



Chris Clarke

Teachers have been known to be influential in the lives of youth. Sometimes that influence extends beyond the classroom. When Chris was 13, his French teacher in England asked if anyone wanted to learn croquet. This was the serendipity that started Chris on the course to win 60 national and international croquet titles.

While he lived in England he belonged to Southport, Bowdon, Colchester, and Letchworth Croquet Clubs. He joined his first club, Southport, in 1984. When he moved to Christchurch in 2005, he started playing at Cashmere Croquet Club then moved briefly to Elmwood. He has been a member at United Croquet club for around 13 years.

Chris started with split hands and grounded mallet for his swing. After watching Robert Fulford, at the National Junior Championship a couple of years after he started, he switched to casting. It wasn't until after his dreadful 1989 season that he started to move his hands together at the start of the 1990 season.

Chris' first national tournament was in 1988 at the British Open Championships. Within a couple of months, he won the Presidents Cup at the age of 17 years, 2 months. He was the youngest to ever win the title. In 1991, he won a Bronze Medal in the World Association Croquet Championship. At the World's he completed the first sextuple peel in a WCF World Singles Championship. Chris also completed the first ever delayed sextuple in the World Championship in 1995.

Chris has never lost a major Team Event in which he has played. He has the record number of National AC Doubles titles. He also won his first 23 World Team Doubles matches with Robert Fulford, which is a record. He finished his International Team career by winning his last 23 World Team Doubles matches with Robert Fulford, Paddy Chapman and Jenny Clarke, an unbeaten record stretching over 10 years.

Chris moved to NZ in 2005 and continued to represent England until 2012. He went on to win the 2014 MacRobertson Shield playing at number 1 for NZ and then Captain the 2016 NZ team to victory in the Openshaw Shield. He is the only player who has captained both MacRobertson Shield and Openshaw Shield winning teams. He was inducted into the World Croquet Federation Hall of Fame in 2010. When Chris was inducted into

Achievements as a New Zealand representative:

- *NZ Open Doubles*
(2019, 2015, 2014, 2012)
- *GC Nationals Doubles*
(2020, 2015, 2012)
- *MacRobertson Shield Team*
(2014)
- *Openshaw Shield Team*
(2016)
- *GC World Bronze*
(2015)
- *Don Reyland Stars Champion*
(2015, 2013, 2008)
- *Yvonne Yates GC Invitation*
(2014)
- *North Island AC Doubles*
(2014)
- *South Island AC Champion*
(2014)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>South Island AC Doubles</i> (2020) - <i>South Island GC Champion</i> (2012) - <i>South Island GC Doubles</i> (2016) - <i>CNZ Volunteer of the Year</i> (2014) 	<p>the WCF Hall of Fame, he was ranked number one in the world in both AC and GC. Chris was ranked number one in the world at AC for most of the last seven years of his singles career 2008 – 2014.</p> <p>Chris played his last competitive AC singles game in January 2014 at the MacRobertson Shield. He played his last GC singles game in May 2016 at the Openshaw Shield. Since then he has exclusively played doubles. Chris continues to be involved with croquet in different avenues. In 2005 he instigated the CNZ Youth Squad and coached it for multiple years. He became a life member of Canterbury Croquet Association in 2015 and in 2016 the United Croquet Club made him a life member. He has managed national and world events and coached players throughout the years, several of whom have gone on to become World Champions themselves. Chris says that "It is my record in team events, doubles and coaching that define me, rather than any singles wins."</p>
<p>Other international honours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Solomon Trophy Team</i> (2004, 2001, 1997, 1995, 1992, 1991) - <i>Presidents Cup</i> (2003, 1996, 1995, 1991, 1988) - <i>British Open Champion</i> (1997) - <i>British Championship Doubles</i> (2007, 2006, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001, 1998, 1996, 1993, 1992, 1991, 1990) - <i>British Open GC Doubles</i> (2019) - <i>British Men's Champion</i> (2005) - <i>CA Mixed Doubles</i> (2007, 2017) - <i>Oregon Invitational</i> (1991) - <i>Sonoma Cutrer Champion</i> (1997) - <i>Resort at the Mountain Invitational</i> (1998) - <i>Australian Men's Champion</i> (2006) - <i>Australian Doubles</i> (2006) 	<p>Achievements as an England representative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>NZ Open Champion</i> (2007) - <i>NZ Open Doubles</i> (2011, 2007, 2006) - <i>GC Nationals Champion</i> (2009, 2007) - <i>GC Nationals Doubles</i> (2008) - <i>MacRobertson Shield Team</i> (2006, 2003, 2000, 1996, 1993) - <i>AC World Champion</i> (2008, 1995) - <i>AC World Silver Medal</i> (1994) - <i>AC World Bronze Medal</i> (1991) - <i>GC World Bronze Medal</i> (2008) - <i>Silver Tray Invitation</i> (2007) - <i>Yvonne Yates GC Invitation</i> (2010) - <i>South Island AC Champion</i> (2007) - <i>South Island AC Doubles</i> (2006)