





















# NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL

LADY CHAMPIONS

# PLAYER PROFILES & INTERVIEWS













### Introduction

A Chairde,

Generally, at this time of year the pitch and putt community is at its busiest and best, preparing their courses for club competitions, open competitions and players are eagerly awaiting national and provincial championship battles. Instead, over the past two months, Irish society and the country have been battling the devastating Covid 19 Virus. As all courses around the country remained closed during these unprecedented times, it was a great opportunity to produce a series of player profiles of all 2019 Ladies National and Provincial winners. These individual profiles were published on Facebook and were warmly received by the social media audience, so I decided to publish all 15 profiles collectively in PDF printable format for those who are not on social media.

I would like to thank all our 2019 champions who gave up their time to conduct these series of interviews and give great insights into their own games and their views on the ladies game in general.

While we can't be certain how the remainder of the pitch and putt season unfolds, I do hope that we will be able to continue such a series of player profiles with our next Provincial and National Champions.

Until then, have an enjoyable and safe return to playing our great game.

Mise le meas Declan Sheedy





## 2019 National Senior Strokeplay, Munster Senior Strokeplay & Munster Senior Matchplay Champion

Next up in our series of lady player profiles is the 2019 National Senior Strokeplay Champion Martha O'Brien from the Lakeside club in Templemore, Co. Tipperary.

Thank you, Martha, for taking the time to give your insight and thoughts on the lady's game at the moment and on your own game.

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Player: Martha O'Brien

Club: Lakeside, Tipperary

National Ranking: 2

Handicap: -2

Major individual senior honours so far:

2019 National Strokeplay Champion, 2019 Munster Matchplay Champion and 2-time Munster Strokeplay Matchplay ('19 & '12)

#### Q: Club you play with?

M: 52-degree wedge

Q: Putter you play with?

M: Wilson Reflex

**Q:** Ball you play with?

M: Titleist Pro V1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

M: This is a hard question! I would say both matchplay and intercounty but if I had to pick one, I would say the Intercounty. You can't beat playing for your county as part of a team!

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

M: Deerpark in Kerry

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition (what score and what comp)?

M: - 9 under in the National Inter County finals in Hillview in 2013.

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

M: 16th in Deerpark!

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

M: My family were so involved, and I just started to play! I didn't really have much of a choice (a) I'm playing since I'm 12.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

M: To continue to compete at the highest standard and to focus on the juveniles in my club.

Q: Your motto in P&P?





M: My motto would be that you have to lose to win and it just makes you more determined to try and achieve your goals. It's all about being patient and your time will come.

# Q: 2019 was an incredibly successful year for you personally but for ladies p&p in Tipperary in general with many other ladies national and provincial titles being won by Tipperary ladies? What do you put that success down to and where do you see ladies p&p in Tipperary go from here?

M: I suppose we are so lucky in Tipp to have such a great bunch of women who love to play. We are all quite competitive in our own right and that just improves our game and drives us on. I think at the moment in Tipperary there are women playing the game and numbers have increased and this was with the help of the County Board. I think Tipp ladies will continue to thrive as more women are playing which will make it more competitive among us all.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

M: Las Vegas

**Q:** Favourite movie?

M: The Lion King

**Q:** Sporting hero?

M: Shane Lowry

# Q: The ladies game is often perceived to be in the shadow of the gents game yet the standard of ladies p&p in Ireland at the top level is world class level. What more can be done to promote the ladies game and what can the ladies themselves do to prompt ladies p&p in Ireland?

M: Well I think the measures that have been taken so far such as this Facebook page for ladies and juveniles and live footage of different competitions is a very positive move taken by the PPI. Also, the international which took place in Seapoint in 2018, was something fantastic to be a part of and would love to see this again as this was an event which really promoted the game both in Ireland and abroad. Coaching evenings for women to take place in clubs would be an incentive especially during the summer months. To have talks in schools (all girls/mixed) to encourage girls to play the game. I think the idea of ranking points for intermediate and junior players would be an incentive for ladies to enter and play competitions. I do feel this is an area that does need to be looked at because I suppose I'm probably the youngest lady who has been playing constant and I'm out now since 2009! Well if ladies are in a position to do so, to get involved actively with their club. I am club juvenile officer and absolutely love it. There are girls playing who really do love it and encourage them to continue to play! Another way is that friendly competitions could be organised between different clubs to encourage as many ladies to play!

Hopefully, we will all be able to play sooner rather than later 😊



## **2019** National Intermediate Strokeplay Champion

Continuing our player profiles, we next have an interview with the 2019 National Inter Strokeplay Champion Bridget Shelley from the Lakeside club.

Thanks to Bridget for giving her time to provide us her with thoughts from last year's National Strokeplay Championship and ladies handicap grades.

Player: Bridget Shelley

Club: Lakeside, Tipperary

Handicap: -9

Major individual honours so far:

2 time National Inter Strokeplay Champion ('19 & '12) and 2018 Munster Inter Strokeplay Champion

- Q: Club you use?
- B: Ping Utility Wedge
- Q: Putter you use?
- B: Taylormade Rossa
- Q: Ball you use?
- B: Callaway Chrome Soft
- Q: Which format do you prefer most strokeplay, match play or Intercounty?
- B: Strokeplay for me

#### Q: What has been your best gross score for 18 holes in competition?

- B: 51 in the Munster Strokeplay Finals in Lakeside in 2018.
- Q: Favourite course (other than your own)?
- B: Tullamore
- Q: Toughest hole on any course?
- B: 18th hole in Cunnigar

#### Q: What got you interested in P&P and how long have you been playing?

B: In 1991 Lily O'Brien invited me to come out to a "Ladies Evening" which herself and Helen McMorrow (RIP) were organising in the Lakeside club to try and entice ladies into the club.

#### Q: What are your P&P goals over the next one or two years?

B: With the current Covid-19 situation just to get back out playing would be the goal and a bonus.

