

Shelley Rudman to carry GB flag at Vancouver 2010 opening ceremony

- Skeleton silver medallist speaks of 'huge honour'
- Rudman and curling skip David Murdoch named captains

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Shelley Rudman holds the Union Jack after her appointment as Team GB's flag-bearer for the Vancouver 2010 opening ceremony. Photograph: Jack Cusano/Getty Images

Shelley Rudman will carry the British flag in today's Winter Olympics opening ceremony in Vancouver.

Rudman won a silver medal in Turin four years ago and is considered a strong medal contender for the skeleton competition in Whistler.

Rudman said: "I am so excited to be selected to carry the flag for Team GB. It's a huge honour for me to have been chosen to represent our team, and ultimately our country, in this way. There are some wonderful athletes here, and I will be so proud to be the person who leads them into the stadium.

"I'm looking forward to the opening ceremony very much indeed. I'm sure it's going to be a fantastic occasion and, as athletes, it's a sign to us that the Games really are getting under way."

Rudman has also been named one of the two team captains of Team GB, a new initiative designed to give younger athletes leadership and support. Rudman will captain the athletes based in Whistler while David Murdoch, skip of the men's curling team who are the reigning world champions, will be the Vancouver-based team captain.

"It's an added privilege to be named as team captain for the Whistler athletes, and when I look at some of the talented competitors we have up in the mountains, it's very exciting," Rudman said.

Murdoch said: "I take a great deal of pride in being part of Team GB and representing my country at the Winter Olympics, so to be named as a team captain is a fantastic fillip for me, and great recognition for the sport of curling.

"I will absolutely do my best to offer advice and support to all the athletes in Vancouver. I know from experience that competing at an Olympic Games can be a daunting prospect, and I look forward to passing on some of my knowledge, and supporting the athletes in every way I can."

Team GB's chef de mission, Andy Hunt, said: "Shelley and David are outstanding athletes and, as with all members of Team GB, they represent the 'Best of British'. Both of them richly deserve to have been honoured in this way.

"Shelley won Team GB's only medal at the last Olympic Winter Games and did a huge amount to raise the profile of both skeleton as a sport, and winter sports in general. I can't think of a more suitable candidate to carry the union flag at the opening ceremony.

"David is an inspirational skip whose team are the reigning world champions. He is an enormously impressive athlete who will, I'm sure, offer the same level of leadership as team captain as he does on the ice."

Rudman, 28, finished the 2009-10 season ranked second in the world after finishing on the podium in four out of eight World Cup races, including victories in Cesena and St Moritz.

Murdoch, 31, led Scotland to the world title in Canada at the start of 2009.

The flag-bearer was chosen after consultation with athletes and team leaders. A shortlist was drawn up and a vote held to determine the winner.