

CHRIS MCWHIRTER

FORREST PARK CROQUET CLUB

What initially attracted you to the sport?

Group of friends had a picnic set in a share house we used to live in. Received a come n try flyer in the post and 12-16 of us popped down to what is now Forrest Park Croquet Club and the members there let us come as a group every Sunday afternoon and play Golf Croquet.

What is your preferred style of play?

I definitely enjoy tactical games and would be more on the aggressive side than defensive.

What is your highest achievement so far?

I've won 10 Australian titles but I'd say Captain of the 2016 GC World Team Championship Tier 2 which we won as a team. It was my first time in an Australian team and I managed to play through the event undefeated as Captain and brought Australia back to Tier 1 where we belong.

What is your short or long term goal in croquet?

My main goal is leading WA to victory in the Interstate Shield.

How do you mentally prepare for matches?

Practice, Experience and Sleep. If you can get 2 of the 3 correct then you will have a good event and if you can get all 3 you will have a brilliant event.

What do you enjoy most about playing croquet?

I like the tactical side of croquet. We had an Egyptian at our club years ago and he had a saying "let them know you are on the court" which I often think about. Make every shot count even if it just to be annoying, let them know you are there.

What aspect of your game do you feel is your strongest?

I think I get the tactics right most of the time. We all do dumb shots and gamble on opponent response, but I think I have been successful as I have managed to pressure build and create consequence through tactical choice.

Do you have any pre-match rituals or superstitions?

When I'm warming up or playing for WA I like to use the Black and Yellow balls. When playing for Australia I like to warm up with Green and Yellow but its not essential, just a quirk that I like to use the colours I'm wearing when representing state or country.

Outside of croquet, what are your other interests or hobbies?

I still play touch rugby (same team for 30 years!) and being in Perth I am at the beach with my dog at least twice a week (and sometimes the wifey). I also have a 1977 Leyland Mini which needs some love.

What is your favourite croquet tournament?

I love playing for WA so the Interstate Shield is definitely something I aspire to be ready for. I love the team environment and the playing for purpose

What advice would you give to someone who is new to croquet?

This is a focus sport so stay calm and hit the ball when you are ready. If you can hit the ball clean, stay calm, steady and don't rush your shot you will be successful. Don't be afraid to ask questions from the best players you meet.

What do you think makes a great croquet player?

I think the best players all have a plan. They plan for an opponent, plan for a hoop and they can see the full rotation of shots before they choose what shot to play themselves. In AC it is next break strategy and GC it is next hoop strategy. Great players are always looking ahead and not just the current shot or the next shot.

Do you have any favorite croquet memories or moments?

Winning the 2016 GC World Champs Tier 2 as Captain. Winning the 2017 GC Interstate Shield as Captain. My first Triple Peel in AC when I was in Division 3 back in the early 2000's. Being the Australian flag bearer at the 2015 GC Worlds.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your journey?

I'm thankful that I have had the work and family support that has allowed me to travel and play as much croquet as I have. To represent your country as captain and wear a baggy green is something pretty special and wherever I journey from here, I will always have that memory.