U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM
Jim Butler
David Zhuang
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Lily Yip
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Wei Wang

Lily Yip: 11-0 at Trials!

Jim Butler: 13-0 at Trials!

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Q. Why is WORLD the same format as Today?
A. By the process of elimination. If WORLD used more expensive paper than newsprint, the printing cost would roughly double. When circulation hits 3,000 or so (or if I find a rich sponsor), I'll go to high-quality paper. Until then, it has to be newsprint. Given that, the dimensions are the cheapest (because so many printers are set up for these dimensions). Plus, if WORLD went to a smaller size, then advertisers would want to pay less for a full-page ad, since they'd have less space—but most would stay with 1-page increments. Also, the advertisers are set up for this size. Lastly, I've seen newsprint magazines using smaller pages, and they don't look as professional.

Q. What did you think about the first issue of USATT's Today?
A. I'll let the membership judge that. However, there was one positive thing about it—the printing was inexpensive. At the USATT meeting on December 2, 1995, USATT Executive Director Paul Montville, President Terry Timmins, and Olympic Representative Sean O'Neill together made the presentation on moving the magazine to headquarters and replacing me. During this presentation, Montville claimed that the printing in Colorado was the cheapest we could find. However, knowing the printing business better (since it is my business), I was able to get the printing done for $1,300 less per issue than Montville's bid, with the same specifications. My bid was rejected and the new editor is now in Colorado. However, they now print Today in Maryland, using the printer from my bid—the same one that prints WORLD! I've been debating whether to ask for a commission on this one.

The strange thing is, in 1995 the editor of Today (myself) was in Maryland with the printing done in Colorado, and this was one of the reasons for the move. Now the editor's in Colorado while the printing is done in Maryland! Both Today and WORLD come off the same press, about a mile from the National Table Tennis Center in Rockville, Maryland.

Q. In the first issue of WORLD, I said "...until they take action to make themselves relevant, they (USATT) are largely irrelevant to the progress of the sport in this country." Why aren't they able to take action to make themselves relevant?
A. It's pretty simple, but you have to attend a few board meetings to realize what's going on. It's personal bias and politics. Unfortunately, it's that simple. Every amateur sport, not just ours. I spent nearly five years working for USATT at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, headquarters for most of the Olympic sports in the U.S. (including table tennis), and they're all like that. The only sports that get ahead are those with their governing bodies, usually through a professional players association. I recommend to interested readers a book called In Spite of Us, which chronicles the rise of cycling as a sport in this country, in spite of the problems with their board. (Sorry, I don't remember author's name—I contacted USA Cycling, but they didn't have the name either.) Table tennis isn't unique in this fashion. I've been a pretty hard pusher for changes and improvements for the past ten years, and along the way I've ruffled many feathers the wrong way. You can figure out the rest. The same thing happens to others who have tried to change the sport—it happens every time, both in table tennis and other amateur sports. And if the pushers and shakers of the sport are always rejected, real improvement becomes impossible.

There are some well-meaning members of our board—two of whom are so disgusted with the current situation that they aren't running for re-election (Sheri Pittman and Barry Rodgers). In fact, deep down, all our board members are well-meaning. However, when it's time to vote, what's best for our sport isn't always their top priority. If we could wave a magic wand and get 7 of the 13 board members to always act 100% in the best interest of the sport, the sport would really improve. Of course, the magic wand could be the ballot box, but it doesn't always work that way—the pressures on a board member are tremendous, and many change once they're in office.

Q. Why do we need a new magazine?
A. Look through both magazines—one a product of a bureaucratic and centralized organization, the other a product of the free-enterprise system done out of a love for the sport—and compare. Which one would you rather curl up with for an hour?

Without WORLD, Today would be the only major outlet for information received by the membership about the USATT. But it is controlled by the USATT, which has a vested interest in keeping you—the voters—happy. Do you want your only source of news to be from the governing body?
Subscriptions: $20/one year, $35/two years, Six issues/year

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Editor Larry Hodges was editor of *Table Tennis Today* from 1991-95, and is the author of the book *Table Tennis; Steps to Success*. He is the Director of the National Table Tennis Center, and a Certified National Coach. He has had over 300 articles on table tennis published in 27 different publications.

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Dear Editor,

Here is a reply to a letter to the editor in your last issue:

Mr. Grady Gordon (of Waco, TX) made a good point about opponent's touching the playing surface of his racket while examining it. The pertinent ITTF rule is:

2.4.8 At the start of a match and whenever he changes his racket during a match a player shall show his opponent the racket he is about to use and shall allow him to examine it.

The ITTF 1995 Handbook For Match Officials states:

7.3.1 Players must show the racket they intend to use to the umpire, and to their opponents, before it is used. The umpire has to be allowed to touch the racket, so he can measure the rubber thickness.

The opponent is allowed to examine the racket visually, but this rule does not allow him to touch it. If you wish, you may allow him to rub a ball across the playing surface. But, if he wants to touch it and you don't want him to, just say no! —Malcolm R. Anderson

Bradford, MA
Ex-Chairman, USTA Rules Committee
Ex-Secretary, ITTF Rules Committee

Correction to Darko Rop Interview

by Editor Larry Hodges

Way back at the 1976 U.S. Open in Philadelphia, a timid young editor-to-be sat down at the bar of a restaurant and ordered lunch. A few minutes later, Yugoslavian Stars Dragutin Surbeck and Milivoj Karakasevic sat down next to him, one on either side. What followed was 20 of the most nerve-racking minutes this editor-to-be ever faced — My God, the Gods of the Sport were sitting next to him! He didn't write this editor-to-be to know that almost exactly 20 years later, he'd be misspelling Karakasevic and other Yugoslavian names so badly that he'd have to write an article with corrections.

The Interview with Darko Rop in the previous issue of TABLE TENNIS WORLD (page 16-17) was well-received by nearly everyone, as Darko is one of the most interesting & colorful players on the circuit. However, a number of the names were mangled in the transcription from the tape recorder.

**TABLE TENNIS WORLD** apologizes and takes responsibility for these errors, which came from not comparing the transcribed article to original tape. In particular:

- On top left of page 16, first column (Darko's third answer), the big stars were Karakasevic & Kosanovich. Both were misspelled.
- On the lower left of page 16, first column, Komovich should have been Kalinic.
- On the top of page 16, second column, Luckovitz and Kamanich should have been Luckovitz and Kalinic.
- On the lower right of page 16, fourth column, Vladimir Jusis is not a sister of Jasna Lupulesku.

Should anyone have any stories, pictures, items of interest or congratulatory letters, please mail them to the MTTF Table Tennis Hall of Fame. Everyone, as Darko is one of the most nerve-racking minutes this editor-to-be sat at the bar of a restaurant and ordered lunch. He didn't write this editor-to-be to know that almost exactly 20 years later, he'd be misspelling Karakasevic and other Yugoslavian names so badly that he'd have to write an article with corrections.

**Minnesota Hall of Fame Banquet**

The Minnesota Table Tennis Federation is proud to announce its Third Annual Hall of Fame Banquet this April 14, 1996 to be held at the Cherokee Sirloin Room, Eagan, MN. Tickets are $20 per person and include appetizers and a full dinner with a cash bar. This year's inductees are: "Tiny" Moss, Ed Kantar, George "Gus" Kennedy, and Fred Soderberg. Also, Harry and Shirley Lund are planning on attending. Lund was one of the very first inductees in the MTTF Table Tennis Hall of Fame.

Should anyone have any stories, pictures, items of interest or congratulatory letters, please mail them to the MTTF at 8559 West 134th Street, Apple Valley, MN 55124, or you can fax them to 612-431-3090. Better yet, come and share your stories in person.

The MTTF will be hosting a silent auction and raffle drawing prior to the banquet. We would love to have someone donate a table, racket or something of that nature to be used as our headlining item. Please contact Rex Harris at 612-431-2865 should you have any ideas.

**Wanna Play a Match? You'd Better!**

BEIJING (Reuters) - The local government in the Chinese capital has executed eight people convicted of murder, robbery, armed robbery, assault and fraud, the official Beijing Evening News recently said. One of the condemned defendants hacked a restaurant manager to death with a sword last August 13 after the man had refused an offer to play table tennis, it said.

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March/April 1996

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The Story of Reisman, Gunn & Green....

In the previous issue, Bob Green (in his "Did’ja Know?" column) told a story about Marty Reisman. Reisman took great offense at this. However, Green’s story is documented by a written report by Team Captain Bill Gunn. Gunn’s report is accurate will probably never be known; however, Reisman’s response to Green’s column is printed below, as is an excerpt from Gunn’s report to the USATT Executive Committee, dated March 21, 1957, which supports Green’s story. “If Reisman isn’t satisfied with this, he should take it up with Gunn,” Green said.

Dear Editor:

Your January/February 1996 issue of Table Tennis World published false and misleading information about me in Bob Green’s column, “Did’ja Know?”

The third paragraph begins by stating, “Marty Reisman got away with financial murder on one trip.” Even if everything Green asserts elsewhere were true by what stretch of the imagination would that justify equating such behavior to a capital crime? In any event, Green’s story about me is utterly false: it is outrageous fiction that has maligned and embarrassed me in the table tennis world as well as among my personal and business connections.

Green claims that players on the U.S. Team had to pay most of their own expenses for the four to six week trip surrounding the W.T.T.C. He asserts I jeopardized full U.S. participation in the W.T.T.C. one year because I showed up at Andrews AFB just two hours before flight time without money for the trip and thereby forced Team Captain, Bill Gunn, to finance my trip personally.

Such an incident would never have taken place because U.S. Team members of my era were never required to pay even one cent toward the expense of a trip to represent our country in the W.T.T.C. This was undisputedly the case on several occasions when the U.S. Military provided free transportation, lodging and meals for the U.S. Team in exchange for a series of exhibitions at overseas bases. When the U.S. Team had fulfilled its obligation to the Military, the tab for the rest of the trip was picked up by the host country during the U.S. Team’s participation in the W.T.T.C. So wherein these Military finanically assisted circumstances can Green support his fiction that I was the recipient of a dedicated Team Captain’s generosity who financed my trip to the World?

During the years when commercial transportation was utilized to the U.S.Team to the W.T.T.C., the host country, anxious for U.S. participation in the event, arranged a series of competitive matches for the U.S. Team prior to the World, in order to defray the expense of getting the U.S. Team to the W.T.T.C. Again, even under these financially lean circumstances for the U.S.T.T.A., I repeat, the U.S. Team members of my era were never responsible for any of this expense.

So Bob Green’s story about me and Bill Gunn is absolutely false; it never happened. I challenge both Bob Green and Table Tennis World to prove otherwise. They cannot. A simple telephone call to any of the team members of those times would have confirmed the total falsity of Green’s story. Instead, Table Tennis World gave free reign to Green to place me in a false and demeaning historical perspective.

Bob Green’s article hardly heralds an auspicious beginning for Table Tennis World. Green’s story about me is wrong and so easy to disprove that it could only have been published maliciously. I hold Table Tennis World and Bob Green responsible for his libelous statements.

I can offer no absolution, but basic human decency requires that Table Tennis World promptly and prominently publish to the entire readership of Table Tennis World’s previous issue: 1) this letter in its entirety; 2) a full and unqualified retraction of Green’s comment as they relate to me; and 3) apologies from both Table Tennis World and Bob Green.

Yours truly,
Marty Reisman
New York, NY

Excerpt from Team Captain Bill Gunn’s Report:

All players were warned to be prepared to finance themselves throughout the trip. Reisman appeared at Maguire Air Base one hour before flight time, with less than two dollars in his pocket, to travel about six weeks and several thousand miles—too late, of course, to leave him behind. I had to finance him from my personal pocket to the tune of $250.00. Further, he is completely ignorant of any sense of responsibility to country or team, and has a complete lack of respect of authority! Several times I was on the point of removing him entirely from tournament, and only restrained because, by doing so, I would have caused others to suffer. There is no doubt that he should never again represent us in anything, and in fact should be suspended for live. He doesn’t belong in our category! U.S. Team Captain Bill Gunn March 21, 1957.
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2. Open singles, seniors and finals are 3 out of 5. All other matches are 2 of 3 games. Winners (and perhaps runners-up) of each RR advance to single elimination draw. Non-rated players may enter any event but will not advance to SE draw in rated events. Doubles are single elimination.
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March/April 1996

**TABLE TENNIS WORLD** 9
Dear Editor,

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The U.S. Olympic Trials

Men's Trials
by Larry Hodges

Flint, Michigan
February 21-23, 1996

Th e top 24 Olympic Eligible men were invited to the U.S. Olympic Trials in Flint, Michigan. However, some were not able to attend, and eventually 21 attended.

The format called for four preliminary groups (three of five, one of six), with the top three players advancing to a final round robin of twelve (with carry-over matches from the preliminaries). All matches were best of five—leading to a grueling competition not only of table tennis skill but of physical fitness. All final 12 played for the highest possible 24 points.

Preliminary Round Robin

Group A

Of the top twelve players, the final 12. The only top seeded player not to advance was Sean Lonergan, seeded 5th. He was in the group of six players, and defeated Bertrand Pietrak & Mike Veillette, as did Jim Butler, Chi-Sun Chun, and Derek May. However, up 2-0 in games, Lonergan lost in five to Chi, who blocked ball after ball. Lonergan's forehand winner couldn't seem to loop a winner—and the loss meant he'd have to beat either Derek May or Jim Butler to advance. (At 20-15 in the fifth against Chi, this writer/coach was red-carded and kicked out of the arena by umpire Ray Cavicchio for calling out, "C'mon, Sean, focus!") which he claimed was illegal coaching... Lonergan was unable to win even after panic had a 9-0 match. Butler defeated O'Neill, 5-11. 11-9.

Group B

Khoa Nguyen had no trouble in winning his group over Danny Seemiller, Brian Masters, Randy Cohen, and Randy Seemiller, with R. Seemiller trying to lose a game against him. Brian upset Danny 3-0—an omen of what to come as Danny had what must have been the worst tournament of his life. Just before this match with Masters, Danny passed Masters in the hallway, with Masters on the way back to the hotel, thinking their match was later. But Danny attended him of the match schedule, saving Masters a default—and leading to Danny's loss.

Both Danny & Masters defeated both Rydys, to Nguyen advanced 2-0; Masters 1-1; Danny 0-2.

Group A

Eric Owens, seeded 8th, lost to former coach/practice partner & 9th seed Darko Rop. But Butler defeated Zhuang, Zhuang did have a close call against Brian Pace (playing with pips on his backhand), who forced him to five games before going down. Owens & Rop also defeated Pace, Barry Duttel, who defeated Pace. Zhuang advanced with a 2-0 record; Rop; 1-1; and Owens, 0-2.

Final 12

Leading the pack at this point were Jim Butler, David Zhuang, Todd Sweeris & Khoa Nguyen, all with 2-0 records. At 1-1 were Derek May, Brian Masters, Darko Rop & David Fernandez. At 0-2 were Sean O'Neill, Dan Seemiller, Chi-Sun Chu, & Eric Owens. But there was a long way to go—nine more rounds, to be exact. Since the first two "rounds" have already been played (as carry-over matches from the preliminary robin rounds), we'll start off with Round III, the first round of the final group of twelve.

Round III

The higher rated player won five of six matches this round, four of them 3-0. Zhuang defeated Chui, 16, 19, 13; Nguyen defeated Seemiller, 17, 11, 14; Sweeris defeated Seemiller, 14, 7, 11; Butler defeated Owens, 18, 20, 14. Brian Masters won the first against Sean O'Neill before losing the next three, 17, 17, 17. Derek May upset Darko Rop (as he had at the Nationals), 17, 14, 12.6.

Round IV

Only two matches were straightforward this round as Zhuang defeated Fernandez, 10, 14, 15 and Nguyen defeated Chai, 15, 14, 12. Seemiller won his only game of this long, long final twelve for him, 17, 17, 17, 11. But Sweeris defeated Butler, before losing to Seemiller, 14, 16, 16. 18. Firesworks highlighted the rest of this round.

May and Masters battled and battled and battled, both being "grinders," with Masters finally winning out, 23-21, 17-12, 19. The match dropped May to 2-2, greatly hurting his Olympic chances.

Seemiller and Owen have played 13 games, with Sweeris leading 20-14 in the third. Owens scored 8 straight points to win, 22-20! A mirror of what had happened to Sweeris when he'd blown a plethora of game & match points, costing him a spot on the Pan Am Team! Sweeris came back, winning the fourth, 21-13, and led 20-16 in the fifth—only to have Owens deuce it again! But, with help from a net ball, Sweeris pulled it out, 22-20.

O'Neill and Rop met in a "must-win" match, if they were to have a realistic chance of making the Olympic Team. They split the first two games, and O'Neill led 20-16 in the third—only to have Rop win, 23-21. In the fourth, Rop leads 16-11, 19-15, and 20-19 match point—but O'Neill comes back, 22-20. At 15-15 in the fifth, Rop runs off the last six to win, 10, -19, -21, 20, 15.

Round V

Four matches were straightforward, as Zhuang defeated Seemiller, 11, 7, 18; Sweeris defeated Fernandez, 11, 18, 12; and O'Neill defeated May, 13, 17, 15; Masters defeated Rop, -10, 19, 20, 14, to improve to 2-2, while Rop was now reeling at 1-3. Nguyen had his first scare, as Owens forced him to five, 14, 16, 9, -10, 14, 19-18!!!—Owens had won this match and the match earlier against Sweeris, Owen's made the Olympic Team (assuming no other changes). Instead, he now falls to 0-5. He would not lose another match.

Round VI

The four "straightforward" matches this round were Zhuang over Masters, 11, 12, 13; Sweeris over May, 19, 19, 18, 13; Butler over O'Neill, 16, 19, 11 (knocking O'Neill to 3-3 and almost out of the competition); and Owens over Seemiller, 10, 13, 14. Fernandez defeated Chai in a grueling deuce-in-the-fifth, 22, 15, -14, 12, 21.

The big match this round was Rop's upset of Khoa Nguyen, 12, 16, -20, 18. Down 11-8 in the fourth, Rop had scored 8 in a row to lead 16-11, only to have Nguyen tie it up, 18-18. Rop scored the last three to stay in the competition—and gave the first crack to one of the "Big Four"—Nguyen, Zhuang, Butler & Sweeris.

Analysis

Zhuang, Butler and Sweeris lead with 6-0 records, followed by Nguyen, 5-1. With five rounds to go, O'Neill and Masters are still very much in the hunt at 3-3. Battling to stay alive are May, Rop & Fernandez, all 2-4. Hanging by a mathematical thread but not yet eliminated is Eric Owens, 1-5. No longer in the running are Seemiller & Chui, both 0-6.

Round VII

A relatively straightforward round, with all matches going as expected. Zhuang defeated O'Neill, 13, 11, 8; Nguyen defeated May, -19, 19, 13, in a match that May led almost every game (with Nguyen coming back from down 17-13 in the third to win at 19); Sweeris defeated Rop, 15, 14, 16; Owens defeated Fernandez, 14, -18, 15. 18; Chui defeated an exhausted & dispirited Seemiller, 18, 18, 17, and Masters downed to Butler, due to leg injury.

It is now past 10 PM on Thursday night, with one more day to go. At this stage, four players are clearly in the lead: Butler, Zhuang & Sweeris, all 7-0, and Nguyen, 6-1. With four rounds to go, however, both O'Neill (3-4) and Masters (3-4) still have a chance to make the third spot (assuming Masters overcomes his leg injuries, with a good night's sleep). Both would have to win their last four matches, while Nguyen lost all four of his. Nguyen's last four matches would be tough ones, however—Zhuang, Butler, Sweeris & O'Neill. Eliminated from the running this round were May, Owens and Fernandez, all 2-5, since each has lost to Nguyen, head-to-head. Darko Rop, 2-5, still has a mathematical long-shot, since he defeated Nguyen.

