



## Obituary: John Lawton, International Umpire

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Tributes have been paid to International Umpire John Lawton, who has died at the age of 75.

John qualified as a County Umpire in 1980 and as an IU in 1986. He officiated at the Welsh Open in 1987, the European Championships in Paris in 1988, the Commonwealth Championships in Nairobi in 1991, the World Championships in Manchester in 1997 and the Island Games in Shetland in 2005.

John was a regular umpire at all levels of table tennis in England and he last umpired two weeks ago in a Premier British League match at Ormesby. John was a founding member of the Association of English Table Tennis Umpires and won a number of events in the association's annual tournament over the last few years.

Fellow IU Brian Watkins said:

"John was a good friend to me and Barbara. He was very honest and generous, having strong opinions on table tennis, a game he loved. I have spent many an hour speaking with John on rules and regulations. I always complained about his bat, but his expertise with long pimples will never be forgotten. A strong character and will be missed."

John also had long-standing involvement in local table tennis. He was Chairman of the Middlesbrough & District Table Tennis League and the Tournament Organiser for the Middlesbrough Table Tennis Championships for many years and was also a member of the Cleveland County Table Tennis Association Committee, acting as Umpires Secretary and Vice Chairman for a number of years.

John played in lots of local leagues including the Middlesbrough, Stockton, Darlington and Ryedale leagues.

John's funeral will take place on Thursday May 25th at 2pm, at Kirkleatham Crematorium, Fishpond Road, Yearby, TS11 8HH and afterwards at The Stainton pub, TS8 9AZ.

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