

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

The World of a High Performance Female Athlete:  
An Ethnography

by



ALISON J. FARROW

Submitted to  
The Faculty of Graduate Studies  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Thesis Requirements

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation Studies  
(August, 1988)

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AN ETHNOGRAPHY

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ALISON J. FARROW

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree of

MASTER OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate and describe in detail, the issues emerging from and surrounding a high performance female Badminton player. More specifically, the objective was to use an ethnographic approach to gather qualitative data which was used to look at emergent issues such as perceived self images and those of significant others. In addition, the study attempted to look at the role playing that took place as the athlete, wife and mother strived to function interdependently.

The method of collecting qualitative data was through information in a natural setting and was primarily descriptive in nature. This procedure lent itself to empirical data being gathered in the form of interviews, observations and personal conversations. The emerging issues served to categorize various subject areas. This design allowed data to unfold rather than be subject to "fitting" a research design constructed a priori.

The exploratory nature served to glean themes from the data in a theory producing manner, rather than forcing the data to fit into an existing theoretical framework. The primary data gathering instrument was the researcher as well as other humans, because it was "virtually impossible for any other instrument to have sufficient adaptability to adjust to the variety of realities that will be encountered" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In conclusion, the study showed the "world" that the athlete created around herself. Therefore, the emergent data served to ground the theory, and provided a more encompassing design to cope with the multiple realities.

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## Chapter 1

### Statement of the Problem

#### Introduction

In the last decade, there has been an increasing demand for us as individuals to strive towards improved fitness. We are bombarded by the media, informing us that regular exercise and balanced diets will provide us with fitter bodies and minds, which in turn should make us more productive in the work place.

Traditionally, the work place has been predominantly a man's territory, and sports, particularly at a highly competitive level, has been a man's playground. Now however, women are infiltrating the once "men only" bastions. They are, in essence, presenting justifiable challenges to their male counterparts. Along with this emerging independence and perhaps realization of competence, coupled with changing social attitudes, there is a "flood of new sporting opportunities and an enormous growth in the number of women willing to seize them" (Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1983, p. 37).

Research of women in sport has been attempted often in the last ten years; the majority of studies dealing with college and pre-college age subjects (Birrel, 1976; Butcher, 1983; Greendorfer, 1978; Bem, 1974). It appears that a systematic examination of women in sport has only yielded fragmentary results in the existing theoretical framework



and that there is a "dearth of empirical data" (Greendorfer, 1978, p. 59). A more creative and fresh approach is needed to explore and provide the thick description necessary for enabling "transferability judgements" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 214). The majority of research examining women in sport has reflected generalizations from group studies (Ingham, Loy and Berryman, 1972; Sherif, 1972). The aim in this study was to refine the data by being more specific and precise. To achieve this, a particular individual athlete was studied and the multiple realities that interacted in her world were examined. Rather than trying to create a setting to predict and control outcomes, the subject was an integral part of the emergent design. Research was conducted in the athlete's natural setting and not in isolation from what affected her and her actions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In conclusion, this study examined the woman as a high performance athlete and also explored the world she has created as a wife and mother.

#### Need for the Study

As previously stated, much of the research concerning women in sport has focussed on a broad base of theories from which specific hypotheses have been deduced. The methods for gathering the data have leaned heavily on true experimental techniques and therefore have been restricted to analysis. There have been no more than a handful of

studies directed at women participating in high performance athletics and virtually none have probed beneath the obvious realities. This study sought to expose the multiple realities evident in various contextual situations by involving the respondent in her athletic, wife and mother settings.

In order to achieve this goal, a research method that allowed for engagement and ongoing analysis of ideas, beliefs or actions was necessary. To restrict or focus on limited situations would then control what was studied. Without being in the natural setting, it is not possible to specify what is important to study or control (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, the data must first be located and analyzed. An inductive methodology, such as the ethnographic approach served this purpose best.

The naturalistic or ethnographic approach taken in this study is a perspective supported by Cicourel's (1969) discussion of the importance of speech and field settings in revealing the principles of interpretation during routine encounters. By allowing the respondent the opportunity to explain and clarify an observation in the natural setting, intentionality was guaranteed (Heron, 1981).

This research design in effect designs itself as data unfolds. Hence as various concepts and hypotheses emerge, the theory becomes grounded (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Heron's (1981) model of co-operative inquiry reinforces the

method of sharing data with the respondent to avoid any misinterpretation.

Hence, this type of inductive research has the potential to generate knowledge that other methods have thus far failed to do. Although as Lincoln and Guba conclude this research design provides "no generalizations, no cause effect statements ... only idiographic interpretations with ... knowledgeable respondents", it " ... encompasses all these facets ... and provides a better fit to socio-behavioural phenomena ... " (p. 44).

With this type of research approach it is impossible to mark boundaries for study. Rather, the boundaries will define themselves as the respondent shares her explanations of thought or actions.

In conclusion then the broad base of ideas open for exploration in this study were epitomized in the following statements:

1. To investigate the world of the post college age female athlete involved in the high performance sport of Badminton.
2. To explore the issues faced in that role and those of wife and mother.
3. To describe the perceptions of significant others.

## Methodology and Perspective

### The Ethnographic Approach

This "method has its roots in ancient history" (Dobbert, 1982) when historians wrote detailed observations of customs and behaviours of groups of people living in distant lands. Scientific ethnography developed from Britain and the Americas, and according to Dobbert (1982) follows four streams. Anthropology being one of those streams, provides the basis for ethnography, as it developed the use of the person as a primary research tool. Thomas (1937) reinforces the importance of not separating the phenomenon from its whole structure if it is to be completely understood. In a study of this nature where the Badminton player was the focus of study, it was evident that many contexts or parts interacted in her world. To remove any of those parts could interfere with our understanding of the "whole" that was her world.

Numerous studies have utilized the experimental research design to test hypotheses from a pre-determined theory (Felshin, 1974; McPherson, 1976; Hall, 1976). If generalization or prediction is the concern then these kind of studies are valuable. However the quantitative analysis tells us nothing about the extreme, the odd or different case. Schwartz and Ogilvy supporting the new naturalistic paradigm suggest that the best research design to use for a case is the one that "fits it best" (Schwartz & Ogilvy,

1979). Ethnography, falling under the umbrella of the naturalistic method provides the best fit for this study. Remembering that the aim is not to predict or control, rather, to let data unfold and flow. To the experimentalist, this design might seem vague and unstructured, but it has the capacity to raise more questions than it answers. To reach into the respondent's world on the Badminton court and at home required a flexibility and adaptability on the part of the observer and observed. It was impractical if not impossible to devise a hypothesis to test a theory when so many extraneous variables were involved. Isolating an idea to check for an answer is telling us little more than in a certain controlled setting, such and such may happen. If as this study supposed, beliefs or actions change with the multiple contexts engaged in, then we have to use a design that allows us to speculate and raise questions. The task of the ethnographer becomes as Filmer (1972) explains, "a matter of not taking for granted what is typically taken for granted at the level of everyday actions" (p. 216). Filmer suggests that the particulars within the generalizations are what we need to examine if our knowledge in the respondent is to grow. The run of the mill exchanges that each one of us face need to be addressed and interpreted (Cicourel, 1969). Schwartz and Ogilvy (1979) point out that rather than studying limited hypotheses as did Greendorfer (1977),

Hall (1976), Kenyon & McPherson (1976) to reach a generalization about women athletes, a better concept is perspective. This requires an "engagement" of the observer and observed so that what we study becomes a concern to the observer. In other words the observer determines the focus of what is studied, and becomes sufficiently involved by continuously questioning responses from the subject. Schwartz and Ogilvy go on to state that by becoming engaged sufficiently the observer can appreciate multiple realities and not be blinded by their biases. The aim at presenting the world of the woman in her interacting environments as it appeared to her and her significant others was best displayed from the perspectives of those inside the world (Schwartz, 1970; Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). Another example of the depth that can be achieved in this type of research design is Bogdan and Taylor's (1975) study on ward attendants' perspectives in a state hospital. They demonstrated overwhelmingly that "social reality is a construction based on the actor's frame of reference" (p. 11). Again, the importance of being as involved as possible allows the researcher to experience many angles of reference with the respondent, and in doing so create the data of the research.

To the quantifier, this research approach may leave too many questions unanswered. However what this study seeks to do is to overturn the stones, and reach deeper into the

settings. Statistics are useful in proving what we already know; the ethnographic approach is not limited to those boundaries.

## Methods and Procedures

### Introduction

"The case study is primarily an interpretative instrument for an idiographic construal of what was found there" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The following elements will be considered in detail in discussing the methods and procedures for this study. The discussion of sampling, the development of grounded theory based on the data, and discussion of the stages in the emergent design.

### Sampling

The focus on the female athlete in a high performance sport combined with being a wife and mother was unusual to say the least. The object in sampling this sensitive case was to detail the many specifics that gave it its uniqueness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) reason that favouring "purposive" sampling "increases the scope or range of data exposed" (p. 40). It follows that this kind of sampling will increase the researcher's ability to "take adequate account of local conditions, local natural shapings, and local values" into consideration. With purposeful sampling the interaction component in the design becomes more important. Interaction is needed to make sure the case fits

the purpose; to examine the unusual case such as in this study requires interaction to expose and to channel areas of thought. In this way the study allowed us to view the athlete's world from the inside. It was in effect allowing us to actually experience something without being there or doing it.

The athlete in this study was selected because she "had everything going for her"; young, (only 29 when the study took place), fairly attractive, and married to the handsome owner of one of the city's largest building companies. Domestically, her life was structured around her husband, Tom, and her 18-month-old son, Gary. The life of the "social butterfly" was hers when she chose. In addition to this she was a superior athlete. Holding down the number 3 spot in the world at Badminton which obviously required strenuous demands on her body and her time seemed to be no hindrance to her domesticity. Her home was constantly a "refuge" for her sports friends when they came from out of town to train and play, and she appeared to be popular with everyone that came into contact with her.

To have the opportunity to study the athlete as she juggled her many roles was challenging. Hence, although the sampling did not facilitate generalizations, it did maximize information.

Bogdan (1975) suggests that the selection of a site should attempt to meet the substantive and theoretical



interests of the researcher. Ascertaining whether substantive needs are met was easier than knowing if the researcher's theoretical interests would be met.

Fortunately, the culture to be studied was the same, thereby preventing difficulties that would arise from cultural differences. The opportunity was present to study the world of a high performance female Badminton player. The subject also, I believe, possessed the kind of personality and nature that could be viewed over an undue period of time without causing too much stress. It was also fortunate that the observer's work setting was at the same time conducive to studying the subject in many social settings.

Approximately a one year period was the time frame for the study. During this period, opportunities arose to view the subject through the competitive Badminton season and during the off season. It was anticipated that a reasonable number of special events such as National competitions and coaching clinics would fall within the study period. During the proposed time frame it was estimated that approximately five hours per week of formal or direct contact with the respondent would suffice. It was also probable that casual observation and non direct contact would add to the data collection. Each of the statements to be examined was covered, at least initially, in equal amounts. Formal interview structure provided the facts concerning family

history, training schedules and achievement statistics. Open-ended questions and shared responses furnished the data for the more subjective issues.

### Data Collection

As the woman in the study was the primary data source, the data was collected from numerous settings and contexts. Data techniques took the form of interviews, tape recordings, observation and non-verbal actions. Field notes were copious because the observer had no knowledge of what would eventually become important. Therefore, rather than miss anything, everything was documented. The use of field notes and tape recordings was preferred for reasons such as: (a) they were less imposing to the respondent; (b) they were not subject to any technical difficulties; and, (c) they also kept the observer responsive (Fine, 1984; Dobbert, 1982; Sage, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) also point out that it allows the observer to return and cross check with more ease, and also to record his/her own insights.

Data collection sessions relevant to training or coaching took place in the court area. The subject was able to comment on any observations that were put forward. This helped to ensure that the observer bias was reduced, plus allowed the respondent to validate her actions or comments.

Collection of data specifically related to motherhood or manipulation of traditional roles versus non traditional took place in a variety of settings; specifically at the

subject's home, in the cafeteria of the club or in the club's dining/lounge area. It was anticipated that most data would be gleaned in the sports facility because of the many hours that the subject spent there.

Initially, data collecting seemed more sketchy and broad, but as interviews or observations gained structure, note taking and interview techniques gained specificity. As the data began to emerge it was categorized so that it could be expanded and checked in subsequent observations.

As previously stated, initial data collection in the three base statements was given equal time. However, as the data unfolded it was necessary to spend more time on certain subject areas than others. The respondent shared in the decision process and the observer followed the leads that seemed to yield the most fruitful data.

Obviously one cannot confine the data collection to specific times or places, therefore the observer had to record everything and begin the sorting process as soon as possible afterwards. The categorization and hence the further questions was then guided by the respondent at the next interview.

The emergent data served to ground the theory and was as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest "a necessary consequence ... that posits multiple realities and makes transferability dependent on local contextual factors." The term "transferability" is used over generalization implying that

one should have information about both contexts to make a reasonable assumption.

During data collection, open ended approaches allowing interaction and clarification were favoured. The focus again was not to restrict, but rather provide limitless boundaries to produce as much information as possible. As mentioned previously the concern in this study was not to answer or test an hypothesis. In this study continuous data collection and analysis was crucial in order to let the design emerge. A lead or thought was used again, and in different ways, to secure or challenge the data. In effect one question, when it became redundant, prepared the stage for the next question.

### Delimitations

A study of this nature is going to be inconclusive as the potential areas and generated themes of investigation are innumerable. The basic criterion of control was triangulation. Therefore, as the study data started to fit together, validation against, at the minimum, one other source was performed. The researcher and respondent to a large extent determined the boundaries. When redundancy was achieved in that the time and effort to extrapolate data didn't warrant any further insights or leads then the decision to alter focus rested on the researcher.

Time lengths of interactions and observations varied according to the nature of the recording and the sensitivity of the procedure.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Related Literature

#### Introduction

The stigma attached to women in sport encompasses a range of theories and postulated causes. Initially ideas of physiological deficiency pervaded our thinking, but now however more emphasis rests on psychological and social factors. Women can and do compete admirably, although they do not compete in the same numbers as men (Butt, 1976). In this review two main topic areas are examined in relation to the research, these being: (1) psycho-social determinants, (2) role playing and self images.

#### Psycho-Social Determinants

As mentioned previously, nearly all the research on women in sport has focussed on adolescent or college age subjects. The results from these studies may offer a basis for development in the proposed study.

