

† Ken SMITH

(18/8/1930 – 5/01/2013)

'Tennis SA - LONG SERVICE AWARD'

Tennis Seniors SA – Riverland Division Life Membership – 2004



Recently Tennis SA held an Awards Presentation Night and I would like to bring to the notice of all readers the magnificent contribution to tennis in SA of a man from the Riverland Tennis Association, Kenneth 'Ken' Gordon SMITH, a quiet unassuming man from Berri in the Riverland.

HISTORY

Berri Zone Juniors: Organiser from 1970-1995; entailing organising teams and programmes for Saturday morning competition. Collects and records all results and prepares premiership tables. Ken acts as Competition Referee and arranges end of year presentations.

Junior Activities Committee: (known originally as Age Tournament Committee) Prepares and organises the Age Tournament which was held over 3 days after Xmas. This includes preparing times and publicity, acting as Tournament Referee and being present each day of the 3-day tournament.

Macdonald's Riverland Junior Tennis Squad: Founded by Ken as Custom Credit Junior Development. Organised interested people, coaches, and committee to adopt his plan 1982-1985. Ken attended local regional and central (Adelaide) meetings. Prepared publicity for local media (papers, radio, and television).

Berriview Lawn Tennis Club: Ken joined the Club in 1970. Junior Coach 1971 - 1995. Life Membership was awarded to him in 1983. Ken played Division I every year to 1993 and now competes in Division 2. His coaching programme included: Monday evenings, primary school children; Thursday evenings, secondary school children; and Saturday mornings, beginners.

Riverland Veterans: Ken formed Riverland Group in 1988. President 1988-1995. Ken is well known by his many Adelaide and other Veteran Groups of South Australia for the Veterans Team Competition on the May holiday weekend, which now caters for near 80 teams and is one of the most popular fixtures for Veterans in SA.

Riverland Association RLTA: President 1961-1966. Secretary 1956- 1960. Life Member 1969. Country Doubles Champion three times; Country Singles Junior Champion; Country representative SA v Victoria; Riverland ' Most Singles' winner 1965-66, 1968-69; Murray Pioneer Trophy (outstanding man in A Grade) 1960, 1961 and 1962. Donation of Shield 'Ken Smith Shield' for junior tennis matches between Riverland Renmark Singles 1955-1960 and Doubles 1955, 1960, 1963. Riverland Open Champion Singles 1966 and Doubles 1963-1967, 1968 and 1978.

Does anyone think Ken is a man with nothing but tennis on his mind?

He is a family man with wife Rusty and three adult children and a proud Grandfather. He has been an active member of the Hospital Board, Cultural Trust and TAFE College Board to name just a few.

The Veterans Tennis Association would like to commend Ken on his outstanding contribution to tennis in the Riverland and South Australia and congratulate him for his " Long Service Award" presented to him by Tennis SA in April.

Footnote:

I would like to thank Mike SCHULTZ and all Riverland tennis players, also Mike POWERS of Tennis SA who supplied me with all this great information on Ken and I would finish off by saying "Well done Ken , and keep up your wonderful work for Tennis - we need you."
Pat McCLEAN, 2004.

Ken SMITH died on 5th January 2013 and the following was published in SA-VET 1. Mar Vol 106:

Vale – Ken SMITH 18-8-1930 to 5-1-2013

We are saddened to report the death on 5th January of Ken SMITH, our esteemed Life Member from the Riverland Division.

Ken was the dearly loved husband of Rusty, loved father of Mark, Brad and Janet, and father-in-law of Bob. He was the loving grandfather of Jess, Luke and Jack, Chelsea and Douglas.

About 200 people attended Ken's Memorial Service at the Berri-View Tennis Club to pay tribute to a man who was a lifetime contributor to the sporting life in the Riverland, not only in tennis, but also in Australian Rules football, badminton and golf.

Ken was a member of Barmera Tennis Club from 1955 to 1969, filling the roles of President, Vice-President, and Club Captain. He was a Life Member of that Club, played in eight premierships and organised junior competitions in the 1958/59 season. In 1970, Ken joined the Berri-View Lawn Tennis Club, coaching juniors from 1971 until 1991, became a Life Member in 1983 and played Division 1 every year until 1991. He was associated with junior tennis at both Barmera and Berri-View over a period of 40 years and founded the Riverland Junior Tennis Squad, firstly under sponsorship of Custom Credit, then McDonalds, being the Regional Coordinator of the squad for 15 years. In addition, he served as President, Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Riverland Lawn Tennis Association from 1956 until 1966 and was very successful on court, being Riverland Open Champion a record eight times in singles. He played a major role in the establishment of the current Berri-View Complex, being solely responsible for the court design and layout, as well as the design and installation of the drainage system. Ken with Alby MARSCHALL established the Riverland Veterans Division in 1988 and organised the first Veteran's Team Event in May of that year with 20 teams. He continued directing this annual tournament for many years. This event is now in its 26th year and regularly has 500 or more players from around Australia and as far afield as New Zealand. It is the largest Seniors Tournament in Australia. Life Membership of Tennis Seniors Association of SA was bestowed on Ken in 2004. He continued playing every Saturday until late 2011 in spite of illness and other medical issues, with his last set on 3rd November 2012.

Sources:

Pat McCLEAN, 2004.

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The following article was published in The Advertiser on May 11, 2013, several months after Ken had died and you can appreciate that Ken's achievements were varied and significant in a number of fields, other than tennis.



Milestones

Ken Smith

Irrigation specialist, sportsman and community leader

Born: Cleve, August 18, 1930

Died: Berri, January 5, 2013

Leader in water issues

Ken Smith

KEN spent much of his early life in a tent as his father looked for work during the Depression.

They finally settled on a fruit block in the Riverland and in 1947 Ken took a job as a junior draftsman with the E&WS (now SA Water).

Denied the opportunity for schooling in early life, Ken embarked on a program of self-education. He rose to the position of superintending technical officer, supervising the provision of irrigation and drainage advisory design services for irrigation properties throughout the Riverland. He made a huge contribution to the understanding of drainage and salinity issues. His expertise extended to wetlands development and included advice on natural resource management of the Murray Darling Basin.

Ken was recognised internationally through his involvement as South Australian representative on the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage.

He retired from E&WS in 1992 but immediately surfaced as Ken Smith Technical Services and for the next 20 years provided support to many government departments, consultants, and community and industry groups. It was during this time that he made an enormous contribution to irrigator and community understanding of the River Murray system and the need to manage both environment and irrigation in a long-term, sustainable manner.

He was always one for an informed, balanced approach.

But Ken was much more than irrigation professional; he was an avid sportsman and a community leader.

Ken not only played senior tennis in the Riverland for 50 years

but coached too – and he played a key role in the development and administration of the game at all levels.

Ken also played badminton and was an enthusiastic football player and follower.

He also played a leading role in the development of TAFE services in the region as president of the Riverland College, services for the disabled, and the new TAFE complex in Berri and branches at Loxton and Cadell.

He was also active on school councils and the Riverland Regional Hospital board.

Ken's services were recognised through numerous awards.

Simply put, Ken Smith was a self-made expert in his field – and a humble, good man who gave himself to his family, community and profession.

He is survived by Rusty, his wife of 57 years, children Mark, Janet and Brad, and five grandchildren.