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Topics Interviews the Producers on Page 4
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March/April 1992

Table Tennis Topics 3
EACH I MISSED THE FIRST HOUR, HOW CAN I

ABOUT TABLE TENNIS ON TELEVISION

EVERYTHING YOU'VE BEEN DYING TO KNOW

Topics Interviews the Producers

Where are all these TV shows coming from? I missed the first hour, how can I get a copy? Above all, when is it going to be on in my area, and on what channel? These are some of the most frequently asked questions by fans of table tennis telecasts these days. To answer these and other questions about table tennis and television, Topics went to Detroit to get the following interview with Bob Allshouse and Gordon Bright, and between the good-natured kidding came out with one of the most interesting and informative interviews we've ever done. Regular tournament players will know Bob and Gordon as Tournament Director and President of the U.S. Open Team Championships, held each year in Detroit. The Team Championship is the last national tournament to be completely operated by an independent club. Over the past ten years, Bob and Gordon have made many improvements in the Team Championships and led the way in areas like event staging and computer scheduling. Now they are working with television, and have just created a joint venture with the USTTA to air a series of table tennis shows on Prime Network.

Topics: Tell us about the series. What tournaments are you televising and how did it start?
Bob: Last year we aired about 30 hours of table tennis programming nationally, on the Prime Network. We taped shows from the U.S. Open, the World Championships, the U.S. National Championships, and two shows from the World Championships in Chiba, Japan.

Gordon: We started off our first year with a real strong lineup of all of our major tournaments, plus the World's. And we got lucky. It seemed like every one of the finals went down to the last game. The fifth game, that was our mainstay.
Bob: Yeah, the network is happy. The sponsors are happy. It could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

Topics: You're supposed to say that at the end.

Gordon: Here's the good news. We have a proposal to do a pilot show at the Team Championships, and we'll take lots of organization and coordination. But the USTTA really can't train no problem, we can make it work. Gordon: The network is happy. The sponsors are happy. It could be the start of a beautiful friendship.
Bob: That show was syndicated all over the U.S. and we stopped airing it in 1991.

Topics: Is that the real goal of the TV program?
Bob: One of the major goals, yes. When you think about it, this is one of the few sports that build the sport. You can't get everything right, many programs are needed, and are working, particularly the school programs. But the USTTA really can't train all of their players. They can't do it themselves. We have to help them sell cars or wear their shoes. Gordon: We have to become more attractive to the TV networks. We have to do it. In any case, we wanted a regular set of programs that we could use as a platform to attract sponsors.
Bob: Historically we have not done very well with this, although many people have tried very hard for a long time. The T.O.C. mounted an unprecedented effort with the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland with professional fund raising companies. Despite this kind of effort, sponsorship was disappointing.

Gordon: We believe that grouping our events into one hour packages, will be better to attract sponsors, and work towards having our own regularly scheduled shows. In 1993 we hope to have enough events and shows to organize a real series in a specified time slot. We want to tape 15 hours of shows and run them all in 15 weeks, at 8:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, for example. It's going to take lots of organization and coordination. But there is no reason why we can't do it. In any case, we wanted a regular set of programs that we could use as a platform to attract sponsors.
Bob: To do anything more than we are doing, we need more money.

Topics: How do the USTTA get it?
Bob: Well, where does the USTTA get it? The Membership fees are only a small part of our budget, so we can't get much that way. We can't get much more from the USOC either, they are having trouble just maintaining the existing funding. We can't get it from the government like they do in Canada or Sweden. Our government does not support any sports, even our Olympic Team. The only way we can raise more money is through corporate sponsorships and/or ticket sales, just like every other sport in America. We have to become more attractive to the TV networks. We have to give them what we have done, and believe that the growth in cable sports channels offered a real opportunity for table tennis. So we went to the E.C. with a proposal to do a pilot show at the Team Championships, in 1990. The E.C. supported the idea 100%. All of the E.C. members supported getting more of our major events on television. They funded a third of the pilot, and Gordon and I did the other half with help from Butterfly and Donic.
Bob: At one time ESPN was good for us, but our 1994 now, it's already too late for 1992. We are talking to companies about 1993 and 1994 now, it's already too late for 1992.
Gordon: One other thing we found out is that the larger companies all have expensive ad agencies who need to be approached when they want to be approached.
Bob: Like Ford Motor Company please give us money because we need it? Probably not.