Kenyon and McPherson (1973) suggest that personal attributes are a key factor in sport socialization. One trait, confidence, according to Butcher (1983) is imperative in the athlete's make-up. Belief in one's sports skills and belief in oneself are pre-requisites for successful sport interaction. Money and Erhardt in their 1972 study however came to the conclusion that "in a large amount of studies on personality traits ... no specific consistencies ...

resulted" (p. 61). The research also stressed that there is "differing literature on validity of trait tests" (p. 61). The significance of situational factors is not taken into account and this in turn, according to these authors, is going to affect the motives of the athletes.

The discussion of motives, particularly the need to achieve, success, fear and the need for stimulation have perhaps been the focus of research recently. Nealon's study in 1973 outlined individual needs for stimulation and came to the conclusion that women with a high need for stimulation are drawn to sports. One would think that team sports offers the most direct form of stimulation. However, Donnelly (1978) found that "fewer women participate in team and contact sports which seem to tap the need for stimulation most directly" (p. 2). It should be noted that none of these studies examine situational factors as contributing factors in the results. The subjective, descriptive approach being used in the proposed study will serve to draw some of the existing results together to give a more complete picture.

The need to achieve and experience success through sport situations has been studied in depth by Matina Horner. In her 1968 doctoral dissertation she found three categories of negative consequences resulting from success of women. The study focussed on the women's feelings given a successful job.

1. Social rejection and loss of marriageability
2. Her guilt, despair or self doubt about her femininity
3. Denial of possibility she could really have done so well. (Horner, 1968, p. 105-6)

When Horner's research results first became evident, they appeared to capture a major cause of why females tended to avoid success and achievement situations. However, with further research several flaws emerged. Fear of success was not found to be predominant among women and replications of the research failed to confirm her findings. Therefore, it follows that comments on this personality disposition in women cannot be said to be a stable characteristic.

Although these criticisms are important for researchers, Horner did make use of situational factors. She states "the need to achieve and fear of failure are motives which must be situationally aroused before they become motivations capable of inducing behaviour" (p. 73).

The importance of studying these situational factors becomes crucial in trying to understand a person's actions in a given circumstance.

#### Role Playing and Self Images

Assuming different roles is an integral and yet sometimes totally overlooked part of our everyday life. The female may be required to manipulate roles of wife, mother, school teacher and parent to name a few. For the female



athlete, extra role playing has to be considered. From birth, as Gilbert and Williamson (1973) discovered, parents are the main contributors to sex role ideology. Further, schools and mass media reinforce the model that says pleasing men is the female's chief role. The woman is, according to the authors "a frilly young thing with a smile on her face ... " (p. 329). The role the girl plays is perpetuated through her interaction with sports. Usually this primary experience with sport is in school. Teachers, coaches and parents suggest and encourage distinctive games and behaviours for the female. Sex role ideology is encultured in us from every angle of life that we can imagine.

Male involvement in sports is an expectation society has of males. The make-up of the male role encompasses aggression, dominance, leadership, outspokenness and achievement all as expected facets. Those same characteristics in women take on a different tone. The woman is expected to be the supportive, passive one, with no other purpose in her life other than that of being the care giver. It is almost as if the qualities incumbent in the male are only male traits and that they seem to dilute when a woman possesses them. Perhaps society today is more accepting of high achievers being female, however the female is expected still to incorporate her job talents with her demands at home. It follows then, that if these traits are

apparent and even necessary to compete seriously in sports, women are more likely to avoid going against conventional thinking. The question arises as to who is doing the expecting? Is the woman imposing her own limitations or is she dominated by perceptions of others?

Kenyon and McPherson (1981) believe that "role learning is accounted for by exposure of the role aspirant, characterized by a set of physical and psychological traits, to a variety of stimuli and reinforcements provided by significant others" (p. 218).

The significant others obviously change with the maturity of the subject. The parents initially, peers at school, college or work, teachers, boyfriends or husbands, may have profound effects on how the developing female behaves socially. The theme for most females is conformity to the expected norm in order to avoid "social isolation" (Sage & Eitzen, 1982, p. 351). This term implies a detachment from a position with which the woman is comfortable. At particular points in her life, the need to fit in with her surroundings will be a higher priority than at other times.

Competing in sports requires a blend of emotional and physical attributes. Femininity is seen as a passive emotional role according to Kaplan (1979), and these traits conflict with such necessary traits as assertiveness,

determination, independence and self confidence; all prerequisites for high level involvement in sports.

Women generally are known as a breed that are not strong emotionally. Crying spontaneously from a woman is seen as a healthy, expected response. From a man, this response is often considered a sign of weakness (Neal & Tutko, 1975). The familiar refrain of "big boys don't cry" is still common.

Inherent in sports is some degree of aggression. In their 1975 study, Neal and Tutko found that aggression was indeed related to athletic success. This researcher postulates that the relationship between these two variables would be similar to the Yerkes-Dodson curve of arousal and performance. If aggression is necessary for success at athletics, then it follows that women will need to be aggressive if they are to achieve competence in sporting endeavours. However, aggressiveness and hostility are not that far removed from each other and hostile behaviour is not that acceptable. Women who are tough minded, outspoken and generally outgoing are seen as aggressive in a negative sense. Men who possess these traits are viewed positively.

For a women to then actively participate through the school institution and beyond there is tremendous social pressure and consequently she may feel her identity challenged. Money and Erhardt (1972) felt that social treatment was a more important factor than sex identity.

With this social pressure leaning heavily on the female, it seems evident that to pursue sporting activities in any great depth, a certain psychological make-up may be necessary.

In her study, Butt (1976) discovered that "women who psychologically need to fill the traditional female role, may be "good competitors" but they will usually express their displeasure in the singular pursuit of athletic goals" (p. 70).

Social rejection and isolation are immense concerns for most women and to adhere to an athletic goal is something that is commonly not a priority. Some of the major concerns for women are outlined by Harris (1972). The sexual overtone that underlies the feeling that indulgence in sports creates a more masculine woman is very prevalent. Most women would rather assume the "socially acceptable role for the female in social situations" (p. 245). Few women step into this dilemma; most will avoid high competitive and achievement situations. Rather than deal with a potential conflict of roles, women will tend to conform to the socially acceptable role of the female. Harris points out, there is "social conflict between the desire to participate and achieve in sport and to fulfill appropriate feminine sex roles" (p. 245).

The image we have of ourselves is our guide in our presentation of self to others. We want others to think of

us in certain ways in a variety of situations, and we tend to conduct ourselves accordingly to ensure that the right image is presented. The adage of never having a second chance to make a first impression is solid. It follows that a conflict arises if our self image is unsure of what kind of impression we hope to create. Dwyer (1982) supports this by stating "conflict between the feminine and the sporting roles is too difficult to handle" (p. 38).

As long as women participate in acceptable female sports, such as swimming or gymnastics, it seems to lessen the anxiety between conflicts. Again, conformity to the norm and maintenance of the expected self image will determine whether or not a woman continues to participate in the athletic field.

Determinants of future involvement stem from the effects of the involvement. If the positive effects outweigh the negative, then it is likely that the woman will continue to participate.

In summarizing the above discussion, it is obvious that generalizations from study to study are the main source of knowledge. What the research has failed to do is provide specific contextual or situational examples. The studies have devised hypotheses which were tested in contrived settings. Therefore, the results obtained are telling us that the study has proved or disproved something that was already known to the researcher. In ethnographic research

the goal is to induce theories because we have no knowledge of what is known. It is through the interaction of observer and respondent that will produce accurate interpretations. To detach the person from his/her natural setting or contexts will in some way alter their action or behaviour.

Using the ethnographic design and natural approach is the most adaptable research method. It will as Dobbert (1983) suggests, " ... convey a well rounded view from the inside ...."

## Chapter 3

### Jane Bird's Early Years

In order to preserve anonymity to the subject and to those directly involved in the data collection, real names have been changed, as have place names and compass directions.

Jane Bird was born in Wales. The second daughter of a couple both qualified in the medical profession. Dr. Henry Bird, a dentist, had other responsibilities as a teacher and administrator for a Canadian insurance company. The commitment to the latter meant that Dr. Bird and his wife, Ellen, were always moving to different parts of the world, every three or four years. Jane remembers:

We were constantly uprooting for Dad's work. There was no time to settle into anything. I don't know how Mom managed so well.

Life seemed to stabilize for the Bird family, now six in number, in Acton, a city of about one hundred thousand people located 700 miles east of Toronto. Jane and her brothers and sister attended the local public school, until Jane was eleven:

I loved sports but there were no elementary teams at school. I think there was some extra-curricular hockey but they didn't allow girls to play.

Mrs. Bird however was intent on providing the children with sporting opportunities and took advantage of the programs offered at the local Y:

My mother enrolled me in ballet. I hated it. I remember crying because I didn't like it. We went swimming though and that was good.

Although Dr. and Mrs. Bird were involved in the sports participation activities of their offspring Jane states:

Mom was always involved the most. I suppose it was because Dad worked a lot and he was off travelling somewhere. Mom tried to keep us occupied in healthy activities. She didn't want us "dropping out."

The Birds wanted their children to develop some habits in their lifestyle that they could continue. Mrs. Bird reflected:

There was always the threat of drugs or alcohol abuse, even then. We didn't want the children to get involved in that. Sports was an excellent deterrent, we felt.

It was during this period in Jane's life that she was exposed to Badminton for the first time. Older teenagers and adults were using the Y for recreational use and Jane remembers sitting and watching them play for hours on end:

Maybe it was the lack of excitement. I really had nothing to do in the evenings at all, so watching Badminton was kind of exhilarating. I wanted to try it; it was so fascinating.



Initially Mrs. Bird played most often with the children. She was very fond of Tennis and during the winter months the only racquet sport that was available was Badminton. Jane seemed to pick the game up really quickly and her natural athletic talents favoured her well.

It seemed like I played at the game every day for about a year. I picked up games with anyone who would play me. The more I hit the bird, the more I wanted to; it was as though I couldn't play enough to satisfy myself.

The older players at the Y encouraged and reinforced the young Jane by allowing her the chance to belong to their cliques. The Y was fortunate enough to house a small number of good players as well as a part time coach. Jane's enthusiasm and her ability to transfer what she saw into what she did on the court prompted the coach to make some videotapes of her. Seeing her constantly challenging the better players and drawing information from them was a quality he felt should be encouraged. Although Jane was unaware of it at the time, the coach took the liberty of sending these tapes to the Canadian National coach in Ontario.

I only found out years later that Mehta (the coach) had sent the tapes to Rhamat (the national coach). I didn't care at the time whether I won or lost the games. The challenge, the competition, the involvement; I was the youngest player, you know, and I thrived on the attention. I guess being successful was a part of it, but then, it was more because I could challenge the good players.

Just as life seemed a little more settled and Jane had made some friends at school, the family was uprooted again. This time the move took them thousands of miles west across the country to the coast. The immensely different terrain of the west coast lent itself to a variety of other sports interests for Jane.

Jane learned to downhill ski and spent much of her free time skiing with friends from school. She remembers not enjoying Physical Education at school. The extra-curricular activities that were offered, Jane found to be boring.

Mrs. Bird again opted to join the Y initially to play Tennis herself. Eventually the whole family joined and the outings to the Y took on a family social outing nature. Tennis and Badminton were available at the Y and Jane recalls playing both sporadically. None of her friends belonged to the Y. They spent their time and energies on the ski slopes where Jane joined them at weekends.

The highly competitive environment of Acton was a complete contrast to the setting of the Y in British Columbia. The only "competition" Jane had was with her family at Tennis or Badminton.

Realizing Jane was fanatically keen after her Badminton experience in Acton, Mrs. Bird was anxious to stimulate the interest. The chance to attend a summer Badminton camp in Quebec would perhaps keep Jane's interest high so the Birds completed the necessary forms and at thirteen years old, off

Jane went. Jane doesn't have any memories of being apprehensive or scared of being alone. She was so ecstatic about the first trip away from the "nest" that she remembers little else.

On her arrival in Quebec, Jane was amongst thirty or so other teenagers. Only girls were attending the camp which was going to last for two weeks. The order of the day was entirely structured around Badminton, and after being taken to the club by their billets, on court skills and drills took the athletes to lunch. After lunch, chalk talk and games were organized.

I met some of my best friends at that camp. I still have friends from there. It was so tiring, by the end of the day we were just exhausted but it was fun; actually it was pretty wild.

Exposure of these young players to National coaches had been planned and Jane remembers being awestruck when Rhamat, the head National coach, attended a few of the sessions with them.

When he actually spoke to me I was stunned. Being the youngest person at the camp brought me some attention I guess, and then to have the National coach give me lots of positive remarks and tips for my footwork . . . well, it was fantastic.

The camp really offered Jane the only qualified coaching she had experienced to that date. The skills that she had developed were mainly transferred from her spectator days and hacker days back in Acton. To then be surrounded

by athletes who had experienced club professionals and good technical coaching was a challenge in itself. However the ability to watch and then to perform kept Jane in good stead.

Returning back to B.C. was not a thrill for Jane but it had allowed her to experience her independence as well as heighten her Badminton skills. The family news that another move was on the way did not bother Jane in the slightest. In fact she recalled:

I was ecstatic about moving back to Ontario because the opportunity to play was much greater. There were excellent family clubs with pros (club professionals) all across the province so it offered a lot more for me.

Jane and her father went on ahead to Toronto, leaving her brothers and sister behind with her mother. Mrs. Bird had the responsibility of packing up the house in B.C. and tying things up before she could join her daughter and husband.

For the three weeks that Jane was alone with her father she took care of the apartment he had rented and remembers having to "cook meals" and "clean up." When Mrs. Bird and the rest of the family arrived in Toronto the task of settling into another neighbourhood was completed expeditiously. Joining the most prestigious family sports club in Toronto was a high priority item on the Bird's agenda. Mrs. Bird wasted little time in signing the family

up to participate in the many programs offered at The Stoneway Club; Jane and her sister enlisted themselves in the Badminton section. The program offered at Stoneway was well established and the club pro was Rhamat, the National coach. Around a dozen select junior players of both sexes took part in a fairly rigorous and disciplined schedule.

Being a part of the program was Jane's first real exposure to formal coaching. Training was four times a week and the quality provided by the coach had drawn a number of upcoming young athletes from nearby cities. Jane, therefore, was amongst a group of super keen and eager to learn athletes. The first tournament Jane was eligible to enter was the U16 City and District. Once her application was filed she was surprised to hear that the coach suggested she give her proper age category a miss and instead enter the U18 category. The coach believed that Jane would gain more by being "pushed" competitively and this would produce much more improvement.

