Insook Bhushan wins her 11th Nationals ... from down 14-9 in the fifth!

Sean O’Neill wins his 5th Nationals ... from down 15-11 in the fifth!

At age 37, Dan Seemiller won both the Olympic Qualifier and Open Doubles!

Jason St. George and Jane Chui, National High School Table Tennis Champions ... the first ever in the U.S!
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The Nationals held in Las Vegas was a highly successful event for the USTTA. The event attracted over 1,000 competitors, surpassing the previous high of 430 several years ago. The playing facility was magnificent, featuring outstanding lighting, 65 fully-barred courts, and 10 feature courts for excellent viewing with a TV arena with room for 900 spectators.

The Las Vegas Convention Center was a five-minute walk from your room at the Hilton. In any major event, there were problems, and here was no exception. The floors were dusty (although we kept cleaning it), and with players allowed to play in ten events, the schedule had some time conflicts that were unavoidable—but nothing that can’t be fixed. The standard of play was high here, and as president I will continue to strive to upgrade the sport’s image and to keep playing conditions for all players at the highest standards.

TOPICS

The new Table Tennis Topics is now being edited by Larry Hodges, who is just finishing a Master’s degree in journalism. Larry is a tireless worker with many years experience as both a writer and editor. I’m sure the magazine will be upgraded in all ways, and still meet budget guidelines. Topics plays such an important role in many ways for our organization, and I feel it’s back on track and better than ever. Best of Luck, Larry. I know you’ll do a good job for the USTTA

The U.S. Open:

Midland, Michigan has been awarded the 1992 U.S. Open. Open set for June 10-14. Kae Browning, Donna Sakai and I met with officials of the Midland Organizing Committee in December to work out the details. Many issues were discussed, and we were informed that the fund-raising committee has already raised $80,000 toward this year’s event. This is more than double last year’s fund-raising, and far more than any U.S. Open sponsor in the past. Dow Chemical will be the title sponsor as they have more than tripled their sponsorship. Other sponsors include Dow Corning, Dow USA, Midland Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, Gerstacker Foundation, Herbert Dow Foundation, Brother, Coca-Cola, Stiga and Nittaku.

The U.S. Open is certainly the premier event each year for the USTTA. Unfortunately, with the $50,000 prize money and the intangible hospitality, the U.S. Open has a $200,000 budget that has to be met. The Midland sponsors and organizers proved that they could do that when the Open was held there last year.

Plan on watching the best players in the world and competing yourself at the prestigious U.S. Open. It will be held six weeks before the Olympic games, and the USTTA expects many of the leading players to attend and sharpen their games. Mark your calendars (enclosed with this issue) for the showcase event of the year. Support the USTTA and enter the U.S. Open! Table tennis: the sport for a lifetime.

January/February 1992
T

his Nationals, with $31,000
in grants and prize money,
had more entries than any Na-
tionals in our history. Over 550
players participated—100 more
than any other Nationals! For
the 92% of you who weren’t
there, prepare for a ride like
you’ve never seen. Get ready
to read about Sean O’Neill and
Insook Bhushan coming back in
the fifth and final games to
become the 1991 Men’s and
Women’s National Champions.
Learn about the controversy that
overtook our men’s final this
year, with expedite called at 18-
16 in the fifth. Applaud the six
men and six women who quali-
fied to go to the U.S./Canada
Olympic Trials in March, with
the winners going to the Olym-
pics in August. Watch the myriad
of upsets as multiple-event win-
ers Bohdan Dawidowicz,
George Brathwaite and George
Hendry romped through the se-
rior events. And find out who
were the winners of the first Na-
tional School Championships in
our history!

MEN’S
SINGLES
by Larry Hodges

There seemed to be even more
speculation than usual over who
should be favored. Should it be Defending Chal-
pion Jim Butler, who, far from resting on
his laurels, spent the past four months
training in Sweden? Two years ago, But-
er had relatively weak serves. One year
ago, he had among the best in the country.
Now, by common consensus, he has the
best serves in the country, better even
than 1986 Champion Hank Teekaveerakit.
As U.S. Team Member Dhiren Narotam put it,
"I miss outright against Hank’s serves
more. But against Jim, it’s almost impos-
sible to return the serve without giving
him the edge." Jim, of course, also has
the best backhand in the U.S., and his fore-
hand is no longer a weakness.

Determined to take away
Jimmy’s crown were, among others,
four-time National Champion Sean O’Neill,
five-time National Champion Dan See-
miller, ’86 Champion Hank Teekaveerakit, and last year’s losing fi-
nalist, John Onifade. Missing was semi-
retired two-time National Champion Eric
Boggan, who still plays local tournaments
near New York but rarely goes out of
town these days.

Many observers seemed to count
Sean out, thinking Jim was just too good,
that it was time for the changing of the
guard. That Sean has a history of rising to
the occasion seemed forgotten. Others
speculated that this tournament was 37-
year-old Dan Seemiller’s, president of the
USTTA but on a table tennis renaissance
of sorts. Three weeks before, he’d beaten
all three U.S. team members at the U.S.
National Team Championships in De-
troit, and then he’d promptly come in first
at the Olympic Trials here. Youth is no
match for age and physical training. Or
perhaps slightly out-of-practice John
Onifade could recover the form that domi-
nated the U.S. a couple of years ago be-
fore he began working two jobs?

Dan and Rick Seemiller ruled
U.S. doubles in the 1970’s and early
80’s, winning the Nationals eight times.
Dan won a ninth last year with Sean
O’Neill. This year, he and John Onifade
teammed up in what can only be called a
dream team. They dominated the field,
not losing a game, not allowing a team to
get more than 16 points in a game. Ac-
ting to Dan, "John’s serves sets me up
perfectly, and our games mesh perfectly.
John takes the big shots, I maneuver over
the net, and we each cover for each other’s
weaknesses." Six of the top eight seeds made it
to the quarterfinals. De Tran, who last
year was featured as a 2200 player who
got hot (or did he just improve?) became
a top contender by beating Brian Masters
in five games to advance to the quarters.
Brian has been living in Sweden for a
number of years as a professional player,
and there were rumors that he was getting
better. However, it was another long-time
overseas team, Charles Butler, who
cashed in his chips by beating Scott Butler
to make the quarters. Charles has lived in
Germany for over a decade, playing in the
German Table Tennis League.

Charles, however, was not able
to match up to Jim Butler. At first, J.
Butler tried to take on C. Butler (no rela-
tion) in a forehand shot-making contest,
which was close. But once Jim got his
powerful backhand into play, along with
his constantly improving forehand, the
match was a straightforward, 16,15,16
sweep. De Tran showed his mastery of
Masters was no fluke as he came out
strong against Sean O’Neill in the quar-
ters, winning the first game 21-18. Tran,
a left-handed twinged looper, turned
the match into a counterloopy contest.
Although not powerful, he is exception-
ally consistent, and when O’Neill had
trouble finding the table on his more pow-
erald counterloop, the audience sensed
an upset. Tran was looping both forehand
and backhand, and Sean just didn’t seem
to have an answer.

But as he has so often in the past,
Sean came alive. The next three games
featured spectacular play, but Sean’s
power (and a soft touch-block that Tran
could never adjust to) took its toll on Tran,
with Sean winning, 18,13,12,14. Al-
though Sean was definitely the better
player, somehow the match seemed
closer than the scores the last three games
indicated. Isolated as Tran is in California
from many of the top U.S. players, he
looks like he could compete with anyone,
coast to coast.

The most spectacular quarterfi-
nal was probably John Onifade versus
under 22 winner Dhiren Narotam. Both
players are known for their great loop off
the bounce, and both play at a pace that
can hurt the eyes. Dhiren’s greater con-
sistency won him the first game, 21-19,
and he seemed quite able to win the next
two if nothing changed. But change
Onifade did. Onifade is known as an
almost all-forehand player, with perhaps
the strongest forehand in the country—
when he’s on. But when a player such as
Narotam puts so much pressure on him,
loopping balls all over the court, something
has to give. Where the first game had been
a pure forehand-forehand battle, the next
three featured Onifade’s rarely lauded
backhand attack. Attacking both lines
with opening backhand loops, Onifade
would follow up with his rarely-returned
forehand loop. That Onifade uses anti-spin
rubber on his backhand merely meant
that, each time he wanted to backhand
loop, he had to twist his racket. But yes,
John’s that quick, and he quickly ended
the match, 19,14,18,14. The match did
feature what might have been the point of
the tournament early in the third game,
although spectators might have missed it
if they blinked. It started with six or seven
counterloops, then Dhiren stepped in
and looped a “winner” off the bounce against
an already impressively fast Onifade loop.
But John had also stepped in, and
counterlooped this ball, also right off the
bounce. Dhiren did a forehand “swab-
block” down the line for a winner. The
last four shots were about as fast as any
I’ve ever seen.

The last quarterfinal was the most
interesting, featuring 1986 National
Champion Hank Teekaveerakit against
five-time National Champion Dan See-
miller. At 37, Dan’s already making the
switch from player to administrator/coach.
But he’s not quite ready yet! He gets his
presidential duties done in the morning,
does his physical training each afternoon,
and runs his professional club at night. In Pittsburgh, he’s rarely seen without his legwedges. Has it paid off?

After beating all three U.S. Team members at the National Team Championships in Detroit three weeks before, Hank credited his friend and training partner John O'Neill for helping him achieve his goal. Then he journeyed to North Carolina to train members at the National Team Championships a few weeks earlier, and barely beatened at the Olympic Qualifier at deuce in the third two days before.

