



Len Pilditch, umpire and referee, passes away

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Tributes have been paid to International Umpire and National Referee Len Pilditch, who has died at the age of 87.

The Middlesex TTA stalwart, also a Table Tennis England vice-president, first qualified as a County Umpire in 1961, becoming a National Umpire in 1966 and attaining the International qualification in 1974.

He travelled all over the world in his officiating career, including to France and the Netherlands, the Commonwealth Championships in Cardiff in 1973, the Welsh Opens of 1978 and 1987, the 1988 European Youth Championships in Yugoslavia – plus the 1988 Paralympics in Seoul.

However, it was in refereeing that he was most active, having qualified as a National Referee in 1971.

His accolades included Deputy Referee at the World Championships in 1977 and Referee at the English Open in 1980, an event at which he was also Deputy Referee in 1970, 1971, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1982 and 1990.

At the National Championships, he was Referee in 1972, 1973, 1975 and 1976 and Deputy Referee in 1978 and 1979, and Organiser in 1971.

He was also an ETTA English Championships and County Championships Committee member.

Fellow Middlesex TTA member Colin Wilson, until recently a Director of Table Tennis England, said: "I recall Len as a very dedicated and competent administrator, organiser and official at local, County (Middlesex), National and International level. He was also a true gentleman and gave his volunteering life for the benefit of so many others, myself included.



Middlesex captain Len Pilditch with his team, including Colin Wilson (second left)

“As a young player I always felt respected, valued and safe around his cheery competence, and when he took us to matches I always wanted to play my best for him as well as for the team and myself. I was lucky to know Len and he helped my TT career through his care and his great personality.”

Len was married twice. His first wife Joy died in 1987 and he later wed Alice, who survives him. He and Joy lived in Finchley, while home from 1995 was Chingford.

Len’s son Phil said: “The trip to Seoul was a particularly happy and sad time for Len. Joy (my mother) had died from breast cancer in December 1987. We all encouraged him to go and knew how proud she would have been of him.

“Myself, his other son Ian and daughter Helen were immensely proud of Len, not just of his achievements in sport, but proud of him as a father, he never had a bad word to say about people. If he had bad thoughts, he certainly kept them to himself.”

The funeral is on Friday December 4 at noon at St Marylebone Crematorium, East End Road, East Finchley, N2 0RZ.

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