Round VIII

Bright and early at 9 AM, Zhuang defeated May, -12, 4, 9; Butler defeated Rop, 14, 7, 10; Owens defeated Chai, 10, 10, 19, and Fernandez defeated Seemiller, 12, 5, 6.

After winning the first against Sweeris at 13 and losing the second at 10, Masters was reeling all over the place, due to his leg injury. He'd had a back operation recently, and had hurt his shoulder a year ago. One of this match Masters would have failed an alcohol test as he never took two steps without stumbling. Match to Sweeris, -13, 10, 8, 6.

With their wins, Zhuang, Butler and Sweeris have clinched at least a top-four finish. And the fourth place finisher does have a chance to make the Olympics, by defeating Canada in the doubles playoff at the North American Championships.

March/April 1996
Swee's backhand smash, and then serve a winner that Nguyen pushed into the net, dence. Sweeris smashed Nguyen's loop, and then serve & looped a winner—and Sweeris 2-0 in what he later told me was the most important match of his life. Sweeris easily won the third and the match, 14- 20, 11, to improve to 9-0 and all but clinch an Olympic berth.

Analysis

Butler, with a 9-0 record, has almost clinched his Olympic spot. The only way he can not make it is if he loses his last two matches to Nguyen & Sweeris. Sweeris defeats Butrer, but Nguyen, and Butler loses out in a 3-way tie for 2nd with Zhuang and Nguyen—one chance in 48 (assuming his 3-1 win over Nguyen neither helps nor hurts in the 3-way tie). Zhuang (8-1) needs to win against either Sweeris or Nguyen in his final two matches to clinch a spot. Nguyen (7-2) is fighting for his life, needing to win against both Zhuang and Butler to have a chance of making the team.

For Sweeris (9-0) not to make it at this point (with his head-to-head win over Nguyen), he'd have to lose to both Butler & Zhuang, with the loss to Zhuang 3-0; then he'd have to come out last in a 3-way tie between himself, Nguyen & Zhuang to go to points. Ignoring the fact Sweeris won big scores over Nguyen, and assuming all games between the top four were even, there was still chance in 7/68 of him not making the team! Enough to give him a nerve-racking afternoon as he waited for the night's final two rounds.

Round X

In the continuing battle for positioning, rating points and pride, Owens defeated O'Neill, 16-16, 14-16, 12; Masters defeated Butler, 17-17, 14, 17; and Rop defeated Seemiller by default. It became obvious very quickly that Nguyen wasn't going to beat Zhuang, and he went down quickly, 14, 7, 16, before the final match between Sweeris and Butler could even be set out.

Final Analysis

If Sweeris beats Butler 3-0, he finishes 1st, Zhuang 2nd, Butler 3rd, if Sweeris beats Butler 3-1, the tiebreaker is a 3-way that would go to points—but Sweeris has to oust Butler by 16 points (his deficit against Zhuang) or he finishes 3rd. If Sweeris defeats Butler in five, there would be a 3-way tie going to games, with Butler 1st, Zhuang 2nd, Sweeris 3rd. If Butler wins, he's undeclared, and Butler is 1st, Zhuang 2nd, Sweeris 3rd.

Round XI, Continued

Up 8-7 in the first against Sweeris, Butler poured it on, and ran away with a 21-12 win. It's just about over for Sweeris—he'd have to oust Butler by 25 points in winning the next three games to get one of the singles spots—the equivalent of winning at 13, 13 & 12. But he battles on, even after falling behind 4-5, 10-7 and 12-7 in the second. Sweeris scores six straight to go up 13-12, but Butler pulls to a 20-18 lead. Todd continues to fight, and defeats it! If he wins this game, all he has to do in the next two games is win by 23 points—say, 21-9, 21-10. But Butler scores the next two points, and the tournament is essentially over.

Butler has clinched 1st place, Zhuang 2nd, Sweeris 3rd. Sweeris wins the third, but down 4-14 in the fourth, they play mostly exhibition the rest of the way. Butler finishes 11-0; Zhuang 10-1; Sweeris 9-2. Nguyen grabs the 4th spot at 7-4.

Eric Owens, with wins over O'Neill and Masters in the last two rounds, finishes 5th at 6-5. Talk about trying to come in the back door—Eric lost his first five matches, then won his last six!

Sean O'Neill, Darko Rop and David Fernandez finished tied at 5-6, with identical 3-3 game records between the three of them. It went to points with O'Neill (202-193) coming in 6th, Rop (194-190) 7th; and Fernandez (190-203) 8th. Masters comes in 9th, 4-7. May is 10th, 3-8. Chui is 11th, 1-10. Seemiller comes in 12th, 0-11.

It's finally over—and our Men's Olympic Team is set. Congratulations to Jim Butler, David Zhuang and Todd Sweeris!

Below is the round by round progression of the players in the Final 12 for men. The first two rounds are the carry-over matches from the Preliminaries.

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*Note: R1-R11 are carry-over matches from the Preliminaries.*

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The injured Masters triped to the sidelines to watch O'Neill versus Nguyen. At one game each, O'Neill led 19-16, but Nguyen scored four in a row to lead 20-19. O'Neill got a lucky winner—"God is on his side," said Masters. But Nguyen held on in the face of divine opposition, 23-21. O'Neill went the fourth to force a fifth game.

The match is an important one, because if O'Neill wins, O'Neill and Owens are still in the running to overtake Nguyen for the fourth spot.

Up 4-1 in the fifth, Nguyen's coach, Zhi-Yong Wang, is red-carded by Umpire Ray Cavicchio for apparently coaching during a match, although Wang and nearby spectators deny it. At 7-3 Nguyen, Wang is ordered by Cavicchio to leave the area! Nguyen seems distracted by this, and plays haphazard for a time as his lead shrinks into a 9-10 deficit. However, with a series of well-placed shots (mostly to O'Neill's wide forehand), Nguyen runs away with the game and wins—19, 14, 21-16, 14.

Analysis

With Nguyen's win, the top four are now set, with Zhuang, Butler and Sweeris all 9-0, Nguyen 7-1. O'Neill, Masters, Owens and Fernandez are 3-5; May and Rop are 2-6; Chui is 1-7; Seemiller is 0-8.

Round IX

In the battle for position outside the top four, O'Neill defeats Seemiller, 11, 12, 13; Fernandez fights to end in defeating Masters, 21-, 12, 16, 18, 19; and Rop defeats Chui, 13, 9, 16. ("Put some prize money in 5 through 12," complained Chui.)

May defaulted to Owens.

Butler & Zhuang squared off, knowing that the winner would clinch a position on the Olympic Team. They split the first two games, then Butler wins the third easily, 21-12. In the fourth, up 11-9, Butler pulls away to win 21-12, mostly by blocking and keeping Zhuang's wide forhand, often catching Zhuang off-balance or going the wrong way.

Sweeris and Nguyen had only played once in the past year, with Sweeris winning at the Allstar Semifinals at the Missouri Open last September. This time, Sweeris quickly won the first, 21-12. In the second, it was Nguyen leading 20-16—only to have

Atlanta 1996
L-R: Jim Butler jumps on table immediately after winning last match; the scene from above; the U.S. Olympic Team.
Scenes from the U.S. Olympic Trials

by John Oros ©1996

March/April 1996

TABLE TENNIS WORLD 15
Women's Trials

Flint, Michigan

Flint, Michigan

February 21-23, 1996

by Larry Hodges

The top 12 rated women in the U.S. (citizens only) were invited to the U.S. Olympic Trials in Flint, Michigan, February 21-23. The top two finishers would play singles at the Olympics. The third-place finisher would play doubles with the top finisher. The fourth place finisher would play doubles with the second place finisher in a playoff with Canada, with the winning team playing doubles together at the Olympics.

The main goal, then, was "Top Three!" Because those three would become instant Olympians.

To the players competing, all that mattered was the Olympics. However, the U.S. National Team was also settled here. Tawny Banh took one position at the Trials at the U.S. Nationals. (Players were only allowed to try out in one Trials; players who were not Olympic-eligible could only try out for the one position at the Trials at the Nationals, where Tawny had defeated Nan Li for the spot.)

A complete round robin of all 12 players would be held, with all 11 matches to be best of 3. To match the upcoming Olympic Schedule, there was a morning session each day from 9 AM to 12:30 PM, and an afternoon session from 7 PM to 9:30 PM.

Round I

Round one opened with great anticipation, but closed with a whimper. All five matches were quick 3-0's for the higher rated player. Nearly every game was under 15.

Round II

There was one match of interest this round, when 7th seeded Chi upset 4th seeded Zakharyan, in a match that would later come back to haunt Zakharyan. The quick-fitting Ching, with pips on her backhand and using a Deng Yaping-like forehand and grip (with index finger partly up on the hand and using a Deng Yaping-like forehand and grip) entertained the fans for the first round, 21-9, and went up 7-4 in the second round. However, once again Wei had her chance at a comeback, 17,21.

Analysis

After seven rounds, six players are still in the running for the Olympic Team (top 3): Amy Feng and Lily Yip are 7-0; Wei Wang is 6-1; Anita Zakharyan & Virginia Sung are 5-2; and Jane Chui is 4-3. Not yet mathematically eliminated, but hanging by mathematical threads, are Jessica Shen at 3-4; and Vivian Lee & Toni Gresham at 2-5. Karen Chang, Amy Alvarez and (should she suddenly appear) Peggy Rosen are now eliminated.

Round VIII

Two matches were of interest this round, Amy Feng vs. Virginia Sung, and Wei Wang vs. Jane Chui. Amy's match was of interest simply because again, she lost a game. This just didn't seem to be the same overpowering Amy Feng that normally rolled over the opposition—infact, Amy would lose games of each of the top seven seeds (excluding herself and the dominating Peggy Rosen). This Amy Feng continued to win, however, this time 14, 20, 21. Wei's match with Jane was of interest not only because it went four, but because it was the first to make a huge difference in the final standings—in fact, if Jane had won, she'd have made the Olympic Team instead of Wei. However, once again Wei had her way, 11, 16, 13.

Also of note this round was red-hot Vivian Lee's match with Virginia Sung. Nope. Vivian didn't win a game, but after losing the first at 17, 18, 12 the next two games, but lost the match, 17, 19, 21. The match also had the funniest moment that nobody saw. Vivian looped a high, spiny loop that seemed to arc off the end. Virginia leaned down to catch the ball, which hit the table, and bounced straight and cleanly into Virginia's forehead!

In other matches, Feng defeated Shen, 8, 11, 15; Chui defeated Chang, 11, 11, 15; Zakharyan defeated Alvarez, 8, 11, 13; and Gresham defeated Rosen, default.

Round VI

Round seven was a slow round, with the higher rated player steamrolling 3-0 in all but one match. #1 seed Amy Feng did face a scare from #7 Jane Chui, however. Amy was cruising through the first game, leading 11-4, when she was suddenly torpedoed as June scored 13 of the next 15 to 17-13! June won the first, 21-15, and went up 7-4 in the second game. However, it was all Amy from here on, as Amy won the match, 17, 11, 15.

In other matches, Yip defeated Alvarez, 3, 6, 8; Wang defeated Lee, 8, 5; Zakharyan defeated Gresham, 10, 12, 11; Sung defeated Chang, 7, 16, 17; and Shen defeated Rosen, default.

Round VII

Another uneventful round, as all but one match was an easy 3-0, most under 10. Only Ann Alvarez was able to win a game in losing to Vivian Lee, 14, 12, 18, 12. Four other matches, Feng defeated Rosen, default; Yip defeated Gresham, 6, 9, 9; Wang defeated Chang, 9, 13, 10; Zakharyan defeated Shen, 11, 15, 13; and Sung defeated Chui, 9, 11, 15.

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Round XIV

There were two big matches this round, as 2nd & 3rd seeds, Lily Yip & Wei Wang. Both players were at their absolute best, with the rallies among the fastest and most furious you'll see on the American continent—and that includes the men's game. Both play a fast, close-to-the-table game (Lily a pips-in penholder, Wei a shakehand with pips on the backhand), and both tried to outdo the other in terms of sheer speed. One spectator said, "I watched a few of their rallies, and wanted to sprint to the barriers to lob." After losing the first at 16, Lily won the next three in very close battles to win the match, 16, 18, 19. There wasn't a slow point in the match.

Also of note this round was red-hot Vivian Lee's match with Virginia Sung. Nope. Vivian didn't win a game, but after losing the first at 17, 18, 12 the next two games, but lost the match, 17, 19, 21. The match also had the funniest moment that nobody saw. Vivian looped a high, spiny loop that seemed to arc off the end. Virginia leaned down to catch the ball, which hit the table, and bounced straight and cleanly into Virginia's forehead!

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In other matches, Yip defeated Alvarez, 3, 6, 8; Wang defeated Lee, 8, 5; Zakharyan defeated Gresham, 10, 12, 11; Sung defeated Chang, 7, 16, 17; and Shen defeated Rosen, default.

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Another uneventful round, as all but one match was an easy 3-0, most under 10. Only Ann Alvarez was able to win a game in losing to Vivian Lee, 14, 12, 18, 12. Four other matches, Feng defeated Rosen, default; Yip defeated Gresham, 6, 9, 9; Wang defeated Chang, 9, 13, 10; Zakharyan defeated Shen, 11, 15, 13; and Sung defeated Chui, 9, 11, 15.

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In other matches, Yip defeated Shen, 6.

March/April 1996
Travel Pains
by Larry Hodges

Chang defeated Alvarez, 14, 18, 20; and Lee defeated Gresham, 13, 17, 13.

Analysis
Mathematically eliminated this round (by their losses or other players’ wins) are Jessica Shen & Vivian Lee, 3-5; and Toni Gresham, 2-6. Still in the running are Amy Feng & Lily Yip, 8-9; Wei Wang, 7-1; Anita Zakharyan, 6-2; Virginia Sung, 5-2; and by a mathematical thread, Jane Chui, 4-4.

Round IX
Again, there were two matches of interest this round. Amy Feng continued to lose games, defeating Anita Zakharyan at 18, 9, 21, 12. The win clinched one of the three Olympics spots for Amy. With Anna’s loss, and Lily Yip’s default win over Peggy Rosen, Lily is also assured a top-3 finish.

The BIG match this round, however, was Wei Wang vs. Virginia Sung. Virginia had defeated Wei in the U.S. Team Trials for the 1995 Worlds, knocking Wei off the team. Since Virginia had lost to Anna Zakharyan, she’d need to defeat Wei here to force a 3-5 tie for third—assuming Amy Feng & Lily Yip came in 1st & 2nd, as it appeared they would.

In the first game, Wei led 20-18, but Virginia won four straight points, the last on a net dribbler, to win 22-20. However, Wei quickly tied it up, winning the second 17-17. The match was turning into a long battle, with each rally going on and on as Wei tried-a clean winner, 20-19. And now, as Lily is also assured a top-3 finish, leaving Zakharyan’s chances for the fourth position.

Karen Chang, up 19-11 and 20-15 in the fifth, on each with Amy Shen, barely held on to win, 17, 15, 12-20, 19. With her winnings default from Peggy Rosen in the final round, Karen ended her tournament with four straight wins to pull up to 4-7 after an 8-7 start.

In other matches, Sung defeated Alvarez, 12, 23, 17; Lee defeated Rosen, default; and Chui defeated Gresham, 19, 16, 19. Analysis
The battle for the fourth position is getting hot, with Anna Zakharyan, Virginia Sung & Jane Chui all 0-4, and Vivian Lee, 5-3, still a long shot if she defeats Anita Zakharyan in the final round, while Sung & Chui lose to Toni Gresham & Jessica Shen, respectively.

Round XI
In matches for positioning, Wang defeated Alvarez, 4, 5; Zakharyan defeated Lee, 10, 12, 14; Sung defeated Gresham, 14, 8, 18; Chang defeated Rosen, default; and Chui defeated Shen, 19, 16, 13, 16. Lee didn’t beat Zakharyan and Sung & Chui both won as well, so the fourth position became a three-way tie, with Zakharyan, Sung & Chui all 7-4. However, among the three tied, Sung was 4-3 in games, Zakharyan 4-4, and Chui 3-4. So Sung grabbed the fourth position, to play doubles with the number two finisher—the loser between Amy Feng & Lily Yip.

Big favorite Amy, after leading 14-6 in the first game, held on to 17-16 lead to win the first 21-18. In the second game, Amy led 14-11—but only scored two more points as Lily won 21-16! In the third game, Lily gradually pulled away to a 21-17 win. In the fourth, Lily went up 13-8, but Amy pulled to 16-13.

Below is the round by round progression of the players in the Final 12 for women.

1. Lily Yip
2. Amy Feng
3. Wei Wang
4. Virginia Sung
5. Anita Zakharyan
6. Jane Chui
7. Vivian Lee
8. Karen Chang
9. Jessica Shen
10. Toni Gresham
11. Ann Alvarez
12. Peggy Rosen*  *defaulted out after 2nd round
**Meet the Olympians**

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**Men's Olympic Trials Results**

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**Playing Style:** All-around aggressive game centered around strong backhand hit, deceptive serves, strong blocking and overall consistency. Shakehand grip with inverted sponge.


**Background:** Nicknamed "Slim Jim"... Enjoys basketball & tennis, anything outdoors... Older brother Scott was member of 1987 Pan Am Team... Originally from Iowa City, Iowa... Spent much of the past three years training in North Brunswick, New Jersey... Loves listening to music... Likes all sports, especially basketball, soccer, billiards and snooker... Has degree in physical education from the Canton Sports College in China... Works full-time as computer technician.

**Playing Style:** Quick, close-to-the-table pips-out penholder with controlling backhand sidespin block, aggressive forehand hitting, and good serves. Sometimes flips has paddle and uses the inverted surface on other side to serve or loop.


**Background:** Emigrated to U.S. in 1990... Became U.S. Citizen early in 1996... Originally from Guandong, China... Spent much of the past three years training in Sweden... Full-time professional player... One of the tallest players in U.S. at 6'4".
**Trials; #2 in U.S. Olympic Eligible Ratings; #48 in World Rankings**

**Olympic Trials**

**Cereal:** Honeynut Cheerios

**Age:** 26

**Current Residence:** Augusta, Georgia

**Playing Style:** All-around aggressive game with looping forehand and looping & hitting backhand, tricky serves. Shakehands grip with inverted sponge.


**Background:** Emigrated to U.S. in 1992... Became U.S. Citizen early in 1996... Originally from Beijing, China... Enjoys tennis, traveling and shopping.

---

**Trials; #1 in U.S. Olympic Eligible Ratings; #10 in World Rankings**

**Olympic Trials**

**Cereal:** Cheerios

**Age:** 35

**Current Residence:** Pasadena, California

**Playing Style:** Close-to-the-table quick & aggressive hitter from both sides with pips-out backhand and consistent forehand loop.


**Background:** Emigrated to U.S. in 1986... U.S. Citizen in 1992... Graduated from Beijing University in 1986... Enjoys listening to music and studying foreign culture... Her Aunt, Wang Jien, finished 3rd in Women's Singles at 1961 World Championships... At 92 pounds, easily the best adult player in U.S., pound for pound... Full-time Table Tennis Coach.

