



Pride of Table Tennis winners announced!

Author: Paul Stimpson

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The superstar volunteers of our sport have been honoured at the Pride of Table Tennis Awards ceremony.

Winners were announced in 12 categories during a virtual ceremony held during the Table Tennis England online National Conference.

They included the flagship Volunteer of the Year and Young Volunteer of the Year Awards, plus two new categories – School of the Year and, reflecting the effects of the pandemic, Lockdown Local Hero.

The ceremony was supported by Principal Partner Rocca Creative and Official Sponsors R J Brand Design, TPF Sports and LinQsport.

More than 150 nominations were received and the winners were chosen by the national judging panel.

Johnathon Driscoll, who leads on the Pride of Table Tennis Awards at Table Tennis England, said:

“Congratulations to our incredible winners and finalists for their outstanding efforts, in what has been a profoundly difficult year.

“Although we haven’t been able to celebrate in person, it was vital to honour and recognise the achievements of our heroes who go the extra mile to provide opportunities to many. We are truly indebted to them for their contributions to our sport.

“Thank you to the volunteers, coaches, officials and organisations who step up each year to ensure table tennis is able to grow – without you, our great sport would not be the same.”

Watch the awards ceremony below:

The winners were:

Young Volunteer of the Year

Winner: Joshua Amanor (*nominated by Maria Ingles*)

Runners-up: Jack Cross, Katie Hicks, Tom Ray

Over the last 12 months Joshua has shown a great passion, commitment and enthusiasm to help inspire the next generation of table tennis players at Greenhouse.

Pre-covid, Josh's infectious smile and fun nature made him one of his club's outstanding young people. His ever-enthusiastic presence and dedication at the community, over-50s, performance, development or after-school sessions has ensured people are made to feel at home. Joshua has made a real impact to the club, in particular as a role model to the younger players.

Partner of the Year

Winner: The Jack Petchey Foundation (*nominated by Keegan Barstow*)

Runners-up: The Grafton Centre/Cambridge City Council, Halton Borough Council.

The Jack Petchey Foundation have partnered with Table Tennis England since 2010 to support the development of table tennis within environments suited for young people such as schools and youth clubs by financing multiple programmes and events.

In 2020 the Foundation supported over 100 table tennis table packages for schools and youth clubs within London and Essex. The newly formed Hubs programme has supported schools and youth clubs to become the epicentre of table tennis development within their community by running events from their facilities. This includes girls-only sessions, training courses and other key programmes to form relationships with local table tennis clubs.

Technical Official of the Year

Winner: Simon Morgan (*nominated by Dylan Day*)

Simon was nominated for going the extra mile through the tournaments he has refereed and organised to give people the opportunity to play table tennis in turbulent times. Through his friendly persona and eye for detail he was able to create a safe and welcoming environment for people to return to table tennis between lockdowns, which raised the spirits of many.

League of the Year sponsored by Rocca

Creative

Winners: Leicester & District TTL (*nominated by Colin Eley*) and Plymouth & District TTL (*nominated by Keta Myskova*)

As the Ping! partner for Leicester, the **Leicester & District League** has been instrumental in a project that engaged families during a challenging pandemic period, prioritising health and wellbeing, and aiming to deliver physical activity & table tennis to people at home. By working with local charities and community groups, they were able to circulate equipment in priority areas and have continued to create a structured plan to get people more active.

By introducing a pairs league and adopting the TT Leagues website to reduce administration, the **Plymouth & District League** has proven to be a very popular format. Players from the surrounding area returning to the league, alongside a diverse range of new players attracted by an earlier finishing time, has seen the league go from strength to strength.

Inclusivity Award

Winner: Community Integrated Care (*nominated by Colin Eley*)

Runner-up: Keith McIntosh

Over the last 12 months, Community Integrated Care has worked with Table Tennis England to support almost 200 care services to access table tennis starter packs during the early months of the coronavirus pandemic, helping to keep people physically and mentally stimulated during lockdown.

Community Integrated Care developed a unique free training programme that has been launched to not only teach people the fundamental skills of how to play table tennis, but also looks at the many ways that the sport can be adapted and used to promote health, happiness and confidence.

Coach of the Year

Winner: Mark Mitchell (*nominated by Dan Bullen*)

Runners-up: Rick Gonzalez, Ajay Naik

As Head Coach of St Neots Table Tennis Club, Mark works hard with junior and senior players to reach their potential through his vast knowledge of the sport. By going the extra mile, Mark's guidance has seen successes for his teams on a national level alongside working with a member of the transplant games to win medals at the world games and has also supported players with a disability at the National Championships.

Mark's experience to deliver new ideas and ways of learning to a range of people has been invaluable to growing table tennis at his club and helping people achieve their goals.

