

Brian Neale (1942-2016)



Former Wellington Table Tennis Association Secretary **Brian Neale** died on the 9th of August 2016 aged 73.

Brian first started playing table tennis at the Stokes Valley Club (1956) at the age of 13. The club was run by Norm McPhee and Frank Miller. He later played at the Taita Club, run by Bob Campbell, a member of the Hutt Valley Table Tennis Executive. Brian won the Hutt Valley F Grade Singles. He rode his bike from Stokes Valley to Lower Hutt to play interclub.

Brian also played cricket and was a spin bowler. He played for the Hutt Valley Primary Schools (1955) including taking 3 for 11 for the Hutt Valley Primary Schools against Wellington Primary Schools. He played against future NZ Representative Rodney Redmond and was in the Naenae College School first eleven in the fourth form (1957) and was selected for the Hutt Valley Colts. Later on he was in the Stokes Valley team that won the Hutt Valley 3rd Grade Competition (1961). His highlight was scoring a century that year.

Brian played table tennis for Victoria University (1962-64) in the Wellington interclub. He played B Grade, then A Reserve and A Grade with Bob Owens, Wim Verhoeven and Len Vincent. In 1963 he won the Waterloo Open Singles and played for Victoria University at the NZ Universities' Winter Tournament in Dunedin. The Victoria University team was Robert Armstrong (Captain), Brian Prendergast, Vic Stubbs and Brian Neale. They won the Teams and were undefeated over the 5 rounds. In the singles Brian defeated the seeded Robert Armstrong and Murray Copen (Canterbury University) to make the final where he lost in 4 games to Brian Prendergast. He was selected for the NZ Universities Men's team together with team mates Brian Prendergast and Robert Armstrong. The Team toured the South Island and played matches against Otago, Southland, South Canterbury, and Canterbury. They paid their own travel cost, travelling by rail, and were billeted in Dunedin,

Invercargill, Timaru and Christchurch. Brian was also in the 1964 Victoria University Team with Barry Cross, Harrison Waterhouse, and Robert Armstrong.

After University Brian taught at primary schools in the Wairarapa (1965-68) and the Marlborough Sounds (1968-70) where he was the sole charge teacher before returning to live permanently to Newlands (Wellington). He continued teaching, first at Hampton Hill School, Tawa, and then as Assistant Deputy Principal at Normandale School and also was a school science advisor.

Brian started playing for the Newlands Table Tennis Club and won the Club Championship Singles a record ten times (1970-1983). He was the Newlands Table Tennis Club Vice Captain (1973) and Auditor (1978). He played A Grade, A Reserve Grade and in the combined Wellington/Hutt Valley Premier 2 Grade for Newlands. Other clubs Brian played for were Karori (1980 & 1981), Hardshots (1991) and Te Rama (1993 and 1994).

Brian won the Wellington A Reserve Grade Singles (1986) and Doubles (1971 with Robert Yee). He was top of the A Reserve averages with 33 wins in 35 games (94.3%) in 1986 and with 35 wins in 39 games (89.7 %) in 1991. He was in the following Wellington A Reserve Grade winning teams.

- 1971 Newlands (Alastair Gooch, Brian Neale, Wim Verhoven).
- 1986 Newlands (Brian Neale, Kaz Witko, Bob Bell, Chas Wong)
- 1989 Newlands (Brian Neale, Bob Bell, Adrian Sutton, Pam Sutton).
- 1993 Te Rama (Malcolm Wong, Martin Young, Brian Neale)

Brian represented Wellington Men (1963) against Kapiti (won 8-4). He represented Wellington in the annual match against Hutt Valley in B Grade (1962) won 8-4, A Reserve Grade (1972) won 9-3, A Reserve Grade (1983) Lost 2-12, Wellington Veterans (1987) Lost 3-9. He also represented Wellington at the NZ Championships in the Over 40 A Grade Men's Teams (1985 & 1986) which was placed 3rd twice.

Brian was on the Wellington Table Tennis Association Committee (1964) and was Wellington Association Secretary (1983-1989). He was elected a Wellington Table Tennis Association Vice President (1994). Brian was also actively involved in tennis, being the Newlands Tennis Club President (1995-2002).

Brian, until his illness last year, was involved with the Titan Club as the Secretary and Vice President, and turning up for his rostered duty day and at the AGM. He had enjoyed outdoors activities, especially tramping, and was a avid watcher and listener of sport, including horse racing.

-Malcolm Wong