

Jack Harrington

Jack Harrington, President of the Guildford Table Tennis Association (www.gttl.co.uk), passed away last Thursday (20th Nov, 2014) at the age of 84. He had played last season but had become ill just prior to the start of this season.

Jack was probably the greatest player to have been associated with the Association with the first reference to him in the league's history being the winner of the 1945/46 Junior Boys competition. The following year he was runner up in the Men's Final but after completing National Service in 1950 and 1951 he was untouchable at senior level winning the Men Singles title eight years on the trot and also taking the doubles title for seven of those years with Eric Grabiak. He won the singles and doubles one more time apiece in the mid-sixties. He was good enough to play competitively against Victor Barna and Johnny Leach, two legends of the sport.

He played for Surrey on numerous occasions and spearheaded Guildford's successes in the Surrey inter-league competitions. Jack was a wonderful exponent of the classical style of play and equally proficient at attack or defence- he had no perceivable weaknesses and was able to change his game, tactically, to suit almost any eventuality.

In later years he had been very successful at Veteran's tournaments around the globe alternating World and European Championships, being particularly successful with fellow Guildford player Mike Willimott in doubles competitions.

He became President of the Association in 1992 a post he held until his death. He also won the Sportsmanship award in 1997 and the John Oakley Award for contributions to the Association in 2008. His last actions as President were running the raffle at the Presentation Evening and having his picture taken with the multitude of winners and then a few days later the Association's AGM where he temporarily took the Chair.

The bare facts, though, do not tell of the man himself. As Secretary Carole Ingram says – he was a wonderful man, kind and gentle, a wise and dedicated President, the trusted elder statesman and a highly successful player.

He will be sorely missed by all the players in the Guildford league and by his many friends in this country and the four corners of the globe. A great guy.