



Women in Petanque

Promoting petanque through sharing news & information

Welcome

It is hard to believe that WiP was formally launched just 18 months ago with a small group of volunteers signing up to promote petanque to women. Since then, it has proved to be an excellent initiative helping to showcase some of the achievements of our players, share news and information and generally raise the profile of women in petanque.

This year WIP introduced the IWD initiative encouraging Regions to run a Women's Doubles event to celebrate International Women's Day. Over the course of two weekends in March, nine regions hosted their IWD events with the winning teams attending the inaugural National IWD competition at Oxshott. Each region has kindly shared their event and photos in this issue.

For the Southern Region, this was my second year of organising the event but the added incentive of having the opportunity to represent the region seemed to encourage many more players to sign up and the competition on the day was fierce with over 60 players taking part.. I was thrilled to have qualified (albeit narrowly) so it was an amazing feeling when myself and Karen Lombard went on to win the Gold on this momentous occasion. It will be an honour to receive the trophy at the Inter-Regional presentations at Hayling Island.

The theme of 'inspiring women' in the previous issue received some great comments and it was good to see that this prompted one of our young readers - Ella Slade - to offer up a piece of her own. And we are delighted to have another top article from Toni Gates.

Finally, with the recent unveiling of the excellent new PE website, there is now an opportunity to ensure an integrated and seamless reporting of all news and information on a regular basis. Plans are afoot to have a dedicated WiP page so in the future you can get all the latest news and information directly via the website. Thank you to everyone who has contributed and supported this publication. Have a great season of playing petanque!

Best wishes

Hassi

Editor



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Hot off the Press



Congratulations to Emma Longstaff and Sammy Thatcher on their recent achievement at the World Championships in Spain. Emma & Sammy reached the Quarter Finals which was the best result for our Women in over 30 years of World Championships. Read all about their historic journey...

<https://www.petanque-england.uk/2019/05/05/historic-quarter-final-place-in-world-womens-doubles/>



International Women's Day



Celebrating Women's Day

The National IWD event was a huge success as it welcomed 32 teams from across nine regions to Oxshott for its inaugural Women's Doubles event as part of Celebrating International Women's Day.

The idea behind the IWD celebrations was to motivate and empower women from across PE regions to take part in the Regional Women's Doubles with an opportunity to represent their region at the National event. In total, almost 100 Women's Doubles teams participated.

The diversity of players who competed at Oxshott ranged in age from the youngest player Francesca aged 12 to several players in their 80s. Players also ranged in experience from some of the top and most seasoned players to those for whom this was the first time of playing outside their own clubs and regions.

The competition was meticulously run by Annette Eggleton who said the day ran very smoothly and "the overall tone of the day was a great balance of competition and camaraderie, sport and support. It was great to see so many ages represented and many women playing in a national competition for the first time. I look forward to organising future competitions".



There were a few surprise wins and losses on the day and our wonderful umpire David Mason was kept on his toes (and feet) all day as he paced up and down the terrains measuring and deciding on the holding boule.

Despite it being a serious competition, it was great to see the overall atmosphere and tone of the day was very much in keeping with the ethos of celebration as illustrated by the testimonials and feedback received.

Although a cold brisk day, there were plenty of spectators supporting their home teams and cheering them along. Special thanks to Di Greenaway and Terry Basson who made the journey from Bath to be part of this inaugural WIP event.

"Thank you so much for the brilliant day today. The organisation was superb, well done to all involved we really did enjoy the event" Sue (London)

"Great day, Great organisation. Great everything And the icing on the cake.....a win for you. Well done" Trish

"Francesca and I had such a wonderful day playing with really lovely ladies - thank you" Julia

"Fantastic day - thanks to everyone involved" Carla

"Great day of petanque even if it was cold" Caroline

"Thanks Hassi & Annette - a wonderful day meeting and playing against lovely ladies" Jean

"A brilliant day" ... "Inspiring"

"Thanks for a well organised event and great boules! Becky and I enjoyed the day" Carolyn

"Brilliant day - well done" John Proctor

"It was a really enjoyable and a well organised day" Teresa

"It was lovely to play amongst so many friendly women. It was a grand day out. Thanks to the organisers for a well-run day" Jill

"It was a great day, well organised and very enjoyable" Sue (GWR)

Here's to 2020 with more Regional IWD celebrations taking place and an even bigger National Competition.





