



Obituary: Jim Stokes Snr

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It is with great sadness that I report the passing on 3rd January at the age of 73.

Jim Stokes, better known as 'Big Jim', played in the Reading League for many years and also represented his county Berkshire. Following his playing career, he went on to coach several players one of those being his son Jimmy Stokes who achieved the No.1 spot on the England junior ranking list and went on to a top senior player. Big Jim was the Coaching Officer at Kingfisher Table Tennis Club from 1990 to 1996 but throughout the 90's Jim helped a succession of young players throughout the Berkshire area to improve, with some going on to win

junior and senior international honours with England. Big Jim's table tennis influence touched so many players. These included:-

Terry Young, Gareth Herbert, Gemma Swartz, the Syed brothers, Sue Collier, Alison Gordon, Karen Witt, Mandy Smith, Dave Barr and Andy Wellman. Later, Big Jim's nephew Richard Andrews, along with Tom Maynard owed much to Jim's long range table tennis advice (from Preston to Reading) to take them to the top of the English game.

Jim was the driving force for the Gillette Reading Team in the British National League and as their Team Manager was always very proud to march in to the matches with his team to the tunes of 'Chariots of Fire'!

Jim played a big part with Peter Charters, Brian Halliday and many others in the renovation of the Kingfisher Club, with Jim using his plumbing skills to great effect. Kingfisher went on to be one of the most successful clubs in the country.

A very generous man and indeed several people have commented on the level of hospitality that Jim and Gwen provided on many occasions at barbecues, meals, and buffets. There was always enough food to feed an army but Big Jim looked on, never eating a thing, making sure his guests were well catered for!

A very caring, generous and likeable man, who will be greatly missed.

Jim's funeral will take place on the 28th January at the Preston Crematorium, Longridge Road, Preston PR2 5BY at 11.30. This will be followed by refreshments at Fulwood and Broughton Cricket Club, Garstang Road, Preston PR3 5JE. If anyone is planning to attend the funeral, could you please contact/text Jean Stokes on 07748 928977 for catering purposes.

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