



LIFE MEMBERSHIP NOMINATION

Ken Cole

BIOGRAPHY

In newspaper articles of the late 1950's, Ken Cole was described as "a promising young left-hander" "from Sydney".^{2 3}

In the many years since, the promising young left-hander from Sydney has certainly realised his potential ... on and off the table.



Photo featured in Narooma News.¹

Competition highlights included winning the J.P. Oliphant Shield in 1957 and 1958 representing NSW in the Australian Junior Teams Championships with team mates Cliff McDonald and Michael Wilcox. McDonald and Wilcox both went on to re-write the record books by winning many Australian Singles Championships at a very young age; Cliff being 16 and Michael being 18. No other player at that time had won the Senior Championship whilst still being a Junior player.

In 1960, Ken won the NSW Junior Boys Singles title.

As a Senior player Ken found it tough with NSW having the top 4 or 5 players in the Australian rankings. Try as he might, he failed to make the NSW team, but was regularly ranked amongst the top 8 in NSW. Ken won many NSW Doubles Titles in both Men's and Mixed.

In 1964 Ken was elected to the NSWTTA Executive where he was to hold many positions such as Assistant Honorary Secretary, Vice President, President, Team Manager, Senior and Junior Selector, and Delegate.

Twenty years later, Ken stepped down to start a new phase in his life as a player and official in Veterans Table Tennis. In 1984 he was selected as Captain of the Over 40 Team to represent NSW at the first ever Australian National Veterans Championships. Ken continued to hold a position as Team Captain for the next 31 years; stepping down after the 2014 Championships which, ironically, were held at the Kingsborough Table Tennis Centre in Kingston, Tasmania, the very same place the first Championships were held.

¹ Photo courtesy of Narooma News, <https://www.naroomanewsonline.com.au/story/191434/table-tennis-ken-does-it-again/>

² Table Tennis Championships (1958, October 23). *Nepean Times (Penrith, NSW : 1882 - 1962)*, p. 1. Retrieved January 21, 2019, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article101370417>

³ National Champion Enters A.C.T. Open Table Tennis (1959, October 15). *The Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995)*, p. 27. Retrieved January 21, 2019, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article103104024>

Ken was the winner of many Gold Medals at the National Veterans Championships:

In Team Events representing NSW:

1989	Over 40 Men
1991	Over 40 Men
1994	Over 50 Men
1996	Over 50 Men
1997	Over 50 Men
2001	Over 50 Men
2002	Over 60 Men
2003	Over 60 Men
2004	Over 60 Men
2005	Over 60 Men
2006	Over 60 Men
2008	Over 60 Men
2009	Over 60 Men
2010	Over 60 Men

In Individual Events:

1985	Over 40 Men's Doubles with Jim Leggatt (NSW)
1986	Over 40 Men's Doubles with Jim Leggatt (NSW)
1991	Over 40 Men's Doubles with Paul Pinkewich (NSW)
2007	Over 60 Mixed Doubles with Cynthia Langley (SA)

In New Zealand at the New Zealand National Veterans Championships, more Gold Medals were to come Ken's way, winning the Over 35 Singles in 1980 and 1983 and the Over 65 Men's Doubles with Michael Ede (Vic) in 2012.

In 2004 at the World Veterans Championships held in Yokohama, Japan, Ken and Horst Frohlich (Vic) won a Bronze Medal in the Over 60 Men's Doubles for their efforts in making the semi-final, which they lost in a very tight match 11-9, 9-11, 9-11, 9-11.

In 1995 Table Tennis Australia declared a Sub-Committee called the TTA Veterans Committee would be put in place to oversee the running of future National Veterans Championships. Mike Butcher (NT) was appointed as the Chairman and there were other members to be elected. Nominations were called for and Glenys Joliffe (ACT), Margaret Walker (now Gabbedy) (Tas) and Ken were elected.

The Committee remained the same until 1999 when TTA appointed Ken as Chairman owing to Mike Butcher standing down as he was to be the new President of TTA. Ken held the position as Chairman continuously until 2015, at which time he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Ken decided to resign at this point as he felt he could not do justice to the position as he had done in previous years.

Ken has been playing Table Tennis since the early 1950s when he was a young boy and holds the record for the longest continuously registered player in NSW⁴ and has been a TTNSW Life Member since about 2003.

TESTIMONIAL

Provided by Jennifer Aduckiewicz, Veteran's Representative, National Advisory Panel

The tall, slim gentleman with a soft voice is Ken Cole, a great example of the Australian “quiet achiever”. He was born on 24th January 1942 at a time when Australia was on the brink of a Japanese invasion. He began playing table tennis at the age of 12 and by the age of 16 was selected to play for NSW in the Australian Junior Teams Championships with the legendary Cliff McDonald and Michael Wilcox. Together they won the J.P. Oliphant Shield as Australian Junior Champions in 1957 and in 1958. In 1960 Ken won the NSW Junior Boys singles title. He has given his all to the game he loves ever since.

