**Paul Skinley**

Achievements:

*Life Member of the Wellington Croquet Association (2015) and the Wellington Municipal Croquet Club*

*MacRobertson Shield Team*

*1979,1982, 1986, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2000, 2006 (selected but did not play), 2010*

*Trans-Tasman Open Croquet tests 1991(Captain) 1994 (Captain) 2009, 2011*

*NZ Representative matches*

*1982 in New Zealand*

*1986 in England*

*1993 in Australia*

*1996 in Wales*

*NZ Open Champion*

*1980, 1981, 1985*

*Runner-up 1975, 1997, 2006*

*Heenan Plate 1974, 1990, 2004*

*NZ Championship Doubles*

*1995 with S Jones*

*1997 with S Jones*

*NZ Mixed Doubles*

*1981 with Mrs R A Johnstone*

*1984 with Mrs C Ross*

*1996 with Mrs S Hoddy*

*2015 with Nina Mayard-Husson*

*NZ Handicap Singles – Hurlingham Cup 1981*

*New Zealand Men’s Champion*

*1978, 1980 , 1983 ,1996. 2011*

*President’s Senior Invitation Winner*

*1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1996*

*Gold and Silver Mallets winner 1981, 2010*

*English Silver& Bronze Medals 1979*

*North Island Open 1974, 1980, 2010, 2011*

*North Island Men’s 1984, 2010*

*North Island Doubles*

*1984 with C J Shilling*

*2009 with Nina Mayard-Husson*

*2010 with P W Drew*

*2011 with Nina Mayard-Husson*

*South Island Open 1976, 1977*

*South Island Men’s 1976, 1977, 1978, 1989*

*South Island Doubles*

*1976 with W R Bulloch*

*1978 with D J Bulloch*

*South Island Handicap Singles 1978, 1995*

*Premier Regional Silver Badge 1991, 2001, 2006, 2008, 2009 (Central), 1998 (Southern)*

******Born: 1959**

Paul Joseph Skinley often says he learnt croquet while in his pram accompanying his mother when she was playing at the Rangatira Croquet Club in Dannevirke. The club was a great source of inspiration for a young boy as two stalwarts Eileen Stephens and Gladys Browne were leading lights in the club and one of their sons, Tony Stephens became a major champion at the age of 16. The club sported two MacRobertson Shield players, Tony Stephens and Ralph Browne from whom to learn the game.

Because of his tender years – Paul started to play seriously at the age of 11 – he developed his own style using the Solomon grip. He played with an extra-long mallet and an upright stance with locked knees. When the mallet was at full flex on the back swing through his legs, the mallet formed a perfect 90 degree angle with his body. The mallet then came forward with a powerful swing which, when making a roquet, ended with the mallet head above his own head. The fact that his feet were so close together in that stance caused the odd mishaps, to his cost. The gap was not much wider than the mallet head.

He first won the North Island Open Singles in 1974 and the next season was runner up to Bob Jackson in the N.Z. Open. In 1980 and 1981 the roles were reversed and Paul was the winner. He won his third N.Z. Open title in 1985 with an immaculate display of precision croquet on lightning fast courts, defeating Joe Hogan in the final.

Paul returned to prominence in the 2006 New Zealand Open, coming second to Robert Fulford. A very unlucky ankle injury prevented him from taking part in the 2006 MacRobertson Shield test series but, he was again selected to play in 2010. He was a reserve for the 2014 series in New Zealand.

Paul came to Wellington in 1978 and joined the Wellington Municipal Croquet Club and has been the leading light in the club ever since. He lives nearby and spends many hours practising which show in his continued form over 40 years. Not only a player of international and national representation, Paul has a significant number of New Zealand titles in the Open championships and the Island championships as well as Silver Badge Competitions, Invitation events and his own club and Association events. Over those 40 years Paul has collected almost all the trophies available to him.

Paul has named the Wellington Croquet Club “The Best Little Croquet Club in the World” and is the caretaker, lawn setter, tournament manager for the club as well as carrying out many other unsung tasks. He is a Life Member of both his club and the Wellington Croquet Association (2015).

Paul has made major contributions on the national front being the New Zealand handicapper from 1988 to 1994 and also a selector. He has helped out with administration at various times in the national office and was its Sales Manager from 1995 to 1999.

Paul has now had to change his grip and stance to standard grip with legs slightly bent – more hours of practise make it appear that he had always played this way.