However, things can change rapidly in this world, and Dan’s game disappeared as fast as the Soviet Union, losing 14,14,11 to Teekaveerakit. Even trainer Kenny军官s, who Dan credits for his earlier great play, couldn’t save him.

How did Hank view the turn-around? In the Olympic Qualifier, he’d had a bad loss against Todd Sweeris. He’d even contributed to the loss, turning an umpire’s call at deuce in the third that Sweeris’ shot had missed, when in fact he knew it had hit the edge. It cost him the point—and match—but gained him points with all those who watched. After the Sweeris loss, he’d told himself not to let it affect his play. Sure enough, in his next match, against Clark Yeh, he came alive, and began to play like he used to play. “I went outside afterwards,” Hank said, “and meditated for 15 minutes. I realized that I still could play like I had in 1984-86, when I was at my best.”

From a purely technical point of view, Hank had changed frorn a backhand player to a forehand/high toss server, but had his long loop serve. The second semifinal was between two former roommates and practice partners. Hank and Teekaveerakit. The conventional wisdom has it that Hank is good, but not as good as he was in the middle 1980’s, and so is a spoiler but not a contender here. Although he did not win, the conventional wisdom was proven wrong as it usually is by Hank’s strong play. With just a few points changed, the outcome of this Nationals could have changed.

The receiver won the first point in this match, with Hank leading 5-0, then 5-1, but then 5-2, and nay for another loop until the sixth point. Normally, Hank favors his backhand and his best serve, but now he is using his backhand serve almost as much—perhaps Sean is too used to Hank’s high toss?

Up 11-9 on Sean’s serve, Hank begins to pull away. First he makes a spectacular backhand kill. He follows that by crossing Hank’s serve on the edge for a winner. However, Sean quickly comes back, tying it at 15-all with a series of great rallies.

Hank often drops Sean’s serve short to the forehand. Sean’s serve and pass combo is critical. He then, after taking a long time to prepare, he serves it into the net. It brings back memories of his serving into the net at deuce in the fifth against Dan Seemiller in the semi-finals of the Nationals several years ago. Is it nerves? Or is he just josing up the serve? Probably a little of both.

In the second, Sean takes a quick 3-0 lead by attacking Hank’s serve. However, Hank quickly comes back to tie it at 5-5. Down 7-5, Hank goes on a looping binge, and goes up 12-8. He’s bouncing and joggling between points, and looks faster than he has in years. He’s silently talking to himself every point, in stark contrast to the silent and stoic O’Neill. Up 15-10, Hank’s in control. But Sean serves and attacks his way to 15-14.

At 16-17 Hank leading, a baby in the crowd begins to cry. Sean backhand kill. He follows that by crossing Hank’s serve on the edge for a winner. However, Sean quickly comes back, tying it at 15-all with a series of great rallies.

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crowd gasps, but Hank can’t take the serve back. He stares at the net, aghast, down 2-1 in games.

Sean, changing into a Brown University shirt between games, quickly goes up 9-5, winning the last point in a spectacular backhand and chopping point. He and Hank fight for the attack, as whoever attacks first seems to win most of the points. Sean attacks first mostly, and soon leads 17-13, just four points from the finals.

But never count Hank out on his serve as he quickly wins four in a row to tie it at 17-all. Both, Sean pops up the serve—but Hank misses! This, along with the two serves in the net, were the great turning points in this match.

Up 18-17, Sean quick-pushes to Hank’s backhand, but Hank misses the loop. After missing a short push attempt, Sean makes a fabulous forehand loop winner to Hank’s backhand that Hank can only watch hang. Sean then serves and quick-pushes again to Hank’s wide backhand. Hank, caught off guard, tries to step around but is too late, and loops into the net again. Game and match to O’Neill (19-18, 19-18, 19-18).

Since losing his National Championship to Butler at last year’s Nationals, Sean has a good record against Butler, especially in the big matches. But he has also been erratic, losing to too many other players, and Sean is the top seed here, rated 2624 to O’Neill’s 2595. The most common prediction in the stands is Butler in four, with the theory being that Sean might play great, but Jim is already playing great. Jim wants a second men’s championship and Sean wants a second title to go with the mixed doubles he’s already won with Diana Gee.

Both players are downright sloppy the first game (for 2600 players!), with few good points. Neither player seems to be able to put together a string of good shots. Sean is very aggressive from the net, and when the third one misses, they are down 2-lm games.

The next point had to be seen to be believed. According to Ed Walters, a consultant, “it destroyed the essence of the game.” An informal poll of the audience found it was 30-0 that the rule should not have been called.

The reaction of the TV booth was even stronger. They were “not happy.” According to Ed Walters, a consultant, “it destroyed the presentation of the sport.”

However, according to one umpire who was present, it is the fault of the USSTA, and not the umpires, for having such poor rules.
Insook Bhushan won Women’s Singles (for the 11th time), came in first in the Olympic Qualifier, and won Women’s Doubles with Diana Gee. Is there no stopping her?

WOMEN’S SINGLES
by Tim Bogdan

The 1991 U.S. National Women’s Singles Championships was won by 6-time U.S. World Team member Insook Bhushan over Defending Singles Champ Wei Wang. In surviving the 5-game final, Insook, who’ll be 40 in February, regained the title she’d lost to Wei last year when the competition was round robin rather than single elimination.

I’ll give you the details of this exciting final after a quick mention of other important matches leading up to it. First, however, a passing word or two about the one exceptional player allowed in the rating events but not in women’s singles—Anita Zakharyan, who’d emigrated, arriving in the U.S. on Independence Day, 1989. Here in Vegas to cheer her on were her husband, a former World Champion gymnast, and her mother who, back in the 50’s, herself dominated Soviet women’s table tennis. Anita, with her spiny openings and fast, off-the-bounce paddle and ball. There’s writing on the wall.

In the top (Bhushan) half of the draw, attention soon centered on Tawny Banh, an ebullient 16-year-old interested in language and literature (“See the neck chain I’m wearing, the paddle and ball. There’s writing on the back, in Chinese, Mandarin—it means ‘Good luck!’”). After coming to the U.S. from Vietnam a dozen or so years ago, Tawny’s family (she’s the youngest of six) settled in Georgia, later moved to California...next door, as it happened, to a table tennis club.

Now, after playing for only three years, Tawny, under the tutelage of Orange County Coach Philipp Caillaud, and with the guidance of her brother Tin, among others, she’s established herself as a real threat to the #1 U.S. junior.

In her first and only match in the Women’s Singles, Banh, rated 430, extended U.S. Olympian Diana Gee to five games. The stamina Tawny’s built up from playing basketball and volleyball, the footwork she’d been practicing in her twice-a-week, two-hour sessions with Coach Philipp helped her to “run around” (or “turn” as they say on the West Coast), aggressively press her forehand attack, as well as effectively counter-block with her Melsumi Redmark short pips.

Against Diana, Tawny won the even games, lost all the odd ones. In the 3rd, her concentration might have been broken a little when the umpire carded (that is, warned) her entourage on the sidelines that if they shouted any more encouraging advice he’d, well, not eject all of them but give a point away from Tawny.

Later, in the semi’s of Women’s Under 22, Banh, who’s sponsored by Armstrong, scored a surprise upset over the current #1 U.S. junior Li Ai, whose sometimes brilliant but inconsistent play suggests that, like many a young student on the run-down at the end of many a professional modeling class, she still needs to practice better footwork.

Tawny went on to win the Women’s Under 22, again in a 3-game upset, this time over #2 U.S. junior Jane Chui (rated 2096). Father/coach Lim Ming says that even if just turned 17? Jane’s schoolwork should suffer, “she needs full-time coaching—needs to practice her footwork, her forehand, her serve and return of serve.” Just like the rest of us, huh? Ming says that maybe Jane should try the Resident Training Program (RTP) at Colorado Springs, says that maybe after all these years, "someone else needs to coach her, give her a different perspective.

Poor Ming. Soon, though, he was feeling better. In the High School Girls Singles, Jane’s fast hands just got her by Tawny...are you ready?...33-31 in the 3rd! "I really wanted to win this one," said Jane. "Five minutes after I’d lost to Tawny in the Under 22’s, everybody knew about it. Now I don’t have to be so embarrassed.”

Having survived Tawny in her first match, Diana Gee was ready to celebrate her 23rd birthday with, gee, her twin sister Lisa, herself a former U.S. World Team member, now just an interested spectator. Did I say celebrate? Diana’s second and last match in the abbreviated Nationals was already a quaterfinal one against...Insook.

No, of course ITTF ratings or rankings weren’t considered. Why? Because in this “closed,” with all players are from the same Association, it’s that Association’s (here the USTTA’s) rating list that takes precedence. Moreover, since there were so few entries, only two of the top-rated players need be seeded, while the others, the placed players, would all be flipped in random. So five had to play one? Diana was right not to like these odds—it was indeed a quick way to lose $100.

Defending National Champion Wei Wang came so close to winning two in a row, but a seven point run by Insook near the end of this epic match was fatal.

