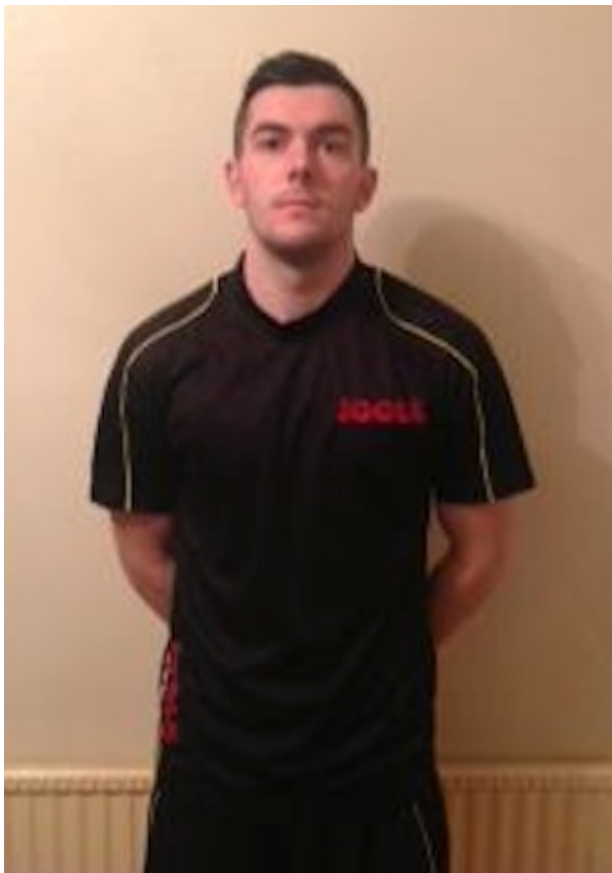


National Young Coach of the Year: Ben Barlow

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It gives the ETTA great pleasure in announcing Ben Barlow as the deserved recipient of the National Young Coach of the Year award. Ben is now working full time as a coach and in the last year has made a significant impact on the players he is working with. He is able to pass on the valuable knowledge he gained as a high level national standard player.



Ben Barlow, winner of both the National Young Coach of the Year and Yorkshire Regional Young Coach of the Year Awards 2012

Ben has been involved with Rotherham Scorpions JTTC for approximately a year, taking the lead on coaching sessions, securing new premises enabling greater access for participants (particularly more advanced players), whilst also providing two junior schools sessions with table tennis coaching, encouraging new players and providing a session for other dedicated junior players to attend. Ben has over this time evaluated the membership and attendees at each session and provided structure to the sessions by incorporating the junior players into planned and structured coaching. This has worked well and allowed some older members free play whilst developing the skills of the junior members. The younger players can see for themselves how they have improved when playing the older players later in the sessions.

Further evidence supports Ben's nomination and selection as the recipient of this award. In a short space of time Ben has demonstrated the improvements that can be made through structured coaching and by focusing on the junior players. The young players are playing with a modern attacking style and use everything they have learnt in the sessions to try and win. The message is always to use in matches what you have been coached in training and not to worry about the result. The results will come through good technique and dedication. Extra sessions at the new premises are now well established and some weeks over subscribed. Hot drinks and light refreshments are available and this gives an opportunity for parents to stay if they wish and see the skills their

children are learning. Involving parents allows members of RSJTTC to make them feel part of the club, strengthening the bond of player to club and to table tennis generally. This is due to Ben securing this session and venue and making it so popular with the young players.

Whilst completing all of the work above, Ben has also demonstrated his commitment to developing young players, operating a junior league within the club which was attended by around 20 young players over 6 weeks and mini tournaments to keep the young players interested, allowing for competition without the pressure of league or external tournaments. This has built confidence in the players for when they are involved in league or school competitions. Ben has also provided detailed player profiles including recording and evaluating video so individuals can really focus themselves on areas they can work on, and regularly attends local league matches to watch and evaluate his players in action and he has accompanied players at external tournaments and in national competitions. All the Scorpions sessions are now well attended with a steady flow of new young players who can relate to Ben as a young player and coach. The sessions feel professional and focused and there is a definite buzz about each session, as the young players know how focused and determined Ben is as a coach and player himself. The club and players clearly feel fortunate to have a coach of Ben's talents working with them, Andrew Saxton states *'RSJTTC and I as the father of two young players coached by Ben feel fortunate to have such a talented player and coach involved with the club. His recent involvement at a regional level shows his maturity and dedication to further advance the individual player and Table Tennis overall.'*

During this time Ben has also sought to learn and improve his skills as a coach, getting involved as an assistant and practice partner at regional sessions, worked with other coaches such as Alan Lowe, Graig Gasgoyne, Will Cooney and Howard Knott, organised training camps on Jersey, Redlands in Worksop and Speedwell TTC in Chesterfield. It is clear that Ben aspires to develop into a high quality coach for the future, with an open minded approach to player development, always seeking advice and considering new ways of working. All of this is further evidence of his commitment to the sport and his wish to introduce more young players to Table Tennis and develop players to the highest standard.

Sally Shutt, Yorkshire Regional Coach, says *'Bens involvement as a coach means that more young players than ever are joining, playing and taking part in the sport. This has lead to dramatic improvement in player development and ultimately results. On a personal level Ben has shown he can communicate well with people of all ages and standards. He is well respected by all club members as a player coach and on a personal level'*.

Final congratulations to Ben on winning the award this year, wishing him and Rotherham Scorpions all the best in continuing this excellent work and it will be exciting to see how the players, club and Yorkshire Region continue to develop in the years to come.

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