



St Gelven Short Mat Bowls

Elaine. I'm outside the Salle Polyvalente in Saint Gelven to talk to Daryl Edwards who's the treasurer of the Short Mat Bowls Club in Saint Gelvin. Daryl. Tell us about this activity that you're involved with.

Daryl Well, it's an activity that runs throughout the whole of the year , effectively an indoor game played on a mat that is rolled out on the days that we meet . We, we're a club that consists of about 40 members, we meet on Tuesdays and we meet on Thursdays. We come together about 9.30 in the morning and to draw lots for who plays on which mat and we start off at about quarter past 10. We have a break mid-morning and finish about 1 o'clock. It's a very sociable, it's of course quite competitive with people on the mat but there's always a lot of friendly banter and when we come together in mid-morning to have our break there's always an opportunity to have a chat about things.

Elaine So one of the aims of the club is perhaps is not just necessarily playing the bowls but it's meeting for social reasons.

Daryl Oh yes, definitely. We all are interested in playing bowls and we, we like to feel that on the days that we turn up that we might win but the other aspect of turning up is that we can meet, uh, meet people, have a chat, many people have made some quite close friends at bowls and they meet socially outside. There is another club at Ploërdut in Morbihan and we occasionally meet up for a friendly game. Sometimes that's a little bit competitive. So we're not the only bowls club, I think there's one at Josselin.

Elaine When you have your matches or competitions against the other clubs how does that work? Do you have a team or do you work with a partner?

Daryl Generally when we meet with Ploërdut we select a team. They might come to us or we might go to them. So twelve people would probably divide up into four teams so we'd have four mats and the number of people that can

play on each mat are two teams of three, maybe two teams of four at most.

Elaine So are there different levels of let's say expertise? Are you going to start maybe with a beginner and then work your way up to ...

Daryl Yes I'd, I'd say the majority of the members who play bowls at the moment have been members of the club for several years now and they've developed quite a sophisticated degree of expertise but many of us when we started hadn't played short mat bowls before and we've gradually built up, uh, built up a skill and an expertise with it. But there are always a steady flow a small number of new members joining each year and some members that, uh, that leave us for various reasons. So although there's a core of committed members that have been there for several years there is always a number of newcomers joining. We have spare sets of bowls that they can use on the mats, we don't ask them to pay any money initially if they want to come and try out. They can have I think it's three sessions without having to pay any money so they can see if they like the company, if they like the game and while they're there for these initial sessions we can explain to them the kind of equipment that they'll need. As I say if people come initially and they haven't got any equipment we will provide the bowls. I'm talking about equipment but essentially that is just a set of bowls and a pair of playing shoes. The shoes need to have a completely flat sole without any serrations in it so that it doesn't spoil the mat that we play on. So but the equipment that people have to provide then are just a pair of playing shoes and their own set of woods or bowls.

Elaine So where would they get those?

Daryl The club can source them for new members but we can also advise people on internet sites that they can source bowls themselves.

Elaine Do you have any French members?

Daryl Yes, we have got one French person!

Elaine. They're working their way in!

Daryl We have had, we have had a few French people come through the club but short mat bowls is not something that they're all that familiar with.

Elaine It's not like boules.

Daryl It's not like boules, no.

Elaine Well it sounds great fun and obviously it's good exercise. [Yes] and it's sociable so what better things to do? Particularly I would think over the winter months.

Daryl The only cost really outside the initial start-up cost of getting a set of woods and the shoes is that each session we charge 1€50 the session and fifty centimes for the coffee and biscuits. So the cost of a good morning's sport, if you like to call it that, entertainment, is 2€.

Elaine Very reasonable.

Daryl I don't think that's bad value for money.

Elaine No, no, it sounds it's very good value: you're getting refreshments, and you're getting a good social morning and exercise thrown in. [yes] So absolutely brilliant. Thank you very much Daryl and long may it continue.

Daryl Okay, thank you very much.

