



IWD: Juliet Bertie's story

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Our final female story for International Women's Day comes from Juliet Bertie, who is part of the Members' Advisory Group for Table Tennis England. Juliet's story highlights the numerous challenges she has faced not only as a female, but as a black female. She wants to raise the challenges of gender inequality so that she can help change things for future generations.

What is your involvement in table tennis?

"I am part of the Members' Advisory Group (MAG) for Table Tennis England. I am also a committee member for Birmingham and Solihull District Table Tennis Association. The thing I like most about my involvement in table tennis is being the Secretary for Continental Stars Table Tennis Club and running the club with my husband. I also play in the local league."

What do you enjoy most about table tennis?

"I enjoy playing a sport that keeps me fit and healthy."

Have you faced any challenges as a female in your involvement with table tennis?

"The challenges I have faced as a female in table tennis, I feel, is being taken seriously, especially when I first started playing. I would hear patronising comments as the presumption was, I just didn't know the rules. As a parent having to consider and make choices between table tennis and things I had to do as a mum was so difficult, as I was sometimes filled with guilt. I feel for me it is so important to mention not only are their challenges as a female but as a black female this carries double weight. Imagine the feeling of being the only female but on top of that the only black female player in a whole division."

Have you faced any challenges as a female outside of table tennis?

"I have faced so many challenges as a female it would be too many to list, but what I would say is that gender bias is apparent in every walk of life. An example is being invisible in a male dominated world, the number of

times I have been the lead for something and been with a male and been bypassed and the conversation directed to them as the presumption has been, they are the lead. The challenges are real and again I have to say being a black female it is challenge on top of challenge.

I love the goal that they have set for International Women's Day – this is right up my street. At the moment for me this is something that is so important and I can honestly say will be forever. Gender bias and equality go hand in hand and I will continue to fight to see a difference. I want for my children, my grandchildren and their children's children for things to be fair."

What's your biggest accomplishment in table tennis?

"My biggest accomplishment for me is captaining a table tennis team that has three black females aged 50+ that for me is changing the status quo!"

What's your biggest accomplishment outside of table tennis?

"My biggest accomplishment outside of table tennis is my children, seeing them grow and blossom into adults makes me feel so proud."

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