

## **1** EDITED TRANSCRIPT

Profile of the 3 interviewees:

### **VICTORIA (Vickey) DIXON**

Olympics: 1988 and 1992

Winner of the Marjorie Pollard Salver 1989 and 1990

Hockey Writers Club Player of the Year 1989

### **SANDRA (Sandie) LISTER**

Olympics: 1992

England Capxain 1987-1995

Hockey Writers Club Player of the Year 1993

### **JOANNE SARAH THOMPSON**

Olympics: 1992 and 1996

Hockey Writers Club Player of the Year 1991

### ***A How did you all get into hockey?***

**VICKY** I was dragged there by my mother. And four of us – I was the eldest – and she used to play for this club every Saturday in this orange and blue kit. And we used to have to go with my dad – he couldn't look after us all on his own. So he'd take us all with him and we'd stand on the sideline and watch her play. I think that was what it was. We were just brought up with it really.

**SARAH** I started at school but then got taken by my PE teacher to play for a local club, a very minor club. We only used to have 7 or 8 people. We couldn't raise a full team, so I could play all over the pitch, which I loved (laughs). So I could run everywhere .... It was great and it helped the hockey development so that was how I got into it.

**JOANNE** Yes, and I played at school, much the same. Had a PE teacher who used to play for Slough – Angela Mitchell – and her husband ran the men's team so she used to pick any sort of decent players and play for the Slough team

### ***B How did the selection process work to get into the GB team?***

**JOANNE** Our selection process was that we played for club level and at the time we were playing for Ipswich – and then you would be selected from club tournaments to play county at the time. So you'd play for Suffolk or other counties. And from there you'd play for regional teams – so the East of England. Then you'd play for England potentially and then England would play off against Scotland, Wales and Ireland and select a team from there

**JOANNE** And it was quite political because in all the other major competitions in the world cups and the European Championships, we competed as England. And it was only in the year of the Olympics and it only happened in that last year didn't it – it used to do. It's a bit better now, a bit better now, a bit more continuity rolling the programme through. But up until that point the teams were very separate. So GB always had a problem trying to get a track record in order to compete at the Games.

**VICKY** England would always have qualified wouldn't they?

**SANDRA** Yes

**VICKY** Always have qualified in their own right but of course they weren't allowed to play as England they had to be Great Britain so we lost out – well definitely in 1984.

**VICKY** In 1984 we had only played about 3 matches – Great Britain – I think and our qualification record wasn't ... we hadn't played enough games to qualify.

***C Womens hockey was introduced as an Olympic sport in 1980. But, as in 1984, GB had not played enough matches to qualify for these games. The first Olympics that the GB womens hockey team took part part were in Seoul 1988.***

**VICKY** .... the first time we did qualify was in 1988 when we had to play Russia three times in a play off for one last place in the Olympics and we played Russia in Barcelona. And that was the worst ever – it was so nerve-wracking. The first game we had against the Russians I think after one minute nobody moved off the spot they were standing and they scored a goal – we were down a goal in the first minute but we ended up winning that game, drawing the next one and winning the last one- so we qualified in the end. That was the most nerve-wracking game I have ever played in – well nerve-wracking three I have ever played in.

**VICKY** We were eighth seed – there were only 8 teams in it. We ended up, we got to the semi-final. Lost 1-0 to the Koreans so we did a lot better than we thought we would. We ended up losing to the Dutch for third place so we ended up with nothing but we did better than we ever thought we would. And the men ended up with the gold medal

**SANDRA** I think that match raised the whole profile of hockey. Suddenly people knew hockey players – they knew Sean Curly, Ian Taylor in goal, Steve Batchelor, Ram Surtani. They had someone to look up to – someone to emulate that were heroes. So it really raised the profile of the game in this country.

#### ***D 1992 – BARCELONA***

**VICKY** I remember the very first game. Remember the Dutch game we played because we'd beaten the Dutch just before the tournament so ... historically the Dutch are like the best women's hockey team and we had just started to beat them quite regularly. And we weren't over confident because we'd never be like that but we had them in the first game and they beat us 2-1. And I remember in the coach – remember them going off and laughing at us. And when they went off in their coach they weren't very pleasant were they?

**JOANNE** Quite arrogant.

**VICKY** Yeah. So they were laughing and waving and we were feeling absolute rubbish but we got our revenge. They never qualified did they?

**SANDRA** Remember at the New Zealand match? They were lined up at the side of the pitch because if New Zealand had beaten us they would have got through. So we had the last laugh. So as they were walking past, we were waving them goodbye. We didn't laugh, we just waved at them. We'd qualified for the semis and they hadn't .

**JOANNE** I think it was strange though because it was very, very exciting the whole time and, as a hockey player, you're not used to anyone watching you and suddenly you've got crowds of people watching you and you've got Radio 5 asking you for interviews when nobody normally what the score is. And we had a psychiatrist ... a psychologist who told us just to be calm and not to treat it like Disneyland and just don't get over-excited. Don't go chasing autographs. You've got to treat it like any other hockey tournament. It's not the Olympics; it's a hockey tournament.

**VICKY** You're as important as Linford Christie.

**JOANNE** Exactly. So half of you was telling you to be sensible about it all but then the other half of you was so excited.