Topics: How do we do it?
Bob: Right. We would like to try to approach companies the way they want to be approached when they want to be approached. We are finding out that some of our target companies want us to pitch them as much as two years ahead of time. They want us to get in at the start of the budget process which happens at least a year ahead of time. We are talking to companies about 1993 and 1994 now, it's already too late for 1992.
Gordon: Another thing we found out is that the larger companies all have expensive ad agencies who need to be approached when they want to be approached. We would like to talk about sponsoring a series of shows rather than a single show, because it's not worth the agency cost for a single show or spot.
Bob: We used to get ESPN to televise table tennis, at least occasionally. Why switch to Prime Network?
Gordon: Basically, we get a better deal from Prime. It's true that Prime goes into prime time, but half of the households that ESPN does (25 million to 60 million). But on Prime, we get three times the hours of airtime for less than half the cost of ESPN. If you add in the important factor of what time of day the shows run, I think Prime is clearly a better deal. Bob: ESPN had been giving table tennis worse and worse times every year. This is because ESPN really doesn't want table tennis anymore. ESPN wants to become a fourth network equal to ABC, CBS and NBC. They need the NFL and the NBA, tennis only leaves them open to criticism.

Gordon: Like when Fay Vincent [the Baseball Commissioner] said last week: "You can only run so many Billiards shows and Tractor Pulls." He was talking about ESPN.

Bob: Of course. Of course, we can still get on ESPN anytime we want, we just need to pay to get them on. It costs about $17,500 for an hour of airtime on ESPN and they promise to repeat the show at least once. The problem is that they will almost never run it in anything like a good time.

Gordon: Remember the 1990 U.S. Open? It was a great show, Waldner kept coming back from nowhere. At the time, it was the best table tennis show the U.S. had ever done. Maybe still is.
Bob: Yeah, ESPN took our 17 grand, dropped our prime slot and rescheduled it for something like 10:00 a.m. on a Thursday. Then they preempted it for a little league baseball game! The USTTA members probably made 7,000 copies of that damn little league game.
Gordon: Of course we understand that ESPN schedules us for some pretty bad times. But that's OK. Our rates are 75% of what our competitors pay, but we still do well.
Bob: Our rates are 75% of what our competitors pay, but we still do well.
Gordon: Prime has offered to give us money if we become more attractive to the TV networks. We have to help them sell cars or wear their shoes.
Bob: It's true that Prime offers to give us money if we become more attractive to the TV networks. We have to help them sell cars or wear their shoes.

Topics: How much does this program cost the Association?
Gordon: The USTTA portion of the costs is about $32,000 for about thirteen hours of March/April 1992
programming on Prime Network. The old ESPN shows would cost about $15,000, net of advertising sold, for two hours of programming on ESPN. But for the extra $17,000 per year, the association also gets to use all twelve courts of our red floor for free for the U.S. Open and the U.S. Nationals. The floor alone would cost a large part of this, if the USTTA had to rent or buy it. Plus, the USTTA gets eight 30-second spots per event. They can use these to please their major program sponsors like Brother, or to run membership ads, or just sell them. Remember that Butterfly, Stiga, and Donic are sponsoring these shows and are really providing a large part of the funding. Butterfly alone is sponsoring at least three shows per year. Stiga is looking at expanding to two shows in 1992. About a third of the first year costs of about $100,000 were paid by Bob and I. We had to buy the red floor for about $10,000 in cash, plus another $18,000 in advertising. Also we need a $6,000 PA system. The world championship broadcast rights cost another big chunk, etc.

Bob: We think we’ll get this back in the long run through ad sales and sponsorship. The important thing for a start-up operation is that we keep our customers happy, and they are.

Gordon: Good luck!

Bob: The old story goes that a past USTTTA president ruined this forever by trying to charge for player interviews. This is a great story, and it’s probably true, but it really doesn’t have anything to do with why table tennis isn’t broadcast. The real reason that we aren’t on a broadcast network is the same reason that they sometimes cancel your favorite shows. We just don’t draw the right numbers yet. Sure, we occasionally can get on some local affiliates, particularly on the coasts where there are more foreign-born Americans. But in the long run, to sustain it, we have to draw enough viewers to justify the high costs of advertising on broadcasts.