January/February 1992
In the companion quarter’s Peggy Rosen certainly wasn’t unhappy about drawing Li Ai. But since Peggy doesn’t practice much, particularly because her regular sparring partner, Men’s Over 40 winner Bohdan Dawidowicz; and longtime supporter Alice Green Kimberly who’d also been the recipient of most of Peggy’s help over the years…whatever father/coach Hal wasn’t around). Alice’s advice to Insook was to play aggressive defense. “Don’t be too eager to go back from the table,” she said. Clearly much would depend on Wei’s ability to read Insook’s changing spin and the adjustments Wei would have to make in timing her attack. Insook, it was thought would have to risk more pick-hitting than usual.

In the 1st, Wei’s down 5-1 but ties it up at 10-all. Wei catches Insook on a drop, but Insook scores on two one-ball deceptive forehands. Up 14-13, Wei misses a drop, up 16-15 Wei drops, but Insook, ready, backhands it in for a winner. Playing Insook wide, wing to wing, is not as good as in and out, down the middle. But drops are dangerous, for though Insook after all these years is a little slower, her anticipation, and consequent ability to come in and score, is still first-rate. Unexpectedly, from 16-all, Wei misses or mis-hits a succession of forehands, doesn’t get another point. First game to Bhushan 21-16.

Says coach Philipp Caillard from nearby, “Wei’s not taking enough time. Insook’s deciding what place of her usual play to rush her.” Says another seasoned observer, “Wei can’t be consistent enough to win.”

And, as if heeding his call, Wei hits in Lily’s high-toss to take the lead. Then she serves off! At 18-all, Lily misses a forehand, and Wei gets one in. Down 20-18 match point, Lily serves and backhands off.

Wei, though shaken, has survived. “I want to keep my title—that made me more tense,” she said. She also said, “I used to think in terms of just serve and follow. Now, after learning concentration from Eric Boggen and Danny Seemiller, I’m thinking further.” Wei said that after this year’s World Cup Team Championships she stayed on for a couple of days to talk to players, trainers, and coaches. “If I learn, many people will benefit,” she said, alluding of course not only to her role as a top player but as a much sought-after coach. For the disappointing Lily, she was anything but sulky or anti-social. I saw her shortly after the match playing with and coaching two young boys, bare wooden blades in hand, who were having fun on one of those butterfly “Family” mini-tables. She was smiling and as playful, as enthusiastic, as she might have been with her own kids.

For the final, in Wei’s corner were Diego, practice partner Mas Hashimoto, and, former-loyal Eyad Adini. Obviously everyone was of the opinion that Insook would mix heavy or not so heavy spin with heavy drop, and would be alert to try to one-ball-pace both forehands and backhands, particularly off drops or the occasional soft short shots. Wei’s strategy in the main was to patiently build up to push, and once in position, and backhand passes. But Lily’s seemingly beaten look is deceptive. With grace and poise she fights back. At 16-14 Wei, Diego shouts, “Move! Jump!” At 17-all, he yells, “Come on! Loose up!”

As they approached Greenup, a drop, Insook scores on two one-ball deceptive forehands. Up 14-13, Wei misses a drop, up 16-15 Wei drops, but Insook, ready, backhands it in for a winner. Playing Insook wide, wing to wing, is not as good as in and out, down the middle. But drops are dangerous, for though Insook after all these years is a little slower, her anticipation, and consequent ability to come in and score, is still first-rate. Unexpectedly, from 16-all, Wei misses or mis-hits a succession of forehands, doesn’t get another point. First game to Bhushan 21-16.

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10 Table Tennis Topics
**OLYMPIC TRIALS**

by Tim Boggan

The first qualifying stage for U.S. men and women who hoped to play at the 1992 Olympics was held at the Olympic Gymnasium in April. Sixty players, including six women, would qualify for the final U.S./Canada trials in March. That stage, against competing Canadian players, will be held in March. The second stage, which hopes to qualify our U.S. players will be able to field Olympic "teams" of two players (two men, two women), though because of the meager allotment of spots given by the ITTF to "North America," it is far from certain that both of these players will get to play in the singles. In 1988 we had no "Men's Team," just a single man's player, Steven O'Neill, to represent us, and though much was expected of him, he faltered and officially registered our protest with ITTF President Ichiro Ogimura—including of course USTTA President Dan Seemiller who’s well aware that both the U.S. and Canada have Men’s Teams in the Championship Division at the next World’s-to date nothing definitive satisfactory has come of our complaints.

But so what, huh? How can this microcosm be here, everywhere, all so bound, so defined—how can it at times not be upsetting?

**MEN’S TRIALS**

The field was limited to 44 players—those with a 2100 rating or better. Two eligible former U.S. National Champions who might have been expected to play, Eric Boggan and Antila Malek, and ineligible U.S. International invitees O’Neill and Tan, did not enter. Because the top 12 ranked players were seeded out, the other 32 had to vie among themselves for the remaining 12 spots via 4- or 5-match round robin play. While this was certainly a very democratic format, it was also in part a largely meaningless one, since none of the 16 players rated under 2123 made the final group of 24.

The qualifiers did not play (as did the 12 women) a round robin, but instead followed a modified "Swiss System." As in many chess tournaments, players with like ratings would never be placed in the same round match here, 22,21 to Charles Butler’s 19,20. As in many chess tournaments, players with like ratings would never be placed in the same round match here, 22,21 to Charles Butler’s 19,20. As in many chess tournaments, players with like ratings would never be placed in the same round match here, 22,21 to Charles Butler’s 19,20.

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1-800-334-8315 or 1-919-291-8202.
RESULTS, 1991 U.S. NATIONALS:

Men's Singles—Final: Sean O'Neill d. Jim Butler - 17,20,15; SF: O'Neill d. Hank Teekaveerakit 19, 18,18; Butler d. John Onifade 12,17,17; QF: O'Neill d. John Onifade 15,13,12; Teekaveerakit d. Dan Seemiller 14,11; Onifade d. Darren Newman 19,14,18; Butler d. Charles Butler 16,15,16; QFs: O'Neill d. Todd Peterson 14,13,15; Butler d. Brian Masters 19,19,18,16; Seemiller d. Derek May 14,12,14; Teekaveerakit d. Clark Yeh 8, 9, 14; Onifade d. Khoa Nguyen 5, 20, 19, 15; Newman d. Chon Sun 19,10,19,13; C. Butler d. Scott Butler -18,19,15,17; Butler d. Rutledge Barry -20,14,13,16; O'Neill d. Barry Davel 6,13,11; Peterson d. Anil Malk 14,18,13; Seemiller d. Roberto Byles 16,12,14; Butler d. Jason George 16,18,19; Seemiller d. Dennis Davis 18,13,15; May d. Masao Hashimoto -14,16,19; Teekaveerakit d. Ty Hoff 9,9,15; Onifade d. Eyal 17,20,15,17,15,12; Teekaveerakit/Narotam d. Jim & Scott Butler 19,-19,19; Hank Teekaveerakil/Dhiren Narotam 9,16; SF: Onifade/Sylvia Lee 14,18,18,18; Wang d. Alice Hugh d. Wan-Ling Cheng 19,11,13; De Tran d. Brian Masters -16,19,19,-12,16: d. Martin Vostry 14,13.


NATIONAL SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS
HELD AT NATIONALS,
FIRST IN USTTA HISTORY
by Larry Hodges

For years, the USTTA has combined the Junior Nationals and the Junior Olympics in one big tournament each summer. At the U.S. Nationals, the junior events were meaningless, and few played. Why not have School Championships instead? President Dan Seemiller pushed for it, and soon it was a fact. It will be far easier to get table tennis into school systems if we can show them we already have National School Championships set up.

The divisions set up were high school (grades 10-12), junior high school (grades 7-9), primary school (grades 4-6) and elementary school (grades 1-3). Except for elementary, there were separate events for boys and girls. There were also boys' and girls' high school doubles, and open doubles for junior high and under. There was a good turnout for the events, even in elementary school singles. I was pleasantly surprised by the large number of spectators at each match.

The first U.S. National High School Boys' Champion in our history is Jason St. George, an upset winner over top seed Eric Owens. Jason, who was rated 1750 a year ago, and 2014 going into the National Team Championships a few weeks before (where he shot up to 2272), has been training at the Olympic Training Center since August.

Known for his quickness and powerful close-to-the-table forehand loop, and with a pips-out backhand, Jason is easily the most improved top junior in the U.S. this past year. He pulled a double by winning High School Boys' Doubles as well, with Shelton Dickson—the same pair that won U18 doubles at the U.S. Open.

Playing on a back table (hopefully a scheduling mistake), Jason used his strong two-winged game to keep the attack. He returned Eric's serves short, so Eric wasn't able to serve and loop. He won the first in nailbiting 24-22 fashion. In the second, he led 15-12, only to have Eric rip three forehand loops in a row to tie it up. But Jason finished strong by snapping in three backhand winners in a row from up 18-17 to win the match 22-17.

Our first U.S. National High School Girls' Champion is Jane Chui. Tawny Banh had beaten Jane the day before in a close three-game counter-driving match in the U12 women's finals. But this time, after losing the first at 15, Jane pulled out the second in the past. Domingo, obviously, does not like choppers. In the quarters, the hot/cold Lim Ming Chui (sometimes a penholder, others times a shakehand) was cold, only getting 8 and 9 against Bohdan.

The biggest upset in the seniors was Mark Wedret over George Brathwaite. George, of course, has won the seniors countless times, and at age 55 is still going strong. Rather than moan about his loss, George went back out and took the over 50's (as expected), over 40 doubles (with Dave Sakai—expected) and 2300's (at age 54! Unexpected!). Watch out, George Hendry!

