



Rene Watkins

Mrs C.A. "Rene" Watkins, nee Serena Eliza Bishop, was born in 1897. In 1938, Rene, a member of the Hastings Croquet club, won the first of her of her four Open Championship titles. In later years, Ashley Heenan described her as the best woman player New Zealand had produced. Playing with an upright side stance, similar to that of present day player, Stephen Forster of Australia, she was an extremely determined competitor, and with husband Clem, won the Doubles Championship three years in succession 1953, 54 and 55.

Her career was extensive as the CNZ Honours Board indicates. She was a MacRobertson team member in 1930 and 1956. Her last title was the NZ Open Doubles in 1961 with Jack Tucker – her tenth NZ Open Doubles title. She was 4 times NZ Open Champion, cementing her place as one of New Zealand's best ever woman players. With husband Clem they won the NZ Doubles 3 times in a row from 1953-1955. She was a great match player, never giving in no matter how bleak things got, the same sort of tenacity Susan Grigg (Wiggins) had. Her career spanned five decades.

Achievements:

- *NZ Open Champion*
(1952, 1941, 1940, 1938)
- *NZ Open Doubles*
(1961, 1955, 1954, 1953, 1946,
1940, 1936, 1931, 1926, 1924)
- *MacRobertson Shield Team*
(1957, 1941*, 1930)
- *Women's AC Champion*
(1955, 1947, 1944, 1941, 1931,
1926, 1924)
- *North Island AC Champion*
(1927, 1924)
- *North Island AC Doubles*
(1955, 1939, 1937, 1933,
1927)
- *South Island AC Doubles*
(1954, 1937)