

Bay golfer chosen for LA games team

By CLINTON LLEWELLYN

Two Hawke's Bay names are in the New Zealand team announced to compete at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles next year.

Special Olympics Hawke's Bay athlete Nick Anderson, 29, was one of two golfers named in the Kiwi team this month, while Hastings jeweller Ian Baldwin is off to his fourth games as the national ten-pin bowling coach.

The New Zealand delegation includes 36 athletes with intellectual disabilities, two 'unified partners' (athletes without an intellectual disability), and a total of 19 coaches, managers and support staff.

Next year's event, from July 25 to August 2, known as "LA2015", will feature 7000 athletes from 177 countries, 30,000 volunteers, 3000 coaches and 500,000 spectators.

Baldwin attended his first Special Olympics in 1995 and went to the last games in Athens in 2011.

"It's all about the athletes - they are just massive. It will be the biggest sporting event in the world in 2015," said Baldwin.

He reckoned the opening ceremony for the Special Olympics was "just as good" as that which kicks off the regular Olympics.

At LA2015, Baldwin will be in charge of New Zealand's team of four ten-pin bowlers, who will compete in singles, pairs and team events.

At the last games in Athens, there were eight Kiwi ten-pin bowlers.

"We did really well. We got a few golds and silvers and nearly everyone got a medal," Baldwin said.

Hastings golfer Nick Anderson replied "of course" when asked if he was looking forward to going to LA for the games.

He was also intending to perform well on the golf course for his country.



Hastings golfer Nick Anderson, 29, who has been selected to represent New Zealand at the 2015 Special Olympics in the United States next July, about to hit a practice ball at Sharpies in Hastings. Back left is Hastings jeweller Ian Baldwin, who is off to his fourth games as New Zealand's ten-pin bowling coach, next to Margaret Baker, Anderson's golf coach and Special Olympics Hawke's Bay sports co-ordinator.

Photo: CLINTON LLEWELLYN.

"I want to win a gold and feel what it's like to be ... a champion," he said.

Anderson and fellow golfer Daryl Smith from Special Olympics Waitakere would compete in a nine-hole, alternate shot format event at the games.

His coach Margaret Baker, also Special Olympics Hawke's Bay's sports co-ordinator, said Anderson had been busy practising every week since his nomination was accepted earlier in

the year.

While his golf game might be up to scratch, Baker said her player still had to fundraise \$8500 to get to the games.

"All the team are on the Special Olympics New Zealand website so friends and family can go to the site and give a donation, as we do ask the athletes to help raise the funds required," she said.

■ See: specialolympics.org.nz