

Tony Rutledge – The Evergreen Sportsman.



Tony Rutledge – 2016 Marlborough Open Over 60 Singles and Doubles winner.

Tony was born in Blenheim (1946). He was the youngest of 6 Children (2 boys and 4 girls). He started played rugby (1955) and tennis (1956) while at primary school. Tony was a second five eight in rugby and was selected for Marlborough Intermediate School Boys Rugby Team (1958) against Nelson.

His father, Jack, was a champion rower. He was in the Wairau (Marlborough) Cox Four (Wally Gibbons (stroke), Harry Rutledge, Jack MacDonald, Jack Rutledge, G Elsmore (cox)), at the 1934 NZ Championship held in Picton, which won the New Zealand Title. Also in the crew was his uncle Harry. Jack also raced motor cycles and later speedboat racing, where he has won the Pelorus Jack Cup (1964) and South Island unlimited championships on "Excuse Me Too". Tony also raced on this boat. His uncle, Harry, was also a competitor in speedboat racing and won NZ's Premier Speed Boat event, the Masport Cup twice (1968 & 1969) on "Tru-Jen".

Tony started playing table tennis interclub in Marlborough (1962) at age 16. He played 2 years in B Grade and then A Grade (1964). His brother, David, also played A Grade. Tony was coached by Nigel Perry, a great stalwart of Marlborough tennis and table tennis. Tony has always played with a hard bat, with short pimple rubber on both sides. He had a all round style. Tony was Co Dux at Marlborough Boy's College (1964) and won the Marlborough Open under 18 Boys Singles and Doubles (with Bill Cockram) that year.

In 1965 Tony moved to Christchurch to study engineering at Canterbury University (1965-69) where he completed a BE and ME degree. He played Canterbury A Reserve Grade Table Tennis (1965-66) and then A Grade (1967-69).

Tony worked for NZ Electricity at Marsden (1970) near Whangarei and played A Grade Table Tennis for the Kamo Club. He then moved to the Wairakei geothermal power

station (1971-72) and played Taupo A Grade. In 1973 Tony moved to NZ Electricity Head Office in Wellington and played for the Hospital Club (1973) and Te Rama Club (1974-80). Tony was in the winning 1975 Te Rama Team (with Alan Eng, Dick Coker) in the Summer (After Christmas) 1st Division B. Tony (with Graeme Jourdain and Murray Talbot) was in the 1977 Te Rama A Reserve Grade winning team and won the A Reserve Grade Doubles with Murray Talbot. In his Te Rama B Team in A Grade (1978-80) were Ann Gyongyos, and Kay Kelly. List of players in teams did not exist in the Wellington Table Tennis Association Annual Report, except for winning teams, prior to 1978. He also played in Kapiti A Grade interclub (1976-80). He won the 1976 Porirua Table Tennis Club Singles and was in the Porirua Red Team (with Murray and Chris Talbot) that won the 1980 Kapiti Division 1 Competition (P Ngan Cup). Tony was selected in the Kapiti Men's Team for the 1977 NZ Championships.

Tony moved to the Hutt Valley (1981) and has played for the Empire Club since then. He played Premier 1, Premier 2, A Grade, A Reserve Grade and Division 1, for Empire. He was in the Empire winning Premier 2 Team on 7 occasions, and in 2 Empire Teams that has won Division 1. In winning 2015 Division 1 (Series 1) his Empire Team became the first winners of the Chris Williams Cup. Tony also won the Division 1 Grade Singles (2015 & 2016). His best season was in 2008 where he was headed the interclub averages in Premier 2 with 100%, winning all his 36 singles.

Winning Empire Interclub Teams

Year	Grade	Players
1981	Premier 2	John Lelliott, Chris Clegg, Tony Rutledge, Paul Ridley.
1982	Premier 2	John Lelliott, Chris Clegg, Tony Rutledge, Paul Ridley, Albie Roberts.
1985	Premier 2	Michael McCleary, Brendon Pearson, Kristen Phillips, Tony Rutledge.
1993	Premier 2	John Lelliott, Heath Murdoch, Tony Rutledge.
1994	Premier 2	John Lelliott, Heath Murdoch, Tony Rutledge.
2006	Premier 2	Stephan Gerszewski, Thom Nguyen, Tony Rutledge, Dzeung Nguyen.
2008	Premier 2	Chris Williams, Bruce Connolly, Uy Tang, Tony Rutledge.
2015	Division 1 (Series 1)	Tony Rutledge, Bob Leeming, Bruce Connolly, Russell Buchanan.
2016	Division 1 (Series 2)	Tony Rutledge, Andrew Maguire, Brendyn Shaw.