---

**Women's Olympic Trials Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Trials</th>
<th>Cereal</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Residence</th>
<th>Playing Style</th>
<th>Career Highlights</th>
<th>Background</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LILY YIP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Metuchen, New Jersey</td>
<td>Very aggressive close-to-the-table pips-out penholder with quick backhand block and all-out forehand hitting game.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Jim & family, L-R: Andrea, Richard, Jim, Scott and Sue.

Jim: I started in my basement, just like any other player in an American family. My dad and brother played, so I played, I started when I was 5.

TTW: Describe your playing style.

Jim: It would make it worse every time I tried practice the week before my break I felt a practice, and I was training a lot. On my last that I felt good and I was happy to prac-
tice on backhand hit and serves?

TTW: All-around game with an empha-
sis on backhand hit and serves?

Jim: That sounds right. I'd say I'm an offensive all-around player.

TTW: Are there any new parts of your game that you're working on?

Jim: Let's see, do I want to tell everyone what I'm working on? I'm working on my overall consistency.

TTW: How much do you normally train?

Jim: Well, the hardest part for me this time was preparing for it mentally. Physi-
cally and mentally?

TTW: How did you train for the Olympic Trials?

Jim: I went to Sweden for three weeks after the Beverly Hills tournament and that was very beneficial for me. I trained hard there for three weeks. I hadn't been playing a lot before that. After this back

TTW: You went 13-0 at the Olympic Trials, with all 13 matches best of five. How did you prepare for such an ordeal, physically and mentally?

Jim: Well, the hardest part for me this time was preparing for it mentally. Physi-
cally I wasn't in that great shape at the Trials, but I was fortunate to only lose three games. What that did was save me a lot of energy throughout the Trials, while everyone else was struggling a little

TTW: All-around game with an empha-
sis on backhand hit and serves?

Jim: Definitely the World Cup Team was very beneficial for me. I trained after the Beverly Hills tournament and that was very beneficial for me. I trained hard there for three weeks. I hadn't been playing a lot before that. After this back
That helped me. It forces me to raise my level to beat them. I mean, Todd's improved a lot. Khoa has too, David's playing at a real high level now on a consistent basis.

TTW: You've trained extensively in Sweden. Tell us about that.
Jim: I can say that I'd like to spend more time in the U.S., and play more in the U.S. I don't see myself going to Europe this next season.

TTW: What was it like training with 1971 World Champion Stellan Bengtsson?
Jim: It was a great opportunity for me. He's a disciplinarian, and he really taught me discipline. He runs a tight and intense practice session. That really helped me out for a while. I think that was most useful for me in my first three years when I went to Sweden, when I was so hungry to practice and improve. That really started my jump as an athlete. That's kind of what shaped me. It does get harder when you get older.

TTW: Do you know anything about the Club of Table Tennis Professionals, the European Professional Table Tennis Players Union? Is there any chance the U.S. will be a part of that any time soon?
Jim: Yes. In fact, I was talking to Jorgen Persson, former president of the thing. They would love for us to join them. All we have to do is establish a Player's Union in the U.S., and talk with them. It's been difficult for us players to organize it because of all the tournaments and training. we just haven't had the time to get it off the ground.

TTW: What are your goals at the upcoming Olympics?
Jim: My goal is to improve on my 1992 performance, where I had a 2-1 record. I'm shooting to make it out of my group. It's not easy! In 1992, we started off with groups of four, with only one advancing. So you have to beat out someone in the top 16 in the world! The number two guy isn't a slouch either.

TTW: How long do you think you'll play table tennis?
Jim: I think I'll continue to play as long as my body is healthy because I still have a big love for the game.

TTW: Any suggestions on how to make table tennis a bigger sport in the U.S.?
Jim: Oh, boy... I would just say one thing: infrastructure. We wouldn't have the facilities to accommodate if there were a big craze and people wanted to play.

TTW: What do you do outside table tennis?
Jim: I like to play other sports, like basketball and some tennis. I like doing outdoor things. It's real nice weather down here in Augusta.

TTW: Your brother, Scott, was a member of the 1987 Pan Am Team, but isn't very active any more. What's he doing these days?
Jim: He just accepted a position at Wachovia Bank, I don't know what his title is. He works full time. And he loves tennis.

TTW: Tell us about the rest of your family.
Jim: I have three sisters. Amy is involved with opera. Ann is married and goes to college, a music major at Augusta College. Andrea played table tennis for a little while. She's graduating from a school in Alabama. My dad is the assistant competition manager for the Olympics. He's really enjoying that. My mother is involved with real estate, and she's working hard.

TTW: Any advice to new players?
Jim: Keep it fun, and be creative in practice. Move around when you practice. What I mean by that is don't get stale in one training environment.

TTW: Thank you, Jim.

March/April 1996
JUNIOR TABLE TENNIS DEVELOPMENT IN MINNESOTA

by John Robb

Disney's Table Tennis Center in St. Paul is relocating, more than 50 children have begun playing within the last year. The wheel has started to turn in a positive direction.

Table tennis in Duluth has been the forerunner of Junior Table Tennis in Minnesota. Much of the organization and implementation of its program has rested on the shoulders of Sonny Helbesch, Gary Hendrickson, and Angelo Simone. Their hard work and dedication has turned a grass roots program into a success, with around 100 kids playing at various different locations on a weekly basis. One of their protégés, 13-year-old Cory Eider, is considered the best table tennis player to ever come out of Duluth. Currently, Cory is rated 1947, with his best win against 3211 1. player. This year Cory was named Athlete of the Year for the Star of the North State Games, and he will soon be featured on a Midwest Sports Channel television program.

Under 18 Boys - John Wiita (Duluth), Reggie Cameron (St. Paul) and Brian Leonard (St. Paul)
Under 16 Boys - Eric Green (Duluth), Matt Potter (Duluth), Tom Neuman (St. Paul)
Under 14 Boys - Cory Eider (Duluth), Kris Sabas (St. Paul), John Grindeland (Moorhead)
Under 12 Boys - Neil Miller (St. Paul)
Under 16 Girls - Tresa Lamphier (Duluth), Leah Wrazidlo (Duluth)
Under 14 Girls - Lydia Brekke (St. Paul), Ashlie Miller (St. Paul)
Under 12 Girls - Tony Parzych (Duluth), Allie Reynolds (St. Paul), Ashley Little (St. Paul)
Under 10 Girls - Meranda Brekke (St. Paul)

This development and activity demonstrates that with a lot of planned effort, Junior Programs work. Minnesota will soon become very well represented at local and national tournaments. Veteran table tennis players believe that table tennis in Minnesota is now entering into a new era and will soon be recognized as a program which can be looked to and followed by anyone wishing to begin their own Junior Program.

March/April 1996
New Jersey is often the butt of jokes about smog, traffic, and landfill. People also kid us about our regional slang and the fact that we sit in the marshlands, on the side of the Lincoln Tunnel. We're just a cranberry in the shadow of the Big Apple. What's also distressing is that people cut through New Jersey to get to other places they'd rather be, like Disneyworld, which is enough to give this tiny piece of valuable property an identity crisis.

We do have some really big stuff here, though. There's Princeton. And Bruce Springsteen. George Washington really did sleep here. (The Devils Hockey Team still does.) You know that tomato in your salad? It could very well have had its roots in New Jersey soil. Also, just ask any teenager who goes "down the shore" every summer who owns the Atlantic Ocean!

And if we ever get tired of being Easterners, we can check out the Prime Meridian, which puts us WEST of lots of the rest of the world.

Yes, we're west all right. We have Deepak Jain and his sidekick Ashu, a couple of paddle-packin' teenagers who are growing 'like cactus and will soon be as big and as strong as grown men.

"I'm working out, now," Ashu will tell you. He's former U.S. #1 under 16. "The Kids" practice at the New Jersey Table Tennis Club in Westfield where they're coached by Boris Rubinovich. Their quick-draw speed and accuracy has paid off; the brothers are currently rated in the 2200's. Deepak, 17, is college-bound, considering engineering schools. Ashu, 16, is a junior who also excels in math. He, too, is planning to attend college and to continue with table tennis.

But even when they're in a mellow mood, you always know they're around. Once in a while there's a whoop-and-holler over a well-executed checkmate or awesome shot, either theirs or somebody else's.

Like most teenagers they need space. Ashu has a tendency to run down the length of the club and leap over the bags, chairs, and legs on his way to the telephone or soda machine. Sometimes he tries to slam dunk the ceiling. Another characteristic common to table tennis players in general, and specific to adolescents is a good appetite. These two will eat 'most any kind of grub available; Chinese food, pizza, or Ashu's favorite, Indian food.

Although these fellows are at home on the New Jersey range, the brothers originally are not from around these parts. They came here from India on July 4th, 1990. After a brief introduction to table tennis, they didn't play for one and a half years after their arrival. Then they discovered Westfield.

"My first rating was 1100." Ashu remembers. Grimming, he adds, "Now I use Silver FX both sides, heavily glued. I have a secret technique for gluing," he says, but he won't reveal it.

Like tumbleweed, the Jain Brothers follow the tournament trail from place to place; Atlanta, Detroit, Las Vegas, Pittsburgh, Palm Bay, New York, Canada, even Taiwan...

"I want to go to Sweden or France—and to meet Gatien, my favorite player," says Ashu.

Well, folks, there you have it. As they blaze new trails with their dueling paddles, somewhere sometime somebody will ask, "Who were those kids?" and the answer will come thundering from the cavern of the New Jersey side of the Lincoln Tunnel, "Those kids? Why, they're the JAIN BROTHERS!"

Ashu Jain gets around a lot. Here he is with Jan-Ove Waldner on the left, with Wang Tao on the right. Sorry, no pictures of the camera-shy Deepak.

**TABLE TENNIS WORLD**

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<th>Jane Chui</th>
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<td>Date:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Livelihood:</td>
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<td>Equipment:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style of Play:</td>
<td>Shakehand hitter, pips on backhand</td>
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**Mini-Profile**

**Recent Achievements:** 1994 & 1995 National Collegiate Women's Singles Champion

**Career Highlights:** Top 10 Women for 10 years

**Ultimate Goal in Table Tennis:** To beat Everybody!

**Nickname:** Jane Chui. People call me Jane Chui

**Personal Slogan:** "You Bum!" (To brother Chi-Sun)

**Favorite Opponent:** Basketball

**Hobbies:** Dancing, Shopping, Talking

**Favorite Opponent:** Sean Lonergan (cause I beat him the last time we played (4 years ago...))

**Favorite Psychological Tactic:** Smiling

**Best Doubles Partner:** Gia Hue Co

**Most Irrational Table Tennis Fear:** Opponents who smile back at me

**Most Memorable Comeback:** Wouldn't know—too many times

**Player I Most Admire:** Kong Ling-Hui

**Most Feared Opponent:** Deng Yaping

**Strongest Part of My Game:** My personality

**Favorite Tournament:** U.S. Nationals in Las Vegas

**Ping Pong Peeve:** Clothes

**I Spend My Prize Money On:** No entry fees for me!

**Idea of Table Tennis Paradise:** Clothes

**Best Advice to New Players:** Don't get involved!

**If I Could Change One Thing About the Sport:** I would get all the $1

**I Plan to Play Until:** Gia Hue Co beats me

**Other Comments:** I ❤ TT
Philip Lim
3/16/96
14
Student

Table Tennis World Mini-Profile

Name: Philip Lim
Date: 3/16/96
Age: 14
Livelihood: Student
Current Home: Oakland, California
Highest Rating Ever: 2200+ (unpublished...)
Equipment: Schildkrot C-Max Racket, 1.8mm TSP Spinpips
Style of Play: Penhold close to the table fast attacker
Recent Achievements:
- 1995 U.S. Junior High School Boys' Singles Champion
- 1995 Tet Invitational Under 18 Champion
- 1995 Pacific Rim Under 18 Champion & Under 16 Runner-up
- 1996 Schildkrot Open Under 18 and Under 2400 Champion

Personal Slogan: "L.T.A. O.K.A.Y." (Said slowly, adopted from Norman Yeh)

Favorite Sport(s) Besides Pong: Tennis, basketball, football
Hobbies: Hanging out with friends, playing table tennis and other sports, and hooping on Shashin Shodhan (which means killing him in B-ball), playing cards, etc...

Favorite Opponent: Maryland Juniors!!! (East-West rivalry). All juniors at Larry Hodges' Club!!!
Favorite Psychological Tactic: Don't eat eggs before a tournament, because in China eggs = zero.
Best Doubles Partner: Shashin Shodhan and Vineet Agarwal
Most Irrational Table Tennis Fear: Losing to Jessica Shen
Ping Pong Peeve: Losing. Also, sore losers—like Larry Hodges!
Ultimate Goal in Table Tennis: To get to the Olympics
Best Advice to New Players: You better switch to penhold (if you were playing shakehands) and keep practicing!

Favorite Tournament: Youth Cup (because West Coast players will win everything!)
Idea of Table Tennis Paradise: If the United States could train juniors like other foreign countries
Best Advice to New Players: You better switch to penhold (if you were playing shakehands) and keep practicing!
If I Could Change One Thing I would want every tournament to have higher junior prize money (instead of trophies)
I Plan to Play Until: I lose to Scott Wong

Other Comments: Go California Juniors!
(He had more to say, but it was censored—he made fun of the Editor!)

Personal Slogan: "I.T.A. OK.A.Y." (Said slowly, adopted from Norman Yeh)

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Ping Pong Peeve: Losing. Also, sore losers—like Larry Hodges!
Ultimate Goal in Table Tennis: To get to the Olympics
Player I Most Admire: Liu Guoliang
Most Feared Opponent: David Zhuang
Favorite Tournament: Youth Cup (because West Coast players will win everything!)
Idea of Table Tennis Paradise: If the United States could train juniors like other foreign countries
Best Advice to New Players: You better switch to penhold (if you were playing shakehands) and keep practicing!
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Personal Slogan: "I.T.A. OK.A.Y." (Said slowly, adopted from Norman Yeh)
The Six-Step Training Process

by Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach

Developing your table tennis game is a steady progression from the simple to the more complex. Many players, however, get stuck at the beginning stage and never move on toward developing the more advanced parts of their game. It's a common syndrome—players spending year after year trying to complete their most basic shots and refusing to learn anything more advanced until the basic shots are (in their mind) perfected—and so they never improve as fast as they should. It's sort of like a sprinter spending all his time trying to perfect his walk while his rivals are practicing sprinting. Guess who improves faster?

Decide for yourself where you fit in the following six steps, and work your way toward the final step. It's not an exact thing—even when you are doing drills from Step Six, you should still be doing some of the drills from all five earlier steps. Although most of the drills given below are simple rally-type drills, as you get more advanced, you should add more advanced drills, with serve and receive techniques to simulate game situations. For example, rather than have your partner serve a simple topspin serve, you might have a serve deep behind you, loop, partner blocks, and drill continues. Or partner serves short, you flip the short ball, and continue drill. Or partner serves backspin, you push, partner attacks, you counter-attack, and drill continues. In all drills below, whenever your forehand or backhand is mentioned, that means either a drive or a loop, as you decide. If you're a beginner, mostly drive. As you become more advanced, use the loop more often. However, make sure you can do each drill competently before you drive into it with a loop. I'd recommend using your forehand loop in all of the drills as possible as soon as possible. Depending on your style and level of play, you may also use the backhand loop in many of the drills.

Step 1: Stroke & Stroke

Before you learn to run, you have to learn to walk. In table tennis, that means you have to learn the strokes before you can use them in more advanced drills. In practice, this means (assuming all players are right-handed):

- Forehand to Forehand Cross-Court
- Backhand to Backhand Cross-Court
- Forehand to Backhand Down-the-Line

A common mistake is to over-practice the strokes by doing simple forehand to forehand, backhand to backhand, etc., over and over, session after session, sometimes for years. You have to start out this way, but don't spend too much time on it. Once you can hit 20 in a row, you can start doing drills from Step 2. However, do need to make the strokes automatic—which means you have to start most sessions with the basic forehand to forehand or backhand to backhand for 5-10 minutes until you can consistently get 20 in a row. As the shots become more instinctive, spend less and less time doing forehand to forehand, etc. Think of this as a simplified warm-up, and do it before and after each session as you warm up each shot. Use the more advanced drills to fully warm up your shots.

Step 2: Move & Stroke

The time to add footwork to your strokes. You have to learn to move to the ball.

- One-On-One Footwork. Partner alternates hitting one ball to your wide forehand, one ball to your middle forehand. You move back and forth, hitting all forehands and returning each ball to the same spot for your opponent, either his backhand or forehand.
- Backhand to Forehand Footwork. Partner alternates hitting one ball to your backhand, one ball to the middle of the table. You return each with your forehand, moving side to side.

Step 3: Different Strokes

Now it's time to combine your forehand and backhand strokes. Here are some drills you can do:

- Forehand-Backhand Alternating. Partner alternates hitting one ball to your backhand, one to your forehand. You alternate hitting backhand and forehand, returning each ball to the same spot (either partner's forehand or backhand).
- One-On-One Drill (Falkenburg Drill). Partner hits two balls to your backhand, one to your forehand, then repeats sequence. You return the first ball with your backhand, step to your backhand corner, and return the second ball with your forehand, then move to your wide forehand and return the third ball with your forehand.

Step 4: Choose & Move

Now it's time to add some randomness to your drills. This is the step that many players never get to as they spend eternity trying to develop the perfect forehand. The key thing in this step is to keep it a simple choice between just two possibilities. Here is the key drill:

- Random side-to-side. Partner hits ball either to middle forehand or middle backhand. You return with either backhand or forehand, depending on where ball is going. Keep the footwork and stroking practice here to a minimum—the key thing to work on here is making the choice between forehand and backhand, and smoothly executing the stroke. Try not to over-anticipate. You shouldn't be moving in one direction, and then have to change directions. Make sure your first move is in the correct direction.

Step 5: Choose & Move

Now it's time to combine decision-making, stroking and footwork.

Don't just use the drills given below—make up your own! There are an infinite number of potential drills.

- Random Forehands. Partner hits the ball randomly all over your forehand side. Your move to each ball and return with a forehand or backhand.
- Random Backhands. Partner hits the ball randomly all over your backhand side. Your move to each ball and return with a forehand or backhand.

Step 6: Whole Table

Now it's time to pull out all the stops and most of the rules and play almost like you were in a match.

- Whole Table Random. Partner hits all balls to all parts of the table, randomly. You return with forehand or backhand.
- Serve & Attack. Partner serves backspin, partner pushes anywhere on table. You attack (mostly by looping), either with a forehand or backhand, depending on your playing style and footspeed.

March/April 1996

The Mental Advantage

Jim Annesi, Ph.D.

Transform your Table Tennis Thoughts Into the Versatile Skill of Mental Imagery

works. Below are some of the many ways in which using imagery will benefit you in your table tennis game:

1. Learning a New Skill. As a new stroke or tactic is being "shaped," key words should be used to trigger an image of a correct response. Using videotape also helps in developing mental images when you are learning something new.

2. Developing Strategy. Table tennis presents players with many options for typical situations. Imagining correct strategic choices prepares you to respond with your best game plan, automatically.

3. Practicing Skills. You should use imagery to perform each table tennis skill, repeatedly, in your mind.

4. Changing a Skill. Imagery aids in the correction process by countering a negative performance. This is accomplished by substituting a correct performance in your mind.

5. Increasing Perception. By effectively using imagery, you can become aware of important details from previous play.

6. Controlling Anxiety. Imagery can control processes such as heart rate, respiration, and blood pressure. These skills can be used for stress management during play.

7. Encourage Persistence. Imagery allows you to compare where you are now to where you can be in the future, in terms of your table tennis game. This increases motivation. Imagining past performance is not useful in this situation.