Inspirational Story of the Year sponsored by

Rocca Creative

Winner: Kim Daybell (*nominated by Shaun Marples*)

Runner-up: Bethany Ellis

Having completed his medical degree in 2018 and working part-time as a junior doctor in North London, Kim was due to start training full time for his third Paralympic games in 2020. However, Kim was instead working full time on the front line in the fight against coronavirus at Whittington Hospital.

Working with his colleagues to save people's lives and raising awareness of the dangers of the virus through the

media, he has been an inspiration to people across the world, in particular his fellow athletes, who he has shown you can have a career in sport alongside pursuing your dreams.

Volunteer of the Year

Winner: Gordon Gatheral (*nominated by Norman Smith*)

Runners-up: Craig Dring, David May, Peter Wilson

During the last 12 months, Gordon has worked tirelessly to develop table tennis in Chelmsford. His duties have been running a successful Bat and Chat social table tennis club, administrating and developing Chelmsford & District Junior league, reorganising and reformatting the Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League and coaching juniors.

Gordon has been at the heart of these projects, and despite lockdown, Gordon was able to keep players engaged, through developing his skills on social media and making it easier for a return to play through his guidance and encouragement.

School of the Year sponsored by TPF Sport

Winner: Christchurch Primary School (*nominated by Jamal Dennison*)

Runners-up: St Edwards Catholic Primary School, Sir John Sherbrooke Junior School

Christchurch Primary school has been able to create an infrastructure of table tennis through supportive teachers, purchasing tables and providing after schools sessions with an external coach. By doing so, pupils from the school have been able to play in the Jack Petchey qualifiers, their first ever competitive experience, with the girls qualifying for the finals and one pupil winning the U11 competition.

The school has really bought into table tennis with various sessions each week, engaging a large number of children in the process. With many who then go on to play at secondary school and at table tennis clubs.

Club of the Year sponsored by R J Brand Design

Winner: Goodwin TTC (*nominated by Claire Brockwell*)

Runners-up: Bath Street Marine TTC, Winstanley Wizards TTC

Over recent years the club has restructured, relocated into new premises and has continued to go from strength to strength. Being located in one of the most deprived areas in England, the club has been proactive in applying for funding to develop new sessions for 7-11 year olds through the TT Kidz programme, working with the local Ping Pong Parlour, developing partnerships with the Charity, Rackets Cubed, and working with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and refugee groups.

Throughout the pandemic, the club have been proactive in upskilling and ensuring they are up to date with the latest Table Tennis England guidance. They have been passionate to re-open and provide the community with the opportunity to play table tennis again as soon as possible.

Lockdown Local Hero

Winners: Sally Maddison (*nominated by David Maddison*) and Natasha Moura (*nominated by Emma Turner-Samuels*)

Runner-up: David Brown

Sally Maddison, head teacher at Sir John Sherbrooke Junior School, has played a significant role in introducing table tennis for the children at the school. During Lockdown, Sally delivered every child their own TT Kidz kit to their door, encouraged parents to join in with online sessions, worked with a coaching company to develop children's skills alongside keeping children and families connected through fun and engaging video challenges. Sally's inventive and enthusiastic approach created a buzz with the whole school community within extremely challenging times.

Through lockdown, **Natasha Moura** provided enjoyable online training sessions for her players 4 times a week, with each session lasting 2 hours to ensure they were able to keep active. The sessions delivered to a range of age groups, included popular quizzes. This became a highlight of the day for many and Natasha also made sure birthdays were made special whilst in lockdown through personalised videos, dressing up, singing, decorations and video compilations. Through Natasha's commitment, empathy and sacrifices, Natasha provided a lifeline for children and parents during a difficult time and was able to make the unbearable bearable.

In addition, the panel decided to award a Lockdown Local Hero Award for an organisation to **Brighton Table Tennis Club** (*nominated by Elizabeth Fletcher*)

Brighton Table Tennis Club was inspirational in the support the club gave to its players and the local community during lockdown. The club were innovative to provide help and reassurance to many. Through operating the food hub for people who are struggling as a result of the pandemic with partners, keeping their community together through 100 BTTC daily shows, creating postcards, providing bats and balls to nearby primary schools and putting together online fitness sessions to name just a few. The club and its volunteers gave a momentous effort to support those in their time of need.

Contribution to Table Tennis

Winner: Hans Soova BEM (*nominated by Sylvia Worth*)

Runners-up: David Green, Ronald Hedley, Keith Wilson

Hans has been heavily involved with table tennis coaching for over half a century. Starting his coaching journey in 1965 in Bradford, Hans became head coach at the centre of excellence in Leeds. Through Hans' tutelage 24 players went on to represent England internationally at senior, junior and cadet levels, with many more at schools' internationals.

In 2012, Hans was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to table tennis. Hans shows no signs of slowing down and prior to lockdown, was coaching 5 to 6 times a week in the schools and clubs working with county, junior national and grassroots players. Through his knowledge and love for the sport, so many have benefitted and will continue to benefit.

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