

'True Gent' Les Jones passes away

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THE table tennis community in Wirral is mourning the loss of Les Jones.

Les dedicated over forty years of his life to table tennis on the Wirral, both as a player and head coach, working with hundreds of individuals over time.

He is undoubtedly remembered with the utmost respect and love by all those who he worked with.

Les developed his passion for table tennis whilst playing with fellow colleagues and working for British Gas, enabling him to go on to play for the league.

At the age of 40, Les progressed from player to coach under the guidance of Cliff Swindells, whom he greatly respected and from whom he learnt a lot.

As a coach Les went on to work with players of all abilities and all ages across the Wirral.

He went on to produce players who played at national level for England, Scotland and Wales.

In his approach to coaching, Les relied on the two maxims of hard work and determination, which he instilled in the players he coached. Les believed that "You should never make your mind up on a player straight away. A less talented boy or girl may go on to achieve more than a gifted one through sheer dedication and hard work."

As a result of Les's continual drive and hard work, table tennis on the Wirral has grown from strength to strength.

More recently his work has been maintained through the commitment of those who Les once coached and inspired and have consequently gone on to continue his work.

The commitment and dedication shown by Les was reflected by the awards he received over the years. One of his most notable achievements was being selected as National Table Tennis Coach of the year in 2001/2002. He also received the Lottie Dodd Cup. In addition, he has been presented with the Wirral Mayor's award twice for his voluntary services to Gautby Road Play and Community Centre. Gautby Road has similarly gone on to mark their admiration for Les through the opening of the Les Jones Suite in his honour.

He accepted these awards with the utmost modesty. On being named, National Table Tennis Coach of the year, Gautby Road was also awarded Premier club status Les said: "Obviously, I am very pleased to receive this award, but I accept it on behalf of the Wirral, where there are a lot of people working hard for the sport." This reflected Les's selfless attitude for which he was loved and aroused great admiration. Les was described by the English Table Tennis Association as "an outstanding personality, whom it has been a joy to know... and with whom it has been a privilege to work."

A gentleman in all senses of the word, Les's work in Wirral table tennis will leave a lasting legacy.

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