

Margaret Melville

Beginnings

Margaret, who has always been a keen sportswoman, was a sprinter as a teenager and played hockey during her twenties. Then with three children, she began entering garden competitions, receiving trophies from the Lord Mayor for her prize-winning exhibits.

She competed in squash fixtures for fifteen years, mostly at A-grade level and soccer with her daughters until her early forties. She really wanted to play lawn bowls with many of her friends, but with stockings and long skirts as part of the dress code, Margaret felt that this was not an option as it would have been too hot for her.

In playing croquet, however, she could wear shorts and a tee-shirt, definitely a more sensible

alternative. There was also a strong family connection in that several Aunts and Uncle Jim with his roquet, croquet and continuation' played. Jim had his own three-quarter sized lawn at Clontarf where all of the relatives and quite a few other players learned the game during the 1980's. When Dorothy (Margaret's mother) started playing, there was the worry that the lawns may be damaged by new players. How things have changed!

Margaret started learning the game at Windsor where beginners were taught on a half-sized lawn. She was totally confused for well over six months before graduating to the big' lawn. Soon after this promotion, she was pushed straight into competition. Her first match was the monthly 'Brooch' and she was so inexperienced that an opposition player ended up giving her a coaching session.

Margaret's first recorded wins were in 1994. After playing croquet for only one year, she was Runner-Up in the Division 4 Singles. This was followed with several wins in both singles and doubles in the lower divisions. Margaret's handicap lowered in twos and threes. At that time, the selectors were the ones who changed handicaps if



they thought that players were good enough. There was no card system during the 1990's.

Queensland Events

Margaret won the Division 3 Brooch in 1996 and 1997, the Silver Medal in 1998, the Queensland Ladies event in 2002, the Division 1 Medal in 2007, 2009 and 2010, the Gibson Medal in 2010, and the Toowoomba Rene Cole singles in 2007.

Gold Coast Tournament

Margaret was Runner-Up in the Gold Coast Ladies event in 1998 and won in 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007.

The Jean Armstrong Shield

In the late 1990's and early 2000's, the place for women to improve their skills at a competition level was the Jean Armstrong Shield competition held in Adelaide. The only other option was to play against men, where the top seeds would wipe you out' 26-0. It was a great honour to be invited to play in the Jean Armstrong Shield.

Margaret attended this tournament for the first time in 2000 and played in it for many years. She won this prestigious event four times, in 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2012. There was always strong opposition from such well-known players as Betty Belz, Shirley Carr, Creina Dawson, Janine Hawker and Sue Beattie.

ACA President's Eights

The inaugural President's Ladies Eight was held in Adelaide in 2001. It later became known as the Jean Armstrong Bowl. The competition proved to be a great learning ground in which to compete against the top women players of Australia. Margaret won the Bowl in 2003, winning thirteen of her fourteen games and again in 2004 when she claimed ten wins from fourteen games. The following year, the ACA created the Third Eight and Margaret competed in this event in the ensuing years.

Australian Interstate 'Eire Cup' Event

After selection as reserve in the Queensland Interstate Eire Cup Team in 2001, Margaret became a team member for the next twelve years from 2002 until 2014. Queensland won the Eire Cup in 2006 and Margaret was the Australian Women's Singles champion in 2008.

Trans Tasman Test Series

The Trans-Tasman series is played every two years. Margaret played for Australia four times, in 2004, 2006, 2009 and 2011. In 2004, she received a trophy for the Best Player of the Tournament. The team had been selected from the top five women players in the country and at that time, Margaret was one of them. The tournament held in 2011 was the first time that Australia had beaten New Zealand in twenty years. This proved a fitting way for Margaret to complete her international team career.

World Events

In 2008, Margaret played in the World Association Croquet Federation Qualifiers and hence qualified to play in the World's Event in New Zealand. In 2012, she also played in the WCF Women's World Association Event, comprising a larger pool of players who were not necessarily in the top five. Margaret completed thirty-one triple peels over a twelve-year period, but there were many more attempted.

Golf Croquet 'Interstate Shield' Event

Margaret played Golf Croquet at the top level also. She was selected to represent Queensland in playing for the Australian Interstate Shield in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

She also competed in the WCF Golf Women's Worlds in 2009 where she improved her ranking by several places to number seven in the competition. The following year, in 2010, Margaret won the Australian Women's Golf Championship by beating the then World Ladies Champion, Alex Verge in a best of five' final

Conclusion

Over a twenty-one-year career span, Margaret has won many top-level events, all of which started from that very first Runner-Up award in the 1994 Division 4 Singles championship.

Margaret was presented with the Brisbane Electorate Sports Achievement Award in 2004. In 2018 she expressed an interest in becoming a Queensland selector, and was duly appointed, with the appointment continuing through 2019.

(Nominated by Stephens Club and inducted into the CAQ Virtual Hall of Recognition in September 2018)