#### Q: What is your motto when it comes to P&P

B: Tomorrow is another day

Q: The 2019 National Inter Strokeplay finals in St. Bridget's, which you won, was a very exciting and closely fought out affair with only 2 shots separating the top 3 over the 54 holes





# format. Does your mindset change entering the final 18 of these championships and how did you approach playing the last few holes knowing you were right in contention?

B: My focus initially was the final 18 prize as I was 4 shots behind the leaders. However, on the 14th tee I saw the leader's scoreboard and I was level with them so immediately the pressure was on. My first thought was I'd missed one or two birdies earlier. So, while I was annoyed with myself I then dropped a shot on 14th. Had another chat with myself and birdied the 16th, missed one on 17th and took a cautious par 18th. Then sat and waited for the final group to come in.

#### Q: Favourite place you have visited?

B: Nejra in Spain

#### Q: Favourite movie?

B: The Shawshank Redemption

#### Q: Sporting hero?

B: Phil Mickleson

Q: The PPI brought in several initiatives in 2019 to promote the lady's games and try get more ladies to enter competitions such as introducing nett prizes. The handicap system has been criticised for pushing a lot of players into the intermediate grade wrongly over the last few years. The PPI are addressing it this year but what is your view on handicap grades, what should be the handicap ranges by grade be and is there merit for a 4th grade in the ladies game?

B: My view is the handicap grades should be split as junior -13 and up, Inter -5 to -12 and Senior +1 to -4 under. I do believe there should be a "premier" grade. The gulf between the senior and intermediate scores in recent championships confirms this.



## 2019 National Junior Strokeplay & Leinster Junior Strokeplay Champion

Our next player profile is with the 2019 National and Leinster Junior Strokeplay Champion Adeline Revins from the Kilbeggan club in Westmeath.

Thanks to Adeline for taking time out to give us background on her own game along with views on ladies P&P in Westmeath and the Kilbeggan course scheduled to host the National Ladies Strokeplay Championship in 2020.

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Player: Adeline Revins

Club: Kilbeggan, Westmeath

Handicap: -13

Major individual honours so far:

2019 National Junior Strokeplay Champion & 2019 Leinster Junior Strokeplay Champion.

#### Q: Club you use?

- A: 50°Titleist SM7
- Q: Putter you use?
- A: Wilson Staff 8883
- Q: Ball you use?
- A: Callaway chrome soft



#### Q: Which format do you prefer most strokeplay, match play or Intercounty?

A: Strokeplay, although I do enjoy intercounty. When we go as a team to practise, the ladies like to make a day out of it and have the bit of fun too. I love the way we all encourage and help one another if we are having a bad day.

#### Q: What has been your best gross score for 18 holes in competition?

A: Best was a 54 which I shot in the Leinster Strokeplay final last year.

#### Q: Favourite course (other than your own)?

A: St. Bridget's in Kildare.

#### **Q:** Toughest hole on any course?

A: The 16th hole in Seapoint

#### Q: What got you interested in P&P and how long have you been playing?

A: Jimmy played all his life and I used to go to watch. Even though I was a member, I only played when he went to play a practise round. He encouraged me to start playing. After I first went out to play in Holland that gave me the courage to go out and play more around Ireland. I felt if I could play out there, there was no reason why I could not play at home. I always had a fear of being out with good or senior players and make a show of myself when I didn't play much and brought in many a cricket score. Being out in Holland and meeting so many great Irish players there gave me more



confidence to play more. I am about 7 years playing but only started playing competitively in the last 4 years.

#### Q: What are your P&P goals over the next one or two years?

A: As I have just gone from junior to inter grade my main goal in P&P would be to continue to improve my game and bring in a half decent round in competition. I try every year to go play on different courses so I would like to add a few more in the future.

#### Q: What is your motto when it comes to P&P:

A: Play the course and not your opponent

# Q: What is the current state of ladies P&P in Westhmeath and will we see Westmeath ladies return to the National Intercounty Championships again soon?

A: Unfortunately, there are not many ladies in Westmeath that play competitively outside their own club. Last year we found it hard to field a junior team of 4 for the Leinster Intercounty. As handicaps change it will probably be harder to field a team of 4 in any grade for the next competition. As for the National Intercounty, only time will tell, but hopefully Westmeath will return.

#### Q: Favourite place you have visited?

A: Favourite place in the world for holiday would be Crete and for P&P outside Ireland is Strand Horst, Holland.

#### Q: Favourite movie?

A: Braveheart

#### Q: Sporting hero?

A: Katie Taylor & Ian Poulter

# Q: Your own club Kilbeggan is due to host the National Ladies Strokeplay Championship this year. For lady who hasn't played Kilbeggan before what advice would you give about the course and what holes on the course are the ones to watch out for?

A: For anyone who has not played in Kilbeggan before they are in for a treat. Also known as the Lawn, Kilbeggan is a small short course, maybe tight in places. At first glance when you go in the gate you will think, I've got this. Don't be fooled, it is not as easy as it looks and there are many tricky shots. Best advice I can give is get a practise round in. Most of the holes are tricky, I would say that none of them are as straight forward as they look. Holes that I would think you should watch for are the 2nd, 46mts, don't leave short or go left. It's a raised green with a small bank in front. Hole 4, 50mts, very deceiving and best to be slightly left or bit long otherwise a tricky chip onto a green with a slope. Hole 8, 38mts up to small raised green if not on the green best to be a bit right here. If you are short, it will roll back and if long could go a mile. Could end up playing table tennis on this one! It will be a great championship.



## **2019 National Scratch Matchplay Champion**

Up next is the 2019 National Matchplay Champion Mary Murray from the Rocklodge club in Cork.

Thanks to Mary for her time as she gives us an insight into her own game along with thoughts on the ladies game in general.