Gordon: The costs really are too high for the number of viewers that we would have today. The networks make money by the ratings they sell, and neither they nor we could sell many spots at say, $20,000 for a 30-second spot. Sponsorship is even worse. Do you know that it costs $1.8 million dollars to be the lead sponsor for a PGA Tour golf tournament? The costs can get ridiculous.

Bob: It’s really a numbers game again. If we were ever to get a significant share of the 22 million table tennis players in the U.S. (According to Gallup Polls—Editor to watch our shows, the networks would come to us. The best of the PGA golf tournaments draw about 6 million actual viewing households. Table tennis gets between half-a-million and a million viewing households. Today, if a sport as popular and as well organized as professional hockey can’t get a broadcast network deal, we’re not likely to.

Gordon: Actually the Prime Network is significantly larger than Sportschannel, the hockey network, 25 million households to 15 million households. The sport of badminton just ran their first U.S. Open on Prime, last fall. We should probably be happy with our Prime deal, since we are leading most if not all of the other racket sports, except tennis, in the television area. It’s going to be hard enough just to hold on to this deal, let alone pop up to broadcast right away.

Bob: Sure, it’s entertaining or die. It was hard enough to get here! People need to know that with Prime or ESPN or ABC or anything, in the long run we have to make interesting shows and get viewers, period.

Topics: What about the USTTA members who don’t get Prime?

Bob: First, see the map to find out what affiliates are showing table tennis. If you don’t subscribe to one of them (they’re not available everywhere), don’t panic! All of the shows will be available on videotape soon through the Martin-Kilpatrick company, so everybody will be able to see them. Watch for ads in future Issues topics.

Gordon: We know that the availability of ESPN was better for some of the members—“they could just program their VCRs and watch it the next day.” But the members also need to realize that one of the major benefits of the program is to reach those who don’t know about our sport. The members already know how good it is, we need to show everybody else. We need to reach as many people as possible in a cost-effective way.

Bob: Getting credibility as a “real” sport is the other major benefit of the television program. We all know how hard it is to sell our sport to people who haven’t seen it. You can talk and talk, until they see it, they really don’t understand it. Better credibility will help us to sell sponsorship or put programs in schools. It will be easier for Johnny to come home from school and tell Dad that he is going to play table tennis as his sport!

Gordon: Running on Prime Network helps our credibility too, because its affiliates run mostly professional sports. Pro teams from the L.A. Kings to the Boston Celtics are regularly shown on Prime affiliate subscribers. In Detroit last week, the Prime affiliate, PASS Sports, ran a feature event each night starting at 7:30 p.m. On Monday it was the Detroit Red Wings, Tuesday the Pistons, and Wednesday was the U.S. National Table Tennis Championships from Las Vegas.

Bob: This is one of the main reasons that Dan Seemiller and the E.C. members are so high on television. I know of no sport that can benefit as much by television exposure as table tennis. Most of the millions of table tennis players in America have never seen professional table tennis and have no idea that it’s much more than just a game.

Gordon: Another part of the credibility issue is that we have to stage it right and produce it right, so that people want to watch it. This has been by far the hardest part of the whole series. Because we are now part of the ratings game, we have to get better at putting on an entertaining show.

Bob: Prime Network also helps us slightly with ratings points. Many of the Prime affiliates are subscriber based, meaning that customers pay about ten dollars a month to watch their favorite sports teams. This means that the Prime Network viewers are more skewed toward the serious sports fan than the average viewer. Many of these fans are table tennis players, and are more likely to give us a try than the average viewer.

Topics: You talked about setup and staging. Is this the reason for the new arena setup at our major tournaments?

Bob: Yes. We did the same thing in the past to try to make it easier for more spectators. If we had only 100 seats, we would try to fill them all. We would usually fail, so we would tape the show with banks and banks of empty seats. Our new idea is that instead of building a big stadium, we should try to fill 5,000 or 10,000 seats, we should just create our arenas for the size of the crowd expected. 500 people look a lot more in a 400-seat arena than in a 10,000 seat arena. This is the made-for-TV type of approach that has worked so well for sports like boxing. Making a show with nothing but empty seats is definitely not helpful. It’s almost an advertisement against the sport—if a player can’t even get his mother to watch, how can we expect viewers?

