



Jean Jarden

Mrs Jean Jarden, nee Jean Johnston, was born in 1907. She married Benjamin ("Ben") Jarden in 1932.

In the late 1970s Jean Jarden was generally regarded as the best women's croquet player in the world. She was also regarded as one of the three best Kiwis among the NZ Women and was very competitive in open events.

Jean played with a very upright side style holding the mallet with both hands at the top. She was a very reliable shot, hardly ever missing at 10-12 yards.

During her match in the 1963 MacRobertson against England at Hamilton, her opponent Pat Cotter unwisely dribbled at Jean's tice, missed and finished on the boundary level with hoop two. Jean promptly hit the tice dead centre effectively rushing it to Cotter's ball and established a break to 4 back.

When stalking a long shot, she would pick out a spot about 2 yards ahead of her ball and focus on that spot throughout the shot. In the early 60's, like nearly every player, she would take the longer defensive lift shots usually from "B" baulk at partner centre court. Around the 70's, players started to take on the short lift from time to time and Jean became very consistent.

Her break play was very tidy and once she established a break she rarely lost control of it. Like others, she did, however, find half rolls, rolls and pass rolls difficult playing with both hands at the top of the mallet, especially on slow courts. Her number one fan - husband Ben - watched every game she played, and would often comment if she failed to pick up a break with a big croquet stroke. Several people tried to get Ben, who never played, to sit the Referee's exam as he'd become quite an authority on the game but he much preferred to follow every shot Jean played. Her All Black son Ron would often send her telegrams during a tournament which just said, "Head down, follow through." Jean was being interviewed by the Press at Waimarie during a tournament and Ron had dropped by to see how she was getting on. The reporter said, and of course you are the mother of the famous All Black wing, whereupon Ron said, "No, I'm just the son of a famous N.Z. croquet player!"

Achievements:

- *WCF Hall of Fame*
(2015)
 - *NZ Open Champion*
(1966)
 - *NZ Open Doubles*
(1971, 1969, 1968, 1967, 1966, 1965, 1956)
 - *MacRobertson Shield Team*
(1969, 1963)
 - *Women's AC Champion*
(1972, 1971, 1970, 1966, 1964, 1963, 1961, 1959, 1958)
 - *Silver Tray Invitation*
(1967)
 - *North Island AC Champion*
(1967, 1962)
 - *North Island AC Doubles*
(1971, 1965, 1962, 1961)
- Representative Matches:
- *vs Great Britain* (1969)

Other international honours:

- *CA Women's Champion*

(1973, 1970)

- *CA Ladies' Field Cup*

(1972, 1970)

- *Irish Open Champion*

(1970)