Hendry, however, has a few years before he has to worry about the likes of Brathwaite. As the world over 70 champion with an incredible rating of 2136, Hendry had little trouble becoming the U.S. over 70 champion, and added the over 60's as well in a close battle with Don Higgins. Rated only 1788, it would seem Don Higgins wouldn't have a chance against him. But after beating Grady Gordon (1922) and Tim Boggan (2024) to get to the final, that rating was meaningless. He won the first against Hendry before losing the last two, the last at 17.

Choppers did well here. Derek May came in 7th at the Olympic Trials, as well as winning the 2500's. Insook Bhushan won women's singles and doubles, as well as the women's Olympic trials. In all, choppers won or were part of the team that won at least nine events here. This could also be called the tournament that the oldsters howled, with 39-year-old Bhushan, 54-year-olds Brathwaite and Dawidowiz, 44-year-old Domingo and 37-year-old Dan Seemiller dominating many of the events.
Scott Preiss visited more than 400 cities as the USTTA's National Touring Coach, exhibiting his special brand of pingpong diplomacy to the delight of thousands. He has mingled with celebrities, corporate executives and Olympic officers, and appeared on the CBS Morning News, the Regis Philbin Show and ESPN. Scott enjoys entertaining and coaching children and believes that they are the future of the sport. He has visited more clubs the past four years than any other USTTA member and now believes that training for clubs is as important as coaching children. Scott recognizes that the USTTA must support both these needs.

Scott himself has received specialized training on setting up school programs. During his tenure as USTTA National Touring Coach, Scott requested and received a grant for $20,000 to carry out a National Physical Educators Coaching Symposium. This grant launched the USTTA's National School Program. This program is the largest program ever attempted by the Association. The program’s success depends on go-getters like Scott who have the talent and charisma to motivate others.

Despite his hectic schedule the last three years, Scott found the time to write his own book, Table Tennis: The Sport. This is the only table tennis book now in print in the United States. The effort required to produce this book clearly demonstrates Scott’s commitment to helping others learn how to play the game. Scott now stars in his own professionally produced table tennis video, another project that was three years in the making.

Scott is proud of his sport and his accomplishments and he asks you to exhibit the same pride by supporting him for USTTA Executive Vice President.
NETS & EDGES

JIM BUTLER AND INSOOK BHUSHAN 1991 TABLE TENNIS ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

Jim Butler, 20 of Iowa City, Iowa, was the 1990 U.S. National Champion. Known for his world-class backhand, his forehand is now world-class as well after many months of training in Sweden. He dominated U.S. juniors for years, and now could be on his way to dominating the men’s game as well. Insook Bhushan, 11-times national women’s champion, has a list of titles that would take up half this magazine. She was the Pan American Gold Medalist for women's singles in 1991. Congratulations to these great athletes!

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COMPUTER CORNER by Walt Gomes, I.D. TMBN32A
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Currently we have 25 players making comments, but the number keeps increasing. We have messages from juniors to seniors, from all parts of the country. You can try it out for free for a 30-day trial. To get a brochure on PRODIGY, call 1-800-776-0836 ex 901.

Once you get Prodigy, here’s how to find table tennis: From your main highlights screen jump to SPORTS CLUB. Then go to BULLETIN BOARD. Then on the “Read Public Notes” screen enter the NOT YET CHosen block. Then on the TOPIC LIST go to the second page and enter OTHER SPORTS. Then change the date to 15 days before the date you are looking at (this will bring up all the messages of the past 15 days.) Enter YES just below where the date & time is shown, then enter OK. At this new window will appear on the left-hand side of your screen listing alphabetically many other sports. In the top left-hand corner of that window, type TAB in the little box. You will now see TABLE TENNIS highlighted. Now ENTER—into our world of Table Tennis.

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ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE

Interested in reading more about table tennis? What 5,131 Europeans have the whole country of PRODIGY users. We'll be looking for you!

LEAGUE WATCH

WANT TO PLAY IN A LEAGUE?

Many visiting Europeans have commented that one of the biggest differences between U.S. and European table tennis is that the U.S. emphasizes tournaments, while Europe emphasizes leagues. Perhaps we should do something about this?

There are two types of leagues: leagues between clubs, and leagues in one club. Both types are important to USTTA development, and great fun too!

If you would like to play in such leagues, (and are lucky enough to live in a region that has one), here are some people to contact.

U.S. Table Tennis League: Jack Marks, (301) 445-4143 (Centered in the Maryland, Virginia & Pennsylvania area.)

Maryland, Virginia & D.C. League: Kevin Walton (VA) (703) 834-4006 or Steve Vagneur (MD & DC) (310) 921-9697

Table Tennis Centers Leagues: Dana Jeffries (719) 632-PONG (Colorado Springs)

Disney's Leagues: Mitch Seidenfeld (612) 724-8400 (Minneapolis)

January/February 1992
JAPANESE COLLEGE CHAMPIONS TOUR U.S.
by Terry Timmins

Khoa Nguyen won the Men’s Singles event in the California-Japan College Champions Tournament held at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California, November 24th. Southern California was the first stop for the visiting Japanese college champions venturing on to play at Augusta and Anderson Colleges in Georgia, and concluding their U.S. tour at the U.S. Open Team Championships in Detroit, Michigan.

Members of the California Team were: Khoa Nguyen, De Tran, Attila Malek and Zoltan Pusztai on the Men’s Team, and Anna Zakharyan, Lan Vuong, Carol Davidson, Tawny Banh, and Wan Ling Cheng on the Women’s Team. The Japanese Team consisted of, in order of ranking, Nakata Yokinobu, Tomakuma Tomohiko, Morimoto Yoji, and Watanabe Riki on the Men’s Team, and Nagashima Masako, Ohba Noriko, Tomohiko, Morimoto Yoji, and Nanpaku Kimiko on the Women’s Team.

After the team events were concluded, the men’s and women’s events began. Than Nguyen, Nguyen Thanh, Jim McKinstry, Philipp Caillaud, Tran Thach, Tuan Pham and Loc Ngo also took part in the competition, at the invitation of the Tournament Committee.

Nakata of Japan defeated teammate Morimoto in a close 2-1 match in the singles event in the California-Japan College Champions Tournament held at Luzerne County Community College gym. Ercan showed advanced technique and form in going undefeated in team competition, and then dominating play to win the singles competition.

Teammate Praveen Manghani lost a 21-19 third game match to veteran Art Saxe to wind up third. Paul Vinskiuk also contributed to the success of the winning Scranton team.

Order of Finish:
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3. East Stroudsburg University
4. Luzerne County Community College

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$400 Manhattan, Kansas Open

Results:
U1800: Chensheng Jia d. Tracy Johnson, 18, 20.
U1600: Can Ucak d. John White, 11,10.

NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA OPEN
September 21 by Dave Dickson

Aydin Ercan led the University of Scranton table tennis team to a clear-cut victory in his mainly-for-college-players tournament held at Luzerne County Community College gym. Ercan showed advanced technique and form in going undefeated in team competition, and then dominating play to win the singles competition.

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Pennsylvania College Championships
November 2, 1991 by Dave Dickson

Rich Burnside, a sophomore from the University of Pittsburgh, dominated the field by defeating John Ramirez in the singles tournament and teaming with Ramirez to win the team event. Aydin Ercan finished third, and Kuan-Tai Chen was fourth. Burnside and Ramirez did not lose a single match in the team competition, defeating University of Scranton (Aydin Ercan and Praveen Manghani) in the final. Host Penn State University (Kuan-Tai Chen and Hon Huy) finished third and California University (Tony Chang and Gary Zoppetti) of Pennsylvania finished fourth. A total of fifteen teams participated.

Burnside then eked out a narrow victory over Henry McCoulm, advisor to the PSUTTC hosts, in an exciting and entertaining exhibition match.

KEYSTONE STATE GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS
by Dave Dickson

Dennis Brown of Philadelphia won the Open Singles, while Joe Scheno of Nescopeck came within a whisker of winning three golds at the Keystone State (PA) Table Tennis Championships at Northampton Community College, Bethlehem. Scheno won the 2200’s, Open Doubles (with Brown), and lost a cliffhanger to Brown 21-19 in the 3rd in the Open Final. Two of Scheno’s biggest wins were over Rich Burmside, state collegiate champion. Wan Yee Cheung won the Women’s singles over Nancy Newcomer.