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Player: Mary Murray

Club: Rocklodge, Cork

National Ranking: 4

Handicap: -4

Major individual senior honours so far:

2019 National Matchplay Champion, 2-time Munster Strokeplay Champion ('18 & '14), 2018 Munster Matchplay Champion & 2018 National Seniors Strokeplay Champion.

#### Q: Club you play with?

M: Callaway Macdaddy 47 degree

#### Q: Putter you play with?

M: Odyssey

#### Q: Ball you play with?

M: Titleist ProV1+

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

M: I really enjoy all three formats, but I especially enjoy playing in team events so it's the Intercounty championships for me.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

M: Lakewood in Cork

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition?

M: I shot a 46 in Fermoy in 2016

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

M: 18th hole in Larkspur Park, no room for error on that one.

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

M: I played for about 8 months when I was in my 20's and then took it up again in 2005 as Johns family were all involved in pitch & putt for years.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

M: To win the National Strokeplay

#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

M: To never give up and keep your head down





# Q: With the National Matchplay scheduled for the excellent Larkspur Park venue this year where you will defend your title, are there any particular players, locals or otherwise, you would hope to avoid in the early rounds?

M: I don't think about wanting to avoid any player in particular as everyone entered will be a strong player. I always go out to play my best and aim to do so again in Larkspur.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

M: Las Vegas

#### **Q: Favourite movie?**

M: Sleeping with the enemy

#### Q: Sporting hero?

M: I always have a few bob on Shane Lowry

Q: Over the last decade the number of ladies entering the various championships and scratch cups around the country has declined. What advice would you give to lady members who may be considering playing in these but don't?

M: My advice to ladies is not to be intimidated and just go out and enjoy the game. Participate in as many competitions and championships as possible and support other clubs and courses.



## **2019 National Nett Matchplay Champion**

To kick off our series of player profiles I am delighted to have the 2019 National Nett Matchplay Champion Sarah O'Neill from the Collins club in Cork.

Thanks to Sarah for taking the time out to answer some questions and get insights into her game along with views on other topics.

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Player: Sarah O'Neill

Club: Collins, Cork

Handicap: -9

Major individual honours for far:

2019 National Nett Matchplay Champion & 2014 National Junior Strokeplay Champion

#### Q: Wedge you play with?

S: I've recently treated myself to a Callaway 56 degree

#### Q: Putter you play with?

S: Ping Gle

#### Q: Ball you play with?

S: Titleist ProV1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay, matchplay or intercounty?

S: Love them all for different reasons. Strokeplay as it gives a true reflection on scoring ability, matchplay as it brings out the competitive streak and intercounty as it is great to play as part of a team.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

S: Fermoy. I won my first National title there in 2014 so it brings back great memories for me.

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition (what score and what comp)?

S: -1 in the Munster Strokeplay last year in Listowel.

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

S: 16th in Deerpark gives me the heebie jeebies every time I play it.

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

S: It was my parents involvement in Collins P&P club which started my interest in the game. I think it was 1994 when I first played as a juvenile, but I only played then for a few years, I came back to the game in 2014.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

S: Keep trying to improve my game, play in more events like scratch cups and hopefully stay competitive in my grade.

#### **Q: Your motto in P&P?**





#### S: Keep the head down

# Q: In recent years we are seeing many Cork ladies perform strongly in the national championships. Which cork players do you see as major contenders for national titles in the coming year or two?

S: I'm going to stay on the fence for this one (a). A lot of us Cork ladies are playing to a good standard and we keep improving, hopefully we'll have a few rebel National winners over the next few years.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

S: San Sebastián, Spain

#### Q: Favourite movie?

S: The Green Book

#### **Q: Sporting hero?**

S: Shane Lowry, he's done Ireland proud.

Q: Entry levels in the national nett matchplay were somewhat disappointing last year. Having played in the championship and won it last year in Rocklodge how would you describe your experience of the championship and what would you say to encourage more ladies to enter it this year?

S: I know that the National Matchplay competition is one of the most popular events in the P&P calendar. The ladies who qualify to participate in the nett competition have a fabulous opportunity to be part of that great competition. As it's a nett competition handicaps come into play, so competitors are competing on a level playing field. It's just another great opportunity to play in a National event. As well as playing yourself you'll get to see some of the top senior ladies and gents in action which is always a treat.



## 2019 National Seniors Senior Strokeplay Champion

The final player in our current series of player profiles is one of the most decorated players in the ladies game and the 2019 Seniors Senior Strokeplay Champion, Margaret Hogan of the Tullamore club.

Thanks to Margaret for giving her time to provide an insight into her playing career, what P&P means to her and what positives she has seen in ladies game over the past decade.

Player: Margaret Hogan

Club: Tullamore

Handicap: -4

National Ranking: 8

Major Senior individual honours so far:

5 times National Strokeplay Champion

4 times National Matchplay Champion

2 times National Seniors Strokeplay Champion

7 times Leinster Strokeplay Champion

2 times Leinster Matchplay Champion

#### Q: Club play with?

M: Slazenger Curtis Cup pitching wedge

#### Q: Putter play with?

M: Ping

Q: Ball play with?

M: Callaway Chrome Soft

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

M: I enjoy both matchplay and strokeplay. However, I get the greatest satisfaction from matchplay. While it can be disappointing to lose a match early in the event, I believe a certain temperament and to some extent good luck is required in order to 'go all the way' in matchplay. There is a great sense of achievement in withstanding some gruelling matches.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

M: Fermoy

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition

M: 43 in an open strokeplay event

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

M: I can think of a few. Ironically, some of these would be regarded as relatively easy pitches when out practicing but they can become much more daunting when pressure is exerted in competition. In that regard I am sure the 18th in Larkspur Park has ruined many a good score.





#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

M: My parents and brothers played at that time and it was the natural thing to take up the game.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

M: Just to continue and enjoy the game.

