



Fellowship honour for para coach Greg

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Posted On: [August 22, 2017](#)

The British Para Table Tennis Team's head coach Greg Baker has joined legendary coaches Sir David Brailsford, Jurgen Grobler, Baroness Sue Campbell and Malcolm Arnold OBE in becoming an honorary member of UK Sport's Coaching Fellowship.

The Fellowship aims to champion the coaching profession and support the development of world class coaches in the UK.

Baker is one of nine coaches from a range of sports to have graduated this year from UK Sport's Elite Coaching Programme and at the age of 31 is the youngest to receive a Fellowship.

Chris Stott, Elite Programme Co-ordinator at UK Sport, said:

Greg was selected by the Fellows themselves to join them as a result of his sustained coaching success on the world stage, his commitment and growth to self-development through the Elite Programme and for his passion for coaching.

Greg's commitment to the Elite Programme saw him develop both as a coach and personally, contributing to the fantastic results of his athletes and inspiring the nation.

Born and raised in Birmingham but now based in Sheffield where the British Para Table Tennis Team trains at the English Institute of Sport, Baker started playing table tennis at the age of eight and lived at the National England Academy as a junior.

He represented England from the age of 12-20, played in five European Youth Championships and was ranked England number 1 in U12, U15 and U18 age groups.

In 2001 he took up coaching and joined the GB Para Table Tennis Team in 2006. After winning four medals in

London 2012, the team won 11 medals at the European Para Championships in 2015 and three medals in the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games – including individual golds for Will Bayley and Rob Davies.

Having been selected for the Elite Coaching Programme, Baker took part in a rigorous three-year course of personal and professional development from 2014–17, both as part of a group and individually, with unparalleled access to expertise, technology and experiences from within and outside the sports industry.

He said:

The Elite Programme has been a great experience and has taught me a lot about leadership and how to manage a team of people as well as providing valuable advice on coaching.

I really enjoy working with Para athletes because of the range of disabilities involved and the challenge that presents. To take a group of athletes from Beijing in 2008 where we didn't win any medals to winning three medals in Rio, including beating China in the team event after they beat us comfortably eight years ago, has been very rewarding and I'm very proud of what we have achieved as a team.

I am absolutely delighted and privileged to be offered a place on UK Sport's Coaching Fellowship. I am extremely passionate about coaching and what it can do to change people's lives and the impact it has on elite performance.

Great Britain has an excellent and ever developing coaching workforce and I believe the Fellowship can help to bring those coaches together to share knowledge, best practice and experiences to create an even stronger British coaching system.

I look forward to continuing to develop my own coaching experience and helping in any way I can to improve the direction and shape of coaching in the UK.

Gorazd Vecko, Performance Director for the British Para Table Tennis Team, said:

Greg's commitment and dedication to Para table tennis has been a significant factor in the success of the team over the past five years. He is always looking to improve and he fully deserves the recognition from UK Sport and the Fellowship. His enthusiasm and energy are a great example to any coach and an inspiration to the athletes in our squad.

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