Results:
Open: 1st Dennis Brown 2nd Joe Scheno Women: 1st Wan Yee Cheung 2nd Nancy Newcomer
Open Dbls: 1st Brown/Scheno 2nd Burmside/Chau
OSB: 1st Fred Kistler 2nd Martin J. Theil III
O60: 1st Robert E. Hennunger
U2000: 1st Joe Scheno 2nd Rich Burmside
U2000: 1st Joe Scheno 2nd M.J. Theil III
U1800: 1st Ed Chen 2nd Mark Schnorr
U1600: 1st Eric Eisley 2nd Thang Nguyen
U1400: 1st Chris Bosich 2nd Terence Wei
U1200: 1st Jace Mellinger 2nd Dan Barnes
U1000: 1st David Tyson 2nd Fred Winkler
U1800 Dbls: 1st Theil/Schnorr 2nd Krobolt/D. Fulcomer

GENSEE VALLEY OPEN
November 1-3, 1991

Results:
Open: Final: Sandor Kastura d. Ray Mack 2-1
U2000: Roman Shandolov d. Harry Hawk 17,17
U1850: Roman Shandolov d. Chris Olsen, Sr. 12,11
U1700: Al Villaria d. Frank Nwaehujor, 11,11
U1600: Dave Colt d. D.J. Colt 19,19
U1540: D.J. Colt d. Larry DeGironimo 17,19
U1300: Dan Barnes d. Jeff Kock 13,10
U1100: Leata Damouth d. Robert Kishland 16,15
U900: David Secco d. Robert Tran, n.s.
O40: Harry Hawk d. Don Young 19,14
O40/U1500: Jim Chapin d. Ray Gutowski, n.s.
U1200: D.J. Colt d. Lucas Colt n.s.
U4000 teams: Hawk/Katura d. Mack/Olan 3-1
U3500 teams: Barnhart/D.J. Colt d. Clowson/Chang 3-1
U1200 Dbls: Damouth/Lucas Colt d. Grego/Maysuch n.s.
Large ball doubles: D. Colt/D.J. Colt d. Dameron/Villaria n.s.

Qunmars Hedayatian and Homer Brown putting on exhibition in New Hampshire.
PORTLAND, Oregon
November 8-10, 1991
by Bob Grenz

Another flawlessness tournament was run in Portland, Oregon by Jim Scott at Madison High School with a cast of 175 participants. Thank you all for coming, with special thanks to Y.J. Liu, who was down with a strong group from British Columbia, and whose play was truly inspirational. But nobody's play was better than Khoa Nguyen of San Jose, California, who mastered a strong field, including Todd Sweeiers in the quarters, Sean O'Neil in the semi's, and Y.J. Liu in the finals of the Open. Super play and presence by both players kept the outcome in doubt to the very end.

Wei Wang, our national women's champion, defeated Lan Voong in the ladies' singles.

I personally would like to thank Li Zhenshi, who is coaching our national team in Colorado Springs, for coming. It was nice seeing him play in the open, and with Sean O'Neil as his partner. If you ever get a chance to see Li Zhenshi play, don't miss it.

See you next November at the next Pacific Rim Open!

Results:
Open-Final: Khoa Nguyen d. Y.J. Liu 16,18,-18,15: SF: Nguyen d. Sean O'Neill 1,7,15; DF: Brian Chao 1,11,15
Open Dbls: Hung Pham/Stellan Roberson 1,12: DF: Peter Wong/Bob Backstrom 12,17:21
1991 New York Senior Open
Mammoth Table Tennis Club
New York, November 23-24
Results:
U-2500: Roy Domingo d. George Brathwaite, 17,17,14: DF: George Brathwaite d. Tim Boggon, 19,11
U-2300: F.L. Lee d. Steve Kaplan, 18,16
U-2100: Richard Armstrong d. H.C. Chao, 31,23,12
U-2000: W. Kapsniski d. George, 10,16
U-1700: Yelena Bryntsev d. Barney Spartan, 14,17
U-1500: Jonathan Ch d. Sheldon Silverstein, 1,6

FAREWELL TO JULIA RUTELIONIS
On October 10, Julia Rutelionis succumbed to a bout of cancer. After emigrating to the U.S. from Lithuania, Julia was the District of Columbia's table tennis champion in the 1950's and 1960's, and was U.S. Lithuanian champion during that same period. From 1958 through 1964, she was ranked in the top ten in the country. She participated in many exhibition matches at local hospitals and military establishments, including entertaining troops in places such as Panama.

She was always full of fun, was known as a great cook, and held many fabulous parties. She hosted dinner parties in her apartment, where she would put up at her house. She was a very personable person, and will be long remembered by her many friends. Jim Verda & Marianne Bessinger

In Memoriam: Dr. Andreas Gal

On behalf of many New York players I'd like to express our sympathy to the family and friends of Dr. Andreas Gal (Mar 28, 1913-Sep. 26, 1991) who, after suffering from Parkinson's Disease and failure-implications brought on by a deteriorating heart condition, died and was cremated recently at Cocoa Beach, Florida.

Thirty-five years ago Dr. Gal arrived in New York City as a refugee from Hungary. Andreas immediately took his place as one of the City's—and the country's—finest table tennis players.

In Andreas's first Nationals in 1956, he won the U.S. Senior's. And with another Hungarian refugee, Tibor Back, he advanced to the finals of the Men's Doubles. With the steady backhand topspin he got from his 1/2 inch foam mattress cushioned sponge side, and the forehand putaway he eventually built up to his harder-span, Dr. Gal was a formidable attacker.

In 1977 he began planning for tournament and diverse places as Washlah, MA, Washington DC, Columbus, OH, and South Gate, CA. That year he was on the winning New York team at the National Team Championships (where he upset U.S. #1 Berni Becker).

In both 1957 and 1958 he represented the U.S. against Canada at the annual CNE Team Matches in Toronto, and in both those years he was ranked U.S. #8 in Men's Singles and U.S. #1 in Senior Singles.

As other, younger Hungarian refugees arrived to gain the spotlight, Andreas's national ranking began to decline. Still, even at age 50, he was to many a feared opponent, especially in a major tournament.

In the 1964 Eastern's, he was said to have brought seven rackets with him, including one with an unusually thick balsa wood frame. And with one or another of a combination of these he upset U.S. Senior Champion Chuck Burns.

It was Errol Resek and his wife Julie who long sang the praises of Dr. Gal...more than for his being an understanding and very helpful physician than as a redoubtable player.

In all my years in New York I've never heard anything other than that he was a very kind and capable physician who treated many, many table tennis players over the years, sometimes for as long as a quarter of a century, absolutely free of charge.

To close this homage to one so passionate about our Sport I'd like to emphasize a line or two about Andreas I heard recently from Marty Reisman:

"When Marty's wife Yoshiko was having trouble with a painful attack of arthritis in her hand, she came eventually to Dr. Gal...and he put his hand on her face and with the greatest sincerity said, "I don't know if I can help you, but I will certainly try with all my heart."

With all my heart. I like that phrase, and I believe the essence behind it—the gift of humanity—long characterized Andreas, the inner man. May his wife Elizabeth be comforted, and Andreas himself finally be at peace.

January/February 1992
The ratings chairman will not give a player's rating over the telephone. Players may obtain their rating from Topics, or by contacting the tournament director about one month after the tournament, or by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope listing their name and last tournament played to Dan Simon, 3449 Yale Court, Bethlehem, PA 18017.
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**Stick with the Best**

January/February 1992 Table Tennis Topics 21
WORKS

SELECTED


Tawny Banh, all ineligible to compete, there Zakharyan, and the new U.S. Women Under 22 Champion. the impressive 16-year-old Wang. former Soviet Union Champion Anita

As it would turn out, this early Kimble-at match was the decider for 4th and 5th place. Not much difference as long as six qualify.

Carol Davidson’s fate was decided in the 5th round (after she’d knocked off three players too low-rated to be more than prelimi-

And then,爱奇艺, and having been 12-1 in the 1st and losing that, Carol defaulted her last three matches, rightly con-

ning in marketing and organizational behavior (she hopes for a job with the USTA?), had the most exciting match of the Trials against fel-

low U.S. Team member Lily Hugh. Second place was decided when Lily, down 20-15 match point in the 3rd, showed more heart than

Diana, who’san SMUjuniorin major-

ORDER OF FINISH, MEN’S OLYMPIC TRIALS

ORDER OF FINISH, WOMEN’S OLYMPIC TRIALS

COACHING BETWEEN GAMES by Larry Hodges National Coaching Chairman

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You are that help.

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For the second year in a row, Joe Ng came through in the fifth and final match to win for Canada.

For the unpthenth year in a row, a good portion of the active membership decided to forgo the Thanksgiving weekend with something far, far better: three days of nonstop table tennis play. Not to mention the chance to see 2700-plus players in action and the U.S. Team— as well as a “backup” U.S. team that proved, on this week end at least, to be as good as the regular one.

Over 700 players and 170 teams participated in this year’s U.S. Open Team Championships at Cobo Hall in Detroit. With 130 tables (twice as many as in any other U.S. tournament), they can keep throwing you back to the table until you wave the white flag. You can play up to 30 matches during the tournament, a player’s paradise. Not that all the players are all there, not in all ways, anyway. As I entered the hall the first day, I was pelted with nerf missiles, care of the “Boos Brothers” team, who gather here each year as a team looking for fun (they didn’t care if they won). The comparison did make the rest of the tournament seem like a vacation.

The third match was Danny Seemiller versus Onifade, a match for sure. Danny always gives Onifade a hard time, even when Dan’s game is off. John has trouble playing lefty’s—their forehand attack to his backhand gives him trouble. And today, Danny’s game is on, and wins 2-0, 18 and 15, giving his team a 2-1 lead. Now it’s time for four-time National Champion Jean O’Neill to try to put out the flames and salvage the tie, against Roy. Roy was pretty confident going into the match, having watched O’Neill play and see how weak (for his level) his backhand was. (Come to think of it, all USA players, not just O’Neill, Teakevaarekait and Narotam— have relatively weak backhands. How’s this happen? Where’s Jim Butler, the one who does have a backhand to talk about?)

However, according to the athletes training with Sean at Colorado Springs, Sean has been working hard on his backhand, and in practice it was supposed to be much better. But practice and tournaments aren’t always the same. Darko romped, exploiting the backhand, at 13 and 15.

