

= 2011 ? 12 Australia women 's national goalball team =

The 2011 ? 12 Australia women 's national goalball team , known as the Belles , is a goalball team that played in two Paralympic qualifying competitions and the 2012 Summer Paralympics . The official announcement confirming the 2011 ? 12 team was made in May 2012 . The team included Jennifer Blow , Meica Christensen , Michelle Rzepecki , Nicole Esdaile , Rachel Henderson and Tyan Taylor . Most of the players , with the exception of Christensen , were relatively new . Their first competition was the International Blind Sports Federation ( IBSA ) World Goalball Games , with the top two teams qualifying for the Summer Paralympics . While Australia finished second in its pool , it ended the tournament in sixth place following a loss to Israel . Their second major competition was the ISBA Oceania @-@ Africa Goalball Regional Championships , where they beat New Zealand in the semi @-@ final , and again in the final , to qualify for the London 2012 Paralympic Games .

At the Paralympics , the Belles , in the same pool as China , Japan , Canada , the United States and Sweden , played Japan first , losing 1 ? 3 . In their second game of pool play , they lost to Canada 1 ? 3 . They lost their last two games in pool play by 0 ? 3 to the United States and 5 ? 8 to Sweden . This placed them last in the pool , and they did not qualify for the finals .

= = Background = =

The team is nicknamed the Belles . Going into the competitions for qualifying for the London 2012 Paralympic Games , the Australian Paralympic Committee was thinking ahead , hoping to build a new , young team that would qualify for the 2016 Summer Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro . The series of competitions leading up to the London 2012 Paralympic Games were seen as providing valuable training and experience .

The first selection process for 2011 ? 12 took place in January 2011 , at a camp that was by invitation only . The final 2012 Summer Paralympics team selection announcement was made in May 2012 , and included Jennifer Blow , Meica Christensen , Michelle Rzepecki , Nicole Esdaile , Rachel Henderson and Tyan Taylor . This included three players from New South Wales , two from Queensland and one from South Australia . Christensen captained the side . The team was coached by Georgina Kenaghan . Support staff for the London team included Section Manager Peter Corr and team physiotherapist Eliza Kwan . Christensen came into the qualifying period as the most capped player on the team , having first played for the it in 2004 , but Taylor had only started playing in 2009 , making her national debut at the 2010 IBSA World Championships , and Blow and Henderson had only taken up the sport in 2010 . Team members received varying amounts of assistance through the Australian Sports Commission 's Direct Athlete Support ( DAS ) program , with Blow and Henderson getting A \$ 7 @,@ 000 .

= = Competitions = =

The Belles came into the 2011 ? 12 Paralympic qualifying season having finished eighth at the 2010 IBSA Goalball World Championship . They competed in three events during 2011 ? 12 : the 2011 IBSA Goalball World Games , the 2011 IBSA Africa @-@ Oceania Goalball Regional Championships and the 2012 Summer Paralympics .

= = = 2011 IBSA Goalball World Games = = =

Australia 's first attempt to qualify for the London Paralympics came in April 2011 at the IBSA Goalball World Games , which were held in Antalya , Turkey . The Belles finished in sixth place , with Canada and Finland taking the two automatic qualifying spots . Playing in Pool X , Australia defeated Spain 7 ? 1 , and lost to Canada 3 ? 6 in games on 4 April . The following day , they beat Germany 8 ? 6 . Then , on 6 April , they tied with Hungary 5 ? 5 . The following day , they beat Israel 6 ? 5 , and on 8 April , beat South Korea 8 ? 3 . They finished second in their pool with 13 points ,

which was 5 points behind Canada and one point ahead of Israel . In their 9 April placement game against Russia , they lost 3 ? 6 , and in their 5th to 8th placement game against Spain , they won 8 ? 7 . In the game against Israel for fifth place , they lost 6 ? 8 .

= = = 2011 IBSA Africa @-@ Oceania Goalball Regional Championships = = =

The 2011 IBSA Africa @-@ Oceania Goalball Regional Championships in Sydney were the last opportunity for the team to qualify for the London Paralympic Games . Only Australia and New Zealand were competing in the women 's event , so Australia only had to play two games : a semi @-@ final and final against the New Zealand women 's national goalball team . The team included Christensen , who captained the team during the competition , Blow , Esdaile , Henderson , Taylor and Rzepecki . In the semi @-@ final , the Belles took a 7 ? 1 lead into the half time break , and went on to win 11 ? 4 . Christensen scored 7 of Australia 's goals , while Esdaile scored 3 and Taylor scored one . When the Australian women played New Zealand again in the final , they beating them a second time , by 6 ? 2 , with Christensen scoring three goals , Esdaile scoring two and Taylor scoring one .

In May 2012 , the team was ranked eighth in the world , a position they continued to hold going into the London Games . The Belles became the first Australian team to qualify for the Games since 1996 , despite attempts to qualify for the 2004 Summer Paralympics and 2008 Summer Paralympics ; Australia had qualified automatically for the 2000 Summer Paralympics as the host nation .

= = = Paralympics = = =

At the 2012 Summer Paralympics Games in London , their pool included China , the United States , Sweden , Japan and Canada , with the United States and Chinese team reigning gold silver medallists respectively from Goalball at the 2008 Summer Paralympics . Australia lost their first game to Japan 1 ? 3 . Esdaile scored the team 's only goal , which came off a penalty throw . Esdaile , Taylor and Christensen were the only players in the game for Australia , with 28 throws for Taylor , 30 throws for Esdaile and 38 throws for Christensen . They lost their second game to Canada 1 ? 3 . Christensen scored the team 's only goal , which again came off a penalty throw . She and Esdaile once more played for the whole game , with Blow playing 14 minutes and Taylor playing 10 minutes . Christensen finished the game with 41 throws , Esdaile with 32 , Taylor with 11 and Blow with 2 . Esdaile led the team with blocks , having 45 to Christensen 's 18 , Blow 's 10 and Taylor 's 8 . The Belles lost their third game to the United States 0 ? 3 . Christensen and Esdaile again played the whole game , with Blow playing 20 minutes , Taylor playing 3 minutes and Rzepecki playing just one minute . Esdaile led the team in throws and blocks with 45 and 33 respectively , while Christensen had 40 and 21 , and Blow had 3 throws and 27 blocks . Taylor had 5 throws and 3 blocks , and Rzepecki had 1 throw and no blocks . The Australian women lost their last game to Sweden 5 ? 8 . In this last game in pool play , every player got minutes with Christensen and Esdaile again playing the whole 24 minutes , Blow playing for 9 minutes , Taylor for 10 , Henderson for 2 and Rzepecki for 3 . Esdaile scored three goals , with Christensen scoring the remaining two , one of which came off a penalty throw . Christensen led the team in throws with 40 , while Esdaile had 32 , Taylor had 9 , Blow had 3 and Henderson and Rzepecki had 2 each . Esdaile led the team in blocks with 29 to Christensen 's 14 , Blow 's 12 , Taylor 's 9 , Rzepecki 's 1 and Henderon 's 0 . One of Sweden 's goals was an Australian own goal scored by Rzepecki .

= = = Group play = = =

= = = Qualifying and Paralympic goals summary = = =