

BOB LOVE APPOINTED AS THE FIRST AMBASSADOR FOR DISABILITY BOWLS ENGLAND

Bob Love is one of the top para bowls players in the world. He won medals at the Paralympics, World Bowls Championships, a prestigious bronze medal at the 2014 Commonwealth Games and is a regular member and Captain of the Disability Bowls England International Squad.

As well as winning various para bowls competitions, Bob is a fitting example of how inclusive the sport of bowls is having qualified to compete in the 2017 English Indoor National Championship finals.

How did you get into sports and what have you achieved:

I was a founder member of a multi-sports club for people with disabilities and one of the sports we did was short mat bowls. The club used to compete against other similar clubs both regionally and nationally, some of the clubs had long mat bowls as one of their activities. This would have been in the early 80's.

After finishing with athletics (track) and swimming, at regional, national and inter-national level, I took up the game of bowls more seriously. It was a sport I could do at a level that was more than "have a go". In all the sports I have tried it has always been at a competitive level otherwise, for me, it isn't worth pursuing.

I won medals at all levels including Paralympic. In bowls I have gained medals at all levels including World and Commonwealth Games. I have been lucky in that the sports I have been involved in I have been successful.

What are your views on the sport and how it can particularly help those with a disability:

The game of bowls is one of the few sports that can be played anyone. It is also one of the few sports that can and is being played with non-disabled bowlers. Inclusion is the big word these days and bowls definitely achieves this. It's a Sport for All.

Not only do you get to play a great sport, but you can choose at what level you want to try and achieve, socially, club leagues and competitions or nationally and even inter-nationally.

What are your views on the future of disability bowls:

The future for bowls for people with disabilities is looking extremely "rosy" at the moment particularly since the reintroduction of DBE and the work carried out by them over the last two years. Membership has increased significantly. More bowls clubs have come on board realizing that they too can benefit from the inclusion of disabled bowlers to their club. More clubs now have disabled members on their committees and running their leagues etc, good for everyone.

It's about giving it a go. Many people have said that once you do you get the bug for doing it again and like other sports I think that's true.

How you see your role and what you are looking forward to doing:

My role would be to spread the word that this great game of bowls is one that can be enjoyed by everyone, young, old, male, female disabled and non- disabled.

This may be done by means of meeting up with bowls clubs, disabled sports clubs even disabled colleges and schools. At the moment the numbers of bowlers overall are thought to be on the decline I believe that this is not the case for those with a disability. I would see this as one of my roles is to make sure that this continues. I would particularly like to encourage the younger disabled to get involved, they are our future.

We wish Bob all the very best in his new role.

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