Gordon: Remember some of the early ESPN shows? We were just learning as a sport, so we would put on a match with 5000 empty seats and six guys and a dog watching.

Bob: And one of the guys was asleep. Or was it the dog?

Gordon: This comes from pressure on the tournament director to show the American playing winner of the semi-final or the senior final, or whatever. Or for that matter to schedule the filming at midnight. This is all wrong.

Bob: We need to get people to understand that even the men’s semi-finals and finals first. The match the tournament crowd wants to see is the same match the television viewer wants to see.

Gordon: With the new downsized arenas we are better at showing fewer empty seats than we were a couple of years ago. We need to get better yet. What we are now trying is to guess at the expected number of spectators, and to make the arena accordingly. This involves some doing and we can’t help but be wrong to some extent. But when we size the arena, we surround it with curtaining to close it in and give it a feeling of intimacy. This also provides an excellent backdrop for filming. We put seating on three sides and put an announcers’ platform on the fourth side.

Bob: We found that elevating the announcers lets them talk freely without being heard by players, which is intimidating for both.

Gordon: We have also added a radio PA system to help bring the crowd into the match. We found that right sound is important also, in getting voters to tune in at home. If we get the right ball sound and the unipole loud enough, our show is more invisible. We also play music through the PA to add to the entertainment and try to keep the crowd up. We have just upgraded the system for better sound quality.

Bob: The music probably gets the most comments of anything that we do. Most people like it, but they don’t like some song or other. We don’t request yet, but when we do.

Gordon: We’ve played music and sung the National Anthem and I wouldn’t be a bit surprised to see ball boys and girls out there sometime soon. We are going to

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experiment with orange balls and blue tables like the ITTF uses. Look for other entertainment as well, like a halftime show.

Bob: I know! We'll bring in some basketball players and do a basketball exhibition. They'll have a basketball match tournament.

Gordon: That's not as far off as you think. We know that Mark Aguirre, Dennis Rodman, and Joe Dumars of the Pistons have used our courts and played doubles tables as a direct result of our shows. We won't wait to figure out how to use that somehow.

Bob: Maybe we'll have them challenge Michael Jordan. But he would pump for pong! That's the question.

Gordon: Another thing that helps our staging is the red floor. Bob and I have purchased the twelve courts of portable table tennis. That would be a switch!

Bob: Our production company does nothing else but sports. They know how to do it because they practice it every day. Sometimes you look in the truck and there's not even a good pair of headphones. They put that on and talk at the same time. You don't know how they do it, but they do.

Bob: This is vital in table tennis because the sport is so fast. Everything is compressed inside a small area and it moves very quickly. It's hard to get the replays in before the next point starts.

Gordon: Well, we are working on things out yet. At an NFL game everybody understands the need for a TV time-out. Some guys stand up wearing orange gloves and everybody knows to chill out for two minutes or so.

We tried a similar thing at the U.S. National Championships in the finals. We had two cameras on Donic and St勃rt, but they were still out there when we needed to get a replay. We're doing the right thing, but we need some help.

Bob: We still have lots to learn, but we might as well start. We have developed a way to actually go "live" by the way, instead of tape delay. We don't need it yet, but you never know.

Topics: Have you had any other setbacks or disappointments?

Bob: Sure, lots of them. One of our biggest problems is how best to syndicate our shows. Prime basically offers a show to each affiliate to run on their own schedule. The shows run all over at different times, even the same day and we never know what will happen the next minute. Right now, until we get this organized better, the members are just going to have to check their local listings for dates and times.

This is not new because we syndicated our shows late in 1991 to get into the proper scheduling loop. This wasn't a screw up, but a real problem when we were all ready to run at the same time. We had 3500 stations syndicated.

Another problem is that if Prime runs our show over the whole network at the same time, we lose some of the affiliates because they are not needed to run the program. So they tape it and fit it in somewhere later. Finally, a few of the affiliates, like MSG in New York, have so many pro teams that they have trouble with the three-hour show.

