



## Welcome to Siobhan Butler – our new Competitions & Performance Coordinator

Our Honorary Secretary, Jason Baker, interviewed Siobhan Butler in her new role as Kent Tennis Competitions and Performance Coordinator.



### **How long have you worked in tennis?**

I have worked in Tennis since 2009 when I was a coaching assistant for Mary Evans. Mary put me in touch with Sandi Procter, who, at the time was Kent Tennis Development Manager and I was offered work experience as an Administrator. A few months later, I became a Tennis Services Assistant in Kent working for the LTA. After an enjoyable 8 years, I left the LTA to look after my children. I missed working within tennis and fortunately a few months later I was asked by Kent Tennis to cover Harri Izzard who was going on maternity leave. Over time, this developed into a contractor role which I undertook for over 3 years, purely coordinating and running competitions. I have now started in a permanent role as Kent Competitions and Performance Coordinator, looking after Competitions and Performance within the County.

### **What do you most enjoy about working in tennis?**

What I enjoy most about working in tennis is, speaking to and meeting lots of different people. I also love organising and running competitions, often seeing players and parents year on year and it is wonderful to see players progressing and having fun playing tennis. I love my role in helping to make tennis accessible to children through running our hugely successful Kent Primary and Secondary Schools competitions. Outside of working for Kent Tennis, I recently helped introduce tennis into my daughter's school and since then several children have started having tennis lessons.

### **What are the key elements of your role?**

The key elements of my role are to coordinate, deliver and develop Kent Leagues and Competitions. I will take on the planning and administering of the County Championships in conjunction with the managing partners and lead referee. I will also be providing support to the Kent Officials Network in conjunction with lead volunteers.

I also support the Kent Tennis Performance Manager in the administration of Junior County Cup teams. In my role, I administer the County Training programme and manage the supply of county players' kit to captains and players from 8U through to Seniors.

### **What are the three things you would like to achieve in the role in the next 12 months?**

I would like to work on increasing the number of officials we have within our Officials Network, setting up online entry for our Senior Schools Annual Doubles Championships and to organise and deliver a successful County Championships in 2023!

### **Do you have any other roles within tennis?**

Yes, I have been a qualified referee for over 10 years, refereeing a variety of competitions ranging from Grade 4 and 5 events to School and Team Competitions. Over the years I have been very fortunate to referee competitions where several of Kent Tennis' current National and International Players, along with future up and coming players, have played. I feel it is a privilege that I get to be a part of players (and parents!) tennis journeys.

### **Who are your favourite tennis players?**

Currently, my favourite male player is Cameron Norrie and my favourite female player is Ons Jabeur.

### **What is the greatest tennis match you have watched?**

The greatest tennis match I watched on the TV was when I was on a family holiday, it was the first match I'd stayed awake most of the night to watch! My favourite player at the time Greg Rusedski was playing the amazing Pete Sampras in the round of 32 at the US Open in 2002. A thrilling 5 set match had me gripped, although I was trying to be as quiet as possible whilst my family were fast asleep!

The greatest live match I have seen was the 2000 Ladies Wimbledon Final, where my all-time favourite player Lindsay Davenport unfortunately lost to Venus Williams; the level of tennis from both players was outstanding. Also, to be in the crowd of a Wimbledon final was very special and a moment I won't ever forget.

### **How often do you play tennis?**

I started playing tennis when I was 4 years old at the Bailey Tennis Centre (part of the site now occupied by David Lloyd Dartford). Over the years I represented my secondary school in the LTA schools' competitions and went on to captain the ladies' team at Canterbury Christ Church University. Now, I play socially twice a week and play competitively in the Kent League, North Kent League and National League.

**What is your greatest achievement in playing tennis?**

I started playing tennis again in September 2021 after I hadn't played for 9 years due to having children. In this past year I have won 3 championships titles at my club and my greatest achievement is winning the Ladies Singles title this year.

**What do you like doing when not working or playing tennis?**

I enjoy spending time with my children, going on day trips and taking them swimming. Also, I enjoy running, baking and going to live sporting/music events when I can.

**What is your favourite band or solo artist?**

I enjoy a lot of different music across the genres; however, my favourite band is Take That!

**What is your favourite film?**

My favourite film is Love Actually, it is Christmas tradition to watch it!

**Siobhan, thank you for this interview and we look forward to working alongside you in this exciting role.**

