

TRIBUTE TO ALAN HEWITT by Mat Hobday

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Alan Hewitt at the age of 44. Alan sadly passed away on the 1st June after a short, but courageous battle with cancer. Alan was not only one of my best friends, but also the kindest and bravest person I have met. We met when I was 12 and he was 10. We were at Etone Sports Centre attending a Nuneaton table tennis coaching initiative, and from that point onwards our friendship was formed. Me and Alan were far more than just table tennis mates though, as we socialised a lot outside of table tennis and went on numerous nights out and stag parties together.

It was table tennis though that bonded us, and Alan was a top player in every league he played in, which included the Leicester, Leamington, Coventry, Birmingham, Hinckley and Nuneaton leagues. Alan actually won the Leicester, Leamington and Nuneaton open singles titles...Nuneaton and Leicester by the age of 18. He also represented Warwickshire at every age group, including the senior first team, and he also represented the Leicestershire senior first team as well, which is quite an achievement to represent two different counties at senior level. Furthermore, Alan was part of the Nuneaton town team with me, David Grundy and Andy Lebutt that won the men's midland league title, an achievement both us were very proud of as Nuneaton lads.

Alan first started playing in the Leicester league in the 1995-96 season when he joined me at Rushy Mead in a team with David Grundy and Andy Lebutt, a team which won division 1 that same season. He also won the league with David and Andy again whilst playing for Leicester Electricity.

In addition to table tennis, Alan was also an exceptional runner and he completed numerous marathons over the years and he was also the cross-country battalion champion whilst he was in the army

To see how Alan handled his ill health and situation really was inspirational. I was honoured to be a pallbearer at his funeral, and even more honoured to deliver the eulogy, as Alan really was a funny, generous, and brave man who had a calming influence on everyone he met. Like so many, I will miss Alan a lot, but his legacy will live on through his beautiful boy Arthur.

Mat.