

Blackjacks and Jackaroos share gold

New Zealand struck Asia Pacific Championships gold at the Burnside Bowls Club yesterday when recalled national skipper Paul Girdler and his partners Andrew Kelly and Mike Nagy emerged victorious in the men's triples final.

The Blackjacks defeated Japan's Hank Sato, Ken Emura and young skipper Kenta Hasebe 24-16 in the 18-end final in front of a large and appreciative crowd at the venue, and a live television audience watching at home on SKY Sport.

It was a fitting result for Girdler, who had not performed on the big stage since the 2004 world championships at Ayr in Scotland, but returned to international duty last week after receiving an SOS from Bowls New Zealand.

However, after powering to a 21-9 lead from ten ends, the Blackjacks had a few anxious moments when their opposition demonstrated exactly how they rocked the establishment last week by toppling Aussie world champions Wayne Ruediger, Mark Casey and Aron Sherriff in a semi final.

Over the ensuing six ends the popular Japanese trio only allowed the Blackjacks a single, while adding seven shots of their own to be just six in arrears with two to play. Very 'gettable' at Eden Park or the MCG for sure, but a tough assignment at Burnside, especially when Girdler put the finishing touches to an outstanding game by drawing close for a count of two and outright victory.

Congratulations to Steve Glasson and his Australian Jackaroos who banked two gold medals in a fine exhibition yesterday. No disrespect intended but the gallant USA team of Myra Wood, Janice Bell, Anne Nunes and Candy DeFazio



• Mike Kernaghan carries New Zealand's hopes of a another gold medal onto the Burnside show green today.

were no match for the Aussie women's fours combination of skipper Natasha Scott, Anne Johns, Kelsey Cottrell and Carla Odgers.

Likewise, a hearty well done to Karen Murphy, who clinched a professional victory over long-time rival Carmen Anderson from Norfolk Island in a quality women's singles final.

New Zealand has another shot at gold today when national champion Mike Kernaghan takes on young Aussie whiz Aron Sherriff for the men's singles title at 3pm. Like Girdler, Kernaghan also responded to a recall plea from Bowls New Zealand and played exquisitely to top his section,

then claimed an emphatic win over Kenta Hasebe to book his berth in today's final.

This morning's first match features the Canadian duo of Ryan Bester and Steve Santana facing off against Malaysia's Fairul Muin and Hizlee Rais for the men's pairs gold medal.

In between the two much-anticipated men's affairs, the women's triples gold medal will be decided between Carla Odgers, Anne Johns and Natasha Scott from Australia and the exciting Philippines team of Hazel Jaconoy, Ronalyn Greenlees and Rosita Bradborn. Should be a crackerjack encounter

Enjoy!