



Obituary: Tony Chatwin, a 'rock' of table tennis

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Tony Chatwin, one of the longest-serving and most dedicated servants of table tennis in England, has died at the age of 84 after a long illness.

Tony spent a lifetime involved in the sport after taking it up in 1952, becoming one of the country's most respected officials and administrators at every level from local to international.

He began his career in Derbyshire, representing the county at Senior and Veteran level, but it was after qualifying as a National Umpire in 1966 that his lifetime of service started to take on a broader dimension.

He was in the first group of National Referees in 1971, qualified as an International Umpire in 1973 when the qualification was first introduced, and was the third English official to be appointed an International Referee, in 1992.

He was appointed to a number of prestigious tournaments, including Deputy Referee when England hosted the World Championships in both 1977 and 1997.

As Referee, he took charge of the World Student Games in 1981, European Top 12 (1983), English Open (1992), US Open (1992) Commonwealth Championships (1985) and National Championships in 1970.



Tony at the 100 Club dinner in 2017

Further appointments as Deputy Referee came at multiple English Opens; as an umpire he officiated at the 1969 World Championships in Munich, European Championships in Rotterdam (1972), 1976 (Prague) and Moscow (1984) and the Commonwealth Championships in Cardiff in 1973, not to mention several international matches and Open tournaments at home and abroad.

But it was not just as an official that Tony served the sport – he was also an administrator who played a key role in so many areas of the sport at every level.

His committee involvement dated right back to the start of his playing career, as a member of the Derby TTL committee. He went on to be Chairman on three separate occasions and became President.

Also at a local level, Tony was Secretary of Rolls Royce TTC for 28 years and served on the committee of Derbyshire TTA since the 1960s, including as Secretary, Chairman on three occasions and President since 1999, for which service he was made an Honorary Life Member of the association.

Nationally, he was ETTA Deputy Chairman from 1997–2003, served as Vice-Chairman of Competitions and was National Councillor for Derbyshire from 2006 to 2015, having been Deputy National Councillor from 2004–6.



At the National Championships in 2013 with Alex Murdoch, making a presentation to Chloe Whyte (picture by Steve Parkin) Chloe whyte

He was part of various committees, including Development, Tournaments, Trade, Disciplinary and Honours, as well as the Appeals Board, and was National Elections Scrutineer.

He was a member of the National Umpire and Referees Committee from 1970 to 1994 and Chairman from 1994 to 1997, also serving on the Referees International Selection Panel. He was also President of the Association of English Table Tennis Umpires and national representative of the England branch of the Swaythling Club International.

Internationally, Tony was Deputy Chairman of the European Table Tennis Union (ETTU) Umpires and Referees Committee and sat on the ITTF Technical Committee. He was also a tutor/trainer for the ITTF Blue Badge Scheme, attending a number of World Championships as a result. For the Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation, he was on the Classification & Technical Committee.

Tony's contribution to the sport was recognised with a number of honours and awards, including becoming a Vice-President of the ETTA in 1985 and an Honorary Life Member in 1995.

He was presented with the Ivor Montagu Award in 1993, the Malcolm Scott Award in 1996 and the Keith Ponting President's Memorial Trophy in 2017, the latter presented for exceptionally long and outstanding service to Table Tennis England.

Tony is survived by his wife Pat, who is herself a Vice-President of Table Tennis England.

Many tributes have been paid to Tony, including the following by Table Tennis England Chairman Sandra Deaton: "He was a close and dear friend who worked tirelessly for the sport at all levels. He was respected and admired worldwide.

"His work within the Derbyshire County knew no bounds and it will be impossible to replace.

"My love and support goes out to Pat and the family at such a sad time."



Tony (standing, third from left) at the Swaythling Club International in 2017 (picture by Diane Webb)

Derby TTL Chairman John Cowell said: "When I first moved to Derby and joined the Derby Association Committee Tony was President, a position he has held ever since. Not only did Tony attend virtually all committee meetings, I always remember him saying to me that at meetings he could only put forward his views if invited by the Chair.

"Needless to say, I asked him many times as he had a calm re-assuring presence putting forward the facts as he saw them. His knowledge of the game was immense and we and the County Association have lost a great President but most of all a friend."

Alan Ransome OBE, former ETTA Chairman, said: "Tony made a great contribution to English table tennis as an excellent referee and official and also a respected committee member.

"He was someone of the highest integrity and was a key member of so many committees, including from my point of view the Commonwealth Technical Committee.

"I think he was regarded as a rock inside the association, everyone trusted him and could rely on him.

"I was very sad to hear of his passing and am thinking of his family at this time."

Table Tennis England Hon Past President, Doreen Stannard, said: "I first met Tony over 50 years ago when we were both umpires. We have trodden a long path through the association and he was a good and loyal friend and a loyal supporter together with Pat of the 100 club functions. He will be truly missed."

Mike Smith, Board member and Honorary Life Member, said: "I was much saddened to hear of the death of Tony.

"As Deputy Chairman, he was an immense support to me and other colleagues on the Management Committee up to 2003 and after that continuing as a calm and thoughtful source of advice right up to this year.

"I remember well working with him at the European Championships in 1994 and at the Commonwealth Games in 2002 – a kindly man who was so committed to our sport and who served it so well. My thoughts are with Pat and

the family.”

Funeral details will follow.

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