8. Practicing Psychological Skills. Many skills such as concentration, positive self-talk, and self-confidence may be rehearsed under imagined, game-like situations.

9. Recovering From Injury. Imagery can be used to speed up healing, manage pain, and keep players out of retirement from deteriorating through lack of use.

The Mental Advantage:

- Deepen the performance state.
- Enhance motivation and performance.
- Reduce anxiety.
- Increase concentration.
- Improve performance.
- Improve learning.

The Mental Advantage: Jim Annesi, Ph.D.

Dr. Jim Annesi is a sport psychology/performance enhancement consultant in private practice. He may be contacted at The Club at Woodbridge, 585 Main Street, Woodbridge, NJ 07095, 908-634-0500.
The Footwork of KIM TAEK SOO

1992 Olympic Bronze Medalist, Men’s Singles
by Wei Wang, USATT Certified National Coach...1990 National Champion

Photo sequence by Diego Schaaf © 1996
The Man with the Hardest Forehand in Table Tennis
by Wei Wang

In previous articles, we have analyzed shakehand players only, because that is the style played by the vast majority of players in the United States. But there are certain portions of a penholder's game that are extremely useful for any player in this sport. The most obvious one is footwork. Due to the limitations on a penholder's backhand, he usually has to develop extremely efficient and precise footwork in order to cover the table with reasonable authority. The danger in playing against penholders lies in their well-developed ability to turn. (Here on the West Coast we call "turning" what East Coast players call stepping around the backhand—that is using the forehand to play a ball aimed at the backhand side of the table.) A player who is used to playing shakehand opponents only can frequently be caught off guard by quickly penholders can move sideways around their backhand corner and attack strongly, both cross-court or down-the-line.

Of course, that leaves the obvious penholder's problem unresolved: After the penholder turns, the table is wide open—nobody in sight. If we can block that attack shot wide into the forehand it should be like stealing candy from a baby—right? Well, not so fast. First of all, a good penholder will turn so wide that it will allow him to place the shot anywhere on the table. Even with great footwork, the whole point of the cross-step is that contact occurs when both feet are almost off the ground. One might think that this would result in a loss of power, since there is no stability to hold the body. But on closer review it becomes apparent that the whole explosive motion is optimized to drive the body and the racket into the ball with maximum force.

This is not Kim's most powerful shot. That distinction undoubtedly goes to his turn/cross court shot. But it is exactly because his cross-step shot is so good that he can turn so fearlessly and lay everything into his turn shot—always confident, that if the ball is not exactly where he expected it, he can still get to it and cause some damage. Operating on such a cushion of comfort, Kim is bound to put fear into the eyes of his opponents for a long time to come.
The Playing Style of Cheng Yinghua
by Larry Hodges, USATT Certified Coach

Cheng, at age 37, has been the dominant player in the U.S. since 1988. He does this despite the fact that he’s no longer the fastest nor the most powerful. His game is based on a complicated mix of spin, consistency, quickness, and experience.

Cheng brings with him to the table the following ammunition:

- The most consistent backhand loop in the U.S.
- An extremely consistent blocking game
- An extremely consistent forehand loop
- Unerring and consistent ball control
- An extremely consistent backhand
- The most consistent backhand loop in the world
- An extremely consistent forehand
- An extremely consistent return of serve
- A ferocious forehand flip, especially off the serve.

You may note the repetitive use of the word “consistent.” Cheng is in both Webster’s and Oxford’s as the definition.

He really has three distinct playing styles: Cheng the two-winged looper, Cheng the forehand attacker, and Cheng the blocker.

In most matches, Cheng plays a consistent blocking game, interspersed with loops. He doesn’t waste energy running around looping unless you force him. To force him, all you have to do is play 2650 or better.

Getting past Cheng’s block is almost impossible. Loop, loop kill, smash—he seems to block everything at will. He also changes his blocks constantly, throwing off his opponent. Watch closely, and you’ll see that many of his blocks are actually “mini-loops,” as he spins the ball off the bounce with a very short, quick motion.

Once you’ve let him know that you’re not about to be blocked down (read: you’re on the U.S. Team, minimally), then you’re going to face one of the other facets Cheng likes to keep in reserve. Against some players, he’ll start ripping forehand after forehand. Because of his great ball control and serves that allow no good returns, he seems to be able to set up his forehand any time he wants. He wins the serve/receive battle against nearly everyone, and Boom! It’s another forehand winner. (That’s Boom!, as opposed to his younger, stronger opponents, who go BOOM!)

However, it’s this two-winged looping game that Cheng is best known for. In this mode, he’ll serve and backhand loop over and over, challenging you to go to his forehand, or face a non-stop barrage of backhand loops. If his opponent is serving, he’ll either backhand spin the serve, or backhand loop out of the rally. No other U.S. player (and very few in the world) can stand back and chop from both sides over and over the way Cheng does. With all the speed, spin, changes of speed & spin, changes of direction & depth, and outright deception in the modern game, few can dominate by backhand looping over and over against every ball—but it’s the hallmark of Cheng’s game. How many opponents have battled to the end of a game with Cheng, only to be blown away by a backhand loop bombardment? It’s not a matter of blocking the loop; it’s a matter of blocking it over and over and over and...you get the idea.

Cheng serves are not scary—few top players have trouble returning them. There’s just one problem: there’s almost no way to return his serve without giving him the attack. No other U.S. player can force a third-ball loop the way Cheng can.

Add to this mix the most ferocious forehand flip in the U.S. (except possibly for protege Todd Sweeris), a will to win, fearlessness that comes from the fact that he’s not afraid to lose (ten seconds after his worse losses, he’s laughing and joking around), and you’ve got something scary. Add the experience born of eleven years on the Chinese National Team and nine years as a full-time coach—and you’ve got something dynamic.

Here’s an example on how Cheng varies his game for different opponents: Huazhang Xu, another former Chinese Team Member now living in Maryland, gave Cheng a series of close matches a few years ago, and even beat him in one tournament. When Cheng blocked, Xu looped successfully. When Cheng backhand looped, Xu counterlooped successfully. So Cheng went to an all-out forehand attack, and hasn’t been challenged since. Another example is against Sean O’Neill, who has a devastating forehand loop. Cheng simply backhand loops or quick blocks over and over toSean’s backhand, keeping him pinned down, never giving O’Neill a good chance to rip a forehand. If O’Neill tries to play a forehand from the backhand corner, Cheng simply plays one ball after another (on his backhand), then comes back to the forehand.

So how do you beat Cheng in a match?

Let’s look at how 1993 World Champion Jean-Philippe Gatien did it at last year’s World Team Cup. Cheng had beaten Gatien just one year before (while Gatien was World Champion) at the World Team Cup by with a 2-winged looping & quick-blocking barrage. Time around, Gatien simply went on a forehand looping rampage, and loop killed Cheng’s backhand loops, blocks, and everything else. If you can do that—TABLE TENNIS WORLD will be writing you up in this column pretty soon.

Next Issue: U.S. Champion David Zhuang

The Playing Style of Cheng Yinghua

Cheng Yinghua (USA) - Erik Lindh (SWE) (GAME 5)
Khoa Nguyen (USA) - J.M. Saive (BEL) (GAME 3)
Jim Butler (USA) - Jan Ove Waldner (SWE) (GAME 3)
Kim Taek Soo (KOR) - Philippe Saive (BEL)
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Cheng Yinghua (USA) - Erik Lindh (SWE) (GAME 5)
Khoa Nguyen (USA) - J.M. Saive (BEL) (GAME 3)
Jim Butler (USA) - Jan Ove Waldner (SWE) (GAME 3)
Kim Taek Soo (KOR) - Philippe Saive (BEL)
Andrzej Grubba (POL) - Jean-Michel Saive (BEL)

Video B

Collage of Exhibition Points - Miscellaneous Players
Quarter Final: Zoran Primorac (CRO) - Philippe Saive (BEL)
Quarter Final: Jan Ove Waldner (SWE) - Jean-Michel Saive (BEL)
Semi Final: Andrzej Grubba (POL) - Zoran Primorac (CRO)

Video C

Quarter Final: Patrick Chila (FRA) - A. Grubba(POL) Game 4 & 5
Semi Final: Kim Taek Soo (KOR) - Jean-Michel Saive (BEL)
Final: Zoran Primorac (CRO) - Kim Taek Soo (KOR)

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March/April 1996
The Backhand and Table Tennis Sense

by Cheng Yinghua, #1 Rated in U.S. since 1988
National Table Tennis Center Head Coach
Edited and translated by Marianne Yeh
Chinese word processing by Dandan Gao

In English And the Original Chinese!

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In English And the Original Chinese!
Table tennis is supposed to be fun. And nothing (except perhaps lobbing) is as fun as Table tennis is supposed to be fun. And lot—but you have a lot to look forward to.

Unlike looping, however, counterlooping is an important part of most top player’s games, and if you’re a serious player, you need to learn how to do it.

It is assumed that the reader has a decent forehand loop, with relatively good technique. (Beginners—a loop is an aggressive topspin shot; to counterloop is to loop your opponent’s loop.) If not, get a coach and practice! This article is not about looping technique. It is about using your looping technique to loop your opponent’s loop right back at him.

Equipment: The sponge on your racket is very important for counterlooping. You’ll need a grippy inverted surface. The sponge itself can be either hard or soft. If it’s hard, you’ll have to generate more force to sink the ball into the sponge. If the sponge is soft, I’d recommend using speed glue.

Types of Counterloops

1. Defensive: This is done from well off the table against a very strong loop. Contact is very late, on the ball’s descent, at about knee level. It is a slow and spotty shot, often arcing several feet over the net.

2. Consistent: This is the most common counterloop. Contact is after the top of the bounce, but before the ball drops below table level. The purpose is to be consistent, yet aggressive, putting pressure on your opponent.

3. Aggressive: This is when you have time to wind up and put full power into your counterloop and go for a winner. Contact should be as close as possible to the top of the bounce.

4. Off-the-Bounce: This is the most aggressive counterloop of all. Contact is before the ball reaches the top of the bounce, often just after the ball bounces on the table. It’s a very tricky shot that takes a lot of timing and anticipation, but almost always wins the point outright.

When to Counterloop

Counterlooping is normally a very physical shot. The question of when to use it depends on your physical agility, how strong your loop is (in terms of both consistency and power), and your playing style. If looping is your strength, then incorporate counterlooping into your game as much as possible. If looping is not a strength—well, it’s still a fan shot, but it’ll take some time before the shot becomes a consistent point-winner.

Even if you normally play a close to the table blocking game, having a good counterloop gives you the ability to counter-attack consistently against a weak loop, rather than continue blocking or go for an erratic smash.

The Secret to Counterlooping

Stroke forward, not up! Those four words sum up 90% of the problems players have with counterlooping. Because so many players learn to loop against backspin first, they learn to stroke upward—and the habit carries over into counterlooping, with disastrous results. Technically speaking, you will stroke slightly up on most counterloops, but the primary direction is forward.

Specifically, when counterlooping, you want to contact the top of the ball, a little toward the back, driving mostly forward. You should also contact the ball a little on the far side of the ball from you, looking it and putting some sidespin on the ball—it’s a more natural stroke.

You will have to learn to adjust your stroke path depending on your distance from the table, the speed & spin of the incoming ball, and how hard you plan to counterloop. You will have to contact the ball more on top and stroke more forward: if you move closer to the table; if the incoming ball has more speed or spin; or if you are going for a more powerful counterloop.

You will contact the ball a little more toward the back and stroke a little bit more upward: if you move away from the table; if the incoming ball has less speed or spin; or if you are going for a softer loop.

It’s best to contact the ball a little on the outside of the ball, i.e. the far side of the ball from you, giving your loop some sidespin. This is both more natural (since arm is already slopping downward from the shoulder, you’d almost have to raise the racket tip up to avoid sidespin) and allows you to contact the ball without meeting the incoming topspin head-on.

One thing to watch out for is a soft loop that drops in front of you. To counterloop this ball, you’ll have to get closer to the table. If it’s too late for that, then loop the ball almost on the very top of the ball, even though this contradicts the previous paragraph. The reason is that the ball’s trajectory is downward, and when it hits your racket, the ball’s topspin will make the ball jump upward. Also, there is a tendency to lift against a ball that is dropping in front of you. Resist this urge at all costs!

Overpower the incoming spin

With all the spin on the incoming ball, you will have to overpower it to replace it with your own spin. This is not as hard as it seems as the ball’s rotation automatically changes when the spin hits your inverted surface. Some players get in the habit of just getting their racket on the ball, and guiding the ball back. This leads to a weak, defensive loop. Don’t wimp out—use your own force to overpower that incoming ball and add your own spin!

Off-the-Bounce Counterloops

To loop off the bounce, you will have to be very close to the table, and either react very quickly as your opponent loops to you, or anticipate his shot. You should only loop off the bounce when you expect a relatively weak loop.

The secret to looping off the bounce is a short swing, a racket held relatively high, and contact almost on the very top of the ball. Overpower the incoming spin—don’t baby it. Watch your opponent pick up the ball from the backcourt.

Study the Stars

There’s no better way to learn a technique than by watching it done. Get a tape or watch almost any top player with inverted sponge. Some recommended international players to watch include Zoran Primorac, Jean-Michel Saive, Jean-Philippe Gatien, Ma Wenge, Kong Linghui, Yoo Nam Kyu, Kim Taek Soo, or Jan-Ove Waldner. In the U.S., watch KhoaNguyen, Jim Butler, Cheng Yinghua, or co-writer Todd Sweeris. Or to see some really physical counterlooping, watch some of the up-and-coming youth players in the U.S., who make up what has to be the strongest crop of counterloopers in years—Eric Owens, Barney J. Reed, Dave Fernandez, Randy Cohen, Ravzan Creta, Shashin Shodhan, and Sean Lonergan.

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March/April 1996
New ITTF President's Plans by Xu Xianzhu

This was what Xu Yinsheng, the newly elected president of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) told this reporter when I interviewed him shortly after his return from the ITTF Executive Committee meeting in Cyprus at the end of last year.

"In a big family such as the ITTF," said Xu, "We have a lot of friends and enthusiastic supporters with rich experience. We should mobilize them to do their bit for the promotion of table tennis and make it an even more prosperous sport than it has been. I hereby promise that throughout the whole of the coming year it could be said to be the guideline of his work during his term of office in the following one and a half years.

He spoke highly of the Chinese Table Tennis Association which had given him great support and help during the years when he worked in coordination with ITTF-Headquarters.

He paid tribute to the two former ITTF presidents, Ichiro Ogiymura and Lollo Hanarulh, who both recently died of illness. The loss had to some degree affected the day-to-day work of the ITTF, he explained, "It is important for me, as a member of the ITTF to strengthen its unity, bring their initiative into full play, and work together to further promote and develop the sport worldwide." The fact that the Cyprus Executive Committee meeting was a success. The participants from across the world took the interests of the whole into account, worked in cooperation for a common goal, and reached agreements on a number of important issues through democratic consultations. The directors of all the working committees, all experienced experts, displayed high efficiency in their work.

Referring to the amendments to the ITTF’s rules and regulations and other reforms, he praised the work the ITTF had done in the past few years. He particularly mentioned the reform of the personnel team event competition from nine matches to the present five, and brightening the color of the equipment and the players’ uniforms, which had all been well received by the coaches, players and spectators. He stressed that the ITTF would adopt a prudent policy in introducing reforms, adding that any new changes would first be tried out on a limited scale before putting them into effect.

"In this respect," Xu explained, "the most important thing is for ITTF leaders, coaches and players to reach a common understanding. One of the questions that concerns ITTF officials most is how to make table tennis competitions interesting to watch, thereby attracting more spectators and sponsors. For the coaches and players, the primary concern is developing at a fast pace. With more and more tricks served and the increase in the speed of the players, points are often won in a few strokes exchanged between the players. Without thrilling rallies, the spectators might lose interest in the game. If this should happen, it would be hard to find sponsors and TV stations would be unwilling to broadcast the matches. The loss of a market would mean economic losses for all concerned.

For the ITTF’s work in 1996, Xu said that the primary task was to ensure the success of the table tennis competition at the Olympic Games in Atlanta, and do a job in number of other important competitions so as to draw more attention to the sport.

In addition, the ITTF will introduce two new events, namely the First World Cup Women’s Singles, scheduled for September, and the Finals of the International Grand Prix toward the end of the year. In the case of the latter, there will be four events: men’s and women’s singles & doubles. Players will be selected using the ITTF’s latest ranking. The prize money offered will be record $200,000 in U.S. dollars.

According to Xu, the ITTF has plans to establish a world club system, with players representing their respective clubs. Such a system imposes few restrictions on a players’ participation, it will give ace players around the world more opportunities to display their talent and superb skills.

The ITTF calls on the well-off nations to consider helping the needy ones by providing them with funds, equipment and coaches, as the Chinese Table Tennis Association has done over the years.

Speaking about the Atlanta Olympics, Xu was happy to note that tickets for the Table Tennis competition had been sold out. Besides the original four events (men’s and women’s singles & doubles), the ITTF tried to add men’s and women’s team events to the Olympics, but failed to get the International Olympic Committee’s approval on this. The request to add mixed doubles might be approved, as was the case with the badminton competition in the Olympics.

"Through common efforts by experts and enthusiasts," Xu stressed, "table tennis will become one of the most favored sports in the world." The new ITTF leader has great confidence in the future of table tennis, to which he has devoted the greater part of his life and energy.

March/April 1996
TTW: Gee, Tim, we've seen your table tennis resume, and figure you use posterboard for your business cards! How'd you get into table tennis originally?

Tim: In the 1930's, growing up in Dayton, Ohio, I began playing with my father on a makeshift, soon-to-be slightly warped table-top placed over our basement pool table. As I said in my book Winning Table Tennis (1976), "I loved the lights over the table and the indefinable darkness around it, the green and white colors that seemed so clear and beautiful to me, the sound of the racket in the silence steadily hitting the ball." I think my boyhood play in that basement was as much an aesthetic as competitive experience.

In 1940 I won a tournament at my grade school on an improvised table the nuns made atop some student desks. I still have the small cup I was awarded (minus the arms) that, many years ago when I smoked some, I used as an ashtray.

When I was in the 8th grade, to my amazement I won an all-City Catholic Youth Organization tournament. I don't know how all those hard hitters, so impressive to me when I first entered the playing hall, lost, but I remember how in the final I relentlessly out-pushed my final opponent.

In the following 55-56 season, my last before I retired (I thought then forever), I was ranked anywhere from U.S. #12 to #20. And now I began to write more and more for our national publication, Topics.

For four more seasons, I played with great fervor. At the University of Dayton, where for years I was a perpetual "student" (who would ever think I'd become a professor?), many a day I'd cut all my classes and teach beginners cum novices to block return the steady forehands I'd roll ever harder at them. And since I'd heard that 10-times U.S. Champion Dick Miles used to practice his close-to-the-body windmill forehand with a handicap chef under his arm pit, I did that too.

My advance in that clubless town was steady but slow. Dayton City Novice Champ, Dayton City Champ, Ohio State Champ, U.S. Intercollegiate Singles and Doubles Champ, U.S. #10, U.S. #7, Member of the U.S. Team in the U.S. vs. Canada matches at the CNE in Toronto (the night before, I'd been throw-up sick, was still sick, played anyway, tried hard, lost every match). During the 1954-55 season (when I was an Ohio TTA V.P. under President Otto Ek) I had my best losses; to Bernie Bukiet in the final of the Illinois Open in Chicago; to Bukiet in the semi's of the St. Joe Valley in South Bend; to Johnny Somael in the semi's of the Michigan Open at Pontiac; to Bukiet again in the final of the Western Open at Milwaukee; and to Erwin Klein in the 8th's of the National's at Rochester, N.Y. The best doubles I ever played was in the following '55-'56 season, my last before I retired (I thought then forever). I had with Steve Isaacson and I for a short time dominated the major Midwest tournaments, won 4 out of 5 finals.

