



After 58 years' service, Colin Clemett retires from TOC

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After an extraordinary 58 years and more than 200 meetings, Colin Clemett has retired as Secretary of the Technical Officials Committee (TOC).

Colin joined the Umpires Committee, as it was known, in 1957 and took on the Secretary's role in 1959, having previously qualified as a County Umpire in 1952 and a National Umpire (No 9 on the list) in 1956.

He went on to qualify as the third National Referee in 1971 and his list of achievements in officiating is both stellar and lengthy.

It includes being Deputy Referee at English Opens between 1961 and 1965 and at the European Championships of 1966 and refereeing the Indian Ocean Island Games in the Seychelles in 1993 and the European Small States Games in Reykjavik four years later.

Colin served as Technical Delegate at the Olympic Games of 1992, 1996 and 2000, the 1999 African Games and the Commonwealth Games held in Manchester in 2002. Colin has also served as Technical Representative at the World team Cup in France, Japan, Spain and the USA and a number of International Championships.

Colin has also had a significant and lasting impact on how officials are trained and supported. Working alongside ITTF colleagues Jean Mercier and Hans Giesecke, Colin introduced the International Umpire qualification in 1973 and wrote all the test papers during the period 1973–2003. And in 1991, he introduced the International Referee qualification and compiled all test papers from then until 2005. He has conducted umpire and referee training seminars in 26 countries.

He wrote the original ITTF Handbook for Umpires (which became the Handbook for Match Officials) in 1969 and the ITTF Handbook for Referees and Tournament Organisers in 1971. He served as Secretary of the ITTF Rules Committee from 1969–73 and then as Chairman for the following 30 years before stepping down in 2003.

Colin, who regards his most satisfying achievement to be his redrafting of the Laws of Table Tennis in 1975 to integrate those relating to singles and doubles play, said he never planned or expected to serve on TOC for so long.

He said:

Table tennis is one of the very few sports at which I had any sort of ability, but very soon after I started playing competitively I realised that I was not going to become world champion or, for that matter, champion of my League, so I turned to umpiring.

I enjoyed serving on the committee and just kept doing it for as long as I felt I could contribute to its work and was allowed to do so. The situation was similar on the ITTF Rules Committee.

I found a lot of satisfaction in helping to ensure that the sport was organised and managed properly and the added bonus for me was the opportunity to travel to over 50 countries and meet people with whom I was able to communicate easily, because we had a common interest.

Colin is not stepping away from volunteering, however, as he remains as Chairman of the Rules Committee.

The current make-up of TOC is: Stuart Sherlock (Chairman), David Edwards, Margot Fraser, Brian Jackson, Harry Jutle, Karen Tonge MBE, John Mackey (Secretary), with Greg Yarnall as staff representative.

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