The X’s were now up 3-1, and USA was in serious trouble.

Next up was Ricky Seemiller versus Onifade. Ricky Seemiller had gotten to 19-all against Onifade one game the last time they’d played. Last year, Dan Seemiller, the U.S. team from the middle 1970’s to the middle 1980’s, doesn’t practice as much as he used to. He does hit with his robot nearly every day, but you need live competition as well. And so he has seen his rating drop over the last few years from near 2500 to under 2300. However, Onifade had just come back from the TSP World Team Championships, and was playing very well. Match to Onifade, 15 and 16.

Dan Seemiller and Hank took the table next. Normally these two play close, with both fighting for the attack. This time, however, Dan came alive, moving like he’d taken ten years off his age. “It looks like Danny’s ankle weights are working,” said Dave Sakai of the ever-present weights on Dan’s feet when he’s back in Pittsburgh. On the other hand, Dave doesn’t seem to be on this tournament. Earlier, he’d survived a 19 in the third match with Randy Cohen—but then Randy’s out at Colorado Springs practicing every day, and according to reports, playing very well indeed.

With the X’s up 4-2, all they had to do was win one of the remaining three matches, and they’d take the USA’s spot in the crossover. But they had three tough ones coming up, and it was quite possible—even likely—that USA would come back. Nearly all available spectators were now watching this tie, the
Cheng Ying Hua went undefeated in the first division, but it wasn’t enough.

Down 14-12, Pintea loops in three winners to take the lead. Down 16-17, Danny scores four in a row, the first with an on-the-foot drop down the line that ace’s Pintea. Pintea misses Danny’s serve at 17-all, and Danny loops in two of Pintea’s to go up 20-18. After Pintea loops a winner to put to 19-20, they have a great point, with a little of everything—looping, counterlooping, blocks and smashes. It ends with Pintea’s lob going off the end and Danny jumping in the air, “Yeah!”

But it’s only one game all. They both come out strong in the 2nd, and it’s Danny’s lead, and blocking him out of position.

They battle to 13-12, Danny’s lead and serve. Then disaster strikes in the form of losing all five points on the serve, including a Pintea on-the-run, off-the-bounce, down-the-line loop that ace’d Danny, who was standing ten feet away looking for the crosscourt loop. Up 17-13, Pintea makes it to 20-15. Danny makes a fantastic touch block drop shot for a winner, but then loops off. Match to Pintea, 13-19, 16.

With that, the U.S.’s chances were partly shot, but they weren’t giving up. Up for the doubles were Ricky Seemiller and Darko Rop.

Surprisingly, the U.S. won the first game, 21-17. This was a match after all. A number of spectators had left, thinking the tie was as good as over. But now interest was raised again. Ricky is especially playing well, starting to find the form of yesteryear again. Canada won the second easily at 14-12, but the third stayed close most of the way, with all four playing well. Halfway through, however, Canada finally ran it out, winning 21-16 to win the 3-0, and make the finals against China. So ended the USA dream.

**FINALS**

These two teams are the same as last year’s finalists, except that China had Qingguang Wei instead of Cheng, and Canada then called “Butterfly North America”). Had Eric Bogran instead of Pintea. (Come to think of it, where is Eric? How many years in a row has he been at this tournament until now? It just isn’t the same without him.) It’s hard to find two more evenly matched teams.

The first matchup in the finals was Hua Zhang Xu versus Johnny Huang. It seems like these two play each other every tournament, even though they are from different countries. Huang generally dominates, but he had lost to Xu in the finals of the Easterns
Xu takes an early 3-2 lead, but then Huang forces a series of fast counters, and wins seven in a row to go up 9-5. But Xu takes a step back and begins spinning his backhand rather than countering, and soon is back into the match. But at 12-11, Xu pushes off the end, and then Huang nips four in a row on this set to lead 17-12. Soon Huang is up 19-16 with the match. But at 12-all. Xu pushes off the end, gives Huang some trouble because of his ability earlier this year, and had been down match to pull to 18-19. Then Huang wins a backhand short pips on both sides. Likes to hit everything, it's to loop back Huang's smashes. Huang, Xu's Powerspin is fast with lots of spin, but it's a world class rubber.

Through the cooperative development and testing by table tennis rubber design experts, Japan's premier rubber molders and top players, TSP has recently created an excellent new rubber to improve your offense. X's Powerspin is the new super-premium quality rubber that advances offensive shot-making, and gives you the spin and power of the 'X' shot.

X's Powerspin is perfectly suited to the powerful, yet precise topspin game of the '90's. Even though this great new TSP rubber has only been available to American players for a very short time, many top players and coaches have already switched to it.

The comments on X's we've received have been universally positive and enthusiastic. To follow are a few of these comments:

**Attila Malek** (Cresta Mesa, CA), a former U.S. Champion, now training and competing part-time is still among the top 20 U.S. Olympic-eligible players, with a recent ranking of 2413. Attila has this to say about X's Powerspin:

"X's Powerspin is fast with lots of spin, but for such a powerful rubber it still has great control. I'm getting more spin on my serves with X's."

**Dave Sakai** (Lantham, MD), a top American player for over twenty years, and winner of many national senior titles in recent years, is currently among the top 20 Olympians. He and recently won the American Allstar Senior Men's title. Dave has these comments about X's Powerspin:

"X's Powerspin gives me extra power when I need it to finish the point. I've also said "X's stays lively longer than rubber I've used", and "I really like the way it works with regluing.""

**Rey Domingo** (Pasigads Park, N.J) has been one of the top 15 U.S. players for many years, and is one of the highest rated U.S. senior player. Rey was World Senior Bronze medalist in 1986 and has been U.S. National Seniors Champ since 1987. Rey says of X's Powerspin: "I've never been happier with a rubber. It's powerful with very strong spin, but also has very good touch. I expect this to be the last rubber I'll ever use - it's that good!"

**George Brathwaite** (New York, NY) is another highly respected U.S. Champion rubber player, who now uses X's Powerspin. George's many titles include the prestigious C.I.N.E. International National Senior titles in singles and doubles. George was a member of the historic Hong Kong Diplomacy" U.S. team that visited China in 1972. George commented on the "extra kick" his shots have gained now that he is using X's Powerspin rubber. He also said that X's Powerspin has "the best quality lapped I've ever seen..."

**Larry Thomas** (Arlington, Va.) has served on the USTA as chairman of coaching materials, films and videotapes. Once the #1 rated player in Florida and an OHIO Men's Singles Finalist, Don is currently one of the top rated senior players in the mid-west. Don says, "The right equipment is essential in table tennis. My previous rubber helped me reach a rank in the mid 2000's, but with the added power of X's, I expect to reach the 2000's and above, soon..."

The crowd is cheering wildly now for the chance-taking Xu. Between games in the finals, Allhouse arranged to have music to entertain the audience. "Great Balls of Fire." Money for Nothing."

Attila Malek

Xu's Powerspin is fast with lots of spin, but it's a world class rubber.

**Dave Strong** (Calhoun, MI) is a table tennis coach and pro. His expert commentary on elite table tennis players has appeared in table tennis magazines and TV broad casts for over a decade.

Now Cheng stays in position. loops for Huang. at least against each other. This is, of course, a must win for Cheng, or the tie is tied at 1-1 to the relief of the Chinese, who came oh so close to down 2-0.

Don't forget - you can now order X's Powerspin rubber Xclusively from your authorized TSP specialty table tennis dealer or ROBBINS SPORT

**Larry Thoman**

Super Performance Rubber Sheet For The 90's

Price: $24.95

Colors: Red, Black

Thickness: 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5mm

ROBBINS SPORT

2005 UNION AVENUE
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January/February 1992

28 Table Tennis Topics
Canada's red-hot Horatio Pintea almost turned hero and giant-killer, going 19-in-the-third with Cheng Hua in the final tie. It was his only loss in the tournament.

backhands crosscourt, dashing Huang to go to his forehand where he's ready. Huang keeps the ball to Cheng's backhand, and Cheng soon ends 11-4.

Huang runs off four in a row to make 11-8. Too often now Cheng is back lobbing, which is great for the spectators, but not so good for the Chinese team. They play even to 4-11 Cheng, then Huang ties it up 15-all.

Up 16-15, Cheng makes a great loop from the backcourt, with Huang smashing to win the point, but Huang then ties it up again at 17-all. But Cheng outlasts Huang three rallies in a row to go up 20-17.

Back lobbing again, Cheng almost makes an incredible counterkill but instead has his lead cut to 20-18. Then 20-19 when Huang hits in his serve. They follow with a good rally, with Huang hitting forehands, but Cheng blocks to the backhand and catches Huang with a wide-angled block to the backhand, which Huang weakly puts into the net. Game two to Cheng, 21-19.

The third game starts out a rout. Cheng takes a 9-2 lead. At 10-5, they have the point of the match, with Huang smashing too many balls to count, and Cheng steadily blocking them all back. Cheng finally misses, but he's crowding his foot! Cheng's seven-point lead is now only four.

The scores swing back and forth, with Cheng taking a 13-7 lead, then Huang losing it to 13-10 on his serve. At 14-11, they have a series of long rallies, with Cheng getting everything back, and Huang aggressive but not able to end the points. Cheng takes four in a row, leads 16-11. Cheng gets the serve up 1-0, but promptly loses four out of five. Now Huang's serving, down only 16-19!