Ten years later, I'd gotten a life—a job, wife, family—and at first hesitantly then with a passionate rush returned to the game. For the next five years, age 35 through 39, I was defending his CNE Championship and U.S. #3 Dell Sweeris at a tournament in Hempstead, Long Island. Alex, understandably, quite dismissed me and anybody I might have against Sidio. But once out there at the table, after I'd hit in that first fast, flat forehand, I could see right away in Sidio's face that he wasn't prepared to play me and was fearful. I beat him two straight, after which the poor guy cut short his stay and ignominiously left for home, while I eventually lost in the final to former Czech World Doubles Champion Ladislav Stipek.

Ah, glory days. Everyone, regardless of his/her ability, has a story or two to tell. Of course we've got to move along with this interview, but I can't resist mentioning that once, long ago, at a Detroit U.S. Open Team Championship, I was down 1-0 and 20-11 match point when suddenly a player/official I didn't like came over. Because he had a pleasant, expectant look on his face as he sat down to watch, he seemed to me like a vulture suddenly alighting there ready to feast on my remains. Absurd, huh? But, seeing him there, I vowed to fight ferociously before losing that last point. Only, miraculously, I didn't lose! Took me 1 straight to win that game, and of course the next.

"If you want your sons (or daughters) to be Champions, as I always did, don't kill their interest in the Sport. They have to have fun...."

TTW: A fantastic come-back like that you'd of course remember forever. Have you, at age 65, any recent playing accomplishments?

Tim: ...Uh, my last U.S. Championship win was in 1993 at the U.S. Open in Indianapolis. The Over '60's over George Hendry who, 75 years young, at our last U.S. Closed in Vegas beat me two straight.

TTW: Enough then about your play. How about your sons? Both of them were U.S. Men's Singles Champions. Keeping in mind there are several more questions I want to ask you, tell us a little something about Scott and Eric.

Tim: Oh, sure... I remember in 1972 in the Tim Boggan Open in Miami (yes, that was the actual name of the tournament), I watched Scott, just turned 11, win a match from down 19-11 in the deciding game by
years they lived abroad, especially in the beginning. But maybe it was all worth it. The final verdict isn’t in yet, perhaps never will be. I’m sure now, though, they must have very mixed feelings about how I directly or indirectly influenced them to spend their youth... But, well, for those 20 years, as my meticulously kept scrapbooks attest (will they ever look through them, read what’s there to read?) we did do something together.

TTW: Any advice for other parents with kids who play table tennis?

Tim: Oh, I’ve advice, but what it’s worth is another matter. But, o.k., consider this. If you want your children to do their best, you too must do your best. (And my wife Sally and I did.) If you want your sons (or daughters) to be Champions, as I always did, don’t kill their interest in the Sport. They have to have fun—away from the table—especially with other kids. And yet they’ve got to be out there at the table to the exclusion of much else. Ideally they should be on a first-name basis with, and should practice against Champions, young and old, who’ll indulge them and encourage them to have the idea that they too can be Champions. They need to have a very high opinion of themselves. Regardless of how seriously they practice, they must play in lots of tournaments, against every conceivable style, and ideally must play every point to the best of their ability. Intensity is very, very important.

Here, in the Jan., 1938 English TTA magazine Table Tennis is ITTF founder Ivor Montagu trying to define “Sport”:

“Not merely a game, nor yet solely a pure physical exercise. Rather a momentary, if make believe, exaltation of effort.”

In other words, Reality will sooner or later bring you back to necessary everyday pursuits, will it? But, for the moment, the spirit calls for an acceleration, an exhilaration that strains to satisfy the imagination.

TTW: That last line sounds more than a little “bookish.” Tim. But of course you did write a book, didn’t you?

Tim: Yes, but there are no lines quite like that in it. Winning Table Tennis was part of a Sports Series (compare Pete Rose’s Winning Baseball), and after I accepted the advance and spent it, I damn well had to write the book. But I couldn’t get started. I couldn’t write without being honest and write out of my own experience, but that meant I had to focus on my own somewhat eccentric game, as well as use whatever appealed to me from what others had written. Further, since my chief concern was not to be boring, I wanted to include as much anecdotal material as possible. It took me three months to find the right voice, without which I couldn’t proceed. Finally I got started with what became “Chapter Five—Serve and Receive.”

At the 1975 Houston U.S. Open, in the Parent-Child event, a Championship I really wanted to win, Scott and I were down match point in an early round to a team we figured to beat. I told Scott to just block the ball back, and I’d hit it in the boy’s return for a winner. Scott dutifully blocked back the father’s serve, but I guess, being directed and not free, he tightened a bit, and the ball hung on the net then dropped back onto our side. As, losers, we turned to each other to shake hands, Scott, not in anger but in anguish, said, “Whad’ja tell me to do that for?” Why do fathers sometimes say what they say? Imagine, more than 20 years later, I still have pangs of regret over that directive....

In 1981, at Las Vegas, when Scott and Eric played in the final for the National Championship and they were at deuce in the 4th and then on into the 5th, I couldn’t make up my mind who I wanted to see win. On the one hand, since Eric had already won the Championship in ’78, I thought it right that Scott, who’d been 2-0 down to Lim Ming Chui in the 8th’s before beating Danny Seemiller and D-J Lee, should win. On the other hand, I greatly admired Eric’s recovery from match-point down in the 4th and his stubborn, if often exasperating integrity—his through the years refusal to be intimidated by his older brother, his selfish fidelity to self. Anyway, when Scott won, 18 in the 5th, I burst into tears and didn’t settle down for quite a while. Perhaps neither of them cared themselves as much as I did about each winning the U.S. Championship?

Scott and Eric, en route to becoming professional players, both had some very painful times in the 4-5
And thereafter I finished the whole book inside of a month. Fortunately I had a very sympathetic editor who liked the way I wrote and scarcely touched my original manuscript.

TTW: With the decades-long perspective you have, can you comment briefly on any combined past/present/future aspect of the Sport? If your thought is somewhat controversial, so much the better.

Tim: Well, it’s quite clear that the quality of play among, say, the top 200 male players in the U.S. in the last 25 years has continually improved, and that the still too few showcase tournaments for them have also gotten better. That’s of course encouraging. But I must say too often some very good workers fall out of favor with one administration or another, or become themselves disgusted with some administration or other, and the Sport suffers. I well understand that those making policy want people around them whom they feel they can team with. But surely some flexibility, some lines of communication and cooperation can be extended to those who’ve served well in the past so that they might in some capacity continue to serve.

More broadly speaking, I think what’s most needed in Table Tennis right now, particularly in the U.S., is audience involvement. “Table Tennis is a participation sport, not a spectator sport”—how often have I heard that. But—and this is a thought particularly for those interested in inter-city/inter-state professional league competition—why not encourage the spectators to be the participants too—as in so many other sports?

Again and again in tournaments today, certainly more so than in the late ’60’s and early ’70’s, say, it’s obvious that a great many spectators don’t care who wins any given match and so they applaud only when spectacular shots are made, or after a while, the most spectacular shots entertain them. Of course today’s super-fast, have-to-attack game is error prone, and one hardly expects a player who’s quickly given a point he’s not worked for. But, as Miles has said for maybe 50 years, the court is generally much too big, and the audience is too far away from the action. Spectators need to be boxing-ring or little theater-like up close to better share the drama.

To me it’s just absurd that sideline coaches and fellow teammates can’t yell out instructions to the players or lustily root for them, especially in a televised one table Arena setting. You’re afraid of chaos? The threat can be monitored because the inherent structure of play provides a saving contrapuntal effect. Nothing’s worse than a passive audience. To make an analogy: over the years, as Editor of Topics, I received a great many photos of players—but photographer after photographer never realized that I couldn’t use his/her picture because the uncrappable background showed very few or even obviously disinterested spectators.

“Without pointing a finger at any particular administration in the 30 years that I’ve been writing table tennis articles, I think it’s almost a given that a free press is not much liked by the resident officers in power.”

TTW: You were Editor of Topics (now called Today) not once but twice. Want to say anything about that?

Tim: Being the Editor and principal writer of the paper for maybe 100 issues (particularly in those days typewriter Wite-Out) was herculean work but great fun—serious pleasure. I printed everything and anything from anyone I thought responsible. And I actively solicited material from all over the country. It was, if not a family paper, an in-group table tennis community paper, where the community was the multicultural world, with all its possibilities. I wanted subjective points of view, the more varied the better. I wanted a particular eye, an individual voice. I thought if everyone was free to say what he wanted about any topic, the many subjective responses would provide a basis for objectivity, and the truth, though it might take time, would out. I preferred writing that showed involvement, that combined reason and emotion—as the best writing does. But I see now that in my zeal for the written word I stressed too much copy and not enough photos.

TTW: The USATT fired you as Editor not once but twice—isn’t that right?

Tim: In 1983, after 13 years of very conscientious but sometimes very controversial service, I was fired as Editor in a very secretive, underhanded way...which, though I was very angry over all the cowardly deception, would not do anyone any good (least of all me). I fought back as best I could by starting a new and well received magazine (for which I’d built up in one season well over 900 paid subscribers, the great majority of whom were regular tournament-goers who knew me and trusted me), and then by running successfully for the USATT Presidency.

Without pointing a finger at any particular administration in the 30 years that I’ve been writing table tennis articles, I think it’s almost a given that a free press is not much liked by the resident officers in power. And with some good reason, for in such a democratic press not all is gospel, though some people are apt to think so. Also, what one says at any one moment shouldn’t really be held as his/her definitive word forever or perhaps even for a short time. There’s always dirty linen and very likely much more of it when it’s never aired in public. Readers of all persuasions realize people not only have differences of opinion but make errors. Mistakes are not so hard to forgive, particularly when acknowledged. But who wants their elected officials to practice secrecy, for secrecy breeds corruption.

Later, in 1990-91, another administration hired me back, this time as Co-Editor (and principal writer) with Scott Boggan. With both of us the paper was a labor of love, and we worked well together. But we were not cost-cutting conscious and we needed to be better budgeted and have our budget enforced by some caring liaison E.C. member. That didn’t happen. But though I was very disappointed on being fired, especially after we turned out a really fine issue on the ’91 Chiba City, Japan World’s, I wasn’t angry.

TTW: You speak of being USATT President. You were elected to that office three times?
Tim: Yes. My first term contribution (and here I was helped by a number of my co-workers and supporters) was (1) to provide the early and mid-1970’s impetus for foreign competition to come to this country and (2) to work at increasing the prize money in tournaments for the top players—those players who generally speaking have worked the hardest and whom the others, and certainly the “outsiders,” if we’re to have a Sport, must be entertained by. Later, I strongly encouraged my own sons and others to live abroad so as to seriously become part of the table tennis world that we’ve so long been isolated from.

During my very abbreviated second term as President, I continued to work as a full-time professor, to write for and edit the paper (a 40-hour a week job itself in those days), and to champion my sons to tournaments on weekends...until my wife, Sally, who for months and months had been acting as an unpaid USATT Secretary, was very near a breakdown (I’d come home on a weekend or even a weekday to find she’d left me maybe a dozen notes, some of them detailing at length what the caller had wanted). Spontaneously I resigned both the Presidency and the Editorship, and after Sally and I both cried for two weeks, we reached a compromise where I continued on as Editor of the paper...and then, because I deeply cared about the players, I did fund-raising for them and Captain them to the ’75 Calcutta World’s.

Ten years later, during my third Presidency, I kept trying as hard as I could to ignite someone, anyone, on or off my E.C., to help me make something happen in the Sport. I remember Jimmy McClure saying as we were about to go to a Meeting I’d called, “We don’t know what we’re doing.” He was right, but I for one didn’t know what else to do but struggle. I didn’t want to be merely a hold-the-line, caretaker President. But we had no money unless we touched some of the $1,300,000 principal that I’d from the beginning agreed should be in a Foundation set up by Jimmy to safeguard the Sport. So without money there was a kind of what’s the use attitude and little enthusiasm.

When I was defeated for reelection by someone I was sure wouldn’t struggle as I did to try to make something happen I was disgusted with table tennis was sure wouldn’t struggle as I did to try to make something more of the world. So far the meetings have always been in places that door-to-door involve long, wearying hours of solitary travel—to Japan, China, Taiwan, Cyprus, and, this May, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It’s a very good idea for the ITTF to have varied geographical representation in its inner circles though, for then disparate voices can be heard. The Federation really is democratic, and I can be heard. Take as an example that which I’m most pleased about. The Ogimura administration, Ogimura himself really, was very much against any umpire at any world title competition being more than 60 years old. But, speaking on behalf of the USATT, I argued against the ITTF Handbook, Directive and I was listened to, and with indispensable help from my colleagues I was able to get the Directive rescinded. So I’m sure any number of our USATT Match Officials appreciated me representing them.

TTW: So that brings us up to the mid-’90’s. I know that now you’re on the ITTF Executive Board as Vice-President for North America. What exactly is expected of you?

Tim: In a manner of speaking, I’m paid to attend meetings, to understand what the discussions are about, to talk if I have something to say, to take (if only for my own satisfaction) careful notes, and to write (when such are needed) occasional Reports. (Right now I’m writing my annual Report to the ITTF on what’s been going on this past year in North America.) What am I paid? Well, a vanity payment of course, and for a few days I dine well and see a little something more of the world. So far the meetings have always been in places that door-to-door involve long, wearying hours of solitary travel—to Japan, China, Taiwan, Cyprus, and, this May, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It’s a very good idea for the ITTF to have varied geographical representation in its inner circles though, for then disparate voices can be heard. The Federation really is democratic, and I can be heard. Take as an example that which I’m most pleased about. The Ogimura administration, Ogimura himself really, was very much against any umpire at any world title competition being more than 60 years old. But, speaking on behalf of the USATT, I argued against the ITTF Handbook, Directive and I was listened to, and with indispensable help from my colleagues I was able to get the Directive rescinded. So I’m sure any number of our USATT Match Officials appreciated me representing them.

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The Racket Sports Heritage Collection, one of the world’s finest and most extensive collections of racket sports antiques and related art, has announced plans for a takeover opportunity. According to the collection’s agent, Roy Segune, the owners are seeking corporate or private sponsors who can acquire the collection and provide for its future.

The collection traces the early years and evolution of Lawn Tennis, Badminton and Table Tennis through hundreds of original rackets of amazing variety, along with a handsome and diverse selection of rare fine art, stained glass, porcelains, prints and engravings, early books, medals, games, antiques advertising and memorabilia. With its unprecedented breadth, depth and historical texture, the collection has attracted international recognition and accolades from the Smithsonian, the Olympics President, Wimbledon, sports journals and magazines, and even Royalty.

1-2. The first game called “Table Tennis” was actually a board & dice game made in 1884 by J.H. Singer. When Lawn Tennis became very popular in the late 1870’s & 1880’s, game makers were quick to realize the potential of parlour versions. Most of these were short lived and now quite rare, including card games, box games, Tiddledy-Winks variations, games with rackets & balloons & others. The only survivor was Table Tennis, which blossomed into an international craze at the turn of the century after the advent of the celluloid ball.

3-4. Boxed set of “Gossima” made in 1891 by Jaques & Sons, London. Includes a 10” high net and sheepskin vellum battledores with elongated handles, and used a 2” diameter stuffed ball with webbing. Because the ball had a poor bounce, this early attempt at an action version of Lawn Tennis on the table was unsuccessful. The game became dormant until about 1900, when it was re-introduced as “Gossima or Ping Pong” with a celluloid ball. Shortly afterward the name was changed to “Ping –Pong or Gossima” and then just “Ping –Pong.” Because the name was trademarked, competitors made similar sets with various names, including “Pom-Pom,” “Whiff Waff,” “Parlour Tennis,” "Royal Game," “Pim-Pam,” and of course, "Table Tennis.”

5. Superb boxed set with very rare clothed covered celluloid balls & drum style vellum battledores. The early sets are highly prized for their fine illustrations.

6. Another beautiful boxed set, made by J.G. Spear in Bavaria, circa 1902. Note that women are shown in active play, and were usually wearing elaborate formal gowns on most of the early sets.


9. “The Royal Game or Table Tennis” made by Milton Bradley in 1902; parchment battledores.

10. Another set with handsome box lid lithograph, made in 1902 by Horsman of New York.

11. Rare boxed set featuring small strung rackets in a compartmented fine wood box, by George Bussey, circa 1902.

12. Box set of “Whiff Waff” with vellum battledores.


14. Boxed set of “Pom-Poms” or Table Tennis, made by Wright-Ditson, famous Lawn Tennis manufacturers. This set includes very rare cane rackets with a single sheet of vellum embedded in the racket head.

15-16. Two more early boxed sets with fine illustrations & battledores with elongated handles. Such rackets were borrowed from the much older game of “Battledore & Shuttlecock,” the predecessor of Badminton, played free form without a net.

17. Very rare experimental variation: Table Tennis with cloth pouches attached to the net, made in 1904 by Horsman, another short-lived game.

18. Lovely work of art, this charming lithograph was used on boxed sets of “Tennis de Salon” in France. High quality art-style picture postcards and note cards are currently available with this image (see e-mail address below for details).

19. Elegant and very rare set of porcelain trophies made by Royal Bayreuth, apparently for an early USA tournament prize.

20. Superb early wood bat with original pen & ink sketch of the famed Gibson Girl.

21. Early Table Tennis rackets: (L-R): Pair, cork faced; single sheet vellum; pair, “ooze” leather.

22. Early Table Tennis bats (L-R): pebbled rubber face, aluminum, carved fretwork, etched aluminum, cross-hatched scored leather face.

23. Very rare strung rackets used for Table Tennis. These miniature Lawn Tennis rackets were found to be unsuitable and were quickly abandoned in favor of the vellum drum-style battledores or wood bats.

24. Rare woodburned “pyrographic” bats for Table Tennis.


26. Hand crocheted net for Ping-Pong/Table Tennis. Note the butterfly decoration!

27. Pair of Nixon-Mao bats from the Ping-Pong Diplomacy excursion.
1996 EUROPEAN CUP OF CHAMPIONS

by Gaëtan Frenoy

Editor’s Note: In the 3-man format used here, each player plays two of the three players on the other team (six matches). There is also a doubles match between the best doubles pair from each team, so it’s best of seven.

The two teams played a team match on February 16, in Paris; a second team match on February 23, in Charleroi, Belgium; and a third match, also in Charleroi (since the Belgium team had a better record in the first two matches), on March 7.

The two teams in the final are Levallois UCU (France) and La Villette Charteroi (Belgium). Both teams included one player recruited from the rest of Europe. The Levallois team was made of Jean-Philippe Gatien (#1), Christophe Legout (#2), and Patrick Chila (#22), all of France, plus Peter Karlsson (#14) of Sweden. La Villette is made up of Jean-Michel Saive (#3) & Thierry Cabrera (#61) of Belgium, plus Zoran Primorac (#12) of Croatia.

Hope you enjoy the writings of this somewhat partisan but very talented Belgium writer.

First Meeting
Paris, France
February 16, 1996

A Coca-Cola in my right hand, a T-shirt of Jean-Michel Saive on my shoulders, 150 other Belgian supporters behind me, more than 3000 French fans screaming against us, a superb Joola table, six of the best European players—everything was perfect for this great final. And it was a great final, with lots of suspense and an unbelievable finish. Almost all the points were extraordinary!!!!

