

Norfolk Bowling Club Newsletter

Shining a spotlight on

Jackie Devitt



Tell us a little about yourself – your background, are you from Norfolk? Your occupation past or present. Your family? Do you have other hobbies and interests outside bowls? (How do you find the time?!!)

I am 63 years young and was born in Scarborough N. Yorks. I am a Yorkshire girl despite living in Norfolk for the last 30+ years. I spent 12 years in the RAF (logistics) after leaving school and had tours in Yorkshire, Germany, and Suffolk. I also got to fly in a fast jet as a leaving present. I also played a lot of hockey when in the RAF and later for Watton Ladies, gradually moving down the teams until I retired.

On leaving the RAF I made a career as a buyer and purchasing manager in the commercial external facade industry, specialising in glass and metals. I spent 30 years in this field before finally retiring in 2023

When did you first begin playing bowls?

I first started playing at around 17 years old just knocking around with some friends but I didn't really take it up until I left the air force in 1992

What attracted you to the sport of bowls?

I liked the competitive aspect to the game, playing with and against both men and women and it seemed to fit with me

How long have you been a member at NBC?

About 13 years

What do you enjoy about bowling?

The competition and the fact that it covers the generations. You can play against internationals one day and socially on another. Very few sports allow you to pit yourself against the best regularly.

Which leagues and competitions have you played in?

I have played national, county and domestic leagues and competitions. Far too many to mention all. I started as an outdoor bowler and have moved more indoors since being at NBC.

What are your highest achievements?

Outdoors I won the national Mother and Daughter in 2006. (Mum will say she won it and I just stood around). This in the day was an extremely competitive comp playing against established England and county players.

I was runner-up in the national singles in 2010, the fours in 2016 and the senior 4s in 2019. Part of the Norfolk Walker cup team as r-up in 2023. I am very good at being a runner-up!!!

Indoors I have been fortunate to be part of the Norfolk County team winning the Atherley on several occasions. I have also been part of the NBC Yetton team that won 2 years on the trot in 2022 and 2023.

Have you volunteered for any roles or positions at NBC? If so, which and for how long?

I am currently the ladies A team captain, a position I have held for the last 2 years, and I also serve on various committees at the club.

What are your happiest memories/proudest moments from bowling?

Happiest memories and proudest moments are my national outdoor finals and being part of some great winning teams indoors and outdoors. I most enjoy being part of the team and love sharing the winning feeling with them.

What major changes have you seen over the years?

So many. All seemed small at the time, but when I look back the game has become much more professional and we now have more youngsters in the game. When I started seriously in the early 2000's, women could only have the green during the day and had to wear skirts and tights, with hats as well if playing for county. Thankfully we have moved forward with the amalgamation of the women's and men's associations and the introduction of coloured clothing and trousers etc. In my view all

positive moves to enhance the appeal of the sport. We still have a way to go but a little change and often is in my view the best way.

Tell us about an amusing incident at NBC

I suspect a lot of people are far better placed to do this rather than me. I seem to cause various amounts of amusement fairly frequently. It might have to do with consumption of the liquids behind the bar mind. Latest one is having the Yetton Plate shield confiscated off me as there was some concern it might fall out of the Uber taxi in Nottingham. Not my fault the sliding door wouldn't shut!!

What tips would you give to players who are just starting out on their bowling journey?

Firstly ENJOY! Yes, it is a sport, but you must enjoy what you do, even the losses. Listen to the coaches and practise, practise, practise. The best bowlers practise far more than you would think. Never be afraid to ask the best bowlers for advice and NEVER be frightened to play the best. It is how you get better. I have had some right hammerings in my time and still now, but you never stop learning and wanting to improve. One of the reasons I joined NBC was to challenge myself and the best in the county and that still applies.

Don't keep buying sets of bowls. You end up with a mountain of em!!

Our thanks to Jackie for agreeing to share her thoughts.