Being fortunate to have a professional coach was in itself an opportunity for Jane. To have the National coach as her personal coach was a chance very few athletes have. Belonging to a private sports facility that only afforded the best for their membership was also a privilege.

Under the direction of Rhamat, Jane escalated her way through tournaments both locally and provincially. As a member of the Ontario Provincial Team, Jane was funded in

part, if not completely, to travel to out of town events. Players from across the country converged in the major cities, staying at hotels sometimes or billets other times. A camaraderie between these athletes had become Jane's main source of strong friendships by the time she graduated from high school. Although by no means an A student Jane gained university entrance and picked up first year Art's courses. Now involved in an intensive training program, studies came second to her sport:

I ended up taking courses when I could fit them in. The ones I did start, many times I had to drop them. I didn't have the time with my training.

The single minded and determined young woman was rewarded time and time again with her successes in major tournaments and she was selected to the National Squad trained by Rhamat. At this stage, university study became impossible. The daily training demands in Badminton swallowed up any free time. The benefits of her athletic career far outweighed her motivation to study although she did intend to finish her degree some day.

The National Squad was brought together for intensive training about six times a year for between two weeks and six weeks at a time. Jane's main event was singles, but she formed part of a talented doubles team, with a woman she had known since her "wild days" in Ontario approximately six years earlier.

It is possible to play singles, doubles and mixed doubles in Badminton and Jane paired off with numerous male players in tournaments. During one of these tournaments Jane met Tom, who was to feature very prominently in her life from then on. Himself a very good player although not nationally acclaimed in singles as much as men's doubles, Tom was a part of the Badminton scene. He played the same tournaments locally and across Canada, socialized with the Badminton group that were part of Rhamat's regime and was generally involved in the provincial association.

Jane's daily schedule revolved around her training. Her days were spent at Stoneway working on her skills and fitness, but in her few spare hours usually later on in the evening, she and Tom joined each other for supper or took in a movie.

The Canadian Team in its bid for recognition in the world Badminton forum had to compete across the globe. Being scheduled for exhibition matches in South East Asia, then across to Brazil for the Seiko Cup and returning to Canada for the Nationals meant gruelling and exhausting months on end. The ten players that were part of the team learned to be adaptable and open to change. Learning to give each other space and be sensitive to mood changes was a vital part of their cohesion. There was no room for prolonged disagreements with other team members. Sometimes the athletes were cramped on buses for hours on end

immediately after stepping off a ten hour plane trip en route to a tournament. Perhaps Jane's ability to block distractions or to remain focussed on her goals gave her the extra drive that was evident on court. Rhamat recalled such a trip to China:

Her dedication was superior. Whatever was happening around her didn't matter. If others were tired, Jane would simply run and skip on court alone.

The fall trip to Great Britain was a major test for the Canadian team. Facing perhaps the strongest team in the world was going to be Jane's toughest challenge yet. At the young age of twenty-two Jane was playing Number One for Canada. This meant she would be matched against the top female players from each competing nation.

The outcome of this tournament would be an indication for Jane as to how she was progressing on the world ranking chart. Playing some of the best Badminton of her life the slight 5'6" 110 lb athlete returned to Canada with an approximate sixth or eighth ranking.

The numbers are always hit and miss until the World's because some players enter some tournaments while others don't. So you never really can tell at any given time until we all come face to face.

The head on competition that beckoned Jane was scheduled in the following Spring. Jane's training cycle now shifted into top gear as the World Championships



approached. The members of the National Squad were finding their other commitments to part-time jobs and family were falling by the wayside, as their competition commitments increased. Some decided to move closer to the National Training Centre while others quit their jobs. Jane was hardly ever at home but she had the good fortune of her family's home being in the same city as the Centre. This certainly eased the burden considerably financially and emotionally for her. Not having to depend on her own earnings to support her, Jane had the extra freedom to play and train at her leisure.

Tom Russell, who Jane had met a year or so earlier was also fortunate that his employment afforded him more freedom than normally associated with a man his age. This lack of structure meant that he could train and play with Jane as it suited him.

In some respects Jane had her one personal training partner, on call as she needed. Once or twice a week they would go for supper or see a movie after working out:

Because Tom knew my training commitments it didn't bother him if I wanted to go home early. He was really supportive of my playing and it was great to have him to train with. He hit so much quicker and harder which meant my shots had to be cleaner and crisper.

When the Canadian Team left Canada for Britain to compete in the World Championships, Jane was playing the best Badminton of her career. She had also developed a

strong emotional commitment to Tom. The three weeks in England would give Jane two things: a new ranking in the World Badminton Charts and time to make a decision on her future with Tom.

The best players in the world had come together in the Royal Stadium, just south of London and Jane was to play her opposite number in singles and women's doubles.

The superb technical ability of the top class players evened out as they pitted their precision shots at each other. No one player's shotmaking skills outshone anyone else's. The fine line between good and great was evident in the psychological preparation of the athletes. The South Koreans exhibited a tremendous disciplined display of skill and their ability to focus to the task at hand was superior. The British team using many unorthodox match play tactics and strategies earned them due respect, and first place in the Championships. The Canadians although one of the fittest teams could only maintain a fifth team place. However, Jane in the ladies' singles, fought her way through one of her most gruelling matches ever to clinch third place in individual rankings. The whole team was ecstatic over her victory and as soon as the news reached Canada, celebrations were being planned for the team arrival. Jane had become the highest placed female ever from Canada in the World rankings, and she looked forward to a well deserved two months of rest and relaxation on her return.

Tasting success at such prestigious heights had been a powerful motivator for Jane and her next goal was to win a Gold Medal in the Asian/American Cup.

When her training cycle got under way in late summer Jane had her own personal doubles partner. She and Tom had married after a brief engagement.

Jane's normal training regime didn't alter initially and her only domestic change affected by the marriage was moving from her parents' home to her own apartment. About two months later, Tom, the son of a wealthy businessman heading up a huge building company on the west coast, had an opportunity to purchase his own contracting firm a couple of hundred miles south of Toronto. Jane reflected on the decision to buy the company.

It was vicious circle for us, really. Tom wanted his own company and the opportunities come by so rarely, you have to take them when you can. On the other hand we didn't really want to leave the city because of Badminton. Our friends were all there too and after you train or play, they're the people you socialize with. Looking back it was one of our toughest decisions.

In their new home town, the couple tried to establish training routines utilising a local gym. Jane substituted running through the more hilly terrain for some of her on court running and she used the gym for agility exercises and shot making. She found herself bound by Tom's work schedule much more now, because there was no one but housewives playing at the gym during the day. This put a lot more

strain on Tom, as he now had an obligation to train daily with Jane plus learn the intricacies of his new company. The detachment from the fast paced Badminton circuit proved to be an irritation to Jane. She felt she needed the strong competition from the training centre to maintain her sharpness on court and decided that she would make the trip back to the centre on weekends. Although she sensed Tom's disappointment in her decision she decided that his support for her athletic career would soften his feelings.

Jane's travel across the country and throughout the world meant numerous periods away from Tom, and the contracting company demands on Tom also meant he had travel obligations. It was not unusual for them to be apart for two months at a time. It did put a strain on their marriage:

Yes, it was difficult at times. I think Tom was more upset about it than me, because he had already had one failed marriage. Maybe he needed more support from me than I needed from him.

The couple did seem to have a separate focus on what they deemed important at that time in their lives. However their joint love and appreciation of their sport seemed to outweigh their differences. It came as a complete surprise to both of them when Jane found out she was pregnant. It was undoubtedly more of an interruption to Jane's career than to Tom's and she realized this with some disappointment.

I'd set my mind on going to the "Asians" and being pregnant wasn't going to hold me up. People perform when they're pregnant in lots of sports. There was no question - I could do it too.

Jane weighed only 112 lbs and looked overly thin rather than fit and athletic but there was no doubt that she was in superior physical condition. One of her athletic colleagues remarked that "she had more stamina than all of us put together."

Her training regime didn't alter in the slightest. She still skipped and ran and played for the same duration and intensity every day.

The baby was due to arrive about a month before Jane was scheduled to leave for Asia, and she continued to work out up to the week that Gary was born:

I was in labour for what seemed like days. I had a lot of trouble with Gary. Because I wasn't that big and my muscular development was good, everything seemed tight in the delivery.

Gary was almost six weeks old when the Canadian team, including Jane, left for Asia. Tom had literally been left holding the baby:

There was no question as to whether I would go or not. It would have been a problem if Gary was overdue or born later but I had over a month to get back in shape. Tom realized from the start that he was going to have Gary for a month while I was away. My mom was close so she could always come up and stay if he got into trouble.

Mrs. Bird did in fact end up with Gary back in Toronto as Tom discovered owning a flourishing business and raising a six week old infant didn't mix too well.

Jane's performance in Asia was exemplary again and she returned to Canada with her ranking still intact, and a Gold Medal under her belt. She knew she had some "rest" time between major international events and began her training cycle at a slightly easier pace. She now trained six instead of seven days of the week. Gary was installed in a baby carrying seat and taken everywhere Jane went. In the gym he was put at the side of the court when she played or skipped, and on weekends she dropped him off at Mom's before she went to the club.

Tom's business continued to expand rapidly and on a visit in the summer to his parents' in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Tom was told by his father that the family's building company and its subsidiaries were being put up for sale. Mr. Russell Sr. was going to retire from the business and he wanted Tom's opinion on the decision.

In some ways Tom couldn't wait to "bite." He had admired his father's business mind and had reaped many benefits growing up in an extremely wealthy family. He saw those same chances there for him; to provide that kind of lifestyle for his family.

Perhaps Tom's mind was geared towards financial security more so than Jane's. Accustomed to moving since

childhood, Jane was not concerned at all about actually moving. What concerned her was where the move was to. She felt restricted enough already being a couple of hundred miles out of the downtown hub of Badminton. This time she was faced with a move to a slightly larger city but a city without any competitive players. Playing national calibre athletes would mean a plane trip every time. At the peak of her career she was not happy about the prospect of the change:

Tom wanted his Dad's business and although we discussed the problem at length there wasn't really a choice for me.

Tom's business was sold in a matter of weeks and with more than a little trepidation Jane and Tom headed out to Sherbrooke.

## Chapter 4

### Jane's Role of Wife and the Demands at Home.

This chapter will describe in detail the home life and roles that Jane manages interdependently. Specifically, the focus will examine the realities Jane faces as the wife of a young striving executive, following his father's footsteps, and the demands on her at home.

Jane's father-in-law owned the tiny 800 square foot house in Royal Park that was the Russell's first home in Sherbrooke. The area known as Royal Park was a well established neighbourhood typified by older homes, immaculate yards and middle to upper class families. It was convenient to downtown via one or other of the bridges; it was close to schools, community centres and excellent shopping facilities. Many of the families living in the area were in homes that had been in the family for generations.

Mr. Russell Sr. and his wife Rosemary had lived in Royal Park all their lives. They now occupied an enormous home surrounded by beautiful elm and oak trees only a few minutes from where Jane and Tom were.

Tom's younger sister, Patti, had been living in the tiny home before Jane and Tom moved in. Patti was a divorced woman, never interested in a job long enough to stay at it, and at the age of thirty-four, she was still being supported financially by Mr. Russell Sr.



Jane and Tom spoke distastefully of Patti when not in the company of certain family members. What was interesting to the researcher was that Patti presented a mirror image of Mrs. Russell Sr.

Jane was not overly impressed with her new "home." She found it "too small"; the rooms were "awkward shapes so the furniture doesn't fit anywhere"; the decor was "tacky."

Stepping in through the back door was in itself a task. The underlying waterways in Royal Park caused major subsidence and movement of the land; thus, the homes in the area were in need of constant repair. The frame of the back door to Jane's house on Willow Street was warped considerably. The concrete step up to the door had cracked down the centre and making one's way into the kitchen was hazardous.

Jane and Tom had brought little furniture or possessions with them on their move, so they were thankful for the archaic appliances that were already in the house. They both saw little reason to spend any money on the house when they proposed to relocate as soon as the finances were worked out with Tom's Dad.

Although the place was small, none of the rooms were remotely tidy. Sports bags, racquets, magazines and kid's toys were littered everywhere. Jane didn't seem to notice as she stepped over different obstacles to show me around:

The stereo system was the only thing that we really wanted to bring with us. Those chairs are part of a set; but we haven't got around to ordering the others yet.

It seemed evident that the amount of time she spent in the house was not conducive to doing housework. The couple on an average weekday were in the house only nine hours a day and almost all of that time was spent sleeping.

Either Tom or Jane was out of the house by 6:00 a.m. heading for their local sports club. Jane had been given the Head Coach role for the Provincial Badminton Association and she had designed her training program so the athletes could work out before they went off to school or university.

When Jane got up to run the training program, Tom was left to get Gary up and give him breakfast before he left for work. Jane would finish the workout with the provincial athletes and then go back home in time to say goodbye to Tom. This exchange of the toddler was a regular occurrence. Each Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning the schedule was the same. Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday mornings the provincial athletes were coached by Jane and occasionally Tom from 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Jane would more often than not take Gary with her when she went to do her coaching duties. When Jane was giving instructions on court, Gary would crawl around the lounge, holding onto the wooden benches for spectators or the plastic garbage cans that were against the walls. The

lounge was separated from the playing courts by half a wall of glass. Metal swing doors were at the exits on either side of the lounge and another set of doors were at the entrance to the courts. The doors would swing open frequently as other athletes walked through the lounge en route to the pro shops and squash courts. Jane was oblivious to Gary's actions and accidents when she was coaching. Sometimes when one of the athletes on the team was injured or getting a drink of water, they would play with Gary or pick him up.

Jane would usually leave the club immediately after the session ended and get home around the same time that Tom would come in from work.

They often had a snack and drink together once Gary was in bed and, after both taking showers, would go to bed around 11:00 p.m.

