



## **Curling gold medals for Japan, Australia**

NASEBY, New Zealand (August 24, 2013) – Japan and Australia took home the gold medals from the Audi Quattro Winter Games NZ curling tournament late yesterday.

Japan won the Men's gold medal match 10-3 from New Zealand, who took silver. Korea picked up the bronze medal as the losing semi-finalist.

A final stone hit from Australia secured the Mixed Doubles gold medal 7-6 from New Zealand "A", and China cleared out from New Zealand 10-4 to win the bronze.

The two silver medals for New Zealand is the best result for the home side in the three Winter Games tournaments to date.

Since losing two of their first three games in the round robin, the Japanese Men improved through the week and put in an impressive error-free performance to record their eighth successive win. A well-taken 3 to Japan in the fourth end put them in control of the match, and NZ skip Peter de Boer offered the concession with his last stone still to play in the ninth.

"We are very happy to win here in Naseby," said Japanese skip Yusuke Morozumi. "It is a wonderful event, and very important for us in our lead-up to try and qualify for the Olympics."

Kiwi skip Peter de Boer was also looking ahead. "We've had 12 good games of top-level curling," he said. "Obviously we're disappointed to lose the final, but we know we can play well enough, we've beaten all the teams here at least once this week, so this has been a really valuable tournament."

The Mixed Doubles final was close throughout, and with her final stone Australia's Eve Bèlisle could see just enough of the NZ "A" stone she needed to hit for their second point of the end and their 7-6 win.

Her playing partner Steve Johns said after the game, "I think we stepped up our game from the round robin. This was the first time we've played together, so there it took a bit of time for us to get used to each other's play. And learning how to support each other when it goes well, and when it doesn't go well."

Maniototo brother and sister Sean and Bridget Becker won the silver as New Zealand "A". Bridget described her week as "crazy", when the team defaulted their first match as she was with her young son in hospital early in the week. Her baby daughter also developed bronchitis a few days later.

"We did really well to get where we did," she said. "Of course we'd have preferred the gold. Sean played amazingly all week, he's a great partner." The pair won the bronze medal two years ago, and when asked if she'd like to come back in 2015 to try for gold and complete the set, she replied with a laugh, "I'd love to – if they'll have us!"

The Japanese, Korean and New Zealand Men's teams will meet at a number of tournaments in the next few months before the 8-team Olympic Qualifying Event in Füssen, Germany. The

top two teams from there will fill the final places in the 10-team field for next year's Sochi Winter Olympics.

Final Standings:

Men	1 JPN, 2 NZL, 3 KOR, 4 CHN, 5 AUS, 6 NZL "A"
Mixed Doubles	1 AUS, 2 NZL "A", 3 CHN, 4 NZL, 5 JPN, 6 ENG, 7 AUS "A"

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