



National Awards for Volunteers of the Year!

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On Tuesday night, 12th April at the Bury League Finals night presentation, both Bryan Edwards and Keith Warrington from Ramsbottom Table Tennis Academy, were awarded with their Table Tennis England National Volunteer Awards for having won the Unsung Hero and Adult Volunteer of the Year Awards.

Both Bryan and Keith were unable to attend the National presentation which was held at the National Championships in March. It was therefore agreed that their awards would be presented locally at the Bury League presentation night and it proved to be a great occasion for both Bryan and Keith with their achievements in Table Tennis being well highlighted to the local Table Tennis fraternity. They both received a standing ovation when collecting their awards, with everyone in the room appreciating what they had achieved.



At the tender age of 81 Bryan has been involved in table tennis in the local leagues since the 1980's. Back then he was an English teacher at Sutherland high school whereby he encouraged many pupils to play the game &

alongside adults, a number teams were entered into the Bury & Bolton leagues achieving great success. After retiring from teaching he transferred the teams to Ramsbottom cricket club, which has just celebrated 25 years of table tennis at the club. Over the years, Bryan has worked tirelessly to run the teams, always maintaining an entrepreneurial flair to attract new members of all abilities but his main remit always being to encourage youngsters to play & progress. Many over the years achieving a high standard in the game, namely Andrea Holt being the club's most successful player. At present he is running 9 teams over 3 leagues & with only one table at the club this is no mean feat.

As well as running the teams, Bryan has used his flair to organize many fun social events over the years for the members but also to raise money for the club, various charities, even sponsoring two athletes in the lead up to the 2012 London Olympics of which one achieved a gold in the cycling event. In 2009 in partnership with Keith Warrington he formed Ramsbottom TT Academy, originally playing on four tables in the civic hall, which has since progressed to Bury leisure centre with 10 tables, 2 robots, 4 level 2 qualified coaches & 35 members ranging from the ages of 7 -16 years old.



Within the first two years the club achieved Premier club status & clubmark accreditation & from working with absolute beginners to the game, the Academy now has 3 Teams in the National Cadet & Junior Leagues (Division 1), 3 teams in the Bury League (22 members playing in the junior closed competition last season) & 12 youngsters in the TTE ranking. This all being testament to Bryan's vision & commitment. However, Bryan never sits on his laurels & is always looking at ways to develop the club, the main focus at present to find premises that can offer more table tennis hours for the kids & all age groups to promote inclusion, participation & progression.

Above all, Bryan is Mr Positive with no barriers & has always encouraged both young & old on & off the table, instilling confidence & friendship & has been pivotal in promotion & inclusion of the game locally over the last 35 years. Definitely an Unsung Hero.

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