By his own admission, Ken found the Australian Senior Championships tough. He never managed to make the NSW Senior team despite always being ranked in the top 10 players because the standard was so high. NSW regularly had the top 4-5 National players among their ranks. Nevertheless, Ken was a superior team player and won many doubles titles. Despite disappointments, his passion for the game never wavered.

A new era began for Ken when he represented NSW once again at the inaugural National Veterans Championships in Kingston, Tasmania in 1984. From then on, he hardly missed a championship. Clearly, he saw a new opportunity to play the game and build the sport of table tennis. As a Veteran player his way was paved with gold. His NSW Teams won gold medals in the 0/40s, 0/50s and 0/60s Team events from 1989 through to 2010. Again, Ken excelled at doubles, winning gold medals in the Men's Doubles with Jim Leggatt in both 1985 and 1986 and again in 1991 with Paul Pinkewich and was highly successful in the Mixed Doubles with his partner Cynthia Langley. Perhaps his greatest success was winning a bronze medal with Horst Frohlich in the Men's Doubles at the 2004 World Veterans Championships in Yokohama, Japan. They lost the semi-final 11:9 in the 5th. It still hurts!

Ken Cole has been a great table tennis player but his contribution to the game is much more significant. Ken served on the Board of NSW Table Tennis for nearly 20 years as President, Vice-president or Secretary. In recognition of his outstanding service to the game in NSW he was made a Life Member in 2003. When Table Tennis Australia recognised the need to create a committee to help build the sport of table tennis among older players, Ken was elected to the first National Veterans Committee. Under the leadership of Mike Butcher (NT) and together with Glenys Joliffe (ACT) and Margaret Walker (now Gabbedy) (TAS) they set about establishing a vibrant table tennis community which Ken always referred to as our table tennis family. Everyone was welcomed and encouraged to play the game. They organised the National Veterans Championships and spent many hours determining Order of Merit lists totally by hand. Often, they were still finalising these lists when the Dinner Dance began. Ken remained on the NVC for 21 years, 17 of which he was the Chairman.

⁴ Table Tennis - Ken does it again! (2012, June 13). *Narooma News*. Retrieved March 02, 2019, from <https://www.naroomanewsonline.com.au/story/191434/table-tennis-ken-does-it-again/>

Undoubtedly, Ken's greatest contribution to our sport has come from his 17 years as Chairman of the National Veterans Committee. During his tenure and beyond, he has worked tirelessly to ensure the game of table tennis is firmly entrenched in the Veterans community. Through his leadership and strong support of the game, Veterans table tennis has continued to grow and achieve new heights both in standard of play and player involvement. We have seen Teams from New Zealand, Japan, Vietnam, Latvia and China as well as the inclusion of Individual entries from around the world resulting in the establishment of the Australian National Veterans Championships as an international event of high standing. Under Ken's leadership, Australian players have formed part of a global table tennis community.

Ken has always had a close connection to our New Zealand cousins so when Bruce Pemberthy mooted the idea of an Australian / New Zealand Test Match, Ken stepped up to make it happen. The best players from each age group were to represent their respective country in the Trans-Tasman Test Match. The Test Match was to be played on the Thursday night before the New Zealand Veterans Championships held each Easter. To this day, selection is highly competitive with matches being hard fought, but the spirit of camaraderie pervades the event. This reciprocal arrangement started by Ken and Bruce can now be seen at every National Championship across all age levels.

When Ken retired from the National Veterans Committee due to ill health in 2015, Table Tennis Australia recognised his outstanding contribution to Veterans Table Tennis by creating the Ken Cole Trophy. This award is presented to the Best and Fairest Veteran player in any given year. In keeping with Ken's involvement in the sport, the award recognises a player's, International, National and State achievements. It is the highest award bestowed on an Australian Veteran player.

Table Tennis is an Olympic, Commonwealth Games and Paralympic sport and is enjoyed by all ages and is represented in all States and Territories throughout Australia. This year Table Tennis Australia has celebrated our growth to over 100,000 players nationwide with veteran players making up the bulk of this number. Such achievement is in large part due to the efforts of quiet achievers like Ken Cole. Certainly, Ken has embodied our goal, "*To Lead and Enable the Development and Promotion of Australian Table Tennis*".

Mr Ken Cole; a worthy recipient of Life Membership in Table Tennis Australia in 2019.