Jane described their lives as "fast paced" while she was putting some homemade muffins in the oven. She didn't pretend to enjoy cooking at all and she claimed her major culinary success was making bran muffins. This was obviously useful, as it became apparent both Jane and Tom ate muffins at least twice a day. On the mornings Jane got up to go down to the club to coach, she put on her sweats and coat and headed out without breakfast. When she got back home and Tom had left for work she would have a muffin and coffee. Gary shared the muffin with her and either

drank apple juice or milk. Jane's own training schedule was on track as far as fitness levels went but the lack of skilled competition, she felt, was causing her to slide. She was determined to maintain her fitness level and every day she arrived at the Hatton Country Club (the H.C.C.) around nine o'clock. A babysitting service was provided at the club and children could be left in there at a fee of \$1.00 per hour per child from 9:00-12:00 p.m. and from 1:00-5:00 p.m. Gary was put in on Jane's arrival at the club and she usually grabbed a juice from the cafeteria before she went to the courts. She stretched for twenty minutes and then worked out, skipping with a weight belt for twenty minutes. She would then pick up a game of Badminton or squash, before heading downstairs for a shower. Usually just a few minutes after noon she would pick up Gary from babysitting. On several occasions, the babysitter had to go looking for Jane through the club because she was late. Jane felt that she paid good money to belong to the club and the least the babysitter could do was wait for a couple of minutes extra if she was slow to pick Gary up. The babysitter however claimed that Jane was the only mother who was never on time. It was a source of surprise to her that Jane left Gary in her care every day especially as Jane was not tied to any kind of job.

After Jane had collected Gary, they ate in the club cafeteria. The standard order for Jane was a bowl of soup

and a muffin, followed by coffee. Gary shared the soup and sometimes the muffin. He was bought his own milk or juice. Whenever Jane was with Gary alone for lunch, her menu choice never varied. It was not surprising to hear from the babysitter that Gary was always begging for food from her. Gary certainly looked very pale and constantly had dark circles under his eyes. He was very prone to crying when things did not go his way, and was eager to take off when no one was paying any attention. Jane tried to sit him down in a high chair for his lunch but this frequently proved to be too much trouble. Gary would start yelling or screaming when he was "contained" in the seat. Jane usually opted to let him out of the chair and gave him a piece of muffin or dry crackers to run around with. It was very apparent from the distasteful looks from the businessmen's lunch tables that they didn't think too highly of this action. However, only one formal complaint was made, and this came back to Jane via the Board of Directors of the H.C.C. Not one of the men approached Jane directly. Jane dismissed the comments she received by calling the men "fuddy duddies." Although not seemingly a staunch feminist, Jane did feel that women had every right to carry on their lunch arrangements any way they deemed fit. She certainly disliked the protocol that had been set at the club for almost one hundred years. The fact that tables were set up and signposted, "Businessmen only."

This place just doesn't move with the times. Some of the "old boy" traditions went out with the ark. Why only men? Do they honestly believe women are incapable of holding down a job?

When Jane and Tom first joined the Hatton Country Club, Tom made an effort to get back to the club for lunch with Jane and Gary. He too usually ordered soup and a muffin. On the occasions he ate by himself, which were more frequent during the course of the year, he always ordered a full complement of food; soup, salad and sandwich, with milk, dessert and coffee. The researcher did never ascertain whether Tom felt guilty eating a lot when he was with Jane or whether he was just never hungry.

As Jane got to know more of the young mothers that dominated the club during the day, she had lunch with them and their kids. Again, it was strange that Jane ordered more food when she ate with other people. Jane's own impression of her eating habits seemed to lean heavily towards healthy food. She was not conscious of changing her habits when her company changed. A number of H.C.C. members made passing comments about her "cheapness" when buying food or drink. When buying a coffee, Jane had a habit of only filling the cup half way and then claiming she would only pay for half a cup. She would always get a full refill however and never thought twice to pay any extra.

After lunch, around 1:15 to 1:30, Jane would take Gary back to the babysitter. Some afternoons she would meet

friends and leave the club to go for coffee or shop. Other times she would go and get some groceries and yet other days she would attend coaching meetings with key provincial Badminton personnel. Jane could not remember ever being spoken to re the club policy of always having a parent in the club if a child was in babysitting. I could only suggest that maybe the extra cash that she gave the babysitter was enough to silence any repercussions. It was rare to see a day when Gary was not left in the care of the babysitter all day except at weekends.

The evenings during the week also bore many commitments for Jane. She had been hired for \$10,000 per year to be the Head Provincial Badminton Coach. The design of the program was entirely hers and this allowed her the flexibility to schedule times that were good for both her and her family. In the mornings as mentioned previously, she chose to train from 6:30-8:00 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings she scheduled training from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Saturdays were the day her athletes could rest and Sunday they trained from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Jane considered this time commitment from the athletes only adequate. Frequently, she referred to her own commitment as an athlete and seemed disappointed that the kids she was training lacked the desire that she had to succeed.

With so many hours spent at the club, either training the kids or training herself, she found little time to spend

at home. Although she was quick to acknowledge that Tom was working hard to get his father's company running in some new directions, Jane also was adamant that looking after the house should be a joint effort:

I don't see any reason whatever why I should do the cooking and cleaning all the time. We're both working, and therefore there's no reason that Tom can't share the load.

Jane conceded that she hated "domestic" chores. This was evident by the condition of the house on a number of occasions. Tom did vacuum once before a visit I made but was quick to remark that "disaster has to strike before I can bring myself to do it."

With the busy schedules not really meshing together, Tom and Jane shared less time with each other now than at any other time in their relationship to date. Jane realized that this was a problem that they would have to resolve, but stated that neither of them were problem solvers until things "get so bad, that we don't speak."

Much of their conversation focussed on issues concerning Badminton. Perhaps this was because most of their common interests revolved around the sport and the people in the sport. Jane seemed most at ease when she was in control of her sport and this reflected in her conversations. The territory was very familiar to her and was something at which she excelled. The couple rarely



talked about Gary to each other and Tom was by far the most talkative to him.

Without her mother being close by, Jane began to feel the extra burden of having a child to consider all the time. As he got older he demanded more of her time and she seemed thankful when opportunities came around to "lose" him for a while.

#### Tom's Immediate Concerns and a Domestic Change

Tom was negotiating with his father over what direction the company would go in, and was facing some huge payments. Mr. Russell Sr. owned the building company and the two blocks of buildings either side of the firm's downtown location. He was only prepared to rent these buildings to Tom as he considered this his pension. Another obstacle Tom had not considered or even been aware of, was that his Dad would still be in overall control of the company. He would still have his own office, secretary and responsibilities and Tom would only control the import and export faction of the business. All in all Tom was working for his Dad. This didn't appear to overly concern him, however in arguments with Jane he certainly used this as ammunition. The couple did not argue, at least in public, very often, although there were countless situations where an outsider would have to have been told they were married. Glowering scowls and disdainful looks gave away hints that all was not as smooth as it seemed.

Approximately 6 months after their move to Sherbrooke Jane announced they had put in an offer on another house.

The new house was literally a mansion. It was nestled in an older part of town, reminiscent of medieval England. Huge homes with endless driveways surrounded on the north side by aged trees and on the south side by the River Lea. It appeared that almost overnight the financial concerns of the Russell's were forgotten. The couple were moved by employees of the Russell business and their furniture placed in the lounge of their new home. Fifteen foot high ceilings gave the main lounge area an almost ghostly feeling. The decoration was extremely old fashioned; paisley wall fabric, heavy oak trims painted bottle green, and a glistening chandelier led one's eyes away from the dark stone floor and ominous granite fireplace. Jane would have no problem fitting their furniture into this place. The kitchen was a little brighter, but lacked any modern conveniences apart from a Jenn-Air type central stove top. Jane had decided that she would fit some plastic insulation on the interior windows one morning and was cursing freely about the latticed windows:

These lead strips are a pain in the neck. God knows why these were ever installed.

Jane eventually resorted to blow drying the plastic over the lead strips. She hoped that it didn't look as awful from the outside as it did from the inside. Tom had

come home for lunch on this occasion, and was teasing Jane about her handyman skills as he munched on an apple. Gary was with Tom's mother on this occasion and it seemed to ease the relationship with each other. It was rare to see them laugh and joke with each other and even rarer to see any physical contact between them. They had big plans for redecorating the whole house and Jane had mentioned that they wanted to rent out the top floor to one of her provincial team athletes:

We'll have to get the plumbing fixed up, but it's an okay size for a single person. There's a kitchen space and it has a separate entrance. What we'll try and do, I think, is to ask her to do some babysitting or cleaning in exchange for part of the rent.

Jane was not at all disturbed by the fact that someone else would be living in the same house. Rather, it seemed to be an added source of income for them.

During the course of the winter Jane was intimately involved in H.C.C. tournaments and was quick to provide lodging facilities for any athletes coming into town. Jane claimed it gave her a real "charge" to see her teammates. She was the first to admit that she had encouraged the local Badminton association to sponsor the tournaments, and she also helped out by getting cash donations for prize money. The largest donor was her husband's company. With her teammates arriving usually at least a week prior to the event, Jane made extra efforts to wine and dine them

accordingly. At the club during the day, she would run up larger bills than usual and become the "perfect" host. She discounted my comment on feeling a need to impress her friends, although she did concede that she wanted to give them a "good time."

#### The In-Laws

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Sr. were still very involved and keen in the Badminton world. Mr. Russell Sr. played at least three times per week with three of his friends and even when he was not playing, still made a daily trip to the club for lunch. Mrs. Russell Sr. was also involved to a lesser degree with the ladies Badminton events. She often played in the Round-Robins once a week, but certainly seemed more comfortable browsing through the sports shops, picking out new clothes, or attending to herself in the ladies locker room. The Russells were an attractive older couple, used to the finer things in life. Both were well dressed, socially superior people. For many years, ever since Mr. Russell Sr.'s father owned the business, they had been a must on the high society social invitation lists. Mrs. Russell was a charming hostess, always, even if only superficially, pleased to see you. This was evident on the number of occasions that she would be overjoyed to see someone and then call them by somebody's else's name.

Tom's sister, Patti, was a clone of her mother, as was Tom's first wife. Although both socially adept, they seemed

to lack the sincerity that is a building block for longer term relationships.

Marrying Jane was a move in the totally opposite direction for Tom. Mr. Russell Sr. was enthusiastic about the marriage, but only ever talked about Jane in the same context as Badminton. Their discussions with each other revolved around playing or training. Jane accepted this indifferently. She realized that her father-in-law was somehow caught up in the awe that surrounds world class athletes, and was happy to stimulate his interest. Her mother-in-law provoked a rather different reaction from her:

I never felt comfortable with her. She means well, I guess, and I know she loves to have a grandchild - it's her first - but I'm always on my guard.

Being on guard for Jane meant that she was concerned about how she should look or how she should act when she and Tom were at his folk's house. She was worried about Gary's behaviour, not in the sense that he would be overly mischievous, but rather that her discipline approach with Gary would not come up to par in her mother-in-law's opinion. Sometimes Jane felt as though she was being compared to Tom's first wife. The social aspect of being the wife of a successful executive had its drawbacks for Jane. Although not unattractive, she had no interest whatever in weekly hair appointments or facials. She loathed shopping for clothes, didn't wear make-up and had no

wish whatever to change her approach towards this at all. Jane lived and died in sweats. Much of her athletic equipment was donated by sporting goods firms that were proud to have their name associated with hers. Jane was quick to be picky over deals involving the companies competing for her endorsement. Her attitude was to get as much out of them as she could. Therefore, whichever company gave her the most, in terms of product, she would endorse. This tight money control aspect of her personality was also evident in her cafeteria dealings mentioned earlier and when she was purchasing equipment or clothing from one of the club's sports shops.

The "cosmetic" side of her life had never been a problem when she was single. Never really even when she and Tom were first married. Now, however, Jane was "on show" to a far more discernable crowd. This seemed more disconcerting to Mrs. Russell Sr. than to anyone else. Either that, or Mrs. Russell Sr. was less adept at hiding her feelings. Through the years, Mrs. Russell Sr. had acquired the necessary, even though perhaps superficial, social skills that enhanced her role. She was the stereotypical female; fulfilling the passive, supportive and nurturing roles easily. Jane was far more inclined to assume that people would accept her in her athletic role and not pay attention to her in her "society" role. The comparison between the two Mrs. Russells was inevitable to

most that came into contact with them. Both husbands were in the same company, basically doing the same thing day in, day out. When functions were held and company representation was mandatory, Jane and Tom were always in the shadow of the Russell Srs. Probably because Tom had grown up directly involved in the expected social pattern he was now perpetuating, it was easier for him to understand his mother. Tom was extremely private with his opinions concerning any of his family members except Patti, and I could only interpret his thoughts or feelings from his visual and non-verbal expressions. He was always a gentleman around his mother; always opening doors, holding her coat or standing when she was being seated. He respected her immensely and was sensitive to her reactions concerning Jane, especially after the novelty of being "new in town" had worn off. It was my impression that he was looking for somebody different than a replication of his mother when he married Jane. He wanted somebody who would be a challenge for him. He didn't really want stimulating conversation or an intellectual challenge, but he wanted fun; someone to have a good time with; someone who shared his childhood love of Badminton. It was also suggested by some closer to them in their "dating" days, that Tom wanted to be in the forefront or the limelight of Badminton. Never really an exceptional athlete, although certainly very capable, some saw it as a chance to "jump on the bandwagon."

In the national and provincial championships that were held during the course of the study, Tom only partnered Jane when no out of town players came in for the tournament. Every time this was the case, Jane partnered a national calibre colleague.

### Socially Speaking

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Sr. always came down to watch Tom and Jane play and doubled as babysitters. Jane had a handful of people she called upon to babysit when the H.C.C. service was closed. Often at weekends, Mrs. Russell Sr. would take Gary over a Friday night through to Saturday evening. This allowed Jane and Tom some time to themselves. On the odd occasion, they would go out to dinner together. If friends were in town for business, or to play a tournament, they would always go out to a restaurant.

The other regular babysitters were all provincial Badminton players and their feelings and opinions towards Jane are discussed in a later chapter. Jane usually paid them two to three dollars per hour, and left them with the usual pop and chips also. It seemed to take about six months for Jane to find any "friends" locally. The one couple that she and Tom did see that weren't old friends of Tom's were also a new couple to Sherbrooke. This friendship seemed to fall apart after an initial keen beginning. The wife of the other couple found them "odd." She was



commenting on the normal pattern of social friendship that she was used to:

We went to their place for dinner, and that was fine. Then we invited them to our place. That was fine too. We went out together to see a couple of movies and when we invited them over for dinner again, they found some excuse. We really didn't give it a second thought until we had tickets for a game and invited them again. They refused again, and this pattern continued until we finally said, "to Hell with it." It was like a door closed somewhere, but we didn't know why.

Jane and Tom did seem fairly happy with staying at home even though they were rarely there together. The house, being so huge, meant that "an appointment" was almost necessary to meet. Jane had hooked up the VCR that the provincial team had purchased for the use of training techniques. One of the athletes scornfully remarked that the only time he had seen the video-camera and equipment was when he was over at Jane's for a team get-together. When she was at home alone or with Tom, they would use the VCR for their own enjoyment. When Tom was out of town on one of his business trips which happened approximately every three months, Jane would plan to have friends over. These friends usually were athletes she was coaching or single women still actively involved in sports. Jane was not conscious of selecting friends that maintained her "safe" environment but she felt that she had most in common with those people that lived in her stream of life.