Cheng gets a net-dribbler, but Huang gets it back, and wins the point, 17-19. The Chinese bench is getting nervous!

They play a long point, with Huang finally missing a smash. Then Cheng misses a loop, 18-20. Finally, Huang serves deep, Cheng backhands it looped, and loops the blocked return for a winner. The match is finally over! It's 18 in the third for Cheng, his second straight win over Huang, but the team tie is only 2-2. Cheng has finished the tournament undefeated, but will it be enough?

The fifth and final match for the championship is a rematch of last year's between Jack and Joe Ng. Last year, Joe won the first game and was serving up match (and championship) point in the second before losing in three. Joe obviously hasn't forgotten that.

The two play close until 10-11. Joe serving, Jack returns the next four serves long, but Joe begins to miss, and Jack takes a 14-10 lead. They follow with one of the best points of the match, a counterlooping spectacle, with Jack looping off the bounce and Joe counterlooping from way back. Jack finally misses, but he's still up 14-11.

But Jack's problem is that he doesn't have a lot of power, and Joe is the best lobber in North America. Joe begins to play soft, just keep the ball in play, and Jack can't get through him. Soon it's tied up at 17-all. Then 18-all. Jack forces Joe off the table, then does a beautiful double bounce block of Joe's loop for a winner. But Joe loops in the net, and wins a long point against a lobbing Joe to deuce it.

The whole tie may have turned around on the next point. Joe serves short, and Jack reaches in and flips it in wide to Joe's backhand. Joe is forced to lob. Jack catches him off guard with a drop shot, and Joe can only push it back high. But Jack misses the easy putaway! He jumps in the air, yelling in frustration, but there are no second chances. It's a shot he will remember for a long time...should he lose this match.

Joe misses a loop to deuce the game again in what could have been the game-ender for Jack. But Jack pushes a ball into the net, and then blocks a loop of the end. First game to Joe Ng, 23-21, and a noticeably disgusted and head-shaking Jack goes to his bench to talk it over.

Afterwards, I asked Joe what his strategy was against Jack. He said, "When I throw the ball up (by) against him, he can't get through me. So whenever I get into trouble, I get back into the point that way." He added, "Once I won the first game, I had too much confidence to lose."

So for the second year in a row, Canada wins the U.S. Open Team Championship over the Chinese team from Potomac, Maryland. (See the next issue of Topics for where and when you can see this on TV.) The U.S. team—both of them—have a year to prepare for next time. If it's international experience we need, there it is—right next door in Canada and in the U.S. itself in Potomac. Let's take advantage of it.
THE 1991 TSP WORLD TEAM CUP

Barcelona, Spain
November 19-24, 1991
by Diego Schaaf

The World Team Cup is a new event on the ITTF schedule. This was the only 1991 U.S. Open Champion Zoran Primorac. His most of the two games. But in both he was
phenomenally strong, unpredictable forehand
to adjust for every misjudgment, moving in
to develop that depends more on overpowering
yet impressively fast counterdrive game de-
velop the match to win a second stage.

The England-N. Korea match
back harder?" Ultimately, Kim's simple lack
of unwavering concentration and, admittedly with
his table to win and loop it so I can't get to it and loop it

No. 1 won the second game at 10. Carl Prean, after winning
uncomfortably eked out a 19,16 win against

Hui at -12,19,15. Alan Cooke scored the only
point against Indian La Giang Sang and lost at 17,12. Next Ma Wenge and Kim Soni
sixtime block of seats.

Now the final match-up: Thierry Cabrera vs.

The England-N. Korea match
to express his contempt for an opposing
table. The spectators could practically hear

world team match at 1-1.

The England-N. Korea match was
rather nervous. The match was not without

The England-N. Korea match
one of the group's two seeds in the quarter-

the England-N. Korea match was not
without its eye-catching moments.

The English-N. Korea match

the England-N. Korea match was
without its eye-catching moments.

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The English-N. Korea match

the England-N. Korea match was
without its eye-catching moments.
Danbury, Connecticut
October 19-20, 1991
by Normand Chouinard

The welcome mat for table tennis was out once again in Connecticut after two years absence at the Danbury High School for the Professional Singles event on Sunday, and the Danbury War Memorial for the under 1800, 2000 and 2200 qualifying events on Saturday. The tournament, with over $3,000 in prize money, was a fundraiser for Creative Recreation Foundation/WLAD, a non-profit organization.

Before we get to the Sunday main event, the Saturday events were highlighted by (1) Ray Carpenter’s (1683) back-to-back upset wins to reach the finals of the U-2000’s (Ray did not even enter the U-1800’s, did he know something?), only to finally become a Barney Reed’s (1983) repeated 20-foot lob at the end of a hard-fought match; (2) Barney James Reed adding to his college fund by coming back from 9-13 in the deciding third game to best Chris Okasia 21-14 in the U-2000’s; and (3) Dan Seemiller and early-arriving Dan Seemiller and early-arriving Dan Seemiller of the Swedish delegation mentioned their family spending their day’s winnings at Phil’s Restaurant (the tournament caterer) along with early-arriving Dan Seemiller and other staff and players at an impromptu table tennis party Saturday evening. At least Kathy Reed, who served as tournament referee, would bring home memories of the beautiful fall foliage in Connecticut.

Sunday’s table tennis menu began with qualifying round robins for all but the top five seeds. Dan Seemiller (2524), the highest seed not to get a free ride into the quarterfinals, had an easy time, not giving up more than 11 points in any of his three matches. Second game on two of his matches must be the only U-2500 player who has beaten Cheng Ying Hua. The only minor upset was 9th seed and New England Champion Quians Huyadian (2343) defeating 8# Rey Domingo (2459) at 16 in the third.

Before the quarterfinals were to commence, the crowd of over 2000 were treated to a skills demonstration by Danny and Hua Zhong Xue (2674). Then they were given a different view with Honorary Tournament Chairman Jim Bouton (the former N.Y. Yankee and author of Ball Four), and WLAD radio personality Pete Summers exchanging strokes to the background music of “High Hopes.” This was followed by one game of Bouton/Seemiller vs. Smiths/Xu doubles won by Danny’s team due to the surprising game of the still-in-shape Bouton. Bouton then hustled off Danbury Mayor Gene Enichals 21-10. Perhaps some astute club director in the North Jersey area should invite this ex-major leaguer for in a tryout.

The first quarterfinal match of the day featured 7th seed Darko Rop vs. 2nd seed David Zhuang (2681), a rematch of the September semifinals at Westfield where Rop played Zhuang to a standstill before losing in the fifth. On this day, Darko, always behind in the first game, but determined to achieve deuce, only to fail to return serve and then lose on a swinging fifth ball forehand by David. Game #1 to Zhuang. In game two, David keeps the momentum and wins 21-9. But Darko, knowing he can play with David, grows weary of the Zhuang wall and decides to make a surprise drop from way back. Ma missed the counterloop. It is after points like this that Waldner often takes up a feverish pace to finish out a game. This time, though, that run was stopped right on the next point when Waldner got a net and Nia leaped forward to barely save it. The ball rolled on top of the net cord for a few inches and then fell over. Waldner got to it, too, but he popped it up and put it away. Now, Ma suddenly took advantage of that turn in momentum and finished the match, allowing Waldner only one more point, 21-17.

Tao K. Ma, 1481, was up against Peter Karlsson, 1690, who had defeated him twice earlier in 1991. Karlsson usually has a habit of playing a stronger backhand than his forehand. He has a consistent topspin loop right off the bounce. Karlsson is a player who, in spite of his accomplishments as a world-class player, has never found a way to shake his weaknesses against good defensive players. Wang Hao is under contract with a China’s women once more took the top step of the podium, gold medals around their necks, gracefully surrounding their coach who was holding the Cup, a pose so familiar to all of them, and received the $15,000 TSP check.

MEN’S FINAL:
Since the previous day, there had been all kinds of speculation about the outcome of the finals between the Class A world champions Sweden and China. None dared to pick China as a winner, and consensus seemed to settle in at a 3-1 or 3-2 victory for Sweden. The Chinese, however, felt confident. They had played well so far, and they had dodged a bullet against North Korea. The first indication that the predictions needed to be rethought was when Sweden didn’t field Peter Karlsson. He had twisted his knee on the slippery floor. That was a cause for concern for many players, and was not going to play. Although Karlsson had not lost a match yet, and although Persson had some shaky performances, Persson would certainly still be Sweden’s preference. The match started out with a barnburner. The “magician,” J.O. Waldner against the gifted Ma Wenge. It seemed as though they had decided to make this their battle of the backhands. Waldner, whose famous punch backhand has given many an opponent nightmares, felt that this was his ticket to open the points against the faster moving Ma. As recently as in the ’90 World Championships Ma had piped on his backhand, but after his change to inverted rubber he developed one of the most formidable backhands with the ability to strike and move at the same time, and Waldner was now finding his range. Now that he knew where to defend from, he started showing the second game 21-16. The third game was a real read Sweden’s strategy perfectly—and so they had placed their chip on Wang Hao who he would meet Eric Lindh, a player who, in spite of his accomplishments as a world-class player, has never found a way to shake his weaknesses against good defensive players. Wang Hao is under contract with a China’s women once more took the top step of the podium, gold medals around their necks, gracefully surrounding their coach who was holding the Cup, a pose so familiar to all of them, and received the $15,000 TSP check.