#### **Q: Your motto in P&P?**

M: If you don't succeed today there is always the next time.

#### Q: What is your most memorable moment in P&P today and why?

M: Without a doubt winning my first All-Ireland title (strokeplay) in Douglas in 1977 was a memorable moment. My first title was also a little bit extra special as it was in the same club, Douglas, that my brother Pat won an All-Ireland Matchplay in 1973. Also playing for my country on four occasion was a huge honour.

# Q: Your longevity and success at the very top of the ladies senior games is an outstanding achievement. What do you put this down to and how much practice do you put in on a normal week and does this change leading into a championship weekend?

M: I was fortunate to acquire the skills of the game at an early stage and these skills helped me progress at the game by gaining confidence and achieving success at the highest level. Pitch and Putt is part of my life and I enjoy playing club and open competitions at weekends. In that way, I feel that I can maintain a playing standard necessary in order to compete at national level. However, success and achievement are not just about winning. I enjoy the camaraderie, meeting friends and having a good laugh!

I want to pay tribute to Eddie Recks (RIP) a local clubman for his encouragement and help in the early days of my playing career. Eddie was also an officer of the PPUI for many years.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

M: Switzerland

#### Q: Sporting hero?

M: Shane Lowry. Shane is from my hometown of Clara.

# Q: Pitch & Putt in Ireland, including that for ladies, has changed significantly over the last decade. What would you describe as the main positive changes for the ladies game in this period?

M: The game of Pitch & Putt is for enjoyment and I have made many friends over the years. A great deal of good work has been carried out by dedicated people, mainly on voluntary basis, in an effort to develop and promote the game. There are more opportunities for ladies to compete in club and open competitions along with international events since I started playing the game. In addition, the annual ladies social days is a good way to encourage more ladies to play the game. Playing equipment has improved and the inclusion of a third playing iron has made a difference as some ladies struggle reaching the greens at longer distances. The standard at senior level remains high but unfortunately the pool of players at that level remains low. It is good that ladies at all levels are being afforded the opportunity to compete in national championship, especially in matchplay. Changes to made to the format of the National Matchplay was an excellent initiative and may lead to the progression of more players to senior levels. The Seniors National Strokeplay Championship (over 55s) is another good initiative. The 3 clubs (putter, wedge and 9 iron) might keep me going for another few years!



## 2019 National Seniors Intermediate Strokeplay Champion

Reflecting the success of the ladies from the Lakeside club in 2019, we are back down in Templemore again this evening to meet with the 2019 National Seniors Intermediate Champion, Frances Ryan.

Thanks to Frances for her time to answer my questions and tell us all a bit about her own game plus reflecting on her great win in ESB and providing suggestions for growing the ladies game.

Player: Frances Ryan

Club: Lakeside

Handicap: -9

Major individual honours so far:

2019 National Seniors Inter Strokeplay Champion & 1994 Munster Inter Strokeplay Champion

#### Q: Club play with?

F: Callaway 50 degree

#### Q: Putter play with?

F: Cleveland lady Huntington beach

#### Q: Ball play with?

F: Titleist Prov1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

F: Don't really mind any of them but I do like the Intercounty format

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

F: McDonagh in Kildare

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition?

F: 49 in the Captains Prize in Lakeside

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

F: 16th hole in Deerpark

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

F: I visited Lakeside to see what all the excitement was about this game called Pitch & Putt shortly after I got married. A lovely lady and very dearly missed friend, Helen, took me under her wing and taught me how to play. She would have been very proud of her Lakeside Ladies. So that was 37 years ago.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

F: To hopefully stay playing for as long as I can.

#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

F: Move on, what's done is done.

#### Q: What has been your most memorable moment in P&P so far and why?





F: Winning the National Seniors Intermediate Championship in ESB. Took a lot of persistence and runner up places over the years but I got there eventually.

Q: You produced a brilliant second 18 round of 52 in the National Seniors Inter Championship in ESB last summer to take the title by 4 shots. What were your memories of that round having been trialling by a number of shots after the first 18? What were your overall thoughts about the ESB venue?

F: I remember thinking that if I just kept my head down that I would play like I know I can. I was comfortable with the course and I played with a lovely lady who kept encouraging me to keep going. ESB is a smashing course. The previous year I was runner up after a play off in the Munster Intermediate strokeplay and I really enjoyed the course.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

F: Egypt

Q: Favourite movie?

F: Love Actually

**Q: Sporting hero?** 

F: Greg Norman

# Q: What do you see as the two mains things that need to be either changed, improved or introduced in relation to ladies P& P to get more ladies and girls joining clubs?

F: I think handicap system aside that we need to teach our new ladies and girls the etiquette and rules of the game. Give them confidence to play which in turn may encourage them to play as individuals. Even as seasoned players every day is a school day if we can impart little tips and help each other's game.



## 2019 National Seniors Junior & Munster Junior Strokeplay Champion

This evening we are in Limerick to meet with the 2019 National Seniors Junior Strokeplay Champion, Margaret O Donovan from the Bruff club.

Thanks to Margaret for giving us her time to give us some background on her game, tell of her preparation before her wins in ESB and Listowel last year plus views on what could be done to get more ladies actively playing the Limerick region.

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Player: Margaret O Donovan

Club: Bruff

Handicap: -14

Major individual honours so far:

2019 National Seniors Junior Strokeplay Champion &

2-time Munster Junior Strokeplay Champion (2019 & 2016)

#### Q: Club play with?

M: Spalding 8 iron

#### Q: Putter play with?

M: Spalding

#### Q: Ball play with?

M: Titleist Pro V1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

M: My favourite is strokeplay format

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

M: ESB

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition

M: My best was a 56 in a National Strokeplay finals

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

M: The 18th in Larkspur. I think a lot would pick that one.