When Tom was away, Jane really did not alter her daily routines in the slightest. The most noticeable difference was that she made no attempt to be sociable with her in-laws, unless she met them by chance at the H.C.C.

In contrast to Jane's capability to cope with a change in her domestic life, Tom was not as able. Jane had decided to pursue her academic and coaching commitments and both of these required her to travel. One trip, to Scotland, for a coaching seminar, left Tom with Gary for a ten day period. Tom was quick to deliver Gary to his mother's every morning before work. Mrs. Russell Sr. would babysit for the day. Tom then went to his parents' for supper and left with Gary later in the evening to sleep at home. On the occasions that Mrs. Russell Sr. had a hair appointment or had responsibilities to her volunteer service, Tom would check off work early and take Gary to the Country Club. There he would put Gary into babysitting and then take a steam or shower. As the time period extended, Tom looked noticeably more haggard and tired. The change in his routine seemed more detrimental to his well being than did Jane's when he was away. With Jane's increased intensity in her athletic commitments it was certainly surprising to learn she was pregnant again.

## Chapter 5

### Mother, Athlete and Coach

The news that she was expecting was a surprise for Jane and Tom. They hadn't been planning another child quite so soon, but Jane didn't see pregnancy as a drawback to her training or competing. Her training forged right through the pregnancy and picked up at full speed one week after the birth. The intensity of her workouts did not vary in the slightest. In fact she started to play Squash more regularly as well as Badminton. The day before Jamie was born, Jane was playing hard 45 minute "A" level Squash. Her ability to carry on her normal schedule astounded the other regular women Squash players. Some were condemning, but most were envious. One of the ladies voiced a common feeling. "I wished I could look like that at 9 months." Jane was still only 128 lbs. She looked slim and well. With a heavy coat on, it was extremely difficult to even tell she was pregnant. In fact she only put on an extra 15 lbs with Jamie.

Jane didn't find being pregnant too distressing. She had occasional morning sickness and when this occurred she scheduled her workouts to a later part of the day. Once she had come to terms with the fact that she was pregnant again, Jane basically got on with her life. She didn't view pregnancy as a drawback or an excuse to be waited on, and it

was certainly not going to stop her from training or competing.

The reality of actually having two youngsters around twenty-four hours a day required more of an adjustment than Jane had initially anticipated. Jane's mother flew in right after the birth to lend a hand in the household. Mrs. Bird was a very calm, no fuss lady. She was adept at entertaining Gary, carrying out chores, and maintaining a conversation at the same time with expert smoothness. Mrs. Bird basically controlled the household and its daily necessities when she was in town. She took over the cooking, the grocery shopping and the general care of Gary and Tom. This allowed Jane to relax after Jamie's birth, although she was up and about as soon as she came out of hospital.

Jane was back training at the Club just a week after Jamie's birth. The pattern of bringing the boys along while she either trained or coached didn't alter. The baby joined Gary in the babysitting room. On weekends Tom took Gary for a swim in the Club's pool while Jane had a coffee and watched with Jamie.

Her parents-in-law were frequently with them and watched the boys if Tom and Jane wanted to play Badminton together. Tom was a rare sight alone with both boys. One of his most demanding weeks occurred while Jane was in Europe in the latter part of this study pursuing her Level

IV certification. Tom had the kids for a week and managed to plan his day around them. In the morning he got them up and dressed and drove them to his Mom's. Mrs. Russell Sr. gave the children breakfast and then babysat until Tom came home from work. He ate dinner with his parents and kids and then took them home to bed. On the nights he acted as coach while Jane was away he generally took both kids with him. One of the Provincial athletes watched them while Tom carried out the exercises on court. If the training time conflicted with a feeding time for Jamie, Tom would take Gary and leave Jamie at his Mom's to be fed. The only occasion that Tom was with both boys around late afternoon was when Mrs. Russell Sr. had an appointment that she couldn't change. Tom looked drawn and tired and between feeding Jamie who was crying, and Gary who was having trouble sitting still, he commented:

We'll be glad when Mom comes home, won't we?

He had taken off early that day from the office because his Mom had an appointment. He bemoaned the fact that one pair of hands was not enough especially around meal times.

#### Jane as a Mother

The onset of pregnancy number two showed no external signs of disruption to Jane. Her sights were still set on competing in the Crown Games in Great Britain. The kettle

was boiling for coffee, Gary was chasing about in the living room and Jane was feeding Jamie as we chatted.

The games are in July so that would give me about six months after I've had the baby to get back into shape. I could probably do it.

To have this long term goal in mind would mean continued training through her pregnancy, something she had done before. Jane's attention switched to the kettle and mine to calling Gary. The support system she would need to look after Gary during this time, and then Gary and baby number two while she would be away did not seem too problematic. As usual, most of her day was spent at the Club, either coaching athletes or training by herself. When Tom was not able to keep an eye on Gary, Jane took him along and left him either by the courts in his car seat carrier or in the babysitting room. As he learned to walk, he became a constant source of amusement and anxiety for other mothers and athletes. (Specific comments and perceptions by people appear in a later chapter.)

The frequent scene at H.C.C. portrayed younger mothers, around Jane's own age, dropping their youngsters in the babysitting room. From there, they would head to the locker room to don designer aerobic wear or Tennis wear. The initial fashion parade began in the cafeteria where the cliques of women gossiped over their morning coffee, until 9:30 or 10:00 when their round robins or exercise classes

began. At around 11:00 when the session ended, they headed back to the cafeteria. At 11:30 they arose en masse and made their way to shower or steam until noon, when they picked up the children and took them home for lunch. A handful of mothers stayed at the Club for lunch; usually those that didn't mind the slighting glares from the "Businessmen only" lunch tables. These women always sat together amidst high chairs and divided their conversation between lunch and feeding the kids.

#### Jane as a Coach

When Jane first came to the city and joined H.C.C. the only hours she spent at the Club were when she trained. However as Gary started to become more agile, he also needed to be watched more carefully. At tournament times if Jane was playing simultaneously with Tom, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Sr. looked after Gary. The following season brought the responsibility of Head Coach to Jane and this in turn required her to be at H.C.C. much more. At the times when the athletes trained, the babysitting service was not open, which meant Jane had to juggle her concentration from athlete to Gary constantly. When first endowed with the coaching position Jane was eager to establish a bona fide program; something lacking in the sport at that time. Jane believed she could give the athletes a taste of "what training is about." She felt that none of the athletes knew what hard work was and religiously set out to improve their

attitude as well as their fitness. At every training session I observed, Jane and Tom trained along with their athletes. After a twenty minute flexibility or stretching session everyone ran laps for about 20 minutes. After this a strength training circuit was performed. One athlete skipped, another performed squats, another crunch sit ups, another push ups and yet another vertical jumps. Each athlete stayed at a station between 1 and 2 minutes each and then they rotated to the next station. Every athlete Jane had selected for the squad was expected to be at every session. Fitness training occurred every second day and skill or playing sessions took place on the alternate days. The athletes had Saturday as a day off. The normal routine for a playing session began with a similar stretch and run session. After this each athlete spent between 30 minutes and 45 minutes working on whatever Jane had prescribed for them. Some would be practising a particular shot and some would be practising controlled games. This meant the athlete, for example, had to return a drop shot with an underhand clear shot. Jane leaned against the wall and watched the various activities. If the number of players were uneven, she would join in, mostly to play games. Feedback to the athletes was given on occasion. Two of the athletes seemed to draw the most attention from her. These were also the same athletes that she chose to play with if the numbers were uneven. Jane commented that these two



athletes always "worked hardest" or "gave more than 100 percent" or had "good attitudes." Often the apparent malaise of the athletes caused Jane to express comments like:

I'm not going to waste my time with kids that don't care. It's my time too, and if a kid wants to get somewhere in Badminton then I'll help them all I can. If they're going to goof off then that's their problem.

In the training sessions Jane rarely encouraged the athletes. Before the session began, or during their stretching exercises Jane chatted to them as a group. She discussed previous or upcoming tournaments, various technical or tactical information she had picked up from a clinic she had attended and usually discussed some psychological skill. At the end of a training session the athletes filtered away. The only athletes to stay around, if any, were usually the girls. This happened at every session at the beginning of the season (early September) and gradually declined after Christmas. From the middle of March the odd one or two approached Jane on an infrequent basis.

At the onset of the season, Jane was keen to improve her own expertise in the coaching area. She approached the local Sport Branch and researched the route to certification as a coach. No other coach in the province was better certified than a Level I coach (the preliminary step) so

Jane took it on herself to make a step forward in that direction. Jane had received a little pressure from her "employer," the Provincial Badminton Association. The local government had a program for funding associations set up dependent on the amount of certified coaches and officials an association had, and the level of qualification those individuals had attained. The higher the level of certification, the more money an association received.

Jane signed up for her Level I and Level II. These courses were approximately 14 hours and 18 hours long respectively. They were held on a Friday through Sunday format, and were prerequisites to signing up for the Level III course. Neither course holds an exam so attendance at all the sessions meant a Pass. The Level III course was somewhat longer for Jane. It meant a commitment to a two month long program. Once a week in the evening, Jane would attend the three hour session, and study the theory components in the Level III program. The final requirement of the course was to design a year round program for the sport she chose and on passing this the certification would be granted. Jane started the program numerous times but didn't get around to finishing it because:

By the time I get home, it's the last thing on my mind. It's too difficult with the kids around to set time when I can just work on it anyway.

Jane did get around to finishing the program two or three months later. Jane's efforts to improve her qualifications and knowledge of coaching spurred on another coach at the H.C.C. Somewhat envious of the attention Jane was receiving from the Province and also according to Jane "scared of losing his job" he made gallant efforts to match Jane's achievements. Jane recalls:

He did nothing for years for the members, especially the younger ones, and now he's setting up programs for this and classes for that. It's about time. He's only been here 17 years.

Jane talked frequently about wanting his job. She saw herself as a part-time professional. Her enthusiasm and drive to establish a good base for Badminton, motivated her to approach the Club Board of Directors concerning the job prospects. She was informed that a member cannot teach according to the Club by-laws. Tom suggested that she not be a member anymore and just let him hold the share. That way she could benefit both ways. After some deliberation Jane decided not to press on with the "job hunt." Her reasoning was: "I really don't know if it's worth rocking the boat." Instead, Jane offered to give Rahul (the pro) a hand with teaching group Badminton lessons on a Saturday morning. One problem as Jane saw it however was that most of the children preferred her as a coach.

Rahul is just plain boring. How enjoyable can it be for a kid to wait 20 minutes in line before he

hits the bird 10 times, and then has to wait again? He's got too many kids in each class. I can't understand those parents who watch. Surely they can see their kids being bored. If it was my kid, I'd complain.

It bothered Jane a lot when she first joined H.C.C. She felt her popularity was the main reason that Rahul hired two other men to take over, instead of her, when the first session ended.

I guess it scares him to think somebody else is more effective. He's like a piece of furniture. Maybe I should nail him to the floor! What's probably killing him too is that I'm a woman and God forbid I could do the job better!

The extent to which Rahul was a source of aggravation to Jane seemed to fade once Jane landed the Head Provincial position. Instead Rahul became a source of derision. Jane rationalized that if by what she was doing, coaching wise, made him work harder at H.C.C. then that in itself was good enough.

#### Forever an Athlete?

In the following spring there was some talk that Jane would be given a coaching position on a National level. Jane thought "it was all talk" at the time and nothing ever came up after that. Jane still considered herself a player first and foremost. She participated at every local tournament in the Ladies' Division although she acknowledged that nobody could give her any competition. I asked why she

didn't play in the men's events for the competition and was told that the Provincial Association didn't think that was appropriate.

The H.C.C. was a competition site for events on the Grand Prix Badminton circuit and results from this helped rank the Canadian athletes. The event was a major tournament and Jane planned to compete in the women's doubles. Out of town athletes had appeared for other H.C.C. tournaments but at this event all the top ranked players would be there. The crowds packed the Club. CBC set up their equipment and both Jane and Tom were asked to commentate. Jane's house became, as she put it, "a hotel for the week." The tournament for out of town athletes began on Friday of the week, but Michelle Mabon, ranked #3 in Canada arrived on the Wednesday. She was staying at Jane's place all week and had wanted to get some extra practice in before the competition started. Each morning Jane and Michelle arrived at the Club around 9:00 a.m. Jane put Gary and Jamie into babysitting, grabbed a coffee and then met Michelle by the Squash courts. They played Squash for 45 minutes, came off and cooled down by the courts for about 20 minutes. Some mornings they would walk up to the cafeteria and sit there, some mornings just have a drink by the courts. Almost as soon as the ladies lessons or round robins had finished at 11:00 Michelle and Jane began stretching and preparing for a workout at Badminton. Jane

would often skip with a weighted belt on for 20-30 minutes. Michelle would sprint, skip or play shadow Badminton. Shadow Badminton is an exercise where one person stands with their back to the net and points to various parts of the court. The other player using correct footwork has to move to those places, perform an imaginary shot and then move back to the centre of the court in the ready position. Depending on how quickly the athlete moves around, the drill can be fast or slow. After both taking turns and sweating profusely, the two women then started on a match. They played intensely until the business men arrived for their daily exercise and then left to get lunch. Jane picked up Gary and Jamie and they headed to the cafeteria. Jane rarely carried any cash on her.

There's been so much theft from the locker rooms in the last little while, it's not worth taking a chance on leaving money around. Tom even had his shoes stolen last week. Who would want a pair of dress shoes?

To purchase anything at H.C.C. a member signed a charge slip. At the month's end, all the slips were totalled and sent out to the members individually or their companies, depending on who pays the bills. In Jane's case, all expenses were picked up by Tom's business. This proved convenient to Tom also, because he could bring clients to the Club for drinks or dinner and have a viable tax write off. Jane and Michelle ordered soup and salads and Jane

grabbed a muffin for Gary. He shared her soup and played with the muffin. After Jane had eaten, she breast fed Jamie at the table. Jane had no inhibitions about feeding Jamie. She breast fed him by the Squash courts, during games and after games, and she fed him in the coffee shop whenever he was hungry. As previously mentioned she received a written notice from the Club management after some members had complained about her feeding Jamie over lunch. Jane then carried on breast feeding the baby at other places in the Club. Her reasoning was that she didn't want to raise further problems especially as her husband and parents-in-law ate at the Club frequently.

