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"My sister Gaye Nicholls (left), my Dad Ernie Nicholls and Me on Clydesdale Farm Worker 'Bell' at the farm in Brunswick, Wanganui." (1956)

"I was born north of Wanganui, in Brunswick, on a dairy farm and went to my local country school, (*Brunswick School*) which only had 30 pupils then.

On the farm, as youngsters, we had chores to do – a fair amount of responsibility. We learned to be astute and logical about how we did the tasks.

The farm background had a significant effect on my enjoyment of outdoors and activity. Quite often country children appear to be stronger, harder and fitter because they play outside more perhaps and I'm sure it was of benefit to me. Later I attended Wanganui Girls' College.

### THOUGHTS OF COACHING

Whilst you could enjoy playing sport I always felt that it was necessary to give something back in the form of administration work or coaching. I certainly didn't debate my career very hard, I was always going to go teaching and undertake physical education. I was very much into the concept of dealing with whole body health and helping other people to properly achieve their personal and sporting goals.

### EARLY ROLE MODELS

My biggest influence was my dad, both my parents really, and probably the odd teacher at school. Late in my first year at High School I was persuaded to fill in for a hockey team one day because they were short of players. After the game I went home to Mum and said, "Oh look, that was just so much fun, you can run anywhere, it's great fun, Mum! – I'm going to play that now!" Although I was left-handed and it was initially awkward – that's how I got involved with hockey.



▲ Peter Snell visits Wanganui Girls' College. Pat Barwick second left. 1963  
1st XI Hockey Team, Wanganui Girls' College. Pat Barwick, Captain, front row, centre. 1964

### EARLY YEARS OF HOCKEY

#### Balance of Body, Will and Mind

My mother very wisely taught me that I was in a team already and I wasn't to let the side down, so I had to keep playing netball until the end of my third form year. So I was only allowed to start hockey in the beginning of the fourth form.

I had the physical balance and coordination to be able to transfer to another game and within a couple of years was playing representative hockey for Wanganui at a senior level, by the 6th Form.

My dad, a rugby and tennis player, was very supportive and of course very enthusiastic about my getting involved with sport, especially a team sport.

I was very interested in human biology and science. I was determined to do physical education school in Otago. I did not do a Teachers College year because women were encouraged to go out quickly and get into the work force – it was expected that we'd give up our career once we got married – I went straight out teaching after university. I seemed to be well ahead in confidence, in teaching experience and organisational skills by the time I came out of the end of my first year teaching, and many of my friends were just coming out of college, so I certainly didn't regret that.

### BEING A TEAM MEMBER

#### Tolerance, Respect for Others, Friendship and Unity

As a team member you need to put aside that individual-only desire for that of being prepared to really work together as a group. It's a real teacher of tolerance. There is a huge amount of camaraderie and a loyalty to each other.

### REFLECTIONS ON BEING A SUCCESSFUL COACH

A big group of people have to be able to work through the issues that all the individuals bring to the group. Then they need to be able to focus and achieve a goal and because you're all maybe wearing the Silver Fern or the school colours, it's about all doing the activity or the competition with a single purpose – that's a huge thing to achieve. To bring all these things together is probably the biggest task for team coaches.

### INSPIRATIONAL ROLE MODEL

The coach who had the greatest influence on my life and my sport was in Hawkes Bay and he was definitely way ahead of his time – Tom Turbitt. He was one of a few men amongst the women hockey players in New Zealand. He brought to the game such concepts as levels of fitness not seen before in women's hockey, for example, the importance of nutrition, and he also promoted skill development to the highest level. He was very innovative – creative in his approach. He developed an era of very successful Hawkes Bay teams and a number of New Zealand players.

### PLAYING HOCKEY FOR NEW ZEALAND

I played hockey during University days for Otago and then went to Napier as a teacher where I played for Hawkes Bay. I was really identified initially in Otago and I did have a New Zealand trial in my 2nd year at university. I was 24 years old when I was selected to play for New Zealand and I was in fact named Captain immediately in my first selection. The Captaincy was probably a bit of a startle and I was surprised, but it didn't seem to phase me much and I have to say I enjoyed the limelight and leadership aspects.

### COACHING

#### Being a Positive Role Model for Others

As a teacher I was always coaching school teams. I wasn't really interested in coaching at other than club level until I'd finished my hockey-playing career.