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

M: All my family were playing it, so I took it up to join them and enjoying it ever since.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

M: To win the National Nett Matchplay

#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

M: Not to take it too seriously, it's only a hobby





Q: 2019 was a brilliant year for you winning the National Seniors Junior Championship in ESB and the Munster Junior Strokeplay Championship in Listowel. Both ESB and Listowel are challenging championship courses, how did you prepare coming into both championships and how did you take on the second 18 in ESB after you found yourself with a sizeable advantage over the field after the first 18?

M: I didn't have any special preparation going into either of the championships. I played scratch cups most weeks since the start of the season so that helped. I just went out to play and enjoy the game, it worked out on both weekends.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

M: Holland.

#### Q: Favourite movie?

M: Gone with the wind

#### Q: Sporting hero?

M: Katie Taylor

# Q: Unfortunately, the number of ladies registered and playing in Limerick is currently very small. With Limerick and Clare now a regional board, what do you think the regional board or clubs needs to do to get more ladies joining the local clubs and out playing?

M: Yes, there are very few ladies from the Limerick clubs actively playing which is a pity. There are several ladies who play in Clare so hopefully with Clare and Limerick together now there will be more competitions for ladies to play in and then maybe more will take it up. I think clubs could run more scrambles as it is a competition ladies like and a good way for ladies to get used to the rules of the games and how to play. Clubs need to advertise more for new lady members.



#### 2019 Leinster Senior Matchplay Champion & Irelands #1 Ranked Player

Today our player profile and interview is with Irelands number 1 ranked lady player and 2019 Leinster Senior Matchplay Champion, Chrissie Byrne of the Ryston club in Kildare.

Thanks to Chrissie for giving her time to provide her thoughts on how we could get more girls playing our game, the ladies international P&P scene plus insights into her own game.

Player: Chrissie Byrne

Club: Ryston

Handicap: +1

National Ranking: 1

Major senior individual honours so far:

2-time World Ladies Strokeplay Champion,

5-time National Senior Matchplay Champion,

3-time National Senior Strokeplay Champion,

9-time Leinster Senior Matchplay Champion &

6-time Leinster Senior Strokeplay Champion.

#### Q: Club you play with?

C: Wilson Bernard Langer 50 degree

#### Q: Putter you play with?

C: Callaway Palomar

#### Q: Ball you play with?

C: Titleist ProV1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

C: I love all 3 formats for different reasons but there is something special about matchplay, so it's matchplay for me. Regardless of the format to win a championship in any of the formats you need to be at the top of your game come championship day or weekend as the standard of competition is so high.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

C: Many great courses out there but my favourite is Navan followed by Athgarvan and Lucan.

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition?

C: I shot a 43 twice, once in the National Strokeplay finals in Ringcommon back in 2011 and also in the Leinster Strokeplay finals in Navan in 2004

#### Q: What been your most memorable moment in P&P so far?

C: I have been very lucky to have so many great memories because of P&P both on and off the course. The most memorable one however was when I was still in juveniles and watching my sister Marian when she beat Ger Ward in the 1998 National Matchplay final in Glenville to win her first adult national title. I specifically remember kneeling down watching the last hole through legs as the





crowd was 4-5 deep standing around the final green watching the match. Mammy and Daddy were at the clubhouse house not able to watch. When Marians putt went in, I remember jumping up and running over to them shouting 'she got it, she won'

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

C: Every hole in Lough Owel....easy understand why it's known as The Monster.

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

C: I started when I was 8. Daddy was a founding member in Athgarvan and St. Bridget's so when myself, my sisters and my brothers were all old enough to start playing Daddy got us each a set of clubs and taught us all how to play. I haven't looked back since.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

C: To not come 2nd in a National Championship 🙃

#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

C: I'll get the next one 😉

Q: Sadly, the number of girls joining clubs and playing competition over the last 5 years is worryingly extremely low. As one of the few active lady players who has come up from juvenile ranks and continued playing, what do you see needing to be done at NEC, county and club levels to get more girls playing as they are the future of the ladies game?

C: In terms of encouraging girls to play the game of pitch & putt, I feel the promotion and marketing of lady players and championships is vital from club to national level. Katie Taylor is a fantastic role model for ladies in sport and has increased the number of girls taking up boxing hugely in the last decade. Pitch & Putt lady players dedicate themselves to their sport just like Katie and this should be highlighted and advertised. This series is a great step to market the ladies of our game and perhaps encourage former lady players to make a return or perhaps encourage parents to introduce their daughters to play. Well done on your endeavour

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

C: Joint favourites are San Francisco and Rome.

#### Q: Favourite movie?

C: The Godfather. Love a good gangster movie!

#### **Q:** Sporting hero?

C: Tiger Woods without question 🐺

Q: As someone who has represented Ireland on a number of previous occasions and with Ireland currently boasting many world class players, what do you see as needing to be done, either at national or international level, to further promote the ladies game on the international stage?

C: The number of Irish ladies travelling to international opens has increased over the last few years which is a massive promotion of the standard of talent in the ladies game in Ireland and it is fantastic to see. It would be great if there were more international games for ladies. I feel if an all ladies international event is not possible on a biannual basis, a place should be set aside for a lady on the Irish team for the European and World Cup Championships. There is no better advertisement than that for ladies in pitch and putt. To represent your country is every sports person's dream and should be inclusive to ladies who play Pitch & Putt **%** 



## 2019 Leinster Senior Strokeplay Champion

Next up we meet with the 2019 Leinster Senior Strokeplay Champion, Glenda Hoey from the R.G.S.C club in Dublin.

Thanks to Glenda for taking time out to give us insights on her own game and views on ladies P&P in Dublin and the National Ladies Strokeplay Championship scheduled for Kilbeggan this year.

Player: Glenda Hoey

Club: R.G.S.C

Handicap: -2

National Ranking: 6

Major senior honours so far:

2019 Leinster Senior Strokeplay Champion

#### Q: Club play with?

G: Callaway 50 degree

Q: Putter play with?

