

Obituary: Ted Inge, BTTAD President

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Ted Inge

Ted Inge, one of the great champions of wheelchair table tennis, has died at the age of 88.

Mr Inge was president of the British Table Tennis Association for People with Disabilities and also a Table Tennis England vice-president.

John Jenkins, a former GB and Paralympic player who is now Vice-President of the BTTAD and President of SportsAble, has paid the following tribute to Mr Inge:

Ted first got involved in wheelchair table tennis in the late 1960s. He was a coach for his Sittingbourne Table Tennis Club and was invited to Medway Table Tennis Club, for disabled players, where he started coaching too. A few wheelchair players, among them Ernie Fisher and Mike Oliver, who had experience of the National Paraplegic Games at Stoke Mandeville, persuaded him to attend first a National Games in 1969 and then the training sessions at Stoke Mandeville.

He quickly developed a passion for the wheelchair game and joined the small volunteer team of table tennis administrators/referees, notably Iris Moss and Stu Dane, who ran table tennis at Stoke – the Nationals, Internationals and training sessions.

Ted became the team coach of the Paraplegic Squad, heading up training and team selection and organising various international trips. His first 'major' was the 1972 Paralympics in Heidelberg followed by the Commonwealth Games in 1974 in Dunedin, New Zealand. Over the ensuing years, he led the GB Team through many European and World Championships and several Paralympic Games until the early 90s, with the Barcelona Paralympics in 1992 being his last. Failing eyesight at that time limited his playing and coaching activity as well as his ability to travel.

Ted was greatly respected for not only for his dedication to disability table tennis, particularly wheelchair table tennis, but also for his coaching ability and always for his sense of humour – that infectious chuckle and twinkle in his eye. He was greatly admired by the players for his ability to stoically represent table tennis to the 'powers that be' on the selection committees, ensuring the sport had its fair share of budget and team places in the GB Paralympic Teams. And it was Ted who consolidated GB's position and ranking as one of the leading nations in the sport in the world's disability table tennis arena.

Ted's standing and reputation was not limited to the UK as he was admired throughout the disability table tennis world, becoming a member of the International Table Tennis Federation Para Table Tennis Division and then the secretary for the Seoul Paralympic Games table tennis event in 1988. This respect for Ted was evidenced when at the 1987 European Championships all the 250 players from 18 countries participating in the tournament gave him a rousing ovation, never previously witnessed.

In 1993, Ted became first and only President of the foundling BTTAD, which is now the governing body of disability table tennis in Great Britain. And in 2000, Ted was presented the Stoke Mandeville based WheelPower "Service to Wheelchair Sport" award in recognition of his contribution to the sport he loved.

Personally, I owe a lot to Ted and I will always be grateful to him. He was a great friend and helped me enormously to develop my game, giving me the opportunity to represent Great Britain for over 10 years playing the great sport of table tennis all over the world.

Whenever I think of Ted, I smile. Either for the way he used to curse my temperamental forehand or for snatching my backhand or for the occasions we shared laughing and telling stories of times gone by. I know he will be greatly missed by all his many friends in the table tennis fraternity as well as in his many other circles. I know

when they think of Ted, they will smile too.

Wheelpower spokesman Ollie Moore added the following tribute.

Ted put tremendous energy and dedication into developing table tennis for disabled people in the 1970s and 80s as both a coach and event organiser and referee. His passion enabled the sport to grow and develop at national and international level and he had a long association with Stoke Mandeville.

Ted was instrumental in the development of international table tennis within the Paralympics and was a member of the International Table Tennis Federation Para Table Tennis Division. In the 1988 Seoul

Paralympic Games Ted was the Secretary of the table tennis event representing the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation.

Ted was awarded the WheelPower "Service to Wheelchair Sport" award in 2000 in recognition of his contribution to the sport he loved. When Ted received the award he recalled how one of his earliest experiences umpiring at Stoke Mandeville had moved him to tears.

"Being involved in the world of disabled table tennis has been a magnificent high point of my life," he said.

The funeral will be at The Garden of England Crematorium, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Sittingbourne ME9 8GZ at 11am on Monday November 3 and afterwards at Milton Regis Bowling Club, Frobisher Close, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 2PS.

The family has requested donations to Wheelpower in lieu of flowers.

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