WANG TAO, a left-handed player with a fully-developed offensive game, on the other hand, always walking a fine line between David’s backhand corner and hard loops to the wide forehand, could not let David establish a forehand control. But now, at this crucial point, Darko misses wide twice, trying to kit the lines, and then he plays safer and David swats in some forehands.

And so the match went under way in typical fashion, the high-strung Lindh struggling to read the spin on the ball, launching it off the end or bunting it in the bottom of the net. Tailing 4-7—he made not more than a couple of minutes o.d.—he turned around to his coach and shook his head in a gesture that looked like “I don’t have the faintest clue what’s on the ball!” Wang, on the other hand, was just finding his range. Now that he knew where to defend from, he started showing Lindh that he has a dangerous attack as well. Rather than the sometimes awkward, one-dimensional attack of many defensive players, Wang has great variety. He can attack many different kinds of balls, so you never know when an attack is coming. He won the first game 21-14. The second game started with a couple of misses by Lindh, followed by a dazzling display of Wang’s attack game that opened up a wide lead. To add insult to injury, Wang got a couple of nets and edges, effectively sealing Lindh’s fate. End result: 21-12.

China had beaten South Korea, North Korea and Sweden to win the 1991 TSP World Team Cup and the $20,000 prize money. The Chinese contingent—with players, coaches and officials easily twenty people strong—was in ecstasy. Their celebration was probably even more intense because it was clear to them that a Chinese sweep at a major event—formerly commonplace—was not to come by anymore.

On the edge back to the hotel—we counted six World Champions on the bus—both losing teams sat beside each other, and the conversation had already turned to the upcoming Swedish Open. Maybe the ability to shrug off a loss is as much the trait of a champion as the capability of savoring a victory. Results:

Men’s Teams—Final: China b. Sweden 3-0; SF: China b. Korea 3-2; Sweden b. France 3-0.

Women’s Teams—Final: China b. South Korea 3-1; SF: China b. Japan 3-0; South Korea b. North Korea 3-1.

January/February 1992

Table Tennis Topics 31
It was one of the strongest fields ever assembled in a U.S. tournament, all fighting for the $400 first-place Open prize. The numbers tell the story best, where the top eight seeds ranged from 2809 down to 2541. Huang Tong Sheng ("Jack"), rated 261, wasn't even seeded to make it past the quarterfinals (and didn't). He'd have been the highest seed of any U.S. Nationals, but he's come to the wrong tournament!

That the Potomac area is becoming a powerhouse in table tennis is an understatement, with five local players among those top eight. However, someone's got to lose, and four giants fell in the quarterfinals.

Quarterfinal #1: Cheng Ying Hua (2755) versus Darko Rop (2564). Rop, the tall left-handed Yugoslavian now living in New York, had taken Cheng down in a recent tournament. Cheng, who was a practice partner/coach at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs for our National Team in the late 1980's, has been coaching full-time in Potomac for a few years. A former member of the Chinese National Team, he has gotten into the unfortunate habit of taking winning for granted. Considering that he's only lost one to a U.S. player in over three years of tournament play (a controversial match against John Onifade in 1988), it's an understandable one. However, as Cheng explained to me after the match, this time he took Rop very seriously. He'd beaten Rop in the recent Southern Open, and did so again, 15 and 16. Cheng's consistent blocking and spinning game wore down Rop's two-sided power game.

Quarterfinal #2: Hu Zhang Xu (2688) versus 1990 U.S. Nationals Finalist John Onifade (2579). Xu also spent a year as a practice partner/coach for the U.S. National Team in Colorado, and now coaches and goes to college in the Potomac area. This is a matchup of Xu's two-sided looping versus Onifade's powerful forehand loop. Onifade, who normally uses spin to win a backhand, has recently switched to regular inverted. However, Xu puts too much pressure on Onifade's erratic backhand, and although they have some fantastic counterlooping points, Xu is too much, 17 and 18.

Quarterfinal #3: Top seed Johnny Huang (2009) versus 1986 U.S. National Champion Teekavereekit (2541). Huang, Canada's #1, immigrated there two years ago and has since dominated
Xu comes out fast, winning the first game 21-16. Huang is good hitting from the backhand to Zhuang's wide forehand, and consistent topspins and blocks begin to force mistakes. Cheng starts to attack with his forehand, and keeps leaving the last rally open. A backhand loop, he can keep Huang guessing. Zhuang blocks, and Zhuang blocks long and strong. Cheng is one of the most consistent players in the world. Huang has one of the most vicious attack in the world. The combination is fireworks.

They had played twice previously. The first time Huang had won 3-0, in the Potomac Open, Spring. The last time, last June in the Miami International Open, Huang had won again, but it had gone five. Cheng had had a match point. According to the report, the match had been practicing more. It is better shape than he was in those two matches. Cheng is 32, and his best days were in his 20's in China, while Huang is at his peak now. In the first game, Huang sets the pattern for the match. He attacks hard into Chenzg's backhand. If he hits hard enough and quick enough, Cheng backs up and counters, then Huang steps around and smashes forwards. (And, to the spectator's great enjoyment, it usually takes several smashes to get past Cheng's reflexes.) However, if Cheng can get into the strong loop, he can keep Huang on the defensive, and eventually force a miss. General theme. Cheng hits and blocks to Chenzg's backhand, and Chenzg backhand loop. However, Chenzg does not step up to his footwork against Huang so often, finding it better to stay in position against the ultra-fast Huang.

Cheng serves two aces and one quick serve. Chenzg blocks, and Chenzg blocks long to lose it.

In the third game, Cheng begins to really go after. Chenzg's wide forehand. Zhuang wants to cover as much of the table as possible with his forehand, and keeps leaving the last two inches of his forehand side open. That's all Cheng needs, as he loops, flips and blocks there whenever Zhuang is the least out of position. Cheng pulls away, and wins the match three straight. 15,19,8. This is the best two points they play exhibition, but Zhuang misses both a lob attempt (after jumping the barriers) and a smash against Chen's loop.

The final is one of the best matches I've seen in years. These two players, the best in North America, with two very different styles, came at each other with everything and gave the spectators a match none will forget. Cheng is one of the most consistent players in the world. Huang has one of the most vicious attacks in the world. The combination is fireworks.

Down 8-2, Huang takes a walk around the court, then gets set to serve. He proceeds to serve and save a game in nine to 11-8! Cheng serves one ball that hits the edge on his side of the table and bounces ten feet in the air. Before Huang smashes it, Cheng has already reached the net and makes an acrobatic attempt to backhand countersmash. However, he misses the ball, and comes up grimacing and clutching his back again.

In the fourth game, Huang goes even, and then just realises that 8-4 would be a good time to stop serving. Chenzg is one of the most consistent players in the world. Zhuang snaps in shot after shot, and wins the point, but the spectators a match none will forget. Down 6-8, Cheng serves one ball that hits the edge on his side of the table and bounces ten feet in the air. Before Huang smashes it, Cheng has already reached the net and makes an acrobatic attempt to backhand countersmash. However, he misses the ball, and comes up grimacing and clutching his back again.

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NEUROMUSCULAR THERAPIST HITS THE BIG TIME:
Warren Moon Calls Kenny Owens “Miracle Worker.”

There has been a recent flood of publicity surrounding neuromuscular therapist Kenny Owens of Texas. Many of you may have seen Kenny working on table tennis players at tournaments, but didn’t know that he was also active in treating athletes in other sports.

Some of the athletes Kenny has treated include Carl Lewis, Evander Holyfield, Hakeem Olajuwon, and Warren Moon. The complete list is pretty long, and even includes Mike Tyson’s ex-wife Robin Givens. He treats many of the Houston Oilers and Rockies.

Moon, star quarterback for the Houston Oilers, gave Kenny full credit for his stellar performance in a recent game after a therapy session. Moon was quoted in newspapers all over the country calling Kenny a “miracle worker.”

In January, Kenny worked on all nine members of the U.S. Team. Kenny volunteers his services to the National Team for free, although he could charge $1000 for similar work outside of tennis. He has worked on all nine members of the U.S. Team.

The following newspaper excerpt, one of many, is by Terry Blount of the Houston Chronicle, Oct. 28:

“A man named Kenny Owens is going to be swamped with phone calls today. That’s bound to happen because Oilers quarterback Warren Moon called him a “miracle worker” after Sunday’s game. After throwing three touchdown passes against the Bengals, Moon credited his new therapist with working on all nine members of the U.S. Team. Kenny volunteers his services to the National Team for free, although he could charge $1000 for similar work outside of tennis. He has worked on all nine members of the U.S. Team.”

March 14-15, Disney’s Spring Open, Minneapolis, MN. Contact: Mitch Seidenfeld, 1421 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55407 (612) 724-3400.

March 20-21, Miller Park March Open, Winooski-Winston, NC. Contact: Rick Mathews, 400 Leisure Lane, Winston-Salem, NC 27103 (310) 794-9728.


April 4-5, Mammoth April Open, Woodside, NY. Contact: Michael Scanlan, 308 Northern Blvd. #2B, Albany, NY 12204 (518) 434-7339.

April 11-12, Westfield April Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 4 Laurel Place, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 (908) 232-9659.

April 18-19, Spring Space Coast Open, Palm Bay, FL. Contact: Joe Henneke, 740 Burttan Lane NE, Palm Bay, FL 32905 (715) 724-4067.


April 25-26, New Jersey State Championships, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 4 Laurel Place, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 (908) 232-9659.


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