But I certainly enjoyed the mana or the profile of being out there in front as a player, and I guess I'm a Leo, so I am a bit of a leader. I think the leadership aspect in me was always there, but of course, as a coach it is really the players that are important so you lead but you sit back a bit more.

I was inspired in my coaching by the women role models that I encountered in my playing days. There were good women up front doing the chores, being the chairpersons, the leaders, all around the world. There were nearly all women coaches then, coaching the top teams, women managers at the highest levels, they were all there.



New Zealand Women's Hockey Team 1973. On tour at Carlisle (England) before the Women's Top 8 Jubilee Tournament in Holland. The tournament was played alongside the Men's World Cup. Pat Barwick second from right. 1973

### MANAGING INEQUALITY

In 1973 while I was teaching, I recognised for the first time the big differences between men's and women's opportunity. I discovered that a male teacher who was going off to the Men's Hockey World Cup in Holland was given leave on full pay to go on his tour, and I was given leave without pay.

I was very angry with this situation and I fought to have this changed. It was the first time that I had looked at the position of women in New Zealand sport compared to men. The result was that soon after there was a policy change, both male and female sports teachers would receive leave on half pay.

### GAMES OF THE XXII OLYMPIAD MOSCOW 1980

#### Dealing with Disappointment

In 1980 the New Zealand Hockey Federation (NZHF) did not send any team to these Olympic Games due to an international boycott.

We were only 3 weeks out from leaving for our tour prior to the Olympic Games in Moscow when the decision to not attend was made.

Obviously we were all devastated and for the older ones, like myself, who had stayed in rather than retire and committed another whole year of our lives to training, we were obviously devastated.

I've always believed that sport can build bridges rather than separate them, and I believe it is in these situations where we should clearly fight a lot to keep politics out of sport as much as possible.

### REFLECTIONS ON COACHING THE NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

In 1987 I was appointed to be the coach of the New Zealand Women's Hockey Team. Although we missed out on an opportunity to compete at the Games of the XXIV Olympiad, Seoul 1988, we set our sights on getting to the Games of the XXV Olympiad, Barcelona 1992. That was the goal that NZHF also set us, with a view to push on for medals in 1996.

### THE OLYMPIC GAMES EXPERIENCE BARCELONA 1992

The Olympic Games is an amazing experience, but for us the whole build-up to the Games was probably not good enough and it was probably just too late for us to be really effective. At the time you think you're handling it as well as you can, but achieving a focus amongst all the excitement and the heat was, I suppose, just one of the issues we faced.

Some months prior to the Games I attended my first Olympic Coaches meeting in Wellington. I walked into the room and was startled to find that I was the only woman Head Coach in the New Zealand Team. Thank goodness my assistant coach was a woman too!



"The Qualifying Moment. New Zealand 4 v South Korea 2 (1991). This meant that we had qualified for the Games of the XXV Olympiad, Barcelona, 1992. The 'Bench' leaving the dugout to join the team for a celebration lap."

### REFLECTIONS ON COACHING AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

I recognised that there were not many women coaches or managers, that women's hockey was an isolated group, in many respects. It was very hard and very different from being at a Hockey Tournament where it is only hockey, but we tried to use that as a positive aspect in terms of the team, that here we were representing women very strongly and that they should be very proud of the fact that as a women's sport we had achieved being where we were, and that we could recognise it as being leaders.

The big picture was that we were there at the Olympics, that we had made it! We were experiencing something that is fantastic and is only experienced by still a very few people. It was a wonderful opportunity and an outstanding experience that you never forget. Although we came home disappointed with our performance, we have still been a part of that wonderful sporting event and amongst those wonderful role models that there are from all across the world in every sport, both for men and women, but certainly for women. It was exciting to see some of the outstanding talent and people that were involved.

### OLYMPIC GAMES PARTICIPATION

Games of the XXV Olympiad, Barcelona 1992  
Coach, New Zealand Olympic Women's Hockey Team  
The team was placed 8th out of a field of eight nations that were competing.

### MESSAGE TO YOUTH

My message is that you need to have a goal, to do something very well, especially in sport, whether it's as a player or a participant, whether it's as an athlete, or as an official because today there are also pathways to the top (*Olympics*) for umpires and managers. You need to know how to access the people that can support you, and that information will come from the mentors that are out there, the other role models, those that have been there before. Don't be afraid to ask them, don't be afraid to use that knowledge out there, don't try and do it all on your own – but definitely do it."