G: Scotty Cameron Newport 1.5

#### Q: Ball play with?

G: Callaway Chrome Soft

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

G: I love them all for different reasons but the intercounty is brilliant. It's the pinnacle of our calendar year and the national stage for players to perform. Why would any player not want to be part of that.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

G: Many fabulous courses come to mind but McDonagh is something special. I love it!

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a championship?

G: 45 Gross, 2019 Leinster Strokeplay in Kilbeggan

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

G: I think every course has its tough holes but for me the 16th Deerpark is probably one I would like to forget . If you get a bad bounce here you can be in a lot of trouble as I found out myself in the Inter County in 2018.

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

G: I joined Glenville as a social member in 1990 and registered in 1994. Peggy Campbell & Stella Sheridan were at the top of their game at that time and so were a great inspiration. Unfortunately, I had to stop playing for a number of years before rejoining R.G.S.C in 2012 and back playing the game I love. Playing 8 years competitively.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

G: To win a national and hopefully play more inter county.  $\heartsuit$ 





#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

G: Believe in yourself ... !!!

# Q: How would you describe the current state of the ladies game in Dublin, the county with the largest ladies membership? What could get more ladies interested in playing competitively in championships?

G: Well everyone is probably aware that there are only a handful of seniors in Dublin at the moment as the handicap system has pushed most out of the grade. I believe there is a new system in place now so hopefully that will make a difference for all grades. I do think the ladies need to put in some effort themselves if they want to keep their sport alive. Enter outside competitions where possible would be a start. Maybe clubs could take turns to host a coaching evening once or twice a week during summer months and encourage ladies to meet likeminded players who want to improve their game. They could bring along a juvenile and try introducing them to the sport too. If clubs looked at this and encouraged their ladies out to other clubs, it might get them interested in playing leagues and most importantly the confidence to enter outside competitions.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

G: Vilamoura in Portugal

#### Q: Favourite movie?

G: I don't really do movies 📳

#### **Q: Sporting hero**

G: Seve Ballesteros

# Q: The National Ladies Strokeplay is scheduled for Kilbeggan this year where you won the Leinster Senior Strokeplay title last year? Obviously, a course you like, are you looking forward to returning to this venue this year and who do you predict to be the top contenders in the senior grade?

G: I don't really see much happening in the way of competition this season, hopefully I am wrong. I love Kilbeggan and always try play in their opens. A beautiful course but tricky with some tough shots. I would think the senior title is open to all ladies. Everyone is of a high standard and I wouldn't overlook any player. As I say it's on the day. If it's meant for you, it won't pass you.



## 2019 Leinster Intermediate Matchplay Champion

Today we meet two ladies from the one family who both had fantastic success in the Leinster Matchplay Championships last year. They are Joanne Cooney from Seapoint who won the 2019 Leinster Intermediate Championship in Trim plus her daughter and future superstar of the ladies game, Sarah, who was runner up in the 2019 Leinster Girls Matchplay Championship played in Athgarvan.

Thanks to Joanne for giving us insights into both her own game along with that of Sarah's, she takes look back at her experience of the Leinster Matchplay Championship in Trim and thoughts on how parents and clubs need to encourage more girls to take up this great sport. Special thanks and congratulations to Sarah who we will no doubt be hearing about and seeing at many more girls and ladies championship in the future  $\sqrt[2]{3}$ 

Player: Joanne Cooney

Club: Seapoint

Handicap: -11

Major honours so far:

2019 Leinster Intermediate Matchplay Champion

#### Q: Club play with?

J: Cleveland 48-degree wedge

#### Q: Putter play with?

J: Odyssey

#### Q: Ball play with?

J: TaylorMade

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

J: Tough one really. I enjoy strokeplay as you are playing your own game, however it does not allow for the odd "bad hole" that happens. Matchplay is also a great format in the sense anything can happen, and it really is not over till it's over and can be a little more forgiving. I've never played intercounty to date.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

J: I'd have to say Bellewstown. I love the variety of shots there and the challenges it poses.

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition

J: 51 in a club competition in Seapoint

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

J: The 11th in Collon, approx. 68 mtr uphill with a pond and trees! What could possibly go wrong???

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

J: I'm playing now nearly 4 years. My husband Paul and daughter Sarah and his family all play. I guess I got fed up sitting on the bench watching. As soon as I picked up the club I was hooked! It's a great game that can be enjoyed by all.





#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

J: To travel Ireland and attend all opens with Paul and Sarah.

#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

J: Stop trying to burst the ball!

# Q: You had an excellent win the 2019 Leinster Inter Matchplay Championship in Trim taking the title after a hard fought 2&1 final victory over home player Margaret Conneely? How would you sum up the championship weekend and the matches you had? Plus, what were your views of the Trim venue as a course relatively new to the championship circuit?

J: Firstly, Trim was a fantastic venue. The course was in pristine condition with some challenging shots. The welcome the was received was second to none. I would certainly recommend more Championships on this course. At the time of the Championship the ladies handicap grade has just been amended. I was off 13 at the time but ended up inter grade. I didn't think I would have a change of getting past the first day. I looked at it as an opportunity to play a different course. After day one going home, I was over the moon. The next day I was determined to give it my best shot. I knew Margaret from meeting her at opens in the past. She is an amazing player and I knew it was going to be a really tough match. It is difficult playing Championships on your own course. So much is expected of you and so many that you know watching you. I was the underdog and I think that worked in my favour on the day if I am honest.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

J: Tough one... I think Kandersteg, Switzerland just amazing.

#### **Q: Favourite movie?**

J: Into the west.

#### **Q: Sporting hero?**

J: Defo Katie Taylor she is amazing. Her determination and what she has achieved for women in sports is a credit to her.

