



HISTORY OF NANAIMO BLIND BOWLS

Since 1983 the Nanaimo Lawn Bowling Club has offered green time, coaching and sighted helpers to low vision persons in our community. Betty & Bob Benton, Mona Haddad, Joyce Osborne and Norval Wheatcroft were instrumental in getting the program started. They recruited many dedicated members who were willing to work with these visually impaired individuals. Mona and the Bentons often included the V I bowlers such as Cheryl Ward and Tracy Manca on their teams both in club and open tournaments.

Because of their hard work, dedication and influence, the blind program has remained strong in our club.

Over the years we have been blessed with some excellent bowlers such as Al Acheson, Cindy McQuirter, Cheryl Ward, Tracy Manca, Elaine Smithson, Shirley Cole. Kendrick Wall, Iris Ferguson and Hugh McIntosh.

These bowlers dominated the medal podium at provincial and national competitions for years.

In 1989 Cindy, Cheryl and Hugh represented Canada in the International Blind Bowls World Championships held in Zimbabwe with Cheryl winning a bronze medal in the mixed pairs event.

In 1993 Al, Tracy and Elaine were part of the Canadian team which competed in the IBBA World Championships held in Victoria.

In 1994 Tracy represented Canada in the Commonwealth Games held in Victoria.

In 1995 Elaine won a bronze medal in England and qualified to bowl in the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games where she placed 5th.

In 2003 Iris travelled to Malaysia as part of the Canadian team.

In 2005 she played in South Africa in the IBBA World Championships where she placed 5th.

At the present time we have 10 bowlers who participate regularly on Tuesday morning. The group now accepts all persons with disabilities including individuals with mental challenges and the early stages of Alzheimer.

Some of the bowlers are competitive and others enjoy the social aspect of our game.

Randy Fred leads our competitive bowlers having won many gold medal at provincial and national competitions.

He is being challenged by Jay Gatley, David Ruckman and our two new totally blind bowlers - Gus Thorne and Tshepo Raditladi.

Tuesday mornings are a fun two hours marked with coffee, goodies, social interaction and of course bowling. The members of the Nanaimo Blind group are very thankful for the support and encouragement they have received over the years from the many directors and markers who have enabled this program to flourish.

Thanks to all club members and the executive for your fine efforts. They are very much appreciated.

We are always looking for new bowlers and helpers.

Plan a visit to the green some Tuesday morning during the bowling season. We are sure you will enjoy it.

Donn Sherry