

Off to Northern Ontario to visit Roxanne Van Tassel

Roxanne, her partner and two children recently moved to the City of Timmins, Ontario (the home of Shania Twain for those of you who are country music fans). Her favorite food is seafood and Chinese. She loves movies and her favorite actors are Morgan Freeman, Tom Cruise and her favorites actresses are Sandra Bullock, Reese Witherspoon and Ashley Judd. With a young family and with working full time, Roxanne is kept very busy but does like to socialize with friends and play Texas hold'em. She works for the Children's Aid Society (Child and Family Services) as a child protection worker – she is the mean worker who takes children away although as she says, she tries to work with families to prevent this happening and she loves her job even on the most stressful of days.

Roxanne started playing darts in Ignace, Ontario at the age of 18. Her brother Mark got her involved. Apparently Mark was a very good player and he wanted her to play him a game. Roxanne thought this was silly and didn't want to play, however he convinced her to play one game, which incidentally she won. She started to practice daily and from then was hooked on our favorite sport.

The first year that Roxanne played at the provincial level was when Ontario was one province. She came in 9th and was beaten by Kim Whaley to knock her out of the top 8. That will give you an idea of the type of player that Roxanne is because it is very hard to make the team in Ontario. Since Northern Ontario made the split, Roxanne has made the N.O. team a total of eight times. She has been the Provincial Champion for Northern Ontario on several occasions and in 1998, with her partner Larry Welch, won the Mixed Doubles event. That same year Roxanne came in joint third in Singles.

Roxanne plays in a couple of mixed leagues just to get out and socialize. Timmins used to have monthly men's doubles and she had an opportunity to play but they changed it to open doubles. During that time when she played there were very strong players and this helped to enhance her competitive play. Unfortunately, there are no longer any dart tournaments in Timmins and for her to play competitive darts she would have to travel and to need to travel for ten hours plus certainly limits her ability to participate.

When not playing or practicing darts, Roxanne loves to play poker, Texas Holdem and pool. She also loves to go participate in Karaoke but apparently she is not very good and her friends have advised her to stick to darts!

Unfortunately, Timmins doesn't have a youth dart league and the kids would need to travel a great distance to participate. Roxanne's son is very interested as is her nephew and apparently they are good, however, there is no opportunity for them to participate. Roxanne would love to have the time to run a youth league, however she is a very busy lady with work and a family and just does not have the time. She would like to advise all youth players that this is a tough sport but players should not get discouraged and

practice will only make them better. Learn to take your losses and learn from them – that is what Roxanne is still doing.

Roxanne has been a member of the NDFC for a number of years and is really impressed with the fact that each year more prizes and recognition is given to the players and not just limiting this to the top four people. Her inspiration is John Part, Patricia Farrell, Kim Whaley-Hilts, Norm Tremblay and Larry Welch. There are so many more and each year there are more and more people who are improving and making a name for themselves.

In conclusion, Roxanne wants to thank her brother Mark who has shown her everything there is to know about darts, the ability of gain confidence, assistance with counting, and the drive to participate etc. etc. Thanks so much Mark!

Roxanne was very excited when I asked her if I could do an article on her and she was happy to share with everyone her thoughts on the game that she loves.