# Q: You were not the only person in the family to win a provincial matchplay medal in 2019 with your daughter Sarah putting in a brilliant performance in the Leinster Girls Matchplay Championship at Athvarvan where she finished runner to Sophie Farnan of Skyrne. Can you give us a few words about Sarah, what p&p means to the family and what would you say to other parents who have girls to encourage them to take up p&p?

J: Sarah absolutely loves the game. She plays with Paul and I in Seapoint all the time and everyone is so encouraging. But the harsh reality is that at most we have seen 5 Juveniles girls in championships and competitions. I think at that age parents need to bring their children to clubs to play and likewise clubs need to facilitate Juveniles by teaching them skills and etiquette of the game together with competition otherwise it simply won't work. In our case it's a little different. We put her name down for everything and away we go, yet at opens she is left watching at the side. Currently Sarah can't play with us in open competition for another 4 years. I fear she will get bored and leave. I have watched the talented young men who are in the same boat and it has already happened whereby they leave and go to golf or give up completely. Like in all sports our juveniles are the key to sustaining growth within every organisation. Figures are dropping and change needs to be implemented now to ensure the future of this great game.

From a family perspective if she doesn't stop using my clubs, balls and cloths she will be walking to the courses!!! (a). We will as always support local and national competitions. Really looking forward to competitions starting back.



## 2019 Leinster Intermediate Strokeplay

We are Dublin bound this evening, to the Lucan club to be precise, to meet with the 2019 Leinster Intermediate Strokeplay Champion, Kathleen Croke.

Thanks to Kathleen for her time as she looks back on the 9-hole playoff in the 2019 Leinster Strokeplay Championship in Kilbeggan, gives some views how to get more ladies in Dublin playing competitively and a background on her own game.

Player: Kathleen Croke

Club: Lucan

Handicap: -8

Major individual honours so far:

2-time Leinster Inter Strokeplay Champion (2019 & 2015)

#### Q: Club play with?

K: Left-handed IVCW2000 Sand wedge

#### Q: Putter play with?

K: Left-handed Slazenger

#### Q: Ball play with?

K: Titleist ProV1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

K: Don't mind strokeplay but I prefer matchplay. No great interest in intercounty.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

K: Glenville

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition

K: 51 in a club Strokeplay

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

K: Being left-handed there are a lot of difficult holes on different courses. The 8th in Ringcommons is particularly difficult. It is a short shot but with a big tree on the left-hand side making it impossible to play my natural shot.

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

K: I started playing P&P in Lucan shortly after I left school. It was and still is a great pastime in the evenings and weekends. I've played all over the country and there are very few courses I haven't played on.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

K: My goal is to compete at the highest level possible for as long as I can.

#### Q: Your motto in P&P

K: Never give up, anything is possible.





Q: You had a great win in Leinster Inter Strokeplay finals in Kilbeggan last year after a dramatic 9-hole playoff (in somewhat inclement weather ) against Oldcastles Annette Dooner. How did you approach the playoff and was your game plan different? Also, what you're your thoughts on Kilbeggan generally, scheduled hosts of this year's National Ladies Strokeplay?

K: When they told me we had to go out to a playoff I couldn't believe it. There was torrential rain outside at the time. I don't mind too much playing in bad weather as we get plenty of practice playing winter leagues in Lucan. I treated it like a matchplay competition, which I love, so it was one hole at a time. Over the 9-hole playoff I was always in control. Experience told as Annette is not that long-playing P&P. She is a good player and her day will come. Kilbeggan is a great course and I hope we do get to play the national stroke play there sometime this year.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

K: My favourite place in the world is here in Ireland, Fethard on Sea, Co.Wexford.

#### Q: Favourite movie?

K: Kelly's Heroes

#### **Q: Sporting hero?**

K: Sir. Alex Ferguson and the 1999 - 2000 Manchester United football team.

# Q: What do you see as the main factor why many ladies do not enter provincial or national championships and how can these hurdles be overcome?

K: Nerves. We have a lot of very good junior players in Lucan. The Dublin leagues helped a lot to get them used to playing on other courses, but the leagues haven't been on for a few years. Bring back the Dublin leagues for the ladies!



## 2019 Leinster Junior Matchplay Champion

We return to the Seapoint club in Louth today to meet the second Leinster Matchplay Champion from the club last year, that being Barbara Murphy who won the 2019 Leinster Junior Matchplay Championship.

Thanks to Barbara for her time as hear about her own game, how she felt playing in the final in Trim last year and views on ladies entries in provincial and national championships.

Player: Barbara Murphy

Club: Seapoint

Handicap: -16

Major individual honours so far:

2019 Leinster Junior Matchplay Champion

#### Q: Club play with?

B: Spalding Pitching Wedge

Q: Putter play with?

B: Odyssey

#### Q: Ball play with?

B: Titleist Prov1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

B: For me it would be strokeplay.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

B: Royal Meath in Clonee.

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition?

B: A 56 in a turkey club competition in Seapoint in 2019.

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

B: The 7th hole in St. Bridget's. A long shot with water on the right-hand side to catch any loose shots.

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

B: I took up P&P because my husband asked me as he was going through a difficult time and I wanted to support him. Playing two and a half years now.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

B: To go out and play as best as I can.

#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

B: To try and enjoy every game.





# Q: It went all the way to the very final green in Trim last year where you clinched in dramatic style the 2019 Leinster Junior Matchplay Championship defeating Navans Sandra Connor in the final. How would you describe the experience of that final and what was going through you mind on the tee box of the 36th hole?

B: The final in Trim last year was a great experience for me as I didn't think I would get to the final and don't think I would have got to the final without the support of some people. I was so nervous I thought I was going to 😥. Standing on the last few I just thought to myself hit it properly, took a deep breath and hit it. I didn't know where it had landed until I went up to the green as there was a mound in front of the green. I remember saying if it is meant it be, it will as Sandra is a very good player. It went my way on the day. Luck has a part to play in any win.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

B: Austria

Q: Favourite movie?

