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2003 GLTA Hall of Fame Inductee – Tom Bijlmer

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Tom Bijlmer has been active in tennis clubs most of his playing career, he was the co-founder of the PINK tournament and later of Smashing Pink and with that initiated and organized gay tennis in Amsterdam. He was one of the people responsible for the organization of tennis at the Amsterdam Gay Games of 1998.

Eleven years ago, as a preparatory tournament before the Gay Games in New York, Tom co-organized the first gay and lesbian tennis tournament in Amsterdam: the PINKster Tournament. The first tournament attracted 36 participants. Since then it has grown to a tournament of over 400 participants from all over the world. Over the years Tom has continued to be active in the organization of the tournament.

After the Gay Games in New York, he co-founded Smashing Pink, the first European gay and lesbian tennis club. Although it would have been logical (and probably easier) to focus on an all male club, he assisted Smashing Pink in starting a mixed tennis club and now it is the largest mixed gay sport club in Europe. He was a member of the board for a couple of years and a member of the technical committee for much longer. He is still active in the organization of the PINK Tournament.

He was a volunteer in the 1998 Gay Games organization and was one of three people that organized the tennis for the Gay Games: a flawless tournament for 1050 participants.

Tom is an initiator and a communicator, he is very good at bringing people together, inspiring them and making things happen.

He won several GLTA tournaments and won gold medals during the Gay Games of Amsterdam

Tom has been THE embodiment of Gay Tennis in Holland for over a decade. It was mainly his enthusiasm that laid the groundwork for the fabulous club and tournament in Amsterdam and was thereby indirectly an important catalyst in the recent growth of the number of gay tournaments in Europe.

Congratulations Tom on being the recipient of the 2003 GLTA Hall of Fame award!

