

Double success for English officials at awards ceremony

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English table tennis officials won two awards at the inaugural National Officiating Awards after a grand ceremony at Worcester Rugby Football Club's Sixways Stadium.

Joshua Reynolds, who won the Young Official of the Year award, and Tony Chatwin, who picked up the Lifetime Achievement Award, were honoured at the ceremony organised by the Sports Officials UK (SOUK) last Thursday (October 31st).

The Sixways stadium was in pristine condition for the 100 guests with each sport allocated their own table. The table tennis table included three nominees (Tony, Karen Tonge MBE and Tom Purcell) and their families but surprisingly not Joshua – who was the first to secure his award.

Joshua, 20, explained: "I received an email from Karen Tonge congratulating me on my award. I had just returned from holiday that evening so was unable to attend. I had forgotten the ceremony was that night so when I received the email I was surprised and shocked at the same time!

"It is always disappointing to not be able to attend a ceremony where you have been nominated for an award, however, due to holidays this was unavoidable. It would have been an honour to attend but hopefully I will have many opportunities to attend these awards in the future."

Despite having not 'received' his awards yet (a certificate, engraved mug and engraved silver whistle) Joshua is already thinking ahead to his future opportunities within the sport.

He said: "I am looking forward to the chances I will hopefully have in the future to progress with my officiating in the sport and will hopefully be selected by the ITTF to umpire at the Young Olympic Games next summer."

Tony meanwhile, who at 79-years-old is at the other end of the officiating spectrum, did manage to attend the event with his wife Pat, daughter Helen and her husband Paul and the quartet were able to celebrate together at the end of a successful evening.



Tony Chatwin with fellow nominees Anne Clark and Sheelagh Redpath

However, Tony had to wait until the end of the ceremony until finding out the result of his category, giving him enough time to create a few butterflies in his stomach.

He said: "The final set of awards were announced with 'Lifetime Achievement Award' being the last one. This was where I first felt butterflies, The citation for Anne Clarke nominated by British Swimming was read out followed by that for Sheelagh Redpath, English Netball next was me, I hardly heard my citation as I was still thinking of those of my fellow nominees.

"Then I heard my name announced, I really could not take it in, the walk to the presentation party seemed endless. I received my award and returned to the table where I was congratulated by family and friends.

"There were then photographs including my fellow nominees for the award from whom I received warm congratulations, the rest of the evening I was in a daze, I had received a National award for something that has given me pleasure for so many years, for table tennis that I first started playing over sixty years ago then officiating in England and around the world. I thought of how honoured I was but I also thought of the as yet unsung heroes without who sport would be the poorer."

Written by Russell Moore (November 4, 2013)

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