

A void of time without table tennis – Dennis' story

Theme: Coronavirus, life balance, mental wellbeing

Defining the Issue

Table tennis plays an important role in maintaining daily routine and life balance. The Coronavirus pandemic and national lockdown has reduced table tennis activity, creating a void of time for those with regular involvement.

Background

At 73 years of age, Dennis Bradshaw has been playing table tennis for 45 years, never missing a season. With more available time after retiring from engineering, Dennis has played in up to five leagues and coaches in various capacities, namely as Head Coach at Glossop Table Tennis Club.

Since his first playing experiences at school and at a local youth centre as a youngster, Dennis continues to strive and get better.

“As a coach, I like to pass on my knowledge. As a player, playing table tennis is something I’ve wanted to do from a young age. Table tennis has been a major part of my life, and I want to continue until I can’t.”

Playing table tennis has helped Dennis to keep fit and understand the importance of active lifestyle.

“I feel very fit for my age. Table tennis helps me keep healthy, both mentally and physically.”

Dennis also tells of the social opportunities provided by table tennis, where he has met many likeminded people during his years of playing.

When Coronavirus forced a national lockdown, all table tennis activity stopped, leaving a void of time for Dennis to fill.



Impact

“All table tennis has stopped for me at this moment in time, and to be honest, I’m finding it very difficult. I’m missing it.”

While not being able to play table tennis, Dennis has maintained his physical fitness by going out on regular walks, runs and bike rides. But he admits, for good mental wellbeing he relies on regular involvement in table tennis.

“Mentally, I’m better when I’ve got table tennis to be involved with, whether I’m playing or coaching. It’s a real benefit to me.”

Between the first national lockdown and current, Dennis returned to some coaching, which he found difficult with restrictions in place. After the current lockdown, he expects restrictions to continue having a negative impact on the coaching experience.

“I’m quite tactile, so I like to move peoples arms and get them in the right positions. Not being able to shake hands or give a pat on the back is weird for me.”

Dennis also felt the rule of six reduced opportunities for players to socialise and practise against opposition of varying abilities.

“It’s strange having to restrict players from interacting and ensure social distancing. They want to socialise and be together, because that’s how table tennis is meant to be.”

In preparation for the return to coaching, Dennis has been utilising resources provided by Table Tennis England and content on YouTube.

Dennis looks forward to returning to playing. In the meantime, he intends to explore local parks for outdoor tables and anticipates the time when he can get together with family and play on his sons home equipment.

“I’m proposing to have a match with my son on his own table, the next time I can see him.”

Key Learnings

1. Table tennis helps keep daily routine and life balance
2. Mental wellbeing is negatively impacted without table tennis.
3. Coronavirus is changing the social aspect of the game.

Further Information

For more advice and guidance on table tennis during Coronavirus, please click [here](#).



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