

## Michelle Bowyer – Box and Field Lacrosse Hall of Fame Player



A native of Port Coquitlam Michelle Bowyer excelled in both box and field lacrosse. A multi-sport athlete, Michelle Bowyer played baseball, basketball, field hockey and ice hockey in addition to playing lacrosse. Her induction into the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame is noteworthy as Michelle is only the third female to be inducted as a player.

When asked her reaction upon hearing she was being inducted into the CLHOF, Michelle responded, *“It’s hard to describe my initial reaction. Given only two other women have been inducted into the Hall, my initial thoughts ran the gamut from surprise to elation to, “why me?” I have had the privilege of competing with and against so many tremendous women athletes in both box and field lacrosse over the years and so many of them are equally deserving of this honour. After an initial flurry of emotions, my thoughts ran to all the years of training and competing, the wonderful experiences I have had traveling with the Kirby Klippettes, the BC Selects and Team Canada; the lifelong friendships I have made along the way, and just how much joy I have derived from playing lacrosse. To receive this honour is really the icing on the cake and I look forward to seeing many more women inductees follow me into the HOF.”*

At the age of fifteen, Michelle began playing box lacrosse on the first female box lacrosse team in Port Coquitlam in 1972. For the years 1976 to 1981, Michelle was a member of the Burnaby Kirby’s Klippettes, playing for a hugely successful team that won league, provincial and Canadian

championships. (Note: Dave Evans coached this team – himself inducted into the CLHOF in 1995).

*In recalling personal career highlights, Michelle commented, “I have so many incredible memories going back to the first time I picked up a box lacrosse stick as a young teen. I was captivated by the sport right from the start and used to spend hours practicing in an outdoor box just down the road from my house in Port Coquitlam. I loved the intensity and physicality of the box game and recall feeling like a warrior going into battle every time I suited up to play.”*

Michelle shared specific memories of the Klippettes - *“My most memorable moments in box lacrosse were when I played in Burnaby for the Kirby Klippettes. We were coached by Dave Evans who inspired all of us to train as hard as we played. He used to end practices by having us run up and down a steep trail into a ravine behind the lacrosse box. If we dogged it, we just ran more laps! When we all transitioned into field lacrosse, Coach Evans realized we needed to play top level competition to get better - so, began the infamous road trips to California, Colorado, and the East coast of the USA to play in tournaments like the Western States, the Coors Light Invitational, and the prestigious William and Mary Tournament. Those road trips were some of the craziest, most taxing, yet exciting and wonderful experiences we had as a team.*



In 1980, Michelle began playing field lacrosse. Over the duration of her prolific career, between 1983 and 1992, Michelle Bowyer captained the BC Selects women's field lacrosse championship teams. Note: this team was inducted into the CLHOF in 2014.

Considered as possibly the absolute best female field lacrosse midfielder to ever wear the Canadian uniform, Michelle Bowyer has represented our country at the World Championships three times including winning the bronze medal in 1982. Team Canada placed fourth in 1986 and 1989. Bowyer recalled representing Canada, commenting *"Playing for Canada in three World Championships was an unforgettable experience and an incredible honour. Our first world tournament in England in 1982 stands out the most in my mind as we were complete 'unknowns' on the international stage. We surprised everyone, including ourselves, when we placed third in the World! The whole experience of endless hours of training, exhibition games and tournaments to get ready, struggling to raise money to get there, training in downtown London the week before the Worlds and then finally getting to Nottingham and being scared to death as we really had no idea what to expect. The entire experience was something I'll never forget."*

When contemplating those who impacted the development of her career, Michelle Bowyer graciously stated, *"I was very fortunate to have played with so many incredible teammates throughout my career. We all pushed each other to be the best we could be and supported each other both on and off the field. I give a lot of credit for my success to them for making me a better athlete but also for being such great friends and teammates on that journey. I was also very lucky to have had several great coaches along the way who inspired and challenged me to continue to improve as an athlete and player. Dave Evans taught me so much about both box and field lacrosse and how to train to be an elite level athlete. My '82 World Cup coach, Courtney Solenberger, was an inspiration to all of us. She taught me and my teammates to believe in ourselves and our abilities and truly pushed me to the next level as an athlete. Lastly, the late Libby Williams who coached Team Canada in the '86 World Cup in Philadelphia. She was hardnosed and tough, but she was very detail oriented, and I played some of my best lacrosse under her."*

Unfortunately, in 1990, a fractured vertebrae (playing ball hockey) ended Michelle's career as a lacrosse player. However, she started coaching at both the provincial and national levels.

In 2009, the International Federation of Women's Lacrosse acknowledged Michelle Bowyer for her outstanding participation and achievement in World Cup competition for her contribution as a player, head coach, assistant coach for numerous Canadian Women's Field Lacrosse teams.

In 2020, World Lacrosse announced the creation of the Women's Indoor Box Lacrosse Group. This group will develop policy to enhance women's indoor/box lacrosse around the world. Michelle Bowyer serves as the Chair of this group. (World Lacrosse is the international federation for men's and women's lacrosse, responsible for providing effective leadership and governance of the sport internationally while supporting the continued growth of lacrosse worldwide)

In assessing the remarkable career of the prolific Michelle Bowyer, undoubtedly, her career and induction into the CLHOF will serve to inspire current and future generations of female lacrosse players. Michelle is a shining example of what can be achieved both as an individual and a member of a team. Michelle Bowyer is inducted into the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame in the player category as a member of the class of 2020.