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80-year-old Blackpool Heart Op Man Becomes National Tennis Champion

WHEN Tom Baron suffered a heart attack whilst playing tennis six years ago he feared his days of playing the sport were over.

Little did he know that he would go on to be crowned the Veteran's GB Indoor Tennis Champion, just days before his 80th birthday.

After suffering the heart attack Tom underwent a quadruple heart bypass at the Lancashire Cardiac Centre in Blackpool by cardiac surgeon Joseph Zacharias. He left hospital five days later and just four months later tennis-mad Tom was back on the court.

Tom, who is married to Christine and has been playing tennis since the age of 18, said: "At the time of the surgery they told me it was a major operation and there was a 10 per cent chance I could die. I had the operation in the March and fortunately all went well and I was allowed home five days later. I then did a cardiac rehabilitation programme and in the July I was back playing tennis and by the August I was playing at Wimbledon.

"I will always be grateful to Mr Zacharias and his team at the Lancashire Cardiac Centre. They were magnificent. I have played tennis for all of my life so it is fantastic that I have been able to make such a good recovery to not only get back to playing tennis but to go on and win this event.

He added: "I have played all over the country at various national competitions but the highlight was definitely winning the GB Veterans Tennis Championship in both the 80's singles and doubles categories."

Tom has celebrated his 80th birthday this week in New York, but he is not showing any signs of retiring from the game. He is now busy preparing for the European Championships in Italy and the Adriatic Championships in Croatia.

Mr Zacharias, Consultant Cardiac Surgeon, who carried out Tom's quadruple heart bypass, said: "We are all delighted that Tom has done so well and the cardiac team would like to congratulate him on his amazing achievement."

For further information about this Press Release, please call Caroline Hastie, Head of Communications, on 01253 303538. **Please note the photos are provided courtesy of Blackpool Gazette and must be acknowledged if reproduced.**



Pics: Tom Celebrating his win at the national Veterans Tennis Championships