International Women's Day



And the winners were ...

Gold Winners (Southern)

Karen Lombard & Hassi Leverett

Runners-up (HoE)

Carol Cox & Gill Matthews

Gold Consolage (Kent)

Melissa Rowley & Deborah Capelin

Runners-up (HoE)

Teresa Bingam & Eileen Sollis

Silver Winners (Mercia)

Carla Jervis & Carole Sheppard

Runners-up (Kent)

Carolyn & Becky Edwins

Silver Consolage (Kent)

Judy Moore & Jill Wood

Runners-up (Southern)

Julia Jones & Francesca Evans-Jones

Bronze 1 (Southern)

Angela Brooks & Maureen Lee

Bronze 1 Runners-up (Eastern)

Jean Wilmot & Dawn Allen

Bronze 1 Consolage (Mercia)

Jill Butt & Denise Proctor

Runners-up (Mercia)

Dil Vowels & Jane Taylor

Bronze 2 (HoE)

Caroline Powells & Becky Rushton

Runners-up (Kent)

Ayjay Keemer-Richards & Christine Clancy

Bronze 2 Consolage (HoE)

Rosemarie Hughes & Josette Whick

Runners-up (Devon)

Sandie Evans & Carol Walsh





IWD - Regional Celebrations

Heart of England Region - by Teresa Bingam

On a chilly day in early March twelve Heart of England doubles teams entered our regional qualifier in the hope of qualifying to represent the region at the International Women's Day finals in April.

The youngest entrant was 12 yrs old and the most senior entrant was 84 yrs of age. A difference of 72 years demonstrating that the game can be played by all age groups. After a long and enjoyable day of leagues, quarter finals, semis and a hard fought final four teams qualified through to the finals day at Oxshott.

Hotel rooms were booked and bags were packed for the weekend trip to Surrey.

The finals day at Oxshott had a superb representation from 9 regions of 32 teams. These 32 teams were divided into 8 leagues. The winners of each league went into the Gold competition, second in each league went into the Silver competition, third into Bronze (1) and fourth into Bronze (2).

Two teams (Gill and Carol + Eileen and Teresa) qualified to the top 8 (gold competition) by winning their respective leagues in the morning. The other two teams (Becky and Caroline + Rosemarie and Josette) qualified for the bronze competitions.

Happily all the HoE teams finished in a final on the day. Gill and Carol played extremely well and reached the Gold final where they finished as runners-up to the strong Southern team of Hassi Leverett and Karen Lombard. Eileen and Teresa unfortunately lost their first game in the afternoon to a very experienced Chiltern team but went on to beat another top 8 team (London region) to eventually finish as runners-up to an 'on form' Kent team in the Gold (consolage) final.

Becky and Caroline had a good afternoon and an impressive win in the Bronze (2) final and were awarded the IWD bronze (2) medals.

Medals were also presented to Rosemarie and Josette for winning the Bronze (2) consolage final.

All the HoE teams enjoyed the extremely well organised day.

London Region - by Giselle Whiteaker

On Saturday March 9, Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens saw the first International Women's Day Doubles, sponsored by London Petanque Club. 14 women from across the region made their way onto the piste to battle it out with the aim of qualifying for Petanque England's National International Women's Day event and taking the cash pot. Despite uncertain weather - sometimes sunny, sometimes blustery - spirits were high, possibly due to an excess of sugar from the cakes at morning tea. The day ran smoothly, with Paul and Christian managing admin, timing, and cake icing, and the women injecting their enthusiasm into the proceedings.

Congratulations to Melanie and Christine from LPC, who won all of their games and qualified first, and Sue and Cecily from Croydon, who took second-place honours. Both teams made the top 8 (Gold category) at Oxshott with Melanie & Christine finishing as Semi-finalists and Sue and Cecily as Consolage Semi-finalists.