B: Ghost

Q: Sporting hero?

B: Sonia O'Sullivan

# Q: As a member of the very successful Seapoint club what are your views on a) how clubs can get more ladies to join as members and b) what more can be done by the PPI and ladies themselves to get more junior ladies to enter provincial and national championships.

B: I think the handicap systems prevents a lot of ladies entering championships as they want to hold their handicaps for club competitions. This leads to those who do enter championships at a disadvantage handicap wise. Some clubs have a minimal amount of ladies competitions while others have more which is a disadvantage for ladies in some clubs as there no chance to play competitions. Maybe having more ladies only social days or mornings might encourage more ladies to join as they might feel they won't make a show of themselves starting off.



### 2019 Munster Intermediate Matchplay & Strokeplay Champion

We head back to the Lakeside club this evening to interview and meet with our next player who is the 2019 Munster Inter Strokeplay and Matchplay Champion, Mary Quinn.

Thanks to Mary for taking part in the player profile series as she looks back on her 2019 win in Listowel, provides views on getting more ladies back playing and gives us some information on her own game.

Player: Mary Quinn

Club: Lakeside

Handicap: -7

Major individual honours so far:

National Inter Strokeplay Champion 2015, National Junior Strokeplay Champion 2008, Munster Inter Strokeplay Champion 2019, Munster Inter Matchplay Champion 2019 and Munster Junior Strokeplay Champion (2007 & 2008)

#### Q: Club play with?

M: MD 50 wedge

- Q: Putter play with?
- M: Ping G2i

#### Q: Ball play with?

M: Titleist Prov1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

M: I would prefer the strokeplay and intercounty formats over matchplay

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

M: Love playing Fermoy despite not having much luck there, yet!

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition

M: I shot a 51 in a club competition in Lakeside

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

M: Deerparks nightmare 16th

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

M: I took up the game when I moved to Templemore in 1990. I played for a few years then gave it up for a while but probably playing consistently now about 18 years.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

M: To try play in as many competitions as I can.

#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

M: You can't change what you did on the last hole, just try and do better on the next one.





#### Q: 2019 was a great year for you winning the provincial double claiming the Munster Inter Strokeplay and Matchplay titles. How did you prepare going into both championships and how would you describe Listowel as a championship venue?

M: Listowel is a fantastic course and only played it last year for the first time. Last year I didn't play as much pitch and putt as I would have liked but it worked for me in both the Munster championships.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

M: Majorca

Q: Favourite movie?

M: Despicable me

Q: Sporting hero?

M: Brendan Maher 💙 💛

# Q: Many ladies have unfortunately left the game for various reasons over the years. What can be done to try get these ladies back playing?

M: I think the handicap system needs to be looked closely this year especially in the ladies' section. There are lot of ladies playing in the senior grade in the -6.4 handicap range who are really in no man's land. Maybe a 4th grade should be considered. I also think there's a lot of ladies out there that just don't have the confidence to play outside of their clubs. Maybe each county should try to set up a regular ladies competition and this might encourage these ladies to play, then from county to provincial and onto national championships, worth a try.



## **2019 Munster Junior Matchplay Champion**

Back to Munster again this evening where we meet with the 2019 Munster Junior Matchplay Champion, Josie McCormack of the Lakeside club in Tipperary.

Thanks to Josie for participating in the series and giving us an insight into her own game along with advice to ladies for entering championships plus how clubs can try attract ladies and juveniles into their clubs.

Player: Josie McCormack

Club: Lakeside

Handicap -15

Major individual honours so far:

2019 Munster Junior Matchplay Champion

#### Q: Club play with?

J: Ping pitching wedge

#### Q: Putter play with?

J: Ping Scottsdale

#### Q: Ball play with?

J: Titleist Prov1

#### Q: Do you prefer strokeplay or matchplay or intercounty?

J: I enjoy all formats but to pick one it would be matchplay for me.

#### Q: Favourite course (not own course)?

J: Fermoy in Cork.

#### Q: Best gross score for 18 holes in a competition?

J: My best was a 53 in a club competition.

#### Q: Toughest hole on any P&P course?

J: The 18th hole in Larkspur Park.

#### Q: What made you take up P&P and how long have you been playing?

J: Main reason was for exercise and now I have been playing 10 years.

#### Q: Main P&P goal in the coming years?

J: To continue to be able to play and enjoy.

#### Q: Your motto in P&P?

J: Enjoy, it's only a game.

Q: Larkspur Park is the venue for the 2020 National Matchplay and where you won the Munster Junior Matchplay title last year. There are now 2 National Ladies Matchplay Championship now played for, scratch and nett. For ladies who haven't played Larkspur how would you describe it from your experience and what would you say to junior ladies to





# encourage them to enter the National Nett Matchplay Championship in particular where handicaps are used?

J: Based on my experience at Larkspur I would say it is an excellent course but can also be a very challenging course, the 18th hole can be a nightmare. To get more playing I would encourage junior ladies to play in as many competitions they can and to play different courses, not just your own club, so as to get the confidence to go onto the next level.

#### Q: Favourite place in the world you visited?

J: London

#### Q: Favourite movie?

J: Gone with the wind

#### Q: Sporting hero?

J: Lar Corbett

Q: Pitch & Putt is not only about competitions rather it is a fantastic sport for all ages to take up from a social perspective, it's a great way to exercise and have fun. What would you say to any lady or girls out there thinking about taking up the sport or joining a club and how they should go about it?

J: We at Lakeside had 40 juveniles last year and I would encourage all clubs to promote and take care of their juveniles. I believe clubs should have one evening each week for ladies to get ladies out playing and a chance for other ladies to see what p&p is, meet others and join up.



















# WHO WILL BE OUR NEXT NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL LADY CHAMPIONS?











