

World champion Rosalind Cornett passes away

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It was with great sadness that Table Tennis England has learned of the death of Rosalind Cornett.

The twice Women's Doubles world champion passed away today, aged 82.

The following obituary appears courtesy of the ITTF website.

Born on Friday 14th April 1933 in Marylebone, London, the twin sister of Diane Schöler, the Honorary President of the Swaythling Club, it was under the maiden name of Rowe that the duo became household names in the United Kingdom in the 1950s.

Together, they formed the ideal Women's Doubles partnership – Diane was left-handed, Rosalind right-handed.

The youngest of five sisters, the elder three being Jean, Pauline and Yvonne, they came from a sporting background; their father Vivian Rowe was an amateur footballer of note.

In 1947, for their 14th birthday, they wanted a bicycle. Instead they received a table tennis set and played on the dining room table at their home in Greenford in north London.

Soon they ventured to the nearby West Ealing Club where they were coached by Ken Craigie and later by the legendary Victor Barna; they improved quickly, especially Rosalind who outshone Diane. There are no records of Diane ever beating Rosalind in an official tournament.

Playing in her first ever senior tournament, the Surrey Open in 1949, Rosalind won the Women's Singles title; later in 1950 in Cheltenham, together they won their first Women's Doubles crown of note.

Incredibly, only 14 months later they secured the Women's Doubles title at the World Championships in 1951 in Vienna. Three years later on Wednesday 14th April 1954, the date of their 21st birthday, in front of 10,000 spectators in London's Wembley Arena, they beat Ann Haydon and Kathleen Best in an all-English final to regain the title.

In the intervening years they were the runners-up in Bombay in 1952 and in Bucharest in 1953. They were also runners-up in Utrecht in 1955, completing the remarkable achievement of reaching the Women's Doubles final in five successive World Championships, a remarkable achievement.

However, it was not only in the Women's Doubles event that they excelled; they were bronze medallists in the Women's Team event at the World Championships in 1951 and 1952, as well as in 1954 and 1955. In addition, they were silver medallists in 1953.

The achievements and their photos together always appeared in the Eagle Sports Annual of the Year, a publication in the 1950s that always carried at least one page for table tennis and always featured the Rowe twins. Featured in the press on many occasions, in addition they produced their own publication "The Twins on Table Tennis".

Forever, Rosalind Cornett will be associated with her twin sister but alone in the five World Championships in which she appeared, Rosalind Rowe proved herself a more than worthy competitor without her sibling.

In 1951, 1954 and 1955 she reached the quarter-final stage of the Women's Singles event; in 1952 and 1953 she was a semi-finalist. Meanwhile, in 1953 she progressed to the last eight of the Mixed Doubles, an event at which she was a bronze medallist in 1952 and 1954.

Later residing in Kent, she turned her attentions to golf but never lost her interest in table tennis; in the early

1970s she presented the awards at the Kent Schools Table Tennis Championships.

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