Up to the end of 2015 Tony has played the most times for Empire at winter interclub (413). At the Empire Club Championships Tony has won the Men's Singles twice (1993 & 1996), Men's Doubles 7 times (1985, 1986, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2007) and Mixed Doubles twice (1994 & 1995). Tony had the best interclub record at the Empire Club (2008, 2012, 2013, 2015) and won the Best Sportperson Trophy twice (1985, 2003).

Tony was a Hutt Valley and Wellington Veterans Representative at the NZ Championships and NZ Veterans Championships. He was in the Wellington Team (with Warren Evans and Bryan McConnochie) that won the NZ Men's Over 55 Teams (2003). At the NZ Masters Games (Wanganui). Tony has won 7 Golds in table tennis, which were for the Over 35 Teams (2007), Over 45 Teams (2003), Over 35 Men's Doubles (1999), Over 35 Mixed Doubles (1999) and 3 Over 55 Men's Doubles (2005, 2009, 2015).

Tony has won the Kapiti Over 35 Men's Singles (1988), Wellington Open Over 50 Singles (1997) and Wairarapa Over 40 Men's Singles (2002).

In Tennis Tony has been runner up in the club singles at the Kilbirnie Tennis Club (1981) and Avalon Tennis Club (1982). He was in the Avalon Men's Team that the Hutt Valley Men's Division 1 (2009-2010). At the NZ Masters Games (Wanganui) Tony won the Gold Medal in the Over 60 Men's Tennis Singles (2007 & 2011).

Tony ran for Aurora Harriers in Petone (1984-89). In 1986 he ran the Rotorua and Masterton Marathons. His best time was 3 hours 25 minutes and 25 seconds at Masterton.

Tony has a keen interest in model power boat racing. He was the secretary of the NZ Model Power Boat Association (1979-87, 1990-91) and was made a Life Member in 2002. He has won the Presidents Cup 12 times for being best overall results at the NZ Model Power Boat Championships (1979, 1987-1991, 1997, 1999, 2001-2004). Tony holds a number of speed and matrix records for model power boat racing. He has represented New Zealand at the 1979 NAMBA Nationals held at Monterey, California (USA) where he was placed 1st (1 hour endurance and ½ hour endurance overall) and 2nd (1/2 hour race). Tony set 2 endurance records at the NAMBA Nationals for 1 hour and ½ hour. Tony went to the Indy Down Under near Sydney in 1991 where he placed 3rd (6 lap race).

Today Tony continues to play tennis, table tennis, build and race model speed boats. At the 2016 Antique and Classic Boat Show held at Lake Rotoiti (Nelson Lake District Park) he won the Eventiac best theme display, a model boat display. Tony played for Wellington at the 2016 NZ Table Tennis Veteran Championships where he won silver in the Over 65 teams with Bryan McConnochie and was unbeaten in the over 70 teams event. In 2016 Tony has won the Wellington Autumn Open Over 65 Singles, Wellington Veterans Over 70 Singles and the Marlborough Open Over 60 Singles and Doubles.

Information for this article came from the following. Table Tennis Wellington Annual Reports and TTW website, 1980 Kapiti Table Tennis Association Annual Report, Empire Table Tennis Club 75th anniversary book and website, The NZ Model Power Boat Association website, The Marlborough Pictorial (Feb 1971), The NZ Power Boat Association website and The Manukau Power Boat Club website.



1977 Kapiti Teams at NZ Championships.

L/R: rear: **Joyce Harris, Jean Radford, Louise Roberts**
front: **Tony Rutledge, Chris Talbot, Ross Talbot**



1981 Empire Premier 2 winning team.
John Lelliott, Chris Clegg, Tony Rutledge.



1982 Empire Premier 2 winning team.
John Lelliott, Paul Ridley, Tony Rutledge.



1985 Empire Premier 2 winning team.
Michael McCleary, Kristen Phillips, Brendon Pearson, Tony Rutledge.



1993 & 1994 Empire Premier 2 winning team.
Tony Rutledge, John Lelliott, Heath Murdoch.



2015 Empire Division 1, Series 1 winning team.
Back - Bob Leeming, Russell Buchanan, Tony Rutledge
Front - Bruce Connolly with the Chris Williams Cup



1971 –Tony Rutledge in “Excuse Me Too”, Lake Rotoiti (Nelson Lake District Park).



Tony at the NZ Model Powerboat Championships.





April 2001 Silver Cup Regatta (Hamilton Lake) – Model Power Boats.
Far right is Tony Rutledge.



2016 - Tony Rutledge, in his 1952 Citroën Light 15 Sedan, which was originally owned by his late father, Jack.