It's just not worth causing the aggravation. Mind you, it's none of their damn business really.

On the Thursday morning, Jane and Michelle went through the same routine of exercise. The Provincial Badminton Association wanted a lunch meeting with Jane so Michelle watched the kids and gave them lunch. At 1:00 Michelle returned the boys to the babysitting room. Jane finished her meeting and they went back to the Squash courts for an hour. They took a small break and chatted about the weekend Grand Prix event and the competition over a drink. For the next hour and a half they played Badminton. Still fresh and lively after hours of vigorous activity they showered and changed and picked up the boys at 4:30. The weekend of the tournament was a real boost for Jane. She was once again in

the middle of an exciting scene. A time for her to renew friendships and catch up on all the sports gossip. It was also an excellent chance for her to evaluate her own performance against her peers. Most of Friday she was chauffeuring athletes from the airport to the Club. Both boys were in the Club babysitting room. Jane's weekend was packed with events. She was chauffeuring athletes almost all Friday in between setting up schedules with CBC. Her own house guests were driven back and forth in one of Tom's company vans and were left to themselves in Jane's house. Tom had taken time off from work. His company sponsored the tournament and he was making sure the Club's organizing committee was doing their job.

Either Jane or Tom sat beside the reporter from CBC throughout the weekend. Whenever they were both tied up, the Russell Sr.'s watched the boys. Jamie was easier to watch than Gary. He would sit or sleep in his plastic seat between feeds. Gary ran in and out of the dozens of Badminton players sprawled on couches or the floor waiting for their next games. Some were sleeping while others listened to Sony walkmans. Those that were awake patted Gary or spoke to him if he approached them. If he tripped over a pair of extended legs he picked himself up and went on his way. If anyone tried to restrain him, he let out a piercing yell of disgust! As the tournament play took place in the evening and during the weekend, Gary was almost the



only child in the Club. Most families restricted their activities to the weekdays; those that came to the Club when a tournament was on generally used the swimming pool or ice rink. Gary did not seem too worried having no other kids his age to play with. The action around him was enough to keep him occupied.

Jane's tournament in women's doubles - she partnered an old friend from Toronto - lasted to the quarter finals. She hadn't entered the ladies' singles because:

I'm just not ready. They've had so much competition compared to me. What with hurting my foot and having Jamie, I just haven't put enough work into it. I want to be able to give them a game if I play - if I can't, then there's no use.

Jane seemed disappointed with her placing in the doubles even though she acknowledged it wasn't her best event. She still believed she was as fit as her ex-teams mates but the match play was the vital area she was missing. The Crown Games team she felt was out of her reach at the moment and although her energies were still thrown into her training, she was now focussing on the Junior Nationals. This event would see Jane in a coaching capacity only. I asked why she didn't attend the Senior Nationals, where some of her Provincial athletes played before Christmas. Jane would also have been eligible to play.

I couldn't play because Jamie was due around then, and there was no point in me going for the kids. None of them stood a chance anyway.

The Junior Nationals however was a different story.

The kids will need me as a support person and we have a good chance of a winner with Simon. Dawn and Jennifer have a good chance too . . . they've both been putting time in.

#### Return to Base

The Junior Nationals, coincidentally, were in the same city as Jane's parents, so Jane decided to take both boys with her when she left. Tom had just returned from a week in the southern States on business and looked tanned and well as he said goodbye to Jane and the kids at the airport. Jane had planned to stay in Toronto an extra week to visit and while she was there she wanted to check in at the University to see how many credits she needed to complete her Arts degree.

Two of Jane's athletes achieved excellent results in their Nationals; these were Simon and Jennifer. The two athletes were the same ones Jane had said on many occasions were the only ones "who gave 100% every practice."

Mrs. Bird took care of the kids while Jane was at the host Club with her athletes. Jane also stayed at her parents' home. Parents who accompanied their own kids to the Nationals stayed in the tournament hotel and managed to supervise them at night.

Jane thoroughly enjoyed the times she could spend with her own family, although she rarely saw her other sister or

eldest brother. Her youngest brother still lived at home so he helped to entertain Gary and Jamie during the day.

Jane made some progress with her degree while she was back in Toronto. She discovered that she had "nine or ten credit hours left to finish my degree." By registering for intersession courses in May and June and then a summer course that would take her through to the end of July, she would almost have her course work completed.

Jane seemed very keen to go back to school and take the courses and after some lengthy discussions with Tom, registered for two courses that would keep her in Toronto for six weeks in the spring and summer.

Tom's not exactly enthusiastic about me going, but I want to finish this thing. He'll come out for a couple of weekends to see the boys anyway.

The discussion with Tom had been fairly volatile Jane explained.

Whenever we really fight, neither of us talks about the problem. Then it gets so bad that something breaks and we end up screaming and yelling! It's not the best way to sort things out I know, but that's the way it is.

Tom had always been supportive of Jane's playing career and had helped her in many ways as a coach. The demands on his time now that he was the "owner" of the company increased in leaps and bounds. He was expected to travel out of town for the company, take charge of the export

division and be responsible for dozens of employees. Although Tom's Dad still took care of much administration, Tom really did all the "legwork" as he put it. Tom also took up Squash, partly "for the business contacts" but also because:

I can get great exercise in 45 minutes, shower and eat lunch and be back at the office in an hour and a half.

He felt a strong need to get regular exercise to help him with the job stresses. When Jane took on extra responsibilities with her coaching she had expected Tom to help her as he always had. Both Jane and Tom had busy and demanding schedules. They were constantly moving from place to place. Jane would play in a tournament, now either Badminton or Squash, fulfill coaching duties six times a week, attend a meeting or two regarding the Provincial team, and manage two youngsters and a huge house.

It's busy but I love it. The only times I really get fed up with it is when I show up for training and half the kids don't, or they're late. This program offers them something they've never had before so I expect commitment from them. They can't do all the other things too if they want to be someone at Badminton.

Initially, Tom had always met Jane and Gary at lunch time. In the latter part of the study, he rarely showed up at lunch time unless he had agreed to play Badminton with one of the Junior athletes. Tom became a member of two other

Clubs in the city also, and played Squash more regularly than Badminton. His reasoning was similar to Jane's:

I can get better competition playing Squash in this province than Badminton.

Lunch times became a time when Tom played Squash and the occasional Badminton game. Perhaps he called into the Country Club for lunch with Jane and the boys once a week. Their lunches together were fairly rushed. Jane held Jamie or put him in the carrying seat on the table. Gary sat in a high chair initially and then graduated to a "regular" chair. Few words were exchanged between Jane and Gary, and Tom usually exercised any discipline necessary.

#### Clique Acceptance

As Jane became a more familiar face around the Club and people began to recognize her sporting skills, she was accepted more into a social clique. This clique was very different from the "norm" of the Country Club cliques. It comprised of three women under the age of 30. None of the women worked and each was married to a self-employed executive. Each of the husbands were working in businesses basically pioneered by their fathers. The ladies had a number of things in common with each other. They each had two or more kids, didn't wear designer clothing, and were "A" level Squash players. This meant they were among the few women at the H.C.C. that was competitive at a tournament

level and played good, serious Squash at least twice a week. Jane met the group by signing up for a ladies' Squash round robin that was organized every Friday morning by the Club pro. Jane was known as a Badminton player, but when she got on the Squash court, her ability to lunge and retrieve the ball astounded everyone. Superior fitness proved valuable for Jane. She soon became the best female Squash player in the Club.

Jane was invited for coffee with the group and soon began to arrange to play them at other times in the week.

On the odd occasion that Tom joined Jane for lunch, they were sometimes sharing the table with one of the group members, Joyce, and her husband Dan. Dan played Squash two or three times a week and met Joyce and their two girls for lunch afterwards. Dan and Tom easily chatted about business or sports. Jane shared concerns about Club programs and services and discussed plans for holidays. Joyce was quite vocal about her dislike towards her in-laws. Jane added a few comments of her own, and they frequently laughed over this issue. She commented later:

I wonder if anyone is happy with their in-laws. I guess we need them around, but when they are around it drives us nuts.

Tom never voiced any discontent with his parents-in-law and Jane, with a smile, offered a reason for this.

This is his second set so he can't be choosy!

Jane considered her coaching season successful although she was disappointed with her own playing. The lack of skilled competition had caused her to drop severely in the National rankings, although she didn't admit that she had probably lost her place on the National Team. Each time we spoke, Jane had a positive attitude towards her future playing career.

Next year I'll have to play more out of town tournaments or get the players here. If the money is good, they'll come.

The following season saw the first annual "Bird Cup." Jane put up money to sponsor a tournament which did pull big National athletes.

Tom drove Jane and the kids to the airport in early May. Jane along with Badminton equipment and kids headed off to Toronto, university and her parents for six weeks.

The main part of the Badminton season being over, his concentration was geared towards his company. The pace was just as hectic. His daily exercise regime didn't alter but he did have more freedom, and as he said "time to sleep in" without having to get up and coach. He planned to fly out to see Jane and the kids two or three times while she was away.

Jane returned to Sherbrooke with a slight tan and looking healthy and relaxed.

I had a great time. I got to see the family and lots of friends. It was like a reunion.

She had completed her courses and had the chance to play some Badminton and renew friendships with her old team mates and coach. Her family was well and Jane had heard their plans to move into the western States, near Seattle for a year or so. Dr. Bird had taken up a consulting position for an American company on a term basis. Jane said sometimes she missed the travel but she had "lots to keep her busy" in Sherbrooke.

My parents spoil me and the kids because they don't see me as often as the others. It's great! No laundry, no cleaning . . . that's the life!

Tom was happy to have them back in Sherbrooke: "It's nice to have life back in order."

#### Back to the Grind

The utmost thing in Jane's mind on her return was to organize a pre-season training schedule for her athletes. She wanted to have them running in Valley Park. The largest of the city's parks, it bordered a river and attracted hundreds of cyclists, joggers and roller skiers along with bleached blond types competing with tans. The park offered numerous running routes, and Jane set out a three mile course for her Provincial athletes. Some of the athletes had still been training with the Club programs only two



weeks before, and were not overly enthusiastic about training getting underway so soon. Jane felt differently.

The Club program doesn't work those kids hard anyway. Half of them aren't in shape. This will do them good.

Three times a week the Provincial athletes met at the park to go running. Jane or Tom always ran with them. The boys were left with the other parent or with grandparents. In middle August the team geared up their training. Running at the park three times a week and court drills and skills three times a week. One of the athletes, Sashi, became the designated babysitter as she was recuperating from an Achilles tendon tear. She had ripped the tendon one evening during a training session, and was in a cast. She entertained Gary with felt pens and paper, and watched Jamie in his first attempts at crawling. Gary liked to draw - everywhere. He "wrote" on the benches, the doors, equipment bags and walls. Jane would send him to the Squash pro if she was watching the athletes or talking to someone. He would ask for "something to draw" and was given pencils and paper. He would sit in the office on a high stool and draw. He showed his efforts to the pro and to any of the athletes who were not training because of injury. Racquets or shuttlecocks that were lying around were also a source of amusement for Gary. He often went wandering down to the Squash office to find a racquet. Rental racquets or

racquets in for repair were the targets. He would grab any racquet he saw and look for something to hit - ball, shuttlecock, pens or shoes! He got a thrill out of swinging the racquets at people while they were trying to stop him or catch the implement! Only once did I see Jane lose her temper when Gary stepped on a bag and a couple of racquets she had put by the pro shop door. She raised her voice at him and snatched the racquets up off the floor. Gary bawled. Usually when Gary was looking for things to do, Jane was concentrating on the athletes on court.

Jane's schedule came to a temporary halt in early fall. She was cooking hot dogs on the stove when she turned to attend to Jamie and pulled the pot and boiling hot water onto herself. She contacted her parents-in-law who rushed over and took the kids and Jane to hospital. The scalding water had touched her wrist and a leg. She was kept in for a few days and sent home with bandages covering the second degree burns. In less than a week Jane was back at the H.C.C. with the Provincial athletes. This was the only period during the entire study where Jane looked unwell. She had a pained expression almost constantly and looked tired and very pale. She said she felt okay and even if she could not participate she could "coach from the sidelines."

Jane couldn't wait to participate and after a couple of weeks she was doing light calisthenics. Recovering from an

injury was just another minor drawback in Jane's pursuit of fitness and achievement.

I can't let that hold me back . . . another season is just around the corner.

## Chapter 6

### A Look from the Inside

Jane Bird came into contact with a myriad of people during the time of this research. Some of those people became intimately involved with her, through her daily contact with them. Their perceptions of Jane as an athlete, a mother and a coach are illustrated in this chapter.

#### Ann

My view is probably a bit distorted, you know, because I'm a Mum too. Robin is only a little bit younger than Gary. I'll tell you though, the one thing I hate is when she leaves that baby beside the court if she's playing. He sometimes cries and cries - he's just starving. It's obviously time for his feeding, but she ignores him. When it's me she's on court with, I can't concentrate. Then she gets mad at me. Everyone remarks about it, but she doesn't seem to hear. I guess you could call it amazing concentration - it's just not fair. She's an alright coach I guess, but I think she's too extreme. How can I be here all those hours when I've got a husband and kid to look after? I want a clean house. And do you know? I feel she picks on me. I can't do anything right. I don't think I've ever heard her say, "well done" or "that's better" to me. I don't know about the others, but I need encouragement. I'm one of the oldest here, actually I think I am the oldest,

next to Jane. I've tried to approach her on it, but there's not much point. Maybe it's because Andy (her husband) coaches a lot of the same kids and because she doesn't like the way he does things, she gets back at him through me.

When she first came here, everyone was ecstatic. Maybe Sherbrooke would get on the map as far as Badminton was concerned. She was super fit . . . put all of us to shame. As time went on though I got the feeling that she didn't really want to coach. She was still playing all the local tournaments and that meant that she played against us. I always thought that she couldn't or wouldn't tell us all she could because of that.

### Jennifer

Jane is very demanding, but it's what I need. I'm playing better than ever before and I'm sure it's because of all the training we do. She doesn't put up with any crap. If you can't make it to a session, watch out. You have to be almost dead! I think she's unreasonable when it comes to exams though. School's important to me and if I have an exam, then I don't think I should have to come. I do though. Some of the others don't, they just face the fire when they come next time.

