



Friday Photos 92: Photos of Alan Cooke

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: February 03, 2017

This month Alan Cooke is featured. Not only one of the best players England has produced but he must now be rated as one of England's finest coaches.



Figure 1. Alan, third right front row. East Midlands Coaching Camp. 1978.

Few have equalled Alan's playing record: at the National Championships he has six Men's Singles titles and was Runner-up on five other occasions; nine times Men's Doubles Champion (with Desmond Douglas x 6, Bradley Billington x 2, Paul Drinkhall x 1); three Mixed Doubles titles with Nicola Deaton. At Junior level Alan won the Junior Boys Doubles title with Nicky Mason in 1982 and the Mixed Doubles in that year with Lisa Bellinger (now Lomas).



Figure 2. An 18th birthday surprise during a training camp at Lilleshall.

Additionally on the domestic front Alan was Top 12 Champion three times and was the first to win when the scoring changed to 11 up. Alan also was the Grand Prix Overall Men's Singles Champion in 1996/97, 2000/01 and 2003/04.



Figure 3. Alan being coached by Don Parker. 1992.

Alan was selected for his senior debut in the Israeli Open just before his 17th birthday and before he gained a junior cap. Playing in seven English Open Championships Alan's best result was in winning a silver medal with Graham Sandley in the Men's Doubles in 1984.



Figure 4. Alan with Desmond Douglas and Carl Prian of England and Jorgen Roskoff of Germany. 1992.

On the World stage Alan reached a known career high World Ranking of 27 and was England number 1 for a considerable time, taking over pole position from Desmond Douglas. Seven World Championship performances ranging over a 12 year period from 1985 to 1997. In 1989 Alan playing with Carl Prian got as far as the Quarter-finals in the Men's Doubles. In 1987 Alan reached the last 16 in the Men's Singles. In the Men's World Cup Alan gained a bronze medal in 1990 and two placings of 5th in 1991 and 1994.



Figure 5. European League match 2004 with team mates Paul Drinkhall and Andrew Rushton, coach, Steen Kyst Hansen. England beat the Netherlands 3-2 at Barrow-in-Furness.

A span of 20 years playing European League fixtures saw over 50 representative matches played.



Figure 6. National Men's Singles Champion with coach, Derrick Marples who also coached the Ladies Champion, Helen Lower. 2005.

The European Championships saw Alan represent his country on eight occasions, the last in 2005. In the team event Alan collected two European Championships silver medals, 1988 and 1992, and two bronze in 1990 and 1994. In the individual events Alan reached the Quarter-finals in the Men's Singles and the Men's Doubles in 1990.



Figure 7. Alan faces Jan-Ove Waldner, Sweden, at the Kenshoen Super Circuit, Betfred Masters, Fairfield's Hall, Croydon. 2005.

Alan played in the Olympic Games in 1988, the first time table tennis was an Olympic sport, and again in 1992. Alan had qualified for the Seoul Olympics in 1988 by beating Zoran Primorac 21-19 in the fifth, a superb result. He finished 17th overall at the Games winning five matches, including taking the scalps of Jean Michel Saive (Belgium) and Jean-Phillippe Gatien (France), before succumbing to Tibor Klampar of Hungary 25-23 in the fourth.



Figure 8. Commonwealth Games 2006, Melbourne. Men's Doubles with Paul Drinkhall.

Commonwealth events saw a plethora of medals with four team golds in the Commonwealth Championships Team event. Alongside this came two silver medals whilst in the individuals a Men's Singles gold in 1989 and four silver medals were won. Doubles events saw two further silver medals plus several bronze. Alan's last representative match for England was in 2006 in the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. It was the changing of the guard, partnering a young Paul Drinkhall, the pair were Semi-finalists in the Men's Doubles.



Figure 9. World Over 40s Veterans Champion. Bremen 2006.

In 2006 Alan ventured into the world of Veterans' table tennis and in Bremen at the World Veteran's Championships he defeated the Swede, Mikel Appelgren, in the finals of the Men's Over 40s Singles. It was a real pleasure to have been there to witness Alan become a World Champion.



Figure 10. Success at the World Championships in Guangzhou, China, 2008. Ladies Division 2 Champions with Kelly Sibley, Emma Vickers and Joanna Parker (Drinkhall).

In the earlier days of his career Alan was coached by Derrick Marples. Derrick turned out many top class players and Alan has followed in his footsteps. Alan has become an excellent coach with many successes under his belt. He is now as highly respected as a coach as he was as a player. A supreme tactician who brings out the best in his players.



Figure 11. Alan coaching Joanna Parker and Kelly Sibley at the English Open 2009.



Figure 12. and with Paul Drinkhall at the Commonwealth Games 2014.

On the coaching front Alan worked initially with the England ladies before moving over to manage the men's team. It is with the men that such remarkable success has been achieved, particularly over the last twelve months – a bronze medal at the World Championships in 2016 and some stunning results at the Olympic Games in Rio last year.



Figure 13. Jubilation at the World Championships 2016. Photo courtesy of the ITTF.

Alan's successes have been recognised by the ETTA with two Victor Barna Awards, in 1988 and 1989. Alan also became a Vice-President in 2006. A further accolade was awaiting at the end of 2016 when Alan was one of three nominees for the ITTF Star Coach Award. Richly deserved.



Figure14. The ITTF Star Awards nominees 2016. Photo courtesy of the ITTF.

Of all Alan's achievements though perhaps the one he is most proud of is being the first England player to have played in over 1,000 team matches for his country. An incredible record.

Thank you Alan for all you have brought to the game and all you have given to the game.

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/featured-news/friday-photos-92-photos-of-alan-cooke/>