Everything began well for us (La Villette), with Zouki (Zoran Primorac) taking the first set of the evening against an out-served Gatien, 22-20. The next two games were won easily by Gatien, who played at his best level, while Zoran’s attack disappeared. Match #1 to Gatien and Levallois, 20-14, 16.

No problem for Jean-Michel Saive, who has recently played very well, and “easily” beat (everything is relative, of course...) Christophe Legout at 17 & 18, and tied it up, 1-1.

The first turn-around of the evening!!!! Thierry Cabrera played very well at the beginning of his match with Peter Karlsson, who seemed to be elsewhere... but it was only an impression as Peter began to come back. Thierry, irritated by some points he lost, threw his paddle on the table and was yellow carded!!!

Bothered by this, he lost the first game, 22-20. He concentrated better in the second set, winning 21-14. The last set wasn’t so easy as he lost to the Swede, 21-16, giving Levallois a 2-1 lead.

Lots of Belgian supporters were too confident about the doubles... but after Saive/Primorac won the first game, 22-20, the second was easier as they defeated Gatien/Karlsson to win the match, 20, 18, and tie things up again, 2-2.

The next match, Gatien vs. Saive, is a “classic” match, since the two men (both with World #1 Rankings in the past two years) have played more than 40 matches against each other. But the last time Gatien beat Saive was one year ago, and we all feared that the pattern would continue.

After an excellent start by Gatien, Saive sprinted at the finish and beat the Frenchman very closely in the first game, 21-19. Gatien led 18-16, but lost four in a row to fall behind 18-20—all unbelievable points!

In game #2, the World 3 Saive ac-
celerated the pace of the match and Gatien couldn’t keep it up as Saive took the second game as well, 21-13, to put La Villette up 3-2.

The beginning of the sixth match was an “execution” of Karlsors by La Villette’s Primorac, with Zouki winning 21-6!!! At this point, we all saw our craziest dream come true: we’d beat the French 4-2, giving us a chance to win the Cup in the second team tie in one week! But Karlsson didn’t agree!!! He tied it up 1-1 in the second, winning 21-15.

In the third set, Zouki concentrated better and played almost as well as he had in the first set as he took a 14-8 lead for La Villette. Most of the people were ready to go home—it was over! La Villette had one hand on the cup... nothing could stop them... nothing!! Not exactly One person could still do something... and he did!!!! Karlsson played the last points of this horrible game (for the Belgians) very well, while Primorac was falling—falling... and falling more. Almost paralyzed, he couldn’t do anything to stop the Swede. From up 14-8, he was suddenly down 20-17 match point!!!! Match to Karlsson, -6, 15, 18... and Levallois has tied it up, 3-3.

In the second year in a row, the first team match came down to the second match between Legout and Cabrera. Last year, Legout beat Cabs (Cabrera) 21-19 in the third set. But the 22-year-old Frenchman (Legout) has made a lot of progress while the 31-year-old Belgian has been falling in the world rankings. A very bad start by Cabrera gave Legout the first game, 21-14. Cabs, who must calm down (remember his yellow card) could not shout as he likes to do and had lots of difficulty playing his best.

However, he played a very good second game, and wins 21-14, forcing the third!!! It was now almost 1:00 AM!!! The suspense was awful!

During all the last set, Legout took a 2-point lead early, and held it all the way. Match to Legout and Levallois, 14, 14, 18 at 1:30 AM, and the first Team Tie goes to Levallois, 4-3.

Too bad for us... I personally think that the Gods of Ping wouldn’t give us the victory. However, all is not lost! We lost ALL our matches by 2-1, while we (um, Jean-Mi) won ALL our matches by 2-0!!! Next week, we only have to win by 4-3 to force the third team match.

Consequently, I say to all the supporters of Levallois: “We’ll have our revenge...”

Results of Meeting #1

Gatien d. Primorac, -20,14, 16 (Levallois leads 1-0)
Saive d. Gatien, 19,12 (La Villette ties it up, 1-1)
Karlsson d. Cabrera, 20,-14,16 (Levallois 2-1)
Saive/Primorac d. Gatien/Karlsson, 20,13 (La Villette leads, 3-2)
Saive d. Gatien, 19,12 (La Villette leads, 3-2)
Karisson d. Primorac, -6,15,18 (Levallois ties it up, 3-3)
Legout d. Cabrera, -14,14,18 (Levallois wins, 4-3)

Second Meeting
Charleroi, Belgium
February 23, 1996

Belgium stayed with the same players for the second meeting. France, however, replaced Christophe Legout with Patrick Chila in one of the singles spots, to go along with Gatien and Karlsson. This was interesting, because it was Legout who had clinched their win in Paris one week before. France also replaced their doubles team in the first match (Gatien/Karlsson) with their Olympic pair, Chila/Legout.

After losing the first round of this great final, the Belgian players were criticized for their lack of cohesion and their inability to play “as a team” rather than as individuals. These criticisms were difficult to support but they stimulated the players and gave them one more reason to beat Levallois.

The first two matches are usually easy matches for the two leaders. They only serve to warm up the hall and the players before the real thing starts at 1-1. For every general rule, there’s always an exception, isn’t there?

After a weak start (10-10), Saive accelerated and won the first set without too many problems, 21-16. Chila, after an injury at the European Top Twelve at the beginning of February, was a little “short”...
finally he played three magnificent points
Swede went up 18-19. Primorac never
he couldn’t... but this time, even when the
hold this level to the end? One week ago.
led for the first time at 16-14. Could he
for Zouki. who accelerated the pace and
Then. Karlsson started to hesitate and
bad, but Peter controlled the match and
wasn’t playing bad: 1-3, 3-6, 8-11. 11-13.
most the same, Karlsson led while Zouki
wasn’t playing bad: 1-3, 3-6, 8-11. 11-13.
that was the moment
For the first set, we saw Primorac who really wanted to
and played very well (much better than in
revenge. But Karlsson doesn’t agree...

The second match was obviously
THE turnaround of this second round. Before this match, Gatien had beaten Cabrera nine times in a row, dating back to 1991, when Cabrera last won. But even so, Gatien had difficulties with Cabs’ excellent backhand. This was con-
fermed early in the first game when Gatien seemed a little stressed, and his great
tennis opponent was erratic. But he found it enough to lead 15-11. We thought that
set was nearly over, but Cabrera, strangely calm, came back slowly (16-14) and
finally took the lead, 18-17, with his own serve coming up! Cabs went up 20-
18, but Gatien isn’t the #9 by chance as he deuced it, and also got a game point.
Always very calm, Cabrera won the next 3 points, giving the first set to La Villette!

The second game was very strange. Until 14-11 for Cabrera, the server had scored 4 and lost 1 on every service point. That meant, with Cabrera serving first, he led most of the time: 4-1, 5-5, 9-6, 10-10 and 14-11! At this point, Cabs made a kind of “break” 14-16, with his own serve to follow. Gatien tied it up, 16-
all, then 17-11. Now came the unbelievable
part-at 19-18 for Cabrera, Gatien completely missed an easy ball, and Cabs
had TWO MATCH POINTS!!!! Until now, nobody really believed it could happen.
One ball was enough for Cabrera, giving La Villette a 2-0 lead!

The next match was between a Swede playing for a French team and a Croatian playing for a Belgian team?!!! Is it the “European Cup”?? Last week, this match was the turn-around of the evening, with Primorac leading 14-3 in the third before he lost. This time, Zouki wanted his revenge. But Karlsson didn’t agree... and played very well (much better than in Paris), and he led all of the first game in winning, 21-16. Zouki wasn’t playing bad, but Peter controlled the match and we thought he’d win in 2 sets. At 11-15 for Karlsson, Levallois, Primorac attacked more and more while Karlsson made some
errors. Primorac tied it up, 16-all, then went up 20-17, 21-18. For the first time, we saw Primorac who really wanted to win, who shouted when he won a point, who raised his fist... in a word, we saw a winner!!!

The scheme of the third set was almost the same, Karlsson led while Zouki wasn’t playing bad: 1-3, 5-6, 8-11, 11-13. Then, Karlsson started to hesitate and miss “easy” balls. That was the moment for Zouki, who accelerated the pace and led for the first time at 16-14. Could he hold this level to the end? One week ago, he couldn’t... but this time, even when the Swede went up 18-19, Primorac never thought that he could win this match and finally he played three magnificent points at the end to win, 19 in the third—giving La Villette a 3-0 lead!
The French doubles team of Chila/Logout didn’t have much of a chance against Saive/Primorac. This was confirmed by the first set... a very easy 21-10 for La Villette, who needed only one more game to force the third match here! We say that it wasn’t always good to win the first set too easily... The players lost their concentration and after leading 13-11 in the second, lost it, 17-21.

Here is a serious reminder for the third round of the final: “Never think that a match is done.”
In the third set, they played as in the first one and led 18-7. But once more, the Frenchmen wouldn’t resign. They scored 4 points in a row to make it 18-11. Then came one last crisis of the evening: after an extraordinary point (once more... won by Chila/Logout, Zouki fell on the ground and stayed there!!! A cramp forced him to call the physiotherapist for a quick massage. After one never-ending minute... he got up to finish the set! But he was still disturbed by his small injury... and the Belgian pair lost 5 more points before concluding the game by a suddenly rather close 21-16!

What an unbelievable end: 4-0 for La Villette!!! The gambler who bet on this score has won a lot of money this night. One victory for Levallois. One for La Villette. All these great players will come back here in Charleroi for the final round! Hope I’ll see you there!!

Results of Meeting #2
Saive d. Chila, 16, 15 (La Villette leads 1-
0) Cabrera d. Gatien, 21, 18 (La Villette leads 2-
0) Primorac d. Karlsson, -16, 18, 19 (La
Villette leads 3-0)
Saive/Primorac d. Chila/Logout, 10, 17, 16
(La Villette wins, 4-0)!

Final Meeting
Charleroi, Belgium
March 7, 1996

I was unable to attend the final meeting between the two teams. However, this is what I was able to piece together. The Belgians won the cup for the second time in their history. Saive defeated Logout, then Gatien executed Cabrera, tying things up 1-1. Primorac won 24 & 20 against Karlsson!!!!! La Villette now leads 2-1. Saive and Primorac easily won the doubles against the French team. Chila & Logout, giving La Villette a 3-1 lead.

We thought that Saive would now win the cup for La Villette by winning his match against Gatien!... But Gatien didn’t agree and won easily, 15 & 14. Saive’s first loss in the European Cup of Champions Final. However, La Villette was still up 3-2.
Primorac had to play Logout... a player that he didn’t play well against at all!!! However, he played very well in the first set and for most of the second, as Zouki went up 15-7 in the second.
It was almost done... But Zouki began to play worse and worse... and the Frenchman came back to tie it up, 17-
17!!!! Unbelievable! Finally, at 19-all, the Croatian playing for Belgium came through, winning 21-19. La Villette is the new European Cup winner!
sweden's jan-ove Waldner (right) won the eu-ropa top twelve Men over belgium's jean-michel saive. hungary's csilla batorfi (above) made it to the finals before losing to ni xia lian of luxembourg.
Countries That Have Won the Most Titles at the World Championships
by Zi-Wei Yang

The All Time Number

**WOMEN**

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The All Time Number One Men

Source: La Derniere Heure Les Sports

Here's the list of all the players who have reached #1 in the world ranking list, and how many months they held the position (from 1967 through February, 1996)

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**1996 International Calendar**

- **March 29-31**: North American Championships, Edmonton, Canada
- **April 5-8**: English Open, Kettering, England
- **April 16-27**: European Championships, Bratislava, Slovakia
- **May 24-26**: China Grand Prix, Xi’An, China
- **June 30 - Apr. 2**: Hong Kong Open
- **June 6-9**: Japan Open, Kitakuki, Japan
- **June 13-16**: Brazil Open, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- **June 24-29**: World Veterans Championships, Lillehammer, Norway
- **July 3-7**: U.S. Open, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA
- **July 5-14**: European Youth Championships, Gydek-Mistek, CZE
- **July 7-14**: South American Championships, Willemstad, Curacao
- **July 20 - Aug. 4**: Olympic Games, Atlanta, Georgia, USA
- **August 22-25**: Australian Open, Brisbane, Australia
- **September 15-21**: World University Games, Geelong, Australia
- **September 28-30**: World Cup Women, Hong Kong
- **September 6-8**: European Masters Cup, Aalen, Germany
- **October 17-20**: World Cup Men, Nimes, France
- **Nov. 31-Oct. 3**: Italian Open, Bolzano, Italy
- **November 14-17**: Yugoslav Open, Belgrade, Yugoslavia
- **November 21-24**: French Open, Villeurbanne, France
- **Nov. 27 - Dec. 1**: Swedish Open, TBA
- **December 5-8**: Finland Open, TBA

**December 12-15**: ITTF Pro-Tour Final, Tianjin, China

**The All Time Number One Men**

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**TABLE TENNIS WORLD** 41
The first Atlanta Cup Challenge was put together, promoted and run, all in the course of just a few weeks. The format was a team tournament combined with Men’s, Women's and Junior Singles, plus Men's & Women's Doubles, with no rating events. However, with the short notice and high entry fees (to help pay for the $9,650 in prize money advertised) turnout was low.

Men’s & Women’s Doubles Trials in Europe. Brazil apparently entered, but didn’t show. The other teams seemed to have expressed interest, but never entered. The top four teams and the eventual final four teams (including Atlanta/Jamaica) were all USA teams.

Teams
Cheng Yinhua and Jim Butler (USA I) romped through the competition, never losing a match as they won six straight 3-0’s against, in order, Nashville (the Sairinthus brothers), Puerto Rico Women, Puerto Rico II, Puerto Rico I, USA II, and Atlanta.

In the semifinals, they defeated USA II, Sean O’Neill & Eric Owens. In match #1, against Sean O’Neill, Cheng won the first at 18, and led 11-5 in the second. A moment later, he was down 12-15! However, Cheng pulled it out to win the match. 18 & 19. In match #2, Butler defeated Owens at 16 & 15. In the second game, Owens led 10-5, then it was 10-10, then 20-14 Jim. Cheng & Jim easily won the doubles, 11 & 6.

Atlanta (Hyatt & Hyatt) reached the final with the loss of only one match, when Hyatt lost 19 in the third to Augusta II’s Amy Feng in the semifinals. However, after losing the first game against Derek May, Hyton powered his team the rest of the way, defeating May (-16,8,16) and Feng (13,12), and combined with Hyatt to defeat May/Feng in doubles two straight.

If Derek May & Amy Feng were Augusta II, where was Augusta I, Razvan Cretu & (temporarily borrowed from California) Chi-Sun Chui? Due to their placement in the preliminary round robins, Augusta I played Augusta II in the quarterfinals. It started off with Amy defeating Chi-Sun, 15 & 19; Augusta I struck back with Razvan defeating Derek May, 15 & 22. Augusta II went up 2-1 when Cretu/Chui won the doubles over Feng/May, 2018. Then, in a match that I was told Razvan couldn’t possibly lose, he lost to Amy, 15 & 15, to set up the final match between long-time rivals Chi-Sun Chui & Derek May. Chi-San pulled out the second game at deuce, but couldn’t pull out the third as Derek won, 18-20,17, to advance Augusta II ahead of Augusta I.

In the Final, Butler started off by winning the first against a mostly-at-the-barriers topspinning Michael Hyatt, 21-8. At some point, Butler cut his finger, and between games, tried to stop the bleeding with a Kleenex. At 10-11 in the second, the umpire called a let and had the referee give the still-bleeding Butler a band-aid. Butler went on to win the match, 8 & 17.

Cheng, down 10-12 in the first game against Hyton, won the next 11 in a row to win 21-12. In the second, at 17-17, he scored the last four in a row to win the match, 12 & 17. Cheng/Butler sealed their victory by winning the doubles at 17 & 17 to become the first Atlanta Challenge Team Champions.

Men’s Singles
Cheng found the path somewhat guarded in his walk to the finals. Down 11-15 in the first game against Eric Owens in the 8ths, Cheng scored 10 straight. In the quarters, Steve Hyton led 14-10, but Cheng came back to win 19. In the second, Cheng led all the way, although a Hyton comeback pulled him to 18. In the semifinals, he faced Razvan Cretu, be of the “Should-I-blast-it-by-you-with-my-forhand-or-my-backhand?” style of play. Razvan had blasted from both sides (but especially with his backhand loop—My God!) against Sean O’Neill in the quarters, winning at 14 & 16. Razvan gave Cheng a second-game scare, deucing the game after being down 20-17, but could do no more as Cheng advanced to the Final, 10, 21, 15.

Meanwhile, Jim Butler was walking his own line to the finals. He lost a game to Michael Hyatt in the quarters (with Michael pretty much camped out at the barriers), but won, 10,15. In the semis, Jim faced practice partner Derek May. Derek had faced George Cooper in the quarterfinals—care of a default by no-show Hugo Hoyama of Brazil. But Derek didn’t have a good time this round, losing to Butler at 15, 11, 12.

Derek’s recently gone to short pips on his backhand, rather than long pips—he’s a chopper with an aggressive attack. “I may lose to more weak players this way,” he said, “but I’ll beat more strong players.” In his first big tournament with short pips, the U.S. Nationals, Derek had made the semifinals, but he didn’t have such luck today. At one point, Derek chapped back a long series of Butler loops. Butler pushed, and Derek went for a running forehand loop, and followed-through onto the floor. The loop missed, and Derek did four pushups before getting up. “I haven’t gotten any exercise today,” said Derek as he lost another point. “I might as well get my exercise,” Later, he made the discovery that “The net is one inch higher on this side.” Derek’s a colorful player, and WORLD could write about him forever.

In the final, Jim won the first game at 18. However, from there on, Cheng began to dominate and he pulled away to win the last two games easily as he won the final, 18, 16, 14. “Cheng is a machine,” said Michael Wetzel during the final. “Jimmy, Sean and Derek should hold him down and take his batteries out.” Interesting note about this match was the recurring series of forehand-to-forehand off-the-bounce counterloops the two kept doing—almost challenging each other to see who could keep it up. The two were closely matched in this, but Cheng’s ability to take control of a point and almost always get the first good shot in, as well as a super-consistent backhand counter, won him the match. In the final point of the match, they played an exhibition point, with Jim jumping on the table to smash a Cheng lob!

Women’s Singles
From the start, it was a foregone conclusion that Amy Feng would win women’s singles. The other contenders in the 6-player field were a pair of Puerto...
March/April 1996

U1850: Lewis Bragg d. Carlos Ebron, -19,6,18.
Lui d. Mario Maier, 18,19; Reid d. Terry Lonergan,
U2000-Final: Pat Lui d. Gerald Reid, 8,-15,17; SF:

NTTC January Open
split prize.; SF: Cheng d. Tacky Santilices, 6,9,6; Huang
Open Singles-Final: Cheng Yinghua & Jack Huang
our way home through the snow.
N'ITC coaches, Cheng & Jack, split the prize and went
Jack Huang fought off a monstrous challenge in the
rat.her weak, and led to the cancellation of several events.
National Table Tennis Center
Hank Teekaveerakit when Hank was oIl the U.S. Team,
Rockville, Maryland
16,18.