Gordon: The good news is that we have solutions for these problems and we are working on improvements in 1992. The first thing is that we have already created our own syndication network and we have written up the Prime Network programmers meeting held in January. It really helps that the USAPA is setting up its major tournament plans more in advance. Another thing that should help this year is that we are going to switch from a single three-hour long show to three one-hour shows, per event. This will start with the U.S. Open. This has the advantage of being easier to sell in the marketplace and of giving us more chances at a good time slot. We'll run each of these shows on three separate days so that we have three times the chances: the first day is the market leader, either ESPN or USA Networks, and the other two television shows are less expensive and more available.

Bob: We are not saying that all of these things will happen or that any of these programs will happen, but we will be doing it. We're happy to have the opportunity to succeed, and we're happy that the new company is well funded. We're really happy that the new company is starting up in this market. We're happy to be working with any of the new companies that will help us.

Topics: Why are you doing all this? I assume for profit.

Gordon: This is not profitable now, but yes, we think we can make money at this after we work it out for a couple of years. There is nothing wrong with that really, after all we spent 30% of our time on it last year, and invested over $30,000. At this point we can afford to be happy just to break even! The key is that we have to continue to be successful attracting advertising, to do that we have an opportunity to succeed, and we have an opportunity to succeed.

Bob: It would also be a huge help if the viewers would help behind the scenes, getting bios or photos or anything else that we need.

Gordon: We have had arguments at loading docks. We have been to work all night. We have had our lives threatened by a guy on a front loader. Once we were kicked out of a building immediately after a show in the middle of a teardown, where later, finally, a few of the affiliated stations had told us about significant increases in their business.

Gordon: Obviously, if a member is in a corporate sponsorship possibility that is starting to happen. In the last six months we have started talking to the Detroit Sports Commission about help with the U.S. Open Tennis. The Detroit Sports Commission has the presidents of General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler as members. We have talked with a major retail chain about sponsoring a new tournament that would appear on the local television stations. The U.S. Open and the Team Championships are raising significant corporate sponsors. We are even talking about shoe contracts for the major players.

Bob: Please be patient if you can't play your match because the finals are going on. You have to understand that we are trying to make money at this. We are trying to make money at this.

Bob: Bob: We have had arguments at loading docks. We have been worked on building the Team Championships over the past ten years, or helping to start up clubs in the Detroit area. We certainly didn't make any money on those! It's great to be a part of the first telecast of the U.S. National Championships and one of the first times a women's match has been on television. I think for now we'll have to say that the reason we're doing this mostly, is for the love of the sport. Or does that sound too corny?

Topics: OK, final question. What can the readers do to help?

Bob: We thought you'd never ask.

Gordon: We need some help. First of all, we need to make our shows as exciting as possible. If you attend a major tournament, please sit in a seat as close to the court as possible. If you feel it like, go ahead and shout for the members. If you love them enough, you'll do anything for them. If you will. The more our television audience sees our live crowd having a good time, the more they will want to watch too.

Bob: We need a lot of help if the members could call their local affiliate and thank them for running table tennis. Let them know that we're worth it and that we want to see more. Fifty calls can make all the difference in the world. Let them know what you want, and that will help bring it about.

Gordon: Obviously, if a member is in a position to help develop advertising or sponsorship contact, we would like to know about it. Please don't call with a list of companies you think we should try, that's not what we mean. If someone has a company that has an interest in the sport, or promotions or advertising, we would like to work with them.

Bob: Please be patient if you can't play your match because the finals are going on. You have to understand that we are trying to make money at this. We are trying to make money at this.

Bob: We need to see a positive effect on our ratings.

Bob: We are very happy with all the corporate sponsorship possibilities that are starting to happen. In the last six months we have started talking to the Detroit Sports Commission about help with the U.S. Open Tennis. The Detroit Sports Commission has the presidents of General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler as members. We have talked with a major retail chain about sponsoring a new tournament that would appear on the local television stations. The U.S. Open and the Team Championships are raising significant corporate sponsors. We are even talking about shoe contracts for the major players.