WOMEN IN PETANQUE



IWD - Regional Celebrations

Devon Region - by Lesley Drakatos

Eight Women's teams participated in this event at the ISCA Sports Centre in Exeter on Sunday 10th March. It was a great fun day with intense competition spirit in spite of very high winds, fierce drenching showers but bright intermittent sunshine.

Plymouth PC took victory with the top two teams and Chudleigh PC won the plate. (Winners: Sandie Evans and Carol Walsh Runners up: Kim Wraight and Jackie Stevens, Plate Winners: Lesley Drakatos and Laura Linsell.)

Many thanks to Thierry Hacq and Karen Bird for great organization and umpire John Thatcher for tirelessly measuring distances all day long.

We hope that the success of this event will see it on the PE Playing Calender for many years to come.



Eastern Region - by Jean Wilmot

A little piece of history for the Eastern Counties Region. The first Women's Regional Doubles competition was held at Towers Pétanque Club on Sunday 10th March in celebration of International Women's Day. It was an amazing day despite being extremely cold at times. 10 teams took part. Brilliant matches and excellent pétanque was played. Thanks to everyone for supporting the day and thanks to Towers Pétanque for hosting. The top two pairs- Jean Wilmot & Dawn Allan and Viv Middleton-Sams and Dee Billington-Austin will represent the region at the National Women's Doubles Competition on 14th April in Oxshott. Nikki Parrish and Tracy Chambers won the Silver Final and Debi Speed and Emily Speed-Turner won the Bronze final. Well done everyone. Definitely a date for 2020! #BalanceforBetter #IWD2019

Mercia Region - by John Proctor

On Saturday 9th March 2019 Mercia Petanque Region held their IWD Ladies Doubles Competition at Mansfield Petanque Club, Titchfield Park, Mansfield.

On a cold wet morning 24 Mercia Ladies braved the elements at Mansfield P.C. to compete for the chance to qualify for the IWD Women's Doubles and represent the Region. It was a great day, played in the true spirit of Petanque and well done to all our teams that went on to compete at Oxshott.

Everybody had a good day and an enjoyable competition.



WOMEN IN PETANQUE



IWD - Regional Celebrations

Great Western Region - by Diane Greenaway

On a very blustery day Sunday March 10th 2019 women players from GWR met together to qualify for the honour of representing their region in the National Finals.

Women in Petanque group was formed to help women in 'what has been sometimes been considered to be a male dominated activity.'

That is certainly not the case at City of Bath Club as the percentage is almost equal with the membership statistics of 48 % / 52% - not unlike Brexit!

Not only are the numbers close but the men in Bath are very supportive, so much so that they took over the catering duties for the day serving up tasty jacket potatoes with choices of fillings, individual side salads and some sweet treats from one of our members. The men donned their aprons and served us well.

The weather was not at all kind when we experienced some sunshine, gale winds, sleet and rain. The petanque club is sited on the top of a hill overlooking Bath so all of these weather elements were challenging. Women battled their way through all of these elements and played each team with good humour and excellent sportsmanship (or should I write sportswomanship?)

Well done to all who struggled through very difficult conditions with such grace, friendship and without any disputes and congratulations to Sue, Jacqui, Gay, and Anne who went to Oxshott and represented our Region.



Chiltern Region - by Sarah Huntley

Thank you so much to all the ladies that played in the Chiltern IWD Women's Doubles despite the wind and hail stones. I really enjoyed organising this event to celebrate International Women's Day. Well done to Soeli Leverett and Steph Moulden for winning the day and to Myra Emson and Syri Noble for also securing a place at the National event at Oxshott to represent our region. Myra & Syri reached the Gold Semi-finals losing to overall winners Hassi & Karen and Soeli & Steph made it through to Bronze 2 Semi-finals.



Kent Region - by Tim Edwins

The Kent IWD event attracted 26 ladies competing in the Women's Doubles. Everyone had a great day despite the weather and the event also caught the attention of the local TV station who were there filming on the day. A number of the ladies were interviewed including Alex Spillett and Becky Edwins who shared their passion for petanque. It was great to have Mike Cubbit, our president fully supporting the event and Mike was invited to the TV studio to talk about Petanque. You can catch the video here - www.kentonline.co.uk - fast forward to about 8 minutes in.