**SANDRA** We had a routine. Every afternoon when we weren't training we used to have to go back to our room and sleep (laugh). So even if you couldn't sleep, the shutters had to come down in the room so there was no sunlight there and we all had relaxation tapes and it was a routine that you had to get that physical rest for the next game.

**VICKY** Some did it better than others. Some did it properly. Some found it difficult.

**SANDRA** And travelling around. Travelling to the matches – every match, the same tape on. We had about a 45-minute coach ride to the matches and there was this one tape on that had Whitney Houston..

**VICKY** "One moment in time"

**SANDRA** And we played the same tape and because it became a winning pattern and we were doing quite well, it had to be played before each match.

### ***E GB had to play Germany in the semi-finals... they lost 2-1.***

**VICKY** I thought, "Oh God here we go again" we'd lost again in the semi-final because that was pretty horrible.

**SANDRA** I remember thinking "Oh God we've got to play the Koreans" because although we'd played them in our section match and won the match, they were an up and coming team and they were a fit and fast team. And I remember thinking "Crikey we've got to beat them again."

**VICKY** Because Korea had lost to Spain and we'd thought that Spain were going to be the ones in the third place play off. So we thought Germany and Korea would be in the final and we'd play Spain – but that didn't happen. So the worst result for us at the time. That's what we thought anyway. But in the end

**VICKY** It was extra time. We had to play it out.

**SANDRA** Lisa (Bayliss) – who hadn't played much. It was a corner they had worked out at club level and Lisa hadn't played much in the tournament she passed the ball onto Jane (Sixsmith) who scored. So it was a Sutton Coldfield goal.

**JOANNE** Then the fun began.

### ***F 1996 ATLANTA***

**JOANNE** But that was when it started to get a bit too serious. I remember 1992 was such fun. We were serious but we had freedom. People trusted us. 92 (***but meant 96***) we were locked up in that Olympic village and there was that bomb incident in Atlanta Park. Security was really high and we never really had the same atmosphere because it was spread out. In Barcelona, you were so close together .... And people had started to get funding. There was the passion about the game ... for me it wasn't half the experience that Barcelona was but I still struggle again because we went home with something from Barcelona. Atlanta we came fourth again so ... I know it's important to take part but it does make a difference.

### ***G Training for the 1992 Olympics***

**JOANNE** Locally there was hardly any money. I mean in 1992, we didn't pay our club coaches and that was how we used to play hockey and got selected through the ranks. You'd play for a club and get spotted and then you'd play for the south of the country and then maybe play for the national team. But there was no money. For us there was, I think – I can't remember – I think we got some kind of sponsorship ....

**SANDRA** What we had was a ... we all had full time jobs, so we were working and then fitting in our training either before or after work. And what we had for the Olympics was – I remember leaving work at Easter – so that allowed me to have 2 or 3 months prior to the Games solely concentrating on the training and hockey. And that was the first time that had happened, we'd never had that before. And the money that was funded for that paid our wages so they would pay our employers to release us from the job. So that was the first time, it was a massive thing for us to be able to concentrate fully .... That was 2 months before the games and then during the games.

**JOANNE** I think things have changed a lot. I mean we used to train at weekends. So you'd work all week, train all week – you'd get in the car on a Friday night and get down to Lewishall until Sunday night, so your whole weekend was taken up by training.

### ***H Thoughts on the 2008 games***

**SANDRA** I think this time, both finished in the top six – which is great and I think they're on line .... And I think their opportunity is to get a medal in 2012. And I think that was a stepping stone for them and we need to carry that through and if we have really successful games in 2012 then the sport will pick up

**JOANNE** It's harder now though. I mean we all played hockey at school so we got into hockey. So you got into hockey because that was what you did – there wasn't an alternative team sport in the winter. People played netball or hockey.

**SANDRA** Yes, they are now competing with women's football, women's rugby, basketball – they are all becoming sports that young girls want to play and hockey has got something to compete against so we desperately need the national teams to do well. Lift the profile of the sport again.

### ***I And 2012?***

**VICKY** It makes a big difference being in London, is so close to everybodys heart.

**SANDRA** Yeah and people will actually be able to go. There's so few matches that are on home soil that are well publicised with the facilities that go along with a big event. I think when it gets to the Olympics, the opportunity to go and watch something live will be fantastic.

**VICKY** And we know we're going, we know we've qualified...

**SANDRA** Absolutely.

**SARAH** You can't underestimate home crowds either. I hope there's plenty of opportunity for people to go and see them play before the games so they get to know some of the players and can look forward to that.

**JOANNE** Yes they need to get some good competition but competition will want to come over and play them on the pitch that they will play in the Olympics. So they'll have no trouble attracting people, they'll get more games on that pitch than any other nation. They'll know what it's going to be like and that's a fine edge but it will make a difference to them. We've got good players though .... We've got good players.

***J OLYMPIC MEMORIES***

**SANDRA** I think it's given me just a lasting memory. It's almost surreal when you look back at it and I remember being on the podium when we got our medal and thinking "I can't believe this is it". And seeing their flags going up. National anthem – Spanish national anthem – and thinking "My God we're here". And you see all these people on telly and then you think you just can't believe that you are actually part of that. So I look back at it and just think what a great time it was and how lucky I was to be involved in something like that.