day Five –Masters

Top-seed, Shalin Zulkifli from Malaysia shot a near flawless 279 in Game One of the Grand Final on her way to Gold in the Women's Masters. Zulkifli then reinforced her supremacy over Canadian bowler, Caroline Lagrange with a decisive 216-184 in Game Two.

The preliminary single game matches of the Women's stepladder finals saw England's Donna Adams initially defeat teammate Jo Harries 237-224, then Sue Abela from Malta 212-203 before Canada's Caroline Lagrange interrupted England's 2004 top-ranked bowler's path to medal glory with a 193-177 score.

21 year-old Lagrange from Notre-Dame-des-Pins in Quebec, then overcame Aussie champion Ann Maree Putney from Newcastle on the Long Oil pattern 235-196 before facing the in-form Zulkifli for the final, best-of-three game match.

The victory gave Shalin Zulkifli her third Gold medal for the Championship, following wins in the Teams and Mixed Doubles events earlier in the week.

Canada's George Lambert IV stormed home in the last game of the Men's Masters grand final against top-seed Alex Liew from Malaysia to secure the final Gold medal of the II Commonwealth Tenpin Bowling Championships. Team-mate and 300-shooter, Zulmazran Zulkifli rounded out the medal placings in the Men's division with the Bronze.

The all-Aussie first match in the Men's Masters saw Ballina's Jason Walsh advance to the next round at the expense of 23 year-old Queenslander, Brandon Qualischefski. Fourth seed, Billy Nimick from Northern Ireland then threw down the gauntlet to Walsh with a solid seven in a row, and an open sixth frame sealed Walsh's fate with a 277-210 loss.

Ultimate winner, George Lambert then came out firing, shooting nine in a row to defeat Nimick 276-223 in the third round. Lambert overcame Malaysia's Zulmazran Zulkifli in the semi final with another eight in a row, spare, strike, spare onslaught, 269-245.

Despite a shaky start with two open frames in the first game of the grand final, top seed Alex Liew from Malaysia recovered with three strikes and two spares before neatly converting a 7,6,10 split in the eight frame. Lambert also faltered initially, with three open frames in the first game of the best of 3-game grand final, losing 168-190. The lead see-sawed between the two bowlers but three solid strikes delivered Lambert a single pin victory in the second game, 216-215.

In Game Three, both bowlers had open frames early but in a down-to-the-wire finish, 25 year-old Lambert from Hamilton, Ontario clinched the Gold, 220-204.

Full scores, medal tally by event and country, and a comprehensive photo gallery can be found on the Championship website - www.cbf.com.cy. The popular site, provided courtesy of Crucial Services in Cyprus, saw an unprecedented barrage of hits from all around the world during the week-long Championship.

"The fact that there were a massive 1,423,767 hits for the month of February, surpassing the 65,046 total for January speaks for itself...there's obviously tremendous interest in our sport at international level and the response to the Championships via this high-tech, user-friendly website has been very gratifying" said Cyprus Bowling Federation President, Roger Christofides.

Final medal tally, by country, is detailed in the table below and a full list of medallists is attached .

Medals By Country

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	 Malaysia	4	2	2	8
2	 Canada	1	5	1	7
3	 Northern Ireland	1	1		2
4	 Australia	1		4	5
5	 Singapore	1		1	2

Details of the 2005 event, and the inaugural Championship held in Stirling, Scotland, plus further information regarding the Commonwealth Tenpin Bowling Federation are published on the CTBF's official website - www.ctbf.org.

President of the Commonwealth Tenpin Bowling Federation, Julian Pace-Bonello, announced that the III Commonwealth Tenpin Bowling Championships will be held in Australia in the second half of 2006, at a date and venue to be confirmed.

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For further details, or pics, please contact CTBF Secretary-General and Media Director, Lynne Clay on +61 419 444 280 or via email lynneclay@bigpond.com