WOMEN IN PETANQUE



IWD - Regional Celebrations

Southern Region - by Hassi Leverett

This was Southern's second year of running a Women's Doubles to celebrate International Women's Day. Following the success of last year which saw 46 players compete, the expectation this year was to achieve similar numbers. The final numbers exceeded expectations as 61 ladies from across the Southern Counties made up 30 doubles teams (including one team of 3). Worthing Petanque Club had already been booked months in advance in anticipation of the numbers.

The day itself was a cold brisk but sunny Sunday in March which was an improvement on the previous years rainy day. Play kicked off slightly later than planned due to an accident which affected several teams arriving over an hour late - but the delay didn't deter the mood as there was much catching up to do as friends from different clubs used the opportunity to have a good catch up.

Play soon kicked off with some serious competition under way as all players wanted to secure a place at the National event and represent the Region. Following some hard fought battles, the final was between reigning champions Sammy Thatcher & Paula Fauvel and sisters Debbie Collier & Tracey Elcome. Sammy & Paula retained the Regional IWD Title for the second year.

Having had the most number of Regional entries secured eight places at the National event with a further place being allocated to take the number to a neat 32. Well done to all the teams and many congratulations to Angela & Maureen on winning the bronze and to Karen & Hassi on winning the Gold and more importantly winning the Trophy in this inaugural event.





Toni's Top Tip!

Our regular feature with Toni is proving popular both for beginners and seasoned players. Toni is an inspirational Coach to our National Youth Squad and has done wonders to motivate and inspire our youngsters over the past few years. Previously, Toni represented the Chiltern Region at the Inter-regional championships and Champion of Champions and had qualified three times to play for England in the Home Nations. In this issue, Toni talks about building confidence.

How can women build their confidence in sport?

It is important to un-link confidence and success. Yes, players will gain confidence from past success but let's face it we were not born with success, we have developed success. So why then as an adult do we fear lack of success? It is still there for the taking. So, you may not have had success yet but you can still have confidence.

Confidence is a player's belief in their ability to perform well in any situation, replace your *what if I don't* with *what if I do*. What if I don't point in?? to **What if I do point in?**

Measure not only success but failure. OK so I didn't take the point but my boule held a better line. I missed the shot a bit to the right but, I did not drop short, there is success in both of these failures. The key then is to make a mental note of *I know how to keep the line pointing, next time focus on the weight I apply and I can shoot with loop and make the distance so now I will focus on keeping my arm in line*. Draw on the positives and build on the negatives.

Ladies aspire to be world champion or aspire to play in the park for an hour a week but be proud of yourself, be confident in what you do, learn from it and improve but above all else enjoy it and encourage others to do the same.

Did you know ...

There are around 2 million fewer women than men regularly playing sport. SportEngland said in 2014, 13 million women would like to engage more in sport, of those only 6 million were currently active in sport. Some reasons women find sport difficult are:

- Fear: of being judged; of not living up to expectations of other; feeling intimidated
- Body conscious: whilst exercise will help to get your body in shape, it is often difficult for women to take that first step comparing themselves to others already in shape
- Cost: many sports now are very costly having to pay for sessions in advance
- Social confidence: many women take a break from working life to raise a family. They often find many aspects of their social life stop or change and after a period of time can find it intimidating to re-integrate in social situations.

What can **Petanque** offer women?

- It is a sport that can be played at many levels social, local, league, competition, regional, national, international, world championship. It can be played on the beach, in your garden, parks, clubs and a variety of other places. This large span of levels and places means that women with families of all ages can also involve them in the sport erasing the fear of being self-indulgent.
- People of all ages and body sizes can and do play petanque equally effectively, it allows gentle exercise in a non-judgemental environment.
- You can choose the level you wish to play at removing the fear of not living up to expectations
- Other than the initial outlay for purchasing boules, petanque can be played at a relatively low cost.
- Petanque is a sport that gently integrates you into a social activity with others of various ages and genders or could be set up as a group activity with a group of friends, other parents or family.