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<td>200</td>
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<td>3 Amateur Singles (–2100)</td>
<td>s/e SAT 9 pm</td>
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<td>4 Novice Singles (–1400)</td>
<td>s/e SAT 1 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Men’s Doubles</td>
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<td>7 Mixed Doubles</td>
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<td>8 Parent/Child Doubles</td>
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<td>9 Wheelchair</td>
<td>s/e SUN 11 am</td>
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<td>12 Junior Under 18</td>
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<td>13 Cadet Under 12</td>
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<td><strong>AMERICAN ALL-STAR SERIES</strong></td>
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<td>14 Men’s Singles</td>
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<td>15 Women’s Singles</td>
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<td>*** HALL OF FAME SINGLES ***</td>
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<td>19 Under 2300</td>
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<td>20 Under 2150</td>
<td>RR SAT 4 pm</td>
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<td>21 Under 2000</td>
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<td>22 Under 1850</td>
<td>RR SAT 2 pm</td>
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<td>*** SPECIAL EVENTS ***</td>
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<td>27 -4300 Doubles</td>
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<td>28 -3300 Doubles</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Parade of Champions</td>
<td>s/e FRI 7 pm</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>200</td>
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**TOURNAMENT INFORMATION**

**ELIGIBILITY:**
- Events (1–13) U.S. Citizens Only
- ** Events (14–16) U.S. Olympic Eligible players
- *** Events (17–29) All players
- **** Players -2100 enter 1/2 fee

**RULES:** This event will be conducted under the laws of the USTTA.

Equipment: USTTA approved
Sanctioned By: USTTA- Four Star Event
American Allstar Series Event
Tournament Chairman: Pete May
Tournament Manager: Ty Hoff
Tournament Referee: Wendell Dillon

Postmark: Entries postmarked after April 24, or without full payment will require a $10 late fee. Entries will not be accepted after April 30.
No refunds after April 28.

Age Events: Juniors must be under stated age 5/8/92. Seniors must be over stated age 12/31/92.
For Entry or Hotel information contact Sherry Fulmer 404-724-0851 Ext 238

WE THANK OUR SPONSORS:
- Augusta College
- United States Table Tennis Assoc.
- Butterfly

Rating Cut off: January 1992 Topics
Unrated players will not advance from RR

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Check payable to: Augusta College Table Tennis. Send to Pete May, 2416 Wilshire Dr., Augusta, GA 30904
Please Enter me in the following events circled:

Name ___________________________ B-date ___________________________ Ustta Exp Date ___________________________
Address ________________________ City/State/Zip _______________________
Signature ______________________ Phone #__________________________

I will comply with all USTTA regulations. I accept full responsibility for my participation and relieve the sponsors and the USTTA of any liability for injury to myself or damage to my property.

Doubles Partners ___________________________

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Event Fees _______________________
Registration fee $5.00
Memb. Fees _______________________
Rating Fee 5.00
Late or Phone Fee 10.00

Total Fees _______________________

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Checking: [ ] American Allstar Series Event [ ] Four Star Event
**PRESIDENT’S POINT**

by Dan Seemiller

On January 5, Mr. Ichiro Ogimura (ITTF President), Mike Lawless (ITTF Promotions Director) and Ruford Harrison (ITTF Equipment Chair) from the U.S. met with USTTA representatives Kae Browning, Gus Kennedy, Jimmy McClure and myself in Chicago. The meeting agenda included: a) the 1992 Butterfly World Doubles Cup; b) the 1992 U.S. Open; c) the 1995 TSP World Team Cup in the U.S.; d) the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta; and e) in general, how the ITTF and USTTA can best promote table tennis in the U.S. in preparation for the 1996 Olympic games and all the accompanying publicity.

This was an important meeting for the future of table tennis in the U.S. With the ITTF and USTTA working together to bring major events to our country, I’m positive interest in the sport will accelerate, especially this year.

a) 1992 Butterfly World Doubles Cup—The ITTF has awarded this major event to the USTTA, which is essentially the world championship for non-world championship teams. Prize money is $160,000, sponsored by Butterfly, by far the most ever offered in a U.S. tournament. Our original bid was to host the event in Atlanta, but the Olympic organizers are not yet ready to host pre-Olympic events. Once this was known, we focused on hosting this event in conjunction with this year’s U.S. Nationals in Las