



TABLE TENNIS AUSTRALIA HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE ATHLETES - OPEN

Awarded by TTA to recognise outstanding contributions to table tennis as an Athlete



Michael SZABADOS*

(New South Wales)

Life Summary

Alternative Names

- Miklós SZABADOS

Birth

- 07 Mar 1912
- Budapest, Hungary

Death

- 12 Feb 1962
- Sydney, New South Wales

Australian Residence

- Sydney, Australia, from 1939



Overview

Michael (Miklós) Szabados, one third of the infamous Hungarian trio (Barna-Szabados-Bellak) known as the "Three Musketeers", first came to Australia in 1937 as part of a world tour with fellow Hungarian, Istvan (Stephen) Kelen. The pair of them had an accumulated haul of 22 World Championships titles, amassed between the years of 1929 and 1935. The tour was the longest tour in the history of table tennis lasting about 2 years, during which Szabados and Kelen travelled through many countries in Asia, the Pacific, Africa and America promoting the sport of table tennis.

They played exhibition matches in Adelaide and Sydney and whilst in Sydney, competed in the Australian Table Tennis Carnival at Rushcutter's Bay Stadium. They walked away with 3 out of the 5 Australian titles on offer; Szabados took the Men's Singles title (defeating Kelen in the final), the pair of them took the Men's Doubles title and Kelen took the Mixed Doubles title with Adela Jacobs (NSW). Moving south to Melbourne, they then competed in the first international table tennis test match to be played in Australia which was held at Wirth's Olympia. Representing Australia in singles was E. Keith Baker (NSW) and Hector Oakley (Vic) and in doubles was Murray Coleman (SA) and Ken Adamson (Vic). The Hungarians trounced the Aussies 5-0.

Szabados and Kelen both fell in love with Australia during that tour so within a couple of years both had returned to settle in Sydney.

Over the next 20 or so years, Szabados owned and ran several table tennis academies, was involved in the organisation of table tennis tournaments, and invested many hours coaching young players. Two of his most successful proteges were Cliff McDonald and Michael Wilcox, who both went on to represent Australia and won many Australian titles of their own in the Junior and Senior age groups.

In an endeavour to promote the game, Szabados travelled the country with some of his pupils and gave many entertaining exhibitions, defending metres from the table, playing with 2 or 3 balls at once or hitting the ball behind his back or between his legs.

The combination of his coaching and exhibitions during the 1940s and 1950s served to not only popularise the game but also to improve the quality of play here in Australia. In the 1950s, Michael Szabados was referred to as the "uncrowned king" of Table Tennis in Australia. His sudden passing of a heart attack in 1962 at the age of 49 came as a shock to Australia and the world.

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Highest Ranking

- World - equal #1 in 1931
- National - #1 in 1950 and 1952

Australian Representation

2 x Test Matches:

- 11 Aug 1949 v England in Melbourne;
- 20 Jul 1951 v England/France in Sydney.

International Medals

Total International Medals: 36.

- World Championships*:
 - 5 x Singles - Gold 1931, Silver 1929, 1932, 1935, Bronze 1934;
 - 6 x Doubles - Gold 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1934, 1935;
 - 5 x Mixed - Gold 1930, 1931, 1934, Silver 1932, Bronze 1935;
 - 5 x Teams - Gold 1929, 1930, 1931, 1934, 1935.
- Austrian Open*:
 - 2 x Doubles - Gold 1929, 1930.
- Czechoslovak Open*:
 - 1 x Singles - Gold 1932.
- English Open*:
 - 2 x Singles - Gold 1930/31, 1931/32;
 - 2 x Doubles - Gold 1930/31, 1935/36;
 - 1 x Mixed - Gold 1931/32.
- German Open*:
 - 2 x Doubles - Gold 1931, 1932;
 - 2 x Mixed Doubles - Gold 1930, 1932.
- Hungarian Open*:
 - 3 x Singles - Gold 1929, 1931, 1934.

** International Medals won whilst representing Hungary and prior to residing in Australia.*

Note: Szabados is likely to have won many other International Medals. These will be added as evidence comes to hand.

- ITTF Hall of Fame Induction: 1993 (posthumously).

National Titles and Awards

Total National Titles: 6.

- Australian Open:
 - 3 x Singles - 1937*, 1950, 1952;
 - 1 x Doubles - 1937*, 1950;
 - 1 x Mixed - 1955.

** National Titles won as a Hungarian visitor prior to residing in Australia.*

- TTA Hall of Fame Induction - Athletes - Open: 1996 (posthumously).

State Titles

Total State Titles: 6.

- New South Wales Open Championships:
 - 2 x Singles - 1947, 1953;
 - 1 x Mixed - 1953.
- Victorian Open Championships:
 - 2 x Singles - 1947, 1952;
 - 1 x Doubles - 1952.



(1948). Michael Szabados table tennis / photographed by B. Rice.

Sources include: ETTA Magazine - Sep 1947. "ITTF 1926 - 2001, Table Tennis Legends". TTA Honour Rolls. 1989 Austrian Open Event Program. Wikipedia for "German Open (table tennis)". Digitised Newspapers on the National Library of Australia's website, TROVE.