

Humans of Tennis – Helen Doyle

I'm in work and at 8.43 and my watch alarm goes off. I turn my attention to my tennis for the following week, no one in the office is to come near me for the next few minutes as I need to book my court at 8.45.

This is how it began.

After getting back to tennis at a small club after a 15 year break I decided to enter singles at a tournament at the Belfast Boat club.

Unfortunately I was beaten quite easily by my opponent but her kind words made me think more about playing more at a bigger club. She said she could really tell that I had an eye for the ball but I just needed to play more.

I decided I would join the Belfast Boat club as I grew up in the area and knew it well.

This has been the best decision I have ever made. My first day at club play I was invited to play doubles the following day and continued playing with this group regularly. There were a number of coaching groups and I joined one and then met more people and began to play singles. There was a tennis ladder featuring both men and women and I quickly joined and began playing and meeting even more people. My highlight of the singles ladder was winning the most number of games played in the year. It had become a fun competitive challenge between me and another player however I pipped him at the post when he went on holiday the last few weeks of the ladder season 😊

The club has an internal league running twice a year which is another great way for new members to meet people of the same level to play against, it can also be competitive but in a fun way. My first achievement was to win best newcomer, I was improving and loving it and now really had a real buzz for it and wanted to be the best I could be. I was meeting more people and arranging regular games.

I was invited to go on my first tennis holiday to Spain and loved it, arrangements were made for the following year to Portugal and we have since settled to a great place in Majorca. There are now 16 of us going every year. As I write this I should be there but it's not to be this year 😞

I have taken advantage of the great coaching team at the Boat Club and have regular lessons with Lynsey my personal trainer / tennis coach as she manages to wreck me each week whilst trying her best to improve my game, (it's not an easy job).

I have become more involved in the club over the years by becoming a member of the tennis committee and I am at the club so regularly people comment on when I am moving in. This is a fun and friendly club full of members who love tennis and would do anything for their club, why would anyone not pick this club. I love it 😊