Jane's probably fitter than all of us. I don't know how she keeps going. Do you remember when she hurt her foot? Mine was injured at the same time, but she showed no

sympathy. She was almost disgusted, as though I could help it. Anyway, she still stretched out; she's so disciplined. Her attitude towards playing is so intense. Everything else, even her kids don't affect her concentration. It's hard for us to follow that. She doesn't say much to us, but you kind of feel that you just won't match up to her standards. If you show you're keen and ask for her advice she'll give it to you. But if you step out of line, say you don't show up for a couple of sessions and you don't call, she makes you feel really guilty.

Badminton is her whole life you know. Tom must be really understanding because they never see each other. Whenever we go to their place to watch videos of our play the kids are always up and running around. Gary's pretty hyper. Tom and Jane don't seem to restrict them too much. They kind of let them play with us. Jane usually calls one of us to babysit when they go out. The kids know us so it makes things easier, and she has a lot of us to choose from.

### Carolyn

I was really excited to get into the program at the start. I've played for years, but the coaches we have in Sherbrooke are hit and miss. The trouble is, you always have to belong to the club the coach works at, so that really restricts you. Most of us can't afford our own fees; our parents are members somewhere, so that's where we play.

With the Provincial program, we get to play wherever the Association gets us courts. Right now we are using two clubs. Jane just switches from one to the other. Getting Jane to train us was fantastic. She was so organized and disciplined. Everyone knew the ropes. She expects you to give up everything for Badminton. You don't have any time for a job, and if you have lots of school work it's just too bad. She wants you to be at every session. At the beginning I was really keen, but now I've kind of had enough. I'm trying to get a job and I can't tell a employer I can work certain days because of the training. It's getting me down. My parents aren't willing to give me pocket money so I've got to earn my own. I want to get my own car; actually Tom said he'd try and get me one through his company, and I've got to pay insurance and everything. I guess my priorities have changed. I never get any time to do anything but Badminton. It's no fun for me anymore. It's more like a duty I have to perform. Can you see I'm getting tense even just talking about it to you? I'm always tired too. I think we over train. Only one day off in seven seems severe to me, but I don't feel I can question Jane on the program. She's not one for receiving criticism or complaints. What makes the situation worse is that I'm planning on moving out of home and Jane has suggested I rent the top storey of their house. She said they'll turn it into a self-contained apartment for me and instead of me

paying as much rent as it's worth, I can do some housekeeping and babysitting. It's so tempting - I really want my own place and this would be an ideal opportunity . . . I don't know. See, I'm still going to have to get a job, and then I'm back to square one. I guess I am going to have to talk it out with Jane - it's so difficult. If I take the apartment, I don't know how much housework I'll have to do. It would be everyday that I have to babysit too. Then what happens if I have to work when they want me to babysit? Maybe the best thing is to get a full time job and just quit Badminton.

#### Bryan

Jane's main goal for us is to get us in shape. She's not much of a technician, she's more a bread and butter player; she grinds people down by running them to death. Her style is like that. She doesn't have the shots that say, Rahul or Andy have, but her stamina keeps her in the game.

The problem as I see it, is that we don't all have her game. I'm more of a shotmaker - I can hit the bird really fast. I like short, but real intense rallies. Jane doesn't like that, and she's trying to get me to take more time. String the rally out a bit more. Andy (Bryan's private coach) on the other hand likes my style. I get a lot more encouragement from him but you have to try and please



everyone. It doesn't do a whole lot for your game. Jane can be so moody that it makes my male chauvinism rise! I don't want my coach bringing her home life and problems to my practices.

When I turn up to train I don't expect to babysit. Jane always schedules the time so someone has a rest time, but I swear it's not for our benefit. It's to look after a kid. I don't even bother. If I'm off I go to the cafeteria and get a drink. I can't believe how Tom puts up with it. She treats him like s\_\_t. He's out making big bucks to satisfy her, but she doesn't lift a finger for him. Her place is a mess every time we go round.

Tom and I play sometimes at lunch but he's not one to talk about his home life. He just seems an unhappy guy; but hey, that's not my problem is it? I'd rather just do my training with Andy, but to get any travel money from Quebec, you have to be part of Jane's program. So there it is.

### Simon

Jane's really straightened out my game. She's such an expert, it's difficult not to learn something from her. She expects a lot and demands a lot from us, but I work hardest when I'm training with her. Her experience with the National Team provides us with the best base of coaching in Quebec. She's really positive towards me and she thinks I can make the National team too if I work hard. I'm going to

get a job next summer in Toronto at the National Training Centre and that will give me a chance to play with the athletes already on the team. Jane's contacts there gave me the opportunity and I'm not going to waste it. Her type of play is identical to mine, so that means my fitness has to be up there. Tom plays with me any time I want and that's great for my game. My Mum helps out with all our tournaments and events here too, so she's in close contact with the scene. She's really impressed with how well I've done since Jane took over. She even watches Jane's kids if she brings them along. I don't have any trouble making practices; I want to be here. If I've got lots of work from school I can talk to the Headmaster and he'll always give me an extension. It probably helps that my Mum is on the Board too.

Jane's been really helpful with taping my workouts. I can go to her place and watch them any time. She never cares when you go. Her house is always open to Badminton players.

I'm sure the extra training and fitness work helped me in the Junior Nationals. It's the best I've ever done.

### Michelle

Jane hasn't really been part of our National team since I've been on the team. When I was on the fringes of the team though, Jane was very active. She's a completely

dedicated player. She loves the game and works very hard to achieve what she does. For me as a youngster on the team, she was my idol. I tried to model my game after her. She gained an awful lot of respect from players and coaches by her commitment to excellence. When she moved to Quebec I think she had the hardest time accepting the fact that she was no longer "competitive" as she knew it. You have to be able to go here or there at a moment's notice and you don't have the time to worry about home. When she was single it was much easier for her and then after Gary was born she was trying to do everything. Even with Tom being so supportive, she still found her freedom restricted. Jane believed she could have maintained her world ranking even with Gary, but I guess it was just too much. Now it would be impossible. She has been out of it for so long and she's getting older. As well, she keeps having babies! I think she likes coaching, but it's not as satisfying for her. She becomes very frustrated with the athletes. She would much rather be playing than coaching. When you coach, you hope the athletes perform well, but you can't change anything. At least when you play, you can do something about your game.

#### Dawn

Being involved in the program is hard work for me, especially now I'm in University. When I was at school I had far more time to hang around the club and play. Now I

have to be highly structured otherwise I don't have time for school and Badminton. Jane's not my idea of a perfect parent; not even close. That's none of my business though. You have to respect her because she was No. 4 in the world at one point. So she must have done something right. When I first met her, I was in awe. That takes a while to wear off. She brings in her friends to give us special camps and clinics. We probably get more top quality coaching than anyone else in the country. I don't know why we can never do very well in competitions, because we get the best coaching. Maybe we don't work hard enough in our sessions. Jane's attitude towards training has given me a goal. She trains hard with us and plays all the time she has free time. When I first became involved in the program, I wanted to make the National Team, but it's too demanding. Now I think I'm just going to play in tournaments and do something in Sports Psychology. I'm not convinced that Jane is really a good coach. What I mean is, that she hardly ever gives us feedback or reinforcement. You never know if you're improving or not, but if you work hard she seems to approve. It's easy to pick out the people she doesn't like, and if I was one of them, it would be hard to keep interested. It's like you have to be self-motivated or she won't pay any attention to you. She's really helped Simon get better. Actually I think Tom has helped him the most. Tom will change his schedule to fit ours, but Jane will always try

and trade a babysitting night for a game. I don't need the hassle. It's kind of crazy really. I know she's not a great coach but she kind of covers everything. Like, maybe if I stick around her long enough, I'll get to be a great player too.

### Richard

I'm sick of her and her "good" coaching. So what if she was world ranked. She's a lousy coach and if you don't look the right way she cuts you out completely. I pay good money to be in this program so I can be privy to the benefits, but I'm playing my worst Badminton. She creates so much pressure on me to win, I can't think straight. We don't all have her game. I need tips for me and my game. I'm not the same as the next player. Coaches shouldn't have favourites on a team. I think I'm coachable. Geez, I want to learn; I give up half my life to play this game and what am I getting out of this? The younger players are just too enamoured. They can't see past the crap. We train so hard and for so much of the year and I don't think anyone except Simon and maybe Jennifer are benefitting. Other coaches I know feel we are either overtraining or reaching our peaks at the wrong time.

Quebec Badminton pays her about \$10,000 for a year's work. They bought her a brand new video camera and recorder and we've been taped once. Once in almost two years. The

stuff is set up now in their house and I guess they use it for their own entertainment. The Association has been fooled by believing her exceptional playing will make her a good coach. It doesn't work. It's just a matter of time until they realize what's going on.

A coach has to be sensitive to their players. We spend lots of hours together so obviously there will be good and bad days. It doesn't take me long to figure out if Jane's in a bad mood, so what's the problem with her sensitivity to us? It's like her kids; she doesn't know where they are half the time. If it wasn't for everybody knowing what her kids look like, they would be lost or out of the building so often. Jane has gotten to the stage where she'll either lean against the wall and write on her notepad or even sit outside the courts completely. How can she coach effectively when she hardly speaks to us? My own mental training now focusses on blocking her out. That's not the way it should be.

Going back to the point I made about overtraining, do you remember Anika? It was at the end of one of our sessions working out when she tore her Achilles tendon. Anika is as fit as any of us, but like everyone else she was exhausted. But we still have to do that extra little bit of training. When she got hurt you didn't see Jane looking too concerned did you? It was the other kids that helped her get to hospital. She's never really played hard Badminton

since then. What about when Jennifer hurt her foot about the time that Jane did? Jane looked disgusted. It was like, "I can handle my injury, so what's your problem?" kind of look. Her whole attitude annoys me.

This past year has been awful for my game. She won't last long though; when these kids grow up and smarten up, they'll appreciate what's happening. Take Laura for example. She thinks Jane is God but have you heard Jane run Laura down. She's too fat, or doesn't try or hasn't a hope in Hell of doing anything with Badminton. You never hear Jane say that to her face though, and guess why? Laura's mum is the executive officer and holds the purse strings to our program. I really think I could run this program better.

### Joyce

I guess I've known her now for about two or three years. We weren't too friendly at the start; well nobody really knew her. We got to know each other through the kids I guess. Gary was in the babysitting room every time I took in Courtney and after a while you get to recognize the same kids. It seems like he was always in there and I was curious to see who his parents were. One day when I was picking up Courtney, Jane was getting Gary, and so we started chatting. I found out Jane was a really good Badminton player and we kind of had a common interest in

competitive sports, you could say. I used to play Volleyball for the National Team and so I remember all the training and commitments we had. I didn't have a husband, let alone a kid though - that wasn't till much later - so it was quite surprising to hear Jane go on about still competing. We had coffee a few times but it wasn't really until Jane got involved in the Squash here that I got to see her more regularly. I guess all the hours she was putting in with the kids she coaches were the ones I spend in bed!! Tom should be a saint. Dan wouldn't put up with me being away from him or Courtney that amount of time. I like to see him, that's why I married him! It's not that he doesn't support me in what I like to do, but if you want to have kids and settle down, you just don't have enough hours or energy to be that competitive. For me, my family is top priority. For Jane, it's second. She doesn't feel bad about it, actually she rarely even mentions it, but Badminton to her is the most important thing. Because of that commitment, she got where she did. I was in a team sport and although it was still super intense I don't think you have to be so hard on yourself. Mentally, for me anyway, I felt I could share the load if things went wrong. In Jane's sport though, it all falls on her shoulders if she makes an error. You must learn to be resilient in that kind of situation. Maybe that's why she handles the kids the way she does. To me, it seems more like she gets so involved in



whatever she's doing, either in conversations or playing or whatever, that she's just not aware that anything else could be happening.

Like at lunchtimes if everyone is feeding the kids you have to try and watch the kids, eat your own lunch and talk, all at the same time. For me if the kids need lunch, that's the first thing to get out of the way. Jane seems to get caught up in conversation before the boys eat. That makes them cranky; so they start whining or crying. Jane finishes the conversation before looking after them. I can't stand it when my kids, or anyone else's for that matter, start whining. Jane gets a real narrow focus, like she doesn't know it's happening. Tom's good with the boys. We don't see him at the club too much lately. I think his job is getting hectic. Dan gets away when he wants to, so we get to see him at lunch. Tom used to be here pretty much every day too, but I haven't seen him hardly at all in the last little while. I guess they're getting along alright; I've never really gotten too personal with Jane. They don't really speak to each other very much whenever I've been with them, and Tom's usually the one to straighten out the kids. He has the best control out of the two of them with Gary. He can be a handful.

Tom's an easygoing guy. Nothing seems to ruffle him. Dan says he's like a sponge - just keeps soaking in pressure. He says there's lots of pressure to do his job

well. He's a young guy and I guess some of his Dad's cronies think he's not ready to take over the business. He wants to make changes and spend more money and they think he's just a young buck. It takes a while to earn respect, especially when it's Dad's company. Dan can appreciate what Tom's up against because he has the same happening to him. When Dan doesn't get his exercise every day, he gets moody and then the kids and I get the brunt of it. I don't really know what Tom's like when he's under stress but he looks quite a bit trimmer and his hair's disappearing fast!! Jane's pressure, from what I know, comes from herself. Badminton is her life and everything revolves around it, even Tom. She decides on what they do and when it's done and then tells Tom.

I think she really misses her friends on the circuit. Winning medals and performing on the travelling National Team is a charge that's not easily replaceable. I think she finds "real life" pretty boring. The hardest part I think for her is adjusting to what the rest of us do every day. You know, getting the kids up, buying groceries, making dinner and all that. On top of that, she's trying to fit in all the training and competing, and playing "Mrs. Society" hostess. Her mother-in-law sets the scene for that lifestyle but Jane is not cut out to follow it. The trouble is that for Jane it's unavoidable. She has to be on Tom's arm more and more. She had the excuse when she was away

playing, not to go these dos; now it's a little harder to escape. Tom doesn't say much, but when we've been out it takes a few drinks until he loosens up. Jane's very overpowering and Tom is inclined to sit back unless he's asked direct questions. When Jane's not around though, he's apparently really chatty. Dan likes him a lot. They're both really good athletes and I guess it gives them another level to talk on. Tom is lucky that he can adjust his schedule to fit Jane or the kids. He swims with Gary as often as he can and for certain the kids ask for him when he's not around. I guess he's used to Jane being so involved but I think things will change in the next couple of years. They can't keep up the pace they live at. The kids get bounced around from place to place but as they get older, they are far more demanding. Gary can't be in babysitting until he's a teenager! Neither of the boys seems favoured by Jane, but I would say Gary is closer to Tom. Maybe that's a reflection on their attachment right after he was born. Who knows? Jamie is a little calmer than Gary and at the moment doesn't really get into mischief. Tom seems such an easy going guy but you wonder how much is a show. I mean he's one of the high profile businessmen in this city for sure, so he can't be seen to be having a difficult time with Jane. Jane lets him do his own thing. I've never really discussed with her if she's interested in the company; probably not. She only mentions

to me what Tom does or doesn't do at home. She was saying that she expects Tom to do his share of housework when he comes home from work. I guess he got a little upset about that. The other thing I know that causes some aggravation is the amount of time Jane puts the kids into babysitting. It must be costing them a fortune. From his point of view I guess he's wondering what Jane's doing all day long if the kids spend the day looked after by someone else. She wants to get someone in to clean the house too, but Tom's not too keen. Everybody has their own methods I guess, but you have to wonder about those kids don't you?

