**Robert McCoig International** – Scotland V England

This match was inaugurated in January 2000 to celebrate the memory of the greatest badminton player Scotland had produced. Robert McCoig was born in 1937 and began playing badminton in the early fifties at his local church club in Greenock.

He was encouraged by his parents, and his Uncle Robert, a former internationalist. In 1956, at the age of eighteen, he made his debut for Scotland and went on to represent his country some sixty-seven times before his retirement from International play in 1976.

Robert dominated Scottish badminton for a period of twenty years. He won fifteen National singles titles and a host of doubles and mixed titles with a variety of partners. He won the Scottish Open singles title four times, as well as many other international events.

In 1976 he won Scotland’s first badminton medal at a Commonwealth Games in partnership with Muriel Woodcock. On court, he was a tough competitor as it is possible to meet, but he was always courteous and scrupulously fair. Of court he was charming, friendly, and the best possible ambassador for Scottish Badminton. His name, as a player and as a person, is remembered around the world with respect and affection.

In 1974 he was honoured with the award of MBE for his services to Scottish Badminton. Robert had a great interest in the history of the game, and was punctilious about accuracy, as Mac Henderson recalls. “The Herald, one of Scotland’s premier daily newspapers, recently ran a series of articles on the whereabouts of erstwhile famous Scottish Sportspersons, and Robert was included in the series. After reading the article on Robert, I phoned him to say what a good article it was. He agreed, but quickly asked if I had picked up the mistake made by the writer. I had to admit that I had not. The article stated that Robert had been Captain of the Scottish Commonwealth Games Team – a great honour for Scottish Badminton – in 1970 rather than 1974. Robert went on to explain that, as well as abhorring the inaccuracy, he was concerned that the wife and family of Crawford Fairbrother, who had actually been the Captain in 1970 and who was now dead, might have read the article and been upset by the mistake.”

Many people here today will have their own memories of Robert McCoig. Right up until the time of his death he was a regular attraction at Masters tournaments, constantly adding to his list of titles and his circle of friends. One of his great ambitions was to be in a Scottish Team which defeated England. He never quite managed that but this match ensures that his name remains linked to the contest between the two countries, and so the hope lives on.

The initial match was held at Inverclyde NTC, Largs on Friday 21st January 2000. England sealed the victory by 18 matches to 6. The Robert McCoig International truly started the strong competition between both countries and has attracted some of the very best of British players over the years.

Click <here> to view the original programme.