Men's Singles—Final: Cheng Yinghua d. Jim Butler,
-18,18,16,14; SF: Cheng d. Razvan Cret, 21,15,15; Butler
d. Derek May, 15,11,12; QF: Cheng d. Rene Santiago,
19,19; Razvan Cret d. Sean O'Neill, 14,16; Derek May d.
George Cooper, 11,6; Butler d. Michael Hyatt, 10,-19,15.
Bths: Cheng d. Eric Owens, 15,13; Hylton d. Chi-Sun
Chui, 13,17; O'Neill d. Thomas Nunes, 10,9; Cret d.
Claudio Kano, def; Cooper d. Hugo Hoyama, def.; May d.
Hector Collazo, 14,19; Hyatt d. Juan Rebeles, 16,12;
Butler d. T.J. Beebe, 6,19.
Women's Singles—Final: Amy Feng d. Anita Zakharyan,
12,15; SF: Feng d. Enerys Garcia, 9,6, Zakharyan d.
Gledna Reyes, 16,14.
Open Doubles—Final: Michael Hyatt/HyfiTagoroado
Puerto Rico I, 3-0; USA II d. Atlanta II, 3-0; Atlanta I d.
Butterfly, Sportlife, HyFI Promotions, www.pccnet.com,
Radio Shack, AT&T, and Crystal Springs.

Rican women, Enerys Garcia and Glenda Reyes, and
California's Anita Zakharyan. As expected, Amy and
Anita reached the final without losing a game. In the final,
it was all-Amy, 12 & 15.

Junior Singles
The first hint that this event wouldn't be a cake-walk
for top-seeded T.J. Beebe was when 12-year-old Lewis of Guyana
defeated 2nd-seeded Jay Sourinthone in the quarterfinals.

U1100 Final RR: 1. Bob Powley, 3-1; 2. Katherine Wu,
3-1; 3. Jay Finkel, 2-2; 4. Ron Linkous, 2-2; 5. Michael
Linkous, 1-2; 3. Erik Larrson, 1-2; 4. Doug Edwards, 1-
2.

Under 18 Champion T.J. Beebe of Atlanta defeated
Idi Lewis of Guyana in the Final.


NTTC February Open
National Table Tennis Center
Rockville, Maryland
February 17-18, 1996
by Larry Hodges

Cheng & Jack had no problems in reaching the final
without losing a game, helped by the absence of Todd
Sweeiers & Sean Longeran, who'd left early for the
Olympic Trials. Also about to leave for the Olympic Trials was
Vivian Lee, but it was older brother Richard who was the
star here, winning both the Under 2450 and Under 2300 in
a pair of all-junior-3 game struggles with Sunni Li.
15 members of the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club came
down from New York, adding spice to the tournament.
They also took part in the Saturday night junior camp at the
NTTC, taught by Cheng & Jack, and (because there were
so many this time) myself, Gary Elwell & Richard Lee.
Watch out, World, 12-year-old Caroline
Huang Oppenheim's had her breakthrough tournament! She's
moving up!

Open Singles—Final: Cheng Yinghua & Jack Huang
split prize.; SF: Cheng d. Tacky Santilices, 13,10,7; Huang
U2450—Final: Medhat Lamdon d. Vivian Lee, 12,17;
SF: Lamdon d. David Cheung, 5,8; Lee d. Pat Lui, 17,17.
U2000—Final: Pat Lui d. Gerald Reid, 8,-15,17; SF:
Lui d. Mario Maier, 18,19; Reid d. Terry Lonergan,
16,18.
U1850: Lewis Bragg d. Carlos Ebron, -19,6,18.
U1500: Linda Santilices d. Steve Latourette, 16,10.

Maryland March Circuit
Columbia, Maryland
March 2-3, 1996
by John Vos

After "weather most foul" forced cancellation of nearly
all events in the January Circuit, local players—probably from forced inactivity—turned out in droves for the March 2nd-3rd Circuit. Over 60 players battled through 11 events at the new playing site at 7175 Oakland Mills Road in Columbia. Special thanks to Mike Branche for all the work he did to bring the new site up to standards!

David Robertson; 4. Carlos Ebron.
U1000: 1. David Yao; 2. Gary Elwell; 3. Pat Lui; 4. M. T.J. Beebe (USA) d. Puerto Rico, 3-0; USA II d. Atlanta, 3-0; Atlanta I d. Puerto Rico, 3-0.

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They also took part in the Saturday night junior camp at the
NTTC, taught by Cheng & Jack, and (because there were
so many this time) myself, Gary Elwell & Richard Lee.
Watch out, World, 12-year-old Caroline
Huang Oppenheim's had her breakthrough tournament! She's
moving up!

Open Singles—Final: Cheng Yinghua & Jack Huang
split prize.; SF: Cheng d. Tacky Santilices, 13,10,7; Huang
U2450—Final: Richard Lee d. Sunny Li, -19,14,19.
U2000—Final: Richard Lee d. Sunny Li, -22,9,13; SF:
Lee d. Morris Jackson, 13,13; Li d. Ching Duan,
17,15.
U2150—Final: Medhat Lamdon d. Xiaohui Hu, -21,16,16;
SF: Lamdon d. David Cheung, 16,17; Hu d. Ching Duan
n.s.
U2000—Final: Gerald Reid d. Terry Lonergan, 9,-19,14;
SF: Reid d. Patrick Lui, 16,18; Lonergan d. Herb Hortobagyi,
17,14.
U1850: Rolando Guadilo d. Mike Master, 18,-25,17.
U1650: Donald Lee d. Tom Golab, -19,15,14.
U1450: Steve Latourette d. Linda Suon, 19,16.
U1250: Geoff Fosdick d. Linda Suon, 19,16.

Maryland March Circuit
Columbia, Maryland
March 2-3, 1996
by John Vos

After "weather most foul" forced cancellation of nearly
all events in the January Circuit, local players—probably from forced inactivity—turned out in droves for the March 2nd-3rd Circuit. Over 60 players battled through 11 events at the new playing site at 7175 Oakland Mills Road in Columbia. Special thanks to Mike Branche for all the work he did to bring the new site up to standards!

David Robertson; 4. Carlos Ebron.
U1000: 1. David Yao; 2. Gary Elwell; 3. Pat Lui; 4. M. T.J. Beebe (USA) d. Puerto Rico, 3-0; USA II d. Atlanta, 3-0; Atlanta I d. Puerto Rico, 3-0.

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David Robertson; 4. Carlos Ebron.
Downtown on a warm, pleasant evening, perhaps a swim before the corrupt world of reality. A Platonic ideal, in fact, in this smog-high reserved, or, since no one wanted them, and the entry blank—what about that? Well, the USTA says (and you can see why) that the sanction ought to be applied for two months in advance, but, gee, it’s summer—nothing’s going on, it won’t make any difference—and, besides, even if we were an affiliated club, which of course we’re not (costs somebody $10), we’d take a chance on the tournament sanction or no—I mean, what can happen to us? But we want to do it right. So two weeks before the tournament’s to begin, we make up and begin handing entry blanks while we try to get hold of the Regional Director—and, failing that, at least get someone who knows him, warning that someone while we’re at it that there’s another someone here in New York City who wants to punch that Regional Director in the nose if he ever sets foot in our Club, which, needless to say, he won’t.

So I relate $55 check takes care of the sanction—though we don’t intend to play with approved balls, and certainly we’ll be little or no use for a Tournament Referee, even were such a person to be at hand. Rough It A Little

We’re not picky here in the City. We live and let live—most of the time. You know, change clothes by Table 1 (careful about the dust though). The girls—women—they’re not jocks; more often than not they knock before they go into the broken-lid tournament john. What’s the long-time saying, “When in Rome do as Romans do”? Makes sense. Not of course for Rome anymore, but for us, Table tennis players survive. The Club is our camp-out spot. We expect to rough it a little.

Others, however, tournament veteran amateurs may be still strangers to this unwritten law, are not quite used to it. Fortunately, though, we’re not holding our holiday tournament in the 4-table Club proper, but in the spacious 5-table Gym downstairs. Or so I thought, until got ready to read the beginning matches Saturday afternoon.

Yes, I was at the very whirlpool center of it all. I was getting free entries and so were my two boys—and, believe it or not, it would have cost us $17.50 to enter the events we wanted to. So, I figured, be practical. Besides, like Dave Cox, who runs those marvelous tournaments on the Great White Way, to the movie “Downhill Racer,” about a ski champion.

But, all right, that was last time. Perhaps next year, or at least get him to come up to the Great White Way, to the movie “Downhill Racer,” about a ski champion.

“Juniors and the rest of the matches begin tomorrow promptly at 9:30 a.m.”

Senior Henry Deutsch says he’s going to call me in the morning. If we don’t get the Gym he’s not coming back. “Right, Henry,” I say, and wish him goodnight. Sunday morning it’s as I feared against us. My boys and I take the hour’s ride from the car through the rain I hurry and lock the doors (this is N.Y., I don’t forget that), and leave my keys in the ignition. Dangling keys, dangling man? Can’t, can’t, Tim, you and the boys are here to have holiday fun, chin up.

The sponsor has given me the keys to the Club—that’s the important thing—and I have only to open the doors to the phone’s already ringing) another, better day of... “New York Table Tennis.”

Soon the Van Gors, the Sterns, the Zakarins, the Grahams, the Houses. The sponsor has given it up. I have only to open the door to the phone’s already ringing) another, better day of... “New York Table Tennis.”

I’ve is too late to enter? asks a voice. “Of course not,” I say, “Come one down.”

I keep getting up from the desk, make sure that, say, Mr. Factor knows Mr. Chen, make sure that they realize they’re next on Table 2 (which is marked Table 6). Mr. Silverstein, say, thinks it would be nice if I put him against, say, Mr. Monet whom he thinks he might beat. I agree that, yes, things could be nicer. I strip to the waist, say, that I’ve love-shackled myself and that the USTA Vice-President’s jockey shorts are showing to men and women come to watch whom I’ve never seen before.

It’s time for Mr. Maldonado’s match. But Mr. Maldonado is not to be seen. “He may not come,” says his friend. But Bill Maldonado is, and, having found there’s a tournament, comes Mr. Maldonado.

“What’s the default procedure” someone asks. I maneuver round him.

“Or, no draw sheets are posted.” We have no draw sheets. Only my scribbled on slips of paper. Occasionally, quick gazing, I take Roman liberties. An 8-year-old Paul Gvildys plays an older boy. Eric’s winning—and it’s this pain that somehow is a value.

Has Given It Up

Little 8-year-old Paul Gvildys plays very well. From time to time he is sternly coached (or Latinian) by his father. “Aren’t you playing any more, Pranas?” I ask him, remembering his dazed angel face of 15-20 years ago. No, he has given it up—no reason exactly.

My 9-year-old son Scott is losing to Timmy House. His father, a professor, sits watching (he and I are something of alter egos: both intellectuals, we know one another ages—both books and tournaments). Scott is cursing after every point. It does not look good. It does not look good to me. And though I too well understand, I don’t like it. After the match Scott and I seek the privacy of the john. His urinals don’t always work but there are disinfectants. “People don’t like it!” I tell him. “Especially from a kid!” He already knows, at 9, everything I’m telling him. Why then does he do it?

The Zakarins, the Grahams, the Houses. The sponsor has given it up. I have only to open the door to the phone’s already ringing) another, better day of... “New York Table Tennis.”

Give him the keys to the Club—that’s the important thing—and I have only to open the door to the phone’s already ringing) another, better day of... “New York Table Tennis.”

The sponsor has given me the keys to the Club—that’s the important thing—and I have only to open the door to the phone’s already ringing) another, better day of... “New York Table Tennis.”
pleased. He suspicions correctly that it’ll be a long day. “C’mon, Henry,” I say, “everything will be all right now.

Only there is no loudspeaker between floors, so, trying to get two rooms of players together for back-up matches, and yelling not 10 feet away from Table 1. The barriers? In the Gym, there aren’t any between tables. And there’s no way to get to Table 5 but to play “Red Light, Green Light” past tables 1-2-3 and 4.

Perhaps you can imagine how people are talking. Are complaining—though it’s probably the best“If they’re bad in New York, for years, at least from the point of view of getting so many matches on and off the tables. “SILENCED” roars Ross Barkning, who, leading the Cana- dian Champ, Larry Lee 2 games to 1, is on his way to losing in the 5th. The very foundations of the place ought to shake—but not the people, they’re unmoved.

Confusion

Mr. Bricenzo, the former Ecuadorian Champ, is puzzled by it all. It’s as if he’s between tables. And there’s no way to get to Table 5 but to play “Red Light, Green Light” past tables 1-2-3—and 4.

Hedoesn’t even understand what the events are. Or, supposing he loses, what are the foundations of the place ought to shake— and spectators yell back. But, inexorably, guided by the Master Director’s hand, now away over a desk set up in the Gym, the tournament wobbles on.

What, I wonder, did N.Y. veteran Pauline Somaier and her little Rice Chek girl who dropped by think of it all? The names of the women players—they were all unfamiliar to Pauline, but then it’d been quite a while since she represented the U.S. at the World’s. The Sport had been pretty terrible in the U.S. in the ‘50s. Was it getting any better?

And always now there were those who came to me wanting to know when they could play so they could leave. And those, too, who (liking what they saw?) wanted to join the USTTA, and did I have change for a twenty?

Children’s Play

As again night is coming on, I am talking to Mr. Van Gor. He wants to know where his children are supposed to play. The Junior Doubles are still going on. They’ve been held back for a while, but now they really must be played. “Send the kids up!” shouts somebody next to me. To that hothouse, I think. “No, I can’t do that!” I shout back. And just then I hear someone out there on the floor yelling at me.

“Shut the duck up!” Was that what he said to me? Whatever it was I didn’t like the sound of it. “Shut the duck up!” And, as I’m looking into Mr. Van Gor’s eyes I wasn’t about to take that quack connotation. I wasn’t seriously flopping on stream, and I wasn’t a quack. And so rising up and ad- dressing whoever it was out there scream- ing for silence, I shouted at the top of my voice, “Oh, goshdarnit! Oh, goshdarnit! This player wants quiet! This player wants quiet!” And having gotten that poison out of my system I resumed talking quite rea- sonably to a maybe beginning to under- stand it all Mr. Van Gor.

Anyway, all the things one sets out to do come to some kind of end, and I heard that the tournament was over with around 10 p.m.—which here in the City must set some kind of record. No, it wasn’t a give- up on my part. It was because by a certain time, that tournament didn’t need me and I didn’t need it.

I left early, around 7:30 that evening. Yes, my wish was all the way from Long Island and opened up that hot car I’d trapped myself with. Understandably she was a little out of sorts. I’d not exactly pleaded my cause a right. I’d imposed on her her and was sure she was going to be mean to me,” she confided to Bernie, and Bukiet, as she’d seen me sharp before, said to her, “You come home with me.”

So, with the holiday weekend over, I went with my family back to settled subur- bia. Forty-four, that’s when I was getting up. After all, like most everyone else, I had work I had to do. And this morning I was to try to teach people how to understand Hamlet.

(Table Tennis Topics, Sept.-Oct., 1970)
Rensselaer Open

February 10-11, 1996
Troy, New York
by Robert Thew

Sixty-five players participated in the 1996 Rensselaer Open held in Troy, New York on February 10-11. This event was generously sponsored by Sunmark Business Products, Inc. which donated Stiga Nets and Europa Barriers. Players came from all over New England, with Suguru Araki and Kazuyuki Yokoyama from Hofstra University having perhaps the longest drive—nearly five hours. The trip was worth it, however, Suguru won the Under 2100 event and Kazuyuki won the Open Singles.

The Open Singles had held no surprises until the finals, with the top seeds advancing from their round robin groups and the higher rated players winning each quarter and semifinal match. The first game of the finals between top-ranked Abass Eku and Kazuyuki was won by Abass, as he held Kazuyuki to nine points. Kazuyuki, a 2400+ level player, fought back in the second, using his strong loop attack more often to win the second game 21-12. Abass clearly lost patience with Kazuyuki’s chopping game and began to attack too early, driving Kazuyuki’s first heavy chop into the net again and again. Kazuyuki Abass clearly lost patience with Kazuyuki’s chopping game and began to attack too early, driving Kazuyuki’s first heavy chop into the net again and again. Kazuyuki held Abass to four points in the third game and won the fourth game 21-13.

The rated events were extremely competitive, with several events—such as the Under 1900, 2100, 1400—filled to nearly capacity. Although less people played in this tournament than last year’s, the events had more entries, as many people entered more than one event. In one day, no one at the tournament managed to give away 750 for first place, which would attract more competition for David. (Second place: $300; 3-4: $125; 5-8: $50)

Problem was, Abass went to China before the tournament to train for the Olympic Trials in late February....

The club members would like to thank all the players who drove so far to attend this tournament, making it our first profitable tournament in years. If you have access to the World Wide Web, check out our club’s home page at http://www.english.tabletennis/club.html for results, ratings changes, and plenty of pictures from this and other tournaments.

New Jersey January Open

Westfield, New Jersey
January 20-21, 1996
by Larry Hodges

With the U.S. National Champion David Zhuang winning every tournament in New Jersey, month after month after month after... that could go on for quite some time (that could go on for quite some time), a group got together and decided to raise the prize money for one tournament, giving away $750 for first place, which would attract more competition for David. (Second place: $300; 3-4: $125; 5-8: $50)

Problem was, David went to China before the tournament to train for the Olympic Trials in late February....

With that many “halfs,” however, there was still sonic vermin, commonly called a Boos and wearing funny clothes.

This species of vermin, commonly called a Boos Brother, is more correctly called an Alan Fendrick, or ALF for short. It can be found in dump, dark places as well as 2150 and 2050 Finals, which it won at both the New Jersey January and February Opens, respectively. It ranges throughout the northeastern region, subsisting on a simple diet of nets & Andrades and wearing funny clothes.

March/April 1996

Photograph by Bowie Martin Jr.
New Jersey February Open

Westfield, New Jersey
February 10-11, 1996
by Tim Boggan

He is the National Champion—twice over. But, even stretching it, who’d try to sling the cross-culture sobriquet "Goliath," on this handsome fellow? "David" we call him, and yet in this Westfield Club's February Open final it's David he also fought. Fought himself?

Well, yes, in a manner of speaking, for David Zhuang had just returned from a month's hard practice in Canton with his former, teaching-government-supported professional players all—and now he had quickly to reacclimate himself. Had to weather subtle or not so subtle changes in ball and table conditions so as to keep all the giant confidence he'd need for the Olympic Trials little more than a week away. Were David to have a home-court loss here, likely it would intensify, at the worst possible time, whatever doubt and confusion he, like any pressure-proofed but still human athlete, might be subject to.

Young David Fernandez, whose aim, sweep, and snap hurtled forth many a killer point today, had likewise been abroad—training in Sweden at Stefan Bengtsson's Falkenberg Club and practicing with ("these world-class players have such good serves") Erik Lindh, Steffen Petzner, and Peter Nilsson. This David, too, was our National Champion, Junior-size, and as his game was steadily growing in stature, so too were his Olympic hopes. In the whirl of his imagination it didn't matter who he was playing, he'd rise unintimidated to the attack.

David—David Zhuang—won this day's final fight, 20, -20, 13, 18 battle.

It was helpful for Zhuang to have his frizzy locks ("When I cut my hair my cap to, voila. cap and uncap the return of my feelings to a boiling point with a 21, 15, -18,19 win over Pat—viz Mojaverian."

So with Abass's default that left Zhuang's personal playground as he won again, although Dave Fernandez (R) gave him a 20, -20, 13, 18 battle.

New Jersey continues to be David Zhuang's personal playground as he won again, although Dave Fernandez (R) gave him a 20, -20, 13, 18 battle.

