

THE HOCKEY WRITERS' CLUB

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The Times Sydney Friskin Memorial award 2003.

MIKE CORBY – **HOCKEY OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR**

MICHAEL (M.W.) CORBY, the president of English Hockey Association, has been named the winner of The Times Sydney Friskin Memorial Silver Goblet for 2003.

The award is made annually to a UK individual for outstanding services to the sport of Hockey.

The 62-year-old Corby will receive his award from Sydney Friskin's son, Neil, in the company of David Chappell, Sports Editor of The Times, at the annual presentations of the Hockey Writers' Club, being held this year at the Wimbledon Club (home of Wimbledon Hockey Club), Church Road, Wimbledon on Monday 26th January, 2004.

The former hockey and squash international has received the award for his stoic determination to settle the debts incurred by the English Hockey Association which is in the process of being disbanded now that the government of hockey has been taken over by English Hockey Ltd.

Facing creditors of £600,000 and a VAT assessment of £500,000, Corby has worked tirelessly and certainly beyond the call of duty, to seek settlements. In 2003, he achieved a major break-through when he negotiated a settlement of the VAT debt. His successful negotiations will bring a huge sigh of relief to all the clubs, counties and divisions, in England for they might well have been called upon to cover the debt.

David Chappell, Sports Editor of The Times has this to say about the award: "Sydney Friskin enjoyed watching and reporting on Mike Corby's performances as a player for club and country and would be delighted that he has served hockey so selflessly as an official. Mike is a truly outstanding and deserving winner of this annual award given in Sydney's memory."

As a hockey player Corby captained both England and Great Britain, playing in two Olympics. He was regarded as an outstanding player, arguably the best ever produced by Britain.

Twenty-five years ago Mike Corby Group Ltd was formed when a squash club was opened under London Bridge From this humble beginning his company has developed into a multi million Fitness and Squash empire.

Corby was elected a vice president of the EHA four years ago and became president two years later. He quickly found himself embroiled in a financial fiasco which brought the game into disrepute and near bankruptcy. A lesser mortal might have fled the scene but Mike chose to fight it out and with his characteristic energy, determination, ability and self-confidence did so much to repair the irreparable.

He will remain president until the affairs of the association are finally completed. Meanwhile this former vice president of the World Squash Federation, continues as president of the English Squash Rackets Association. He has just been re-elected their president of for a further three-year term.

In the view of the judges, David Chappell, Patrick Rowley (Chairman, HWC) and Dil Bahra (Secretary, HWC), he has made a truly outstanding contribution to the sport he loves.

Previous winners of the Friskin Goblet were Ernest Wall O.B.E., Robert Watson and David Collier.

The Sydney Friskin Goblet is just one of several awards to be handed out at the Wimbledon Club on January 26. Stephen Martin, Deputy Chief Executive of the British Olympic Association and a member of Great Britain's 1988 Olympic gold medal winning team, will also make the presentations to the male and female 2003 UK Players of the Year. The winners of Chris Moore Memorial Regional Hockey Writers Awards will also receive their prizes.

The awards bearing the names of Sydney Friskin and Chris Moore are in memory of two highly respected hockey correspondents.

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