



Ping Pong merrily on high in Lottery Christmas film!

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A new Christmas film from The National Lottery shows table tennis really is a sport for all, for life!

The film tells the story of a match between a team of young players and a team of veterans, showing how The National Lottery raises money for schemes which bring people together.

It shows the young players from Greenhouse Sports meet their match when they come face to face with a team of over-70s players from VETTS (Veterans English Table Tennis Society).

Star of the film is Geof Bax, an 83-year-old great-grandfather from Watford. Geof first picked up a paddle when he was working as an apprentice sheet metal worker, aged 16. He played his first league match in March 1949 and, 66 years on, he is the current Veterans Doubles World Champion, and was Singles World Champion until a shock defeat in New Zealand last year.

Geof said: "Making the film was great fun. I knew a few of the young people from tournaments we've played at. That's the great thing about table tennis – it's an intergenerational sport and it is the best sport for keeping your mind and body fit."

Geof's opponent, 15-year-old Nabilah, is a member of Greenhouse Sports, a National Lottery funded London-based charity committed to using sport to help young people living in the inner city to realise their full potential.

She said: "Greenhouse has helped me gain in confidence. In fact, if it wasn't for Greenhouse Sports I wouldn't have been able to put my name forward and get selected to be head girl at my school. Greenhouse Sports has helped me build on myself and make me a better person."

Table Tennis England helped to put the film's creators in touch with Greenhouse and VETTS to get the film off the ground and would like to thank all those from both organisations for their enthusiasm and help with the project.

Arabella Gilchrist, Head of Brand for The National Lottery, said: "The National Lottery creates millionaires every week but what a lot of people don't know is that our players also raise a life-changing £34 million a week for amazing projects large and small all around the UK.

"This includes over £37 million invested since 1994 in table tennis projects and facilities for elite players, grassroots groups and community clubs. Special thanks must go to National Lottery players for their life-

changing vital contribution to supporting small and large projects across the nation. It's their play that makes it possible."

The match took place in the Victorian theatre at Alexandra Palace, London, which has just started a major renovation programme funded by Heritage Lottery Fund.

For further information please visit www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk

Edit: see how it was filmed!

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