David Zhuang—won this day's final fight, 20, -20, 19, 18, with an unyielding fast-hands onslaught. Barron Dattel, opposing him—David Fernandez—also stayed strong at the table, often scoring by sending side-top sweeping, and snap hurtled forth many a promising witness. I'll take a moment to comment on Paul's win over Barry. David, who has two coaching certificates to his credit, was himself coached in this match by Ronald Joseph, and it was quite obvious that Dattel did not appreciate Joseph taking the lead in a very vulnerable, non-stop show of support for his friend.

Did those rooting for David not have enough confidence in him to let him fight his own battles? Did they, and David, too, need to be so distracting point after point? Did those rooting for David not have enough confidence in him to let him fight his own battles? Did they, and David, too, need to be so distracting point after point? Barry's view was buttressed by his late comment on Paul's win over Barry. "I don't know why" lost three straight. David, before losing to Fernandez in the semi's, downed Colombian Orlando Casas, who in the 8th's had eliminated Anni Lawson, one of Westfield's best.

Abass simmered through a match with David Rosenzweig, then brought his feelings to a boiling point with a 21, 15, -18,19 win over Parviz Mojaverian. After which he was more than vocally protesting the ruling against him, just defaulted out of the semi's. Abass might not have been in the best of moods this weekend. He'd hustled off to the Troy, N.Y. tournament the day before and was upset in the final by (where did this guy come from?) an "unknown" Japanese chopper. (Kazuyuki Yokoyama, now at Hofstra University in New York.)

So with Abass's default that left Zhuang with only his straight-game quarter's match against Shao Yu as warm-up practice for Fernandez. Of course the 24-year-old Shao who, along with his aunt, Shao Peizhen, coaches Jennifer Johnson and other Champions who'll be representing the U.S. at the Paralympics in Atlanta this August, is now retired. Yip, went to college, studied foreign trade, and now wants to make his mark in the import-export world. Retired? At 24? It's hard to believe. Zhuang with all his game that Parviz had, said: "This guy's good." In the Semi's, though, "The Chieftain" was too steady for 46-year-old Parviz Mojaverian who in the Open was to play so well against Abass. "George is very strong mentally," said Parviz shaking his head in that mauling way of his, as if George had concocted a mix to his game that Parviz, with all his Johnson & Johnson experience, just couldn't pharmaceutically out.

One last note. Umpire Ray Cavichio asked me to please mention that 2050—winner Alan Fendrick cleverly wore ear-plugs in his final against John Andrade, since before the match John had belittled the announcement that he's not getting more quiet [sic] but is not getting less quiet either.


U1450—Final: Dan Goldschmidt d. Lawrence Shieh, -14, 19, 12. SF: Goldschmidt d. Arvo Hyttinen, 8, 10; Shieh d. Larry Wong, 14, 15.


U950—Jeffrey Fang, 3-0. 2. Albert Luk, 2-1. 3. Stephen Fang, 1-2. 4. Eric Babcock, 0-3.


Over 40/U1650—Final: Cyril Thomas d. Hsu Fei-Hsing, -17, 8, 21.

Under 18/U1800—Jason Haft, 3-0. 2. Jeffrey Fang, 2-1. 3. Stephen Fang, 1-2. 4. Eric Babcock, 0-3.


March/April 1996

TABLE TENNIS WORLD 47
Salina Open
Salina, Kansas
March 2, 1996
The tournament brought contestants from California, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Kansas City and other cities within Kansas. It was sponsored by the Salina Recreation Department and the Salina Table Tennis Club and conducted in the Salina Recreation Gymnasium. For information on Kansas Table Tennis or the Kansas Senior Olympics contact Cliff Metzger (913)823-6844, 2026 Rouch Street, Salina, Kansas 67401.

Open Championship Singles: 1st: Paul Olivier; 2nd: Yi Liu.
Class A Singles: 1st: Joshua Bartel; 2nd: Paul Olivier.
Class B Singles: 1st: David Stucker; 2nd: Donald Bassett.
Class C Singles: 1st: Jim Williams; 2nd: Craig Coulter.
Class D Singles: 1st: David Whitted; 2nd: Phil Deschner.
Class E Singles: 1st: Terry McCoor; 2nd: Doug Stafford.
Class F Singles: 1st: Thad Crane; 2nd: Greg Nicholson.
Under 1400 Singles: 1st: Kelly Finney; 2nd: Tom Will.
Class A Doubles: 1st: John Potocnik/Craig Coulter; 2nd: Sheldon Muninger/Dave Whitted.
Hard Bat Singles: 1st: Carl Miller; 2nd: Charles Rocker.

Bartlesville Winter Open
Bartlesville, Oklahoma
January 19-20, 1996
Open Singles—Final: Yumiko Payton d. Christian Lillieroos; 19,19,18; SF: Payton-Broy; 19,18,19,18,18; Lillieroos/Reed; 17,12,22; QF: Payton-Broy; 19,18,19,19,19; Lillieroos/Robert McKinney; 14,14.
U2000—Final: Nicky Agimudie d. Paul Olivier; 14,22,23; SF: Agimudie d. Robert McKinney; 17,16; Olivier d. Jim Meredith; 9,11.
U1750 Final RR: 1st: Ryan Wellington; 1-1; 2nd: Bob Kyker; 1-1; 3rd: Rick Downey; 1-1 (d. Wallace Collins; 13,22,21).
U1250 Final RR: 1st: David Edwards; 2-0 (d. Jacob Hendrickson; 24,17); 2nd: Robert McKinney; 2-0 (d. Jacob Hendrickson; 15,17); 3rd: Jacob Hendrickson; 15,17.

Colorado New Year Open
Colorado Springs, Colorado
January 27, 1996
U1600: 1st: Eric Kaab; 2nd: Todd Springer.
U1500 RR: 1st: Dave Miescke; 2nd: Gokal Shab.
U1000 RR: 1st: Neal Miller; 2nd: Bill Kressner.

Harlingen Spring Open
Harlingen, Texas
March 9, 1996
Participation was great, with players from the Asociacion de Nueva León Tenis de Mesa from Monterry, Mexico adding that international competition we all look for. Hopefully, in our November 2, 1996 tournament, we can add players from the Fedaraci Mexicana de Tenis de Mesz in Mexico City.
The player that came the farthest from the tournament site was not from Mexico—it was Jon Don, of Temple, Texas—440 miles one-way... that's dedication!
The Harlingen Table Tennis Club meets Tuesdays & Thursday nights at 210 E. Madison in Harlingen, Texas. For further info. call 210-427-9916, or Bob Salmeron at 210-428-2002.
Division A Round Robin: 1st: Cesar Serna ($200); 2nd: Dave Edwards ($100); 3rd: Sergio Alvarez ($50).
Division B Round Robin: 1st: Buster Chase ($70); 2nd: Sergio Muniz ($50); 3rd: Akin Popoola ($25).
Our team consisted of three individuals from very different backgrounds. Josh Bartle is a cowboy boy straight from the Kansas wheat fields. I am a small-town boy who lives in a suburb of a big cow town in Ohio. Tahl Leibovitz is a slice-of-the-'Big Apple.' I thought they were all bigger and better in Texas, but it seems that I've been living under a rock for my first 51 years! I arrived at JFK Airport a little earlier, and told the attendant at the Czech Air counter that I was representing the U.S. standing-disability team in the Czech Republic, so he told me to go to the V.I.P. lounge to wait for my flight to Prague. To say that it was plush is a gross understatement. The lounge had anything you wanted to eat, a complimentary bar.... oh, do this to me after I played my matches. I had even had a full-blown shower with complimentary linens. The three of us met at the gate and boarded the Czech Air flight to the Czech Republic. Seven hours and a day later we arrived in a very winsiy winter Prague. With a walking disability, I am not exactly thrilled. When we got to the baggage claim area, there was one less piece of luggage than we started with.... and yes it was lucky me! We had set aside the day to sightsee, and a very pleasant young man gave us a three-hour excursion through the streets of Prague. We had a tour of a central part of the city that nearly took a broadsides from a car bolting from a side street. We must have slipped into a time warp to avoid that collision.... it was just that close! Our tour guide worked seven days a week, and that weekend he was a school teacher to make ends meet for them and their two children. If Americans had the work ethic as the Czech people have as a whole, our society would not have the myriad of problems from which we suffer. After seeing the older parts of Prague with its stone architecture, winding cobbled streets and beautiful cathedrals, we ate in one of the better restaurants in the city. It was not time for them to be open, but they made an exception for us. After a tasty meal, topped off with a couple of mugs of dark Czech beer and purchase of a souvenir beer mug, we finished our tour, and waited in a very cold Prague airport for our flight to Ostrava. The steel benches would give the most seasoned traveler flat spots on his posterior. During the wait for our flight in the terminal the snowstorm became more severe, and we all predicted that the flight would be canceled. We were all wrong! Tahl Leibovitz played hard, but he ran out of gas in the eighth match, and during the wait that followed, he told me to go to the V.I.P. lounge to wait for my flight to Ostrava. The steel benches would give the most seasoned traveler flat spots on his posterior. During the wait for our flight in the terminal the snowstorm became more severe, and we all predicted that the flight would be canceled. We were all wrong! 

The stage was now set for our semifinal against Czech Republic I. We got a taste of what it is like to be the visiting team against a very enthusiastic home-town crowd. Tahl Leibovitz played first. Tahl's serve and end point quickly was nerve-wracking to watch. His returns were easily handled, and he followed up many of his returns with slashing ace forehand kills. His backhand kills and loops also command respect. After splitting the first two games, Tahl quieted the crowd with a super-heated serves and blistering loop-kills, winning a convincing 21-12. Josh Bartle played a courageous match against Soukop, displaying much improved serves and forehand loops (the result of much coaching by Christian Lillieron), but lost a tense 20, 18, 11. At one match apiece, the tension was incredible. Every point that the USA scored was like a walk through a funeral park, and every point that the Czech Republic scored was an explosion of cheering. The Tahl and Josh lost the first at 18, but were up a commanding 11-8 in the second, when the wheels came off. A bizarre combination of errors combined with crowd pressure, and we had lost that surreal game and match.... and tie, 22-20!

France had lost a similar match to Taiwan in the other semi. Taiwan brought an impressive contingent of players and coaches numbering about twenty. The playoff for third and fourth would be between Josh of his singles matches, and Ron Schull losing both of his. Tahl and Josh Bartel won both doubles. I sat out the rest of the ties. All of the rest of the teams were playing their best two players. I was the lowest-rated player, plus the piece of luggage to carry the lactic acid medicine, and my court shoes, which were three times lighter than the street shoes I was forced to use. The other factor there was there was no rating system for the players to enable the captain to evaluate the risks of substitutions. There was a world ranking list, but that didn't include enough of the contestants to make sound decisions. The quarterfinals saw the USA defeat Sweden I by a now-familiar 2-1 score.

At the tournament party afterwards. The two on the left are from other countries. The three on the right are (L-R) Tahl Leibovitz, Ron Schull and Josh Bartle.

The Czech Republic I team won over the Taiwan contingent two straight to capture the title. Tahl Leibovitz was the fabric that held the team together. He went through the entire team competition without losing a singles match, and the pressure that he put on his opponents was relentless. The pressure system was used in this format with his biggest pressure points being his backhand loop-kills and his forehand serves. Tahl dislikes the thought of losing a set, but it seems that I've been living under a rock for my first 51 years!

Many thanks to the very personable Jennifer Johnson and Ron Schull for tirelessly making all of the arrangements for our very successful trip. Another thank you goes to Jitka Slegrova, who went to the wall to recover my piece of luggage. Jiri Danek and his very capable and pleasant staff made a supreme effort to tend to our every need. Two young ladies even went out in the snow and filled the ice bag for my injured shoulder. These loving people redefine the concept of hospitality.
CHAPTER TWO

The Game

Despite the revolutionary (and evo-

lutionary) leaps Earth was to undergo

because of table tennis, the galaxy's new

no. 1 sport, the game itself had remained

remarkably unchanged. Ironically, it was

the game's very introduction to the new

alien races of the intergalactic commu-
nity that had saved it from changing.

Through the years the International Table

Tennis Federation, table tennis' govern-

ing body on Earth, had tried tinkering

with the game under various guises,
sometimes disastrously, in the hopes of

increasing the sport's popularity. But the

alien races were charmed with the game

just the way it was, so the ITTF, ever

fearful of offending them, had the good

sense to leave well enough alone.

The few changes the game had un-
dergone largely concerned peripheral

elements. The ball, for example, had now

been impregnated with an unstable lumi-

nescence compound which, when reacting

with air friction, caused it to give off a

neon-colored trace effect of various hues,

making the ball look like a tiny comet

zooming around the table. The effect

nothing less than spectacular on tele-

vision, not only giving a 4th of July

fireworks feel to each point, but also

enabling the viewer to follow the ball

more easily, and to better understand its

movement.

Another improvement made possible

by alien technologies was a system of

absolute surety on linesman calls via the

implementation of tiny sensors hidden

with perfectly uniform temperature,
uhidity, and barometric pressure. Lastly,

but not least importantly, the electro-

stasis barrier set a decibel ceiling on

spectator noise allowed to reach the play-

ers so that, while the players could still

benefit emotionally from crowd partici-
pation, they would not be unduly dis-

tracted by it. It was found that the

advent of the screens that some races

could be absolutely deafening in the sup-

port of their players; and, in the case of

the Thalaxzzzzes, downright painful.

Many races, humans among them, sim-

cply could not physically tolerate the shrill

screeching and squawking of the insectoid

Thalaxzzzzes. And so not only were the

spectators barred off from the players,

they were also screened off from each

other. The compartmentalization of the
different races into their special sections

made for an interesting study in the vari-

ous displays of fan appreciation, which

were often as entertaining as the matches
themselves.

As mentioned before, the Thalaxzzzzes' incessant cacophony of buzzing, clicking, and hissing noises

made their section sound something like

a tropical rain forest gone mad. The

empathic and telepathic Shamarians sang

and chanted in beautiful harmonies, of-

ten doing free-flowing choreographed
dances to urge their players on. The

blocky, male-domi-

nated Gronks

grunted loudly when they were pleased

with a point, a kind of extended guttur-

al "harrumphing" that made them sound

more like an angry

lynch mob than

spectators at a sporting event. The lusty

Cabribrians, a shamanistic warrior race

rather like the medieval Celts on Earth,
had a rollicking, drunken, scandalously
good time. Often singing, and always

drinking, the robust Cabribrians roared

their approval or groaned their disap-

proval with each shot, and were the most

expressive of all the races. For the more

pious "joie de vivre" and irrepressible good

humor also made them a favorite among

all the players and fans.

The Zisters and the No-Names

were among the strangest fans to observe, the

No-Names by virtue of the often odd
timing of their humming and bell-stick

shaking, say, in the middle of a point or

when their player missed a shot. "But it

was the right shot" they would answer

complacently when queried about this

baffling behavior. The mystical, octoped

Zisters, with their six tentacled arms and

massive heads, waved and snaked their

unjointed limbs hypnotically while emit-

ting a wailing tremolo tone which sounded

like the vibrato note from a cheap electric

organ; and, like the No-Names, were also

likely to let loose at very odd times.

The bug-eyed, hyperactive Pingians

were at least as much fun to watch as

their players. The diminutive, freneti-
cally high-strung Pingians could not sit

still, if they sat at all, and would be

constantly chattering, shrieking, and

seething until they worked themselves

into such a frenzy that their section was

the absolute picture of bedlam. It was not

uncommon for a Pingian on the front row
to somehow twist and claw boil his

way to the back row, then end up back

on the opposite side in the front row with

no idea how he had gotten there, or even

that he had moved at all.

There was also an open area where

fans of all races could sit (with the excep-
tion of the Thalaxzzzzes and the Pingians)

and enjoy the matches together. This

section did much to promote interplan-

eary harmony, and was generally fre-

quented by the more gregarious, outgo-

ing races such as the Shamarians, the

Doaks, the Cabribrians, and the Terrans,

with the No-Nomes occasionally

wandering in and out.

Though the many races from across

the galaxy competed more or less harmo-
niously with each other at the Pan-Galac-

tic Games, there were several species that

the Overseer Committee would refuse

to allow entry to. These races loved the sport

as much as any of the others, but had too

much difficulty adapting to the inter-

species setting. Many, like the drooling,

fat-lipped Grobos or the constantly

shedding Mastodykes, were custodially

challenged. Others, from very wet, very
dry, or very dark planets, could not adjust to

the particular environmental conditions

imposed on them. Still others had their

own unique cultural drawbacks, such as

the lethally poisonous Viperians, who

had persisted with the singularly nasty

habit of biting and killing their vanquished

opponents. Clearly not all races were cut

to compete at the Pan-Galactic Cham-

pionships. And this is what worried the

Overseers foremost on the eve of the 10th

championship: What about the mysteri-

ous new races (the "Outsiders," as they

had come to be called) that were thought

to be on their way? No one, not even the

far-ranging Taxons, had ever heard of

these Outsiders, let alone seen them.

How could the Overseers know if they

should be allowed to compete? After all,

these were the hallowed Pan-Galactic

Championships. Certain standards had

to be met. What if the Outsiders didn't

meet these standards? And worse yet,

what if they didn't take kindly to a rejec-

tion? Everyone was anxious, and more

than a little apprehensive about the com-

ing encounter. The Overseers finally

decided all they could do was await the

coming of the Outsiders, and withhold

determination to participate.

(Continued next issue)
Sean O'Neill On Lightspeed SP

"Yasaka Mark V, Friendship 729, Butterfly Sriver, Double Happiness PF4 and Juic 999 all claim to be power-punchers. I should know - I tried them all. The problem with these sheets is you always give up spin for speed or visa versa. Luckily, Airedale Sports & Technology came up with a solution - Lightspeed SP. It combines the devastating spin of Chinese style rubber with the forceful speed of their Japanese counterparts. As a power player you should have every tool at your disposal, that means rotation and acceleration. If your game depends on intense loops and potent smashes give it a try. I did and it's staying on my racket."

Sean O'Neill - 5-X US and 1990 North American Champion

Sean Plays With Lightspeed SP 2.2 Both Sides

Keenan Bowens: 1995 Boys U12 US Junior Olympic and Junior National Champion
Keenan plays with an ASTI Euro-Flex blade with Lightspeed Attack 2.0 rubber.

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Andrew Rushton: Member Of the English Cadet Boys (under 14) National Team
Andrew plays with an ASTI Polaris blade with Lightspeed Regular 2.0 rubber.

Diana Rainer: 1995 Canadian Winter Games Girls U14, 94 U12 National Champion
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Lightspeed comes in four Versions: Regular, Attack, Attack Plus & SP to suit most playing styles and preferences.

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Meeting at U.S. Open

• Would you like to see Table Tennis expand in the U.S.?
• Are you tired of a USATT that does little to make our sport grow?
• Would you like to make things happen?

It's Time to Take Control of Our Sport!

Who: Anyone who would like to join us in expanding our sport.

What: A program to force the USATT leadership to address the many concerns of the membership and to fulfill campaign promises.

When: At U.S. Open, Friday, July 5, 8:00 PM

Where: At the TABLE TENNIS WORLD booth

Why: If you have to ask--don’t come!

How: During the meeting, we will:
I. Decide by majority vote what the main issues and problems are;
II. Decide how USATT should address these issues and problems;
III. Communicate our conclusions to the USATT Leadership;
IV. Arrange to meet one year later at 1997 U.S. Open. If at that time the consensus is that USATT has not responded satisfactorily, then we will:
   • Recruit a full slate of candidates for the 1998 USATT elections;
   • Support and campaign for these candidates;
   • Replace the current leadership with officers who will do the job.

Have a Question? Suggestion? Idea?
Call Larry Hodges at TABLE TENNIS WORLD, 301-838-8571
See you at the Open!