

Coaching course Des-igned to help youngsters!

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Desmond Douglas (third from right, back row) with young players and BATTs coaches at one of the half-term sessions

England legend Desmond Douglas passed on his knowledge and experience to the next generation of players at a half-term coaching event at BATTs.

The 11-time national singles champion, who reached No 7 in the world at his peak, led the sessions alongside coaches from the club in Harlow.

Dozens of youngsters from BATTs and neighbouring clubs reaped the benefit of his teaching during three days of sessions.

It was the second time Douglas had visited the club after summer training camps organised by BATTs coach Adam Nutland proved a great success.

BATTs player George Campbell, 12, said: "He came here last summer and I didn't know who he was then, but now I know he's very important in our sport. He's the one who set the benchmark for what somebody from England can do.

"He's helped with my forehand. I used to hit it mostly cross-court but now I can play it to different places, and he's helped me with my movement around the table."

Ella Patel, 17, said: "I know he was No 7 in the world and No 1 in England and I know he was someone who got people excited about table tennis.

"He's very attentive but not overbearing. If he sees something wrong he will come and tell you but then let you work it out.

"He's helped me with my serve and my blocking. It was good to practise serving in a match situation but with one player serving for the whole match."

Douglas was impressed by the skills of the youngsters, saying: "They're pretty good – they're keen and willing to learn, which makes it easier to use my experience and knowledge to show them different ways to do things and how to play better table tennis.

"If you can see somebody improving, that's where the joy of coaching comes from."

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