Let's get the message out there - Petanque is a Sport for All



Inspiring Women - by Ella Slade

Ella Slade is fast becoming a household name in Petanque circles. Ella has been playing for three years and has made some great strides and travelled far and wide with dad Steven to play in regional, national and even international competitions. One of her proudest achievement was in May 2018 when she won the Women's Doubles with Kaylee Thatcher at the National Titles Weekend. Along with a passion for Petanque, Ella loves writing and so WIP are delighted to feature Ella's article below about Women who inspire her - this is what Ella had to say:

I asked to write this column after reading the last issue of Women in Petanque which was about inspirational women and I wanted to write about two players in particular. Firstly, I wanted to find out more about Hassi who is editor of this newsletter and leader of the Women in Petanque Group. Hassi has credited some of the most inspiring players in the sport and I felt she deserves to be noticed for the incredible things she is doing for the sport. She is very friendly and encouraging so I took the opportunity to ask her a few questions about herself:

Q: How did you begin playing Petanque?

Following a holiday in Lanzarote where we joined a few hotel guests in a game of boule and really enjoyed it, I decided to see if any such club existed in the UK. To my amazement, my Google search revealed over half a dozen petanque clubs within a 10 mile radius from us. So, the following week we went to try it out at Fareham Petanque Club and I fell in love with it despite it being a very cold and wet February evening back in 2014 and the rest is history.

Q: What made you start writing about WIP?

Throughout my working life, I was involved in many projects aimed at empowering women and building confidence so when Petanque England were looking for volunteers to help promote petanque to women, I volunteered and lead the initiative.

Q: How do you see WIP in 5 years time?

I think there has been a great deal of progress made over the past couple of years and the profile of our women players has been raised. The success of the 'International Women's Day' Regional celebrations and the National IWD competition saw a record number of women (in recent years) taking part. We also now have two women on the PE Board. All this means that hopefully there won't be a need for WIP in 5 years time as we will have a good gender balance of men and women not only competing in equal numbers but also be part of the national decision making body.

Q: How often do you like to practice petanque?

Two years ago, Paul built me a petanque terrain in our garden so I do try and have a practice a few times a week, although I much prefer to play in matches and try and compete in as many competitions as possible. I think last year, there were only 6 weekends in total when I didn't play!

Q: What would you say to be your biggest achievement?

In terms of promoting Petanque, I am delighted with the response we have had to our 'Lets Celebrate International Women's Day' initiative in its first year which engaged almost 100 Women's Doubles teams taking part around the country. From playing point of view, my biggest achievement was reaching the Gold semi-finals at Maaseik in 2018 when I played with the lovely Sabrina Seville who is an amazing player and absolutely brought out the best in me.

Q: Who is your biggest inspiration and why?

I am inspired by so many great players (both male and female) and have had the pleasure to partner a number of them (too many to name!). I also find inspiration when meeting individuals who empower others. For example, Pam Treend who I have never seen play but she inspires players of all ages through her support; Sarah Huntley who I find humbling as she is always encouraging new players despite being one of our top players and is a great sportswoman; Claire White who is one of the nicest players I have come across at a national level. I am also truly inspired by young players like Francesca and yourself who show such great commitment and determination.



Inspiring Women - by Ella Slade

My next interview was with Sarah Huntley. I am so inspired by Sarah who is currently the top ranked female in England, and has held this title for two years (2017 and 2018). From a personal perspective she is an inspiring player and someone I look up to. I can only wish to achieve what she has achieved. I asked her the following questions:

Q: How was the experience of your first world championships as a junior and as an adult?

My first junior world championships was in Canada in 2005. It was pretty daunting and a massive eye opener to the level of play around the rest of the world. At that time there wasn't really any streaming or videos available to watch so I had no idea what to expect. I was selected to play with Clare Brooks, Kris Smith and Dean Seville and we didn't play very much before we went and at that point, didn't know each other's games particularly well so it was pretty tough. The stand out part of the competition was playing against the French team, which Dylan Rocher and Kevin Melbec were part of. They were phenomenal and fanned us in 3 ends, making every boule they threw count. Although we didn't do particularly well, I learnt so much from the experience just from watching the other juniors that were there.

