



Don Parker awarded Commonwealth Sport Order of Merit

Author: Paul Stimpson

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England table tennis great, and former Team England Sports Director, Don Parker, has been recognised for his outstanding service to sport by being awarded the Commonwealth Sport Order of Merit 2019.

The announcement was made at Commonwealth Games England's Annual General Meeting in Birmingham.

Having represented England in table tennis more than 200 times, Don went on to work at Commonwealth Games England as Sports Director for 21 years between 1997 and 2018, playing an active role in six Commonwealth Games and six Commonwealth Youth Games.

Don was also the national coach for the then English Table Tennis Association, and worked within the governing body for 18 years in a variety of performance-related positions.

Don and his wife Jill – the Table Tennis England President – are well known by our members, attending numerous events around the country. Don is also an authoritative TV commentator and has commented from a raft of international events as well as our own Senior National Championships.

He served with distinction as the European representative on the Commonwealth Games Federation Sports Committee, and was most recently appointed as a member of the Evaluation Committee for the 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games, which have now been awarded to Trinidad and Tobago.

Speaking about the honour, Don said: "Receiving the Order of Merit was completely unexpected. I am honoured and thrilled. The years I spent with Commonwealth Games England, working so closely with the Commonwealth Games Federation, have been fabulous."

"I've loved every minute and to receive this award is the icing on the cake."

Table Tennis England Chairman Sandra Deaton said: "I was delighted to be at the AGM to witness Don receiving

this prestigious award.

"To say it is well deserved is an understatement – Don has put so much into table tennis and the wider sporting world."

Commonwealth Games Federation President, Dame Louise Martin, said: "I've known Don for a long time, since 2000 when we first met at the Millennium Youth Games in Edinburgh. It was there where our Commonwealth journey together began.

"Don is an extremely well-respected member of the Commonwealth movement and has been an excellent ambassador for, and advocate of, Commonwealth sport. On behalf of the Executive Board of the Commonwealth Games Federation, I'm absolutely delighted that he has been awarded the Order of Merit."

Commonwealth Games England CEO, Paul Blanchard, said: "Don has made an outstanding contribution to Commonwealth sport, both as an elite table tennis player and sports administrator, and he fully deserves this award.

"There are very few people who can come close to matching the passion, commitment and dedication that Don has made to Commonwealth Games England. I'm delighted he's being recognised publicly for a lifetime of extraordinary work."

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