#### Rose

The club's had some trouble with Mrs. Russell. The biggest thing we've had to deal with so far is the nursing incident. It's so embarrassing. Lots of members dropped into the office and mentioned it, but we were reluctant to do anything. You hope she (Jane) gets wind that something is going on, or that one of the people she sits with says something. But none of them did. So finally when one of our oldest longstanding members came in to give us a formal complaint, we had to act. He was really upset. You can see his point, can't you? I mean, there they are, eating lunch and right there at the next table Mrs. Russell is breast feeding. It's enough to put anyone off their lunch. I don't think the manager wanted to do anything about it

really, but when Mr. Carpenter (the longstanding member) came in, he had to. Mrs. Russell is a bit strange I think. I've known Tom and his family for years, since Tom was a baby. God, I've been working here too long! Anyway, he's always been a nice boy. Very well mannered and polite. He was married quite young to a local girl, very similar to Patti. They didn't get along too well. Perhaps she was too much like his sister. He's always been a good athlete. He loved Badminton. Just like his father. They used to be down here all the time when Tom was growing up. Tom takes after his Dad. The same schools, they both play Badminton, and now Tom's following his Dad into the business. The Russell family are all in the building business. One of Mr. Russell's (Sr.) brothers has a building business in Toronto, another has a business in Victoria and then ours here. Tom worked for his uncle for a few years and then started out on his own. It was just a matter of time before he bought his Dad's business. He met Jane when he was working for one of his uncles I think. She belonged to the same club. I think his other marriage was over completely by then, although I don't remember if he was divorced at that time. Tom's Dad was really enthusiastic about Jane. She was a fabulous Badminton player. She was on our National Team and was one of the best in the world. Tom seemed to enjoy mixing with that scene. When he was single and not working for himself I think it was easier for him to play and have fun with

Jane. When he started on his own after they got married, it was harder for him to do everything. And since they've moved back home, Tom has aged so much. I think things at home are tense. Jane doesn't really seem to care what he does or where he goes. She's too involved with Badminton. Tom just doesn't have all the time he used to, but Jane still expects him to go here or there for her, and to do his share of household things. Having all that time in the day, you'd think she could manage to do some housework or something. But she's down here all hours under the sun and the kids are left with the babysitter. She must be making a fortune off them. That must be cause for argument between them. I know from what Mrs. Russell (Sr.) was saying that they fight over the house and the money. They have a boarder upstairs in their house now and that doesn't help them too much. I can't see them staying there for too long. The place is enormous. I feel sorry for Tom because he is such a nice boy. I'd like to see him do well at his business but he seems to have a lot of weight on his shoulders at home. He's not the type to complain about his troubles, but I never see him laughing and joking anymore. He's very preoccupied and he's down here less and less, especially with Jane. I see him now and again with Gary. It's a wonder they have kids at all. Nobody but the babysitters get to see them. Jane never spends any time with them, at least not that I've seen. Maybe she's

different at home. They always look underfed. Have you seen what they eat in the coffee shop? How can you expect a kid like Gary to be fed properly on half a muffin? It can't be that they don't have the money. Tom's business picks up the tab. I think she's just cheap. She asks for half a cup of coffee, wants to pay half the price, and then expects refills - full cup refills - for nothing. Or asking for a half bowl of soup for the kid and then complaining if she's asked to pay anything for it. The gossip around here embarrasses Mrs. Russell (Sr.). She rarely socializes here anymore with her friends. Last year, she was a regular Badminton and Tennis player. This year, the only times I've seen her at the club have been when there's a tournament. Those are the times that she's been at the centre of attention. Mrs. Russell puts a lot of cash into those tournaments and he is here with his wife to shake hands and do all that stuff. Otherwise, Mrs. Russell prefers to other things. The association with Jane happens only through the boys now. She helps out a lot when Jane goes out of town and leaves Tom with the kids. Just lately though, Jane has taken both the kids with her. Jane and Mrs. Russell are so different. Mrs. Russell has this unassuming manner; stays in the background almost. Jane seems to barge in everywhere. She can be very aggressive and downright rude. It bothers Mrs. Russell and you can't blame her. Maybe she (Jane) feels a little over-confident because now Tom is the

boss. Even though he still really isn't, Jane acts like he is. That's odd too, because she's just not the type to sit at functions and be Tom's wife. She has to be in control and you just can't have that when Tom's the man in charge. It just makes him look silly when his wife walks all over him. If you ask me, I don't think they're happy at all.



## Chapter 7

### Reflections

The preceding descriptive chapters have constituted the essence of the study. In the comments that follow I have shown less of the restraint characteristic of my ethnographer role. My purpose is to indicate some pertinent personal thoughts and also to expose various avenues open for further study and analysis.

It is obvious that this method of research has generated a multitude of unanswered questions. Each reader will draw something different and insightful from being inside Jane's world, and hence, begin to speculate about situational coincidences or causes.

Jane Bird's arrival in Quebec had sparked a vitality that had been non-existent for almost 20 years. The expectation was there for her to teach every budding young athlete the way to the top. Her world ranking and medal winning ability afforded her immediate glory and recognition in Provincial Badminton. As is often the case, talent on the court is not always complementary to coaching ability off court. I believe Jane had every intention of doing a good job in coaching the Provincial Team, but I feel she underestimated the immensity of the task.

First and foremost, the main quality a coach requires is good communication. Jane's ability was in playing, and not explaining how to play. As the study developed, it was

apparent that her heart was not in coaching. A number of occasions arose depicting an insensitivity to her athletes over injury or effort. Jane demanded 110% effort from the athletes and accepted nothing less. I found it very difficult to understand how she assessed their efforts and towards the end of the study she began to face questions regarding the same from two of the older athletes. It was obvious from the arguments that the athletes were considered uninformed or lacking the knowledge to understand or challenge Jane's judgements.

Once Jane had been involved in coaching the program for about six months and the spotlight had dimmed, it appeared Jane needed to find a new challenge. Her desire to be noticed and the best in her field persuaded her to further her coaching credentials. Her husband at this point seemed to me to be reluctant to cross Jane's path.

As Kenyon and McPherson stated in 1981, various reinforcements provided by significant others profoundly affect the female athlete in her continued involvement with sport. In Jane's case, her husband was extremely supportive especially at the onset of her coaching career. Further research on the affects of significant others in this regard is needed, if we are to isolate personal psychological traits in the female athlete.

By agreeing with her plans Tom faced the least anguish. Initially, I believe, he absorbed and basked in the aura

that surrounded Jane. However, the other demands of his own career, which was the major income source, began to require more time. Consequently, his priorities swung more toward his growing company. In addition, Jane was expected to start fulfilling some of the "hostess" roles with him. This became a constant source of irritation between them. Jane always believed that her Badminton responsibilities were as important as Tom's job. I admired Jane's dedication and complete commitment to her job but had reservations towards her choice of priorities. Without question, her total focus on Badminton was the number one priority in her life. Everything, including her husband and children, bore the brunt of neglect. Jane never did, and I doubt ever will, admit that her sport took precedence but the descriptive chapters tell their own story.

As mentioned earlier, Sage and Eitzen suggested that the female reaches different points in her life where the need to fit in socially is at a higher priority level than at other times. Each one of us prioritizes our daily lives into some form of routine within which we can function. What governs our choices differs from individual to individual. Examples range from finances to job transfers and incorporate decisions regarding lifestyles, children or career choices. In Jane's world, situations changed around her, but her priorities seemed fixed with Badminton remaining the number one. Jane's determination and single-

mindedness towards Badminton was not receiving the same reinforcement as it had done, however, she continued her routines with the same intensity regardless of Tom's feelings. One can only speculate whether this kind of psychological make-up is indeed a pre-requisite for international calibre athletes, or whether in fact, women need to possess a "tougher" state of mind in the sports circle. Future ethnographic research will help generate further data in the areas of psychological traits in female athletes.

Without the tremendous support network of her own family, Tom and his family, and the athletes she coached, Jane would have been hard pressed to maintain the manipulation of roles. Because of their help, Jane was allowed more freedom to play and train, and was exempt from her social role as Tom's wife. The aura around Jane provided a personal platform upon which she could stand and give direction. From this position, she could manipulate her "followers." As a female athlete, she had to consider the non-athletic roles also. She recalled never making a conscious choice to get married or to have the first two boys. Underlying her achievements in the World Ranking was the kind of feeling that if she had stayed with the team and trained, she could have been even better. But she had Gary, and then Tom had to move for his company. It was almost as though success was snatched from her.

### Summary and Implications for Future Research

As stated earlier, questions and speculations have emerged concerning many aspects of Jane Bird's world, and I feel it is appropriate to summarize a number of the major findings, and to suggest some areas for further study.

1. Maybe Jane used these situations in a type of displacement way. It occurred to me that what if she really knew that playing at a higher level was not within her capabilities? Excuses such as the situations she had, seemed like a reasonable set of circumstances to lay the blame on. Consequently, the fact that she never was Number 1 in the world, or more importantly, the fact she had tried to become Number 1 and hadn't made it never became an issue she had to face. Therefore, she could retire gracefully and acceptably without actually disclosing her real reasons.

More studies of this nature could supplement the speculations that Horner suggested in her 1968 research on achievement and success avoidance.

Perhaps Jane's superior dedication to be the best is a characteristic necessary and common to all world class athletes. She was accustomed to recognition and enjoyed it. From a young age she had experienced challenge after challenge, both on court by playing older people and off court having to make new friends when her family moved. The self reliance and perhaps selfishness she learned from the disruption of lifestyle due to moving allowed her to develop

a fierce intrinsic desire to be the best. She learned to discipline herself in training and she was rewarded constantly by success. I feel she was extremely fortunate that her parents provided all the support, both emotionally and financially, that she needed, and that their concerns were not overly directed into schooling.

2. This area of data collecting was not overly fruitful in this research. Nevertheless, it is interesting to speculate whether or not academic success or lack of success has any bearing on athletic participation. In this study, it was apparent that the emphasis for Jane was Badminton during her teens and into her twenties. Her schooling was erratic due to her father's job transfers, and although she did graduate from high school, there was never any mention of her academic excellence or conflicts over school and sport. In fact, she did not resume her university studies until her Badminton activities on the Tour circuit had dwindled. The implication from this data is that Jane chose to pursue Badminton at the expense of academics, at least until she had less commitments in the sport. Future research will help determine if in fact this avenue is one pursued by many international athletes.

By no means was Jane restrained from travel or opportunity by finances. Parental support and then stability in marriage afforded her tremendous freedom. What did seem peculiar to me was why, with the financial security

that she had, she was exceptionally frugal with buying anything. Beyond the point of being careful or making a deal, Jane picked over every last dime. Perhaps she inherited her father's Scottish fastidiousness with money. The only really tangible asset that Jane displayed was the huge mansion she and Tom shared. It performed the function of a home but was really just a showpiece.

Interestingly enough, about six months after the study ended, Jane and Tom had a tremendous disagreement over the house. Jane left to go back to her parents with the boys and the latest addition to the Russell clan, Amelia. Tom put the house up for sale. Six weeks later, in a smaller home in Royal Park, they were back together.

3. Another issue for further research is the relationship between financial security or wealth, and sports participants. Jane herself was fortunate, and as a coach, only two of her athletes had to work to help support themselves. These two were the same athletes that ran into conflicts with Jane over training commitments. Individual sports, such as Tennis, Squash or Golf perpetually attract athletes from the wealthier classes. The need for private lessons, equipment or facilities to ensure optimal achievement for these few athletes, also serves to isolate the general populous.

4. Perhaps related to the issue of finances or perhaps another independent area for future research is the

observation of eating habits. It has been known that even international calibre athletes have weight gain and loss problems, sometimes to extremes. In Jane's case, she was fairly routine in that she ate at basically the same times. However, the amounts she ate and what she ate seemed insufficient to her training demands. My impression was that eating was not a priority, rather just an interruption.

5. The data has revealed subtle insights into the relationship between Tom and Jane Bird, and the resulting conflicts they dealt with on an ongoing basis. This study highlighted their conflict of perceived role "duties or responsibilities" and what the other "expected" from them in that role. The dissension between the couple had been brewing for a while. Again, Tom had become stressed out with the demands of his work and felt he was having to be fully supportive of Jane and Badminton too. It got to the point where an ultimatum was reached. Tom felt Jane should be spending far more time at home with him and the kids, and that she should become more sociable in terms of his business commitments.

The passive emotional role that Kaplan (1979) suggests is conducive to femininity was non-existent to the observer. Jane was not prepared at this time to give up Badminton or give in to Tom's demands. She was by far the more assertive of the couple, and her ability to set her mind to a task and not waiver for anything was superior. Personally, I felt



Tom was more responsive to other needs and situations as they became important, such as disciplining the kids at meals. Perhaps he was more self-confident and didn't need to constantly be in a state of overt power. More insights will be gained when future avenues of research take a closer look at psychological make-up in female athletes.

The tension continued with them, until Jane almost overnight stopped attending the Club regularly. She rarely played Badminton and she played Squash here and there. The kids were no longer left in babysitting and Jane never showed up at the Club with Tom. I find it difficult to believe that the situation for them changed overnight but in everything Jane has done, it has seemed important to her that she be noticed - if not by presence, then perhaps by her absence.

By the conclusion of this study, Jane had been advised that she would no longer be Provincial Coach. The reasoning was that she was just not putting in the time anymore. She had too many other commitments.

The avenues for extended research are limitless, bounded only by the researcher's focus, and method of study. Although these types of studies are not in themselves generalizing, they could become such, as Giddens (1984) suggested, by being "carried out in some numbers, so that judgements of their typicality can justifiably be made."

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