

Jo Goode, started playing Badminton at 10 years of age having been taken to her parent's badminton club in Bognor Regis. During her illustrious career Jo won seven Commonwealth Games Gold Medals, a World Junior Mixed Gold, a World Mixed Doubles Silver, two All England Mixed Doubles titles, a European Ladies Doubles Gold, and a Bronze Medal in the Mixed Doubles at the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, along with 10 National titles. In October 2004, Jo was awarded an M.B.E for her services to the sport.

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This year's Commonwealth Games marks the fourth anniversary since winning two Gold Medals and the announcement of your retirement. Have you missed playing during these past four years?

I gave badminton everything I could. I won enough to have made it all worthwhile but there is a time to finish and the Commonwealth Games was the time and place for me. I don't like flying so not having to get in a plane every week is a real bonus. I do not miss pushing my mind and body every day but I do miss the players and the competition.

Do you have any current involvement in badminton?

I have in the past got involved with the World Class Programme but the regular commitment was difficult to keep up. However, I help Bill and Nick (Goode) with the Ashaway Badminton Academy at the Hertfordshire Sports Village. Their sessions are fantastic, lots of enthusiastic children and parents at one of the best facilities in the country.

Do you play any other sports now?

I play tennis at the local village club which fits in with a drink down the local afterwards. Most days I go running with friends. Last year I ran a 5k, 10k and the 10 mile Great Southern Run. I have also taken up yoga and pilates which has greatly helped my back. For years I've wanted to go skiing but as a professional athlete that was not possible. However this year the family are off to the Alps and I can't wait!

You are married to Andy, former National Champion and Olympic Manager. Do you ever play badminton as a family?

Not that often as two of our children are a bit young. Andy always claims to have a bad shoulder and cleverly delegates the coaching to Bill, Nick and myself.

So what is a typical day for you?

As you might expect with three children it starts early. The youngest Harry wakes me at 6 o'clock and from then on its 2 hours of breakfast, packed lunches, dressing and tooth brushing. I feel tired thinking about it. With the 2 eldest at school full time and the youngest at play group until 12 o'clock I generally catch up with house chores.

What sports do your children play?

Jack the eldest goes to his Grandad's badminton coaching on Saturday mornings but has really taken to cricket. Molly is into ballet and Barbies. Harry is only two and a half years old but he is a very big boy and left handed. Growing up with an older brother and sister, as I found out being the youngest of five, has helped him develop very quickly. He is very good at football and hitting golf balls.

Would you like to see your children follow a career in professional/competitive sport like Andy and yourself?

I like to see them play sport because I believe it is good for their physical and social development but I see no benefit in pushing them into competitive sport. I am sure they will decide if it is for them. The desire to pursue a professional sport career has to come from within. It's hard and you have to have a real desire to choose sport as a career. I recently gave a talk at a secondary school to sixth formers. A lot of the pupils would love to pursue a pro sport career but its difficult to get across what full commitment really means. It's a well-used phrase but nearly good enough is not good enough in professional sport.

What advice would you give to young badminton players thinking about a full time career in badminton?

Firstly, to have no illusions, professional sport is hard. Secondly, be honest about your strengths and weaknesses. All too often, even at a quite high level, I see players practice the things they are good at but not the weaker areas.

So what would you like to be doing in five years from now?

I have always been fortunate in knowing exactly what I wanted to do and the next five years is no exception. As the children become more independent I will go back to university to become a qualified primary school teacher. I have done some days at a local school and I am under no illusions that it could be my biggest challenge yet!