In 2011 I played my first ladies world championships, which was actually my first championship after the Junior worlds in 2005. Myself, Emma Longstaff and Steph Moulden qualified as a team after playing the whole year together so I was naturally more at ease with the team but it was the first time any of us had been to a senior world championships, so we were all pretty nervous and didn't have any idea of the level of women we were going to be playing against. We drew Thailand in the first game and we gave them a really good game, only losing by being timed out. I was in awe of how well they played the high lob and the difference of their tactics in comparison to how we had been taught to play. The tournament was played outside and the whole of the first day it was raining which meant they had to squeeze the games, as well as the shooting all in to the next two days, this made the days incredibly long. We were only a team of 3 and it really taught me the importance of having a 4 person team as the stamina you require at these sorts of competitions is completely different to the stamina required to win a competition in England. This tournament was the first time I did the shooting and I was literally shaking with nerves. Somehow I channelled the nerves well and manage to get a bronze medal, knocking out the Thai world champion in the 1/4 finals.

Q: How does it feel to be ranked top female in England?

I was over the moon to be ranked top female in England for the second year. I had a rocky start to the year and knew I had to win the last 3 competitions to get number 1. I worked really hard, practicing pretty much every day, so when we won the last 3 competitions I was really happy because I thought that it would give me the best chance of getting selected to represent England at the Europeans and World championships.

Q: What would be your best advice for someone who aspires to play like you?

The best advice I can give is to play with as many different people as possible. Never be afraid to ask people to play and learn as much from each person as you can. You will never be too good to learn something new about the game. Also, always set yourself goals, keep practicing and trying to better yourself, no matter how many knock backs you have. Use them to make you an even stronger player and never give up while you still love the game.

Thank you to both Hassi & Sarah - I hope you have enjoyed reading my article.

My personal ambition is that one day people will not only remember the names of the top male players such as Tyson and Dylan Rocher but their female counterparts will also be in the mix. Think about the woman that won the European Singles (can you name her) and the women that win huge competitions (can you name some off of the top of your head)? I hope one day the names of top female players will be just as popular as the male players and we will see equality at all levels.

Ella





PE - Announcements



New PE Board Director

We are delighted to announce that Annette Eggleton has been co-opted onto the PE Board. This is a 100% increase in the number of women officially involved

at Board level. As well as bringing another female voice to the discussions, Annette will be focussing on safeguarding matters following the retirement of Alan Forse.

Many people will already know Annette's 'no nonsense' approach through the many PE competitions she is involved in organising including the Titles Weekend and the Inter-Regionals. It will be great to have another formidable voice in the Boardroom.

Umpires Needed

Are you firm, fair and friendly?
Can you help anticipate and resolve problems?
Do you have regard for Health & Safety at all times?



These are just a few of the qualities needed to make a good umpire. If you like the thought of taking on this important role and joining a friendly team of Umpires, then Petanque England would love to hear from you.

For more information and to discuss the role, please email John Thatcher in the first instance:

johnthatcher@talktalk.net



Leah Hutchinson



Jessica Hickman



Sophie Rowley



Jane Geddes

NYS - Female Development Team

Last year, the Confederation of European Petanque (CEP) decided to split the Junior Championships into single sex teams. There are arguments for and against this change. On the plus side, this will create more participation opportunities, particularly for girls but with increased costs and potentially a very small pool of players, the competitiveness aspect may be limited.

In preparations to the changes, the PE National Youth Squad (NYS) has set up a new initiative to encourage and develop our young female players. Congratulations to Leah, Jessica*, Sophie and Jane who are the first intake to help develop and strengthen our female players. [Note: * Jessica whilst thrilled to be selected has had to put her position on hold due to pressure of exams this year and needing to prioritise her schoolwork]

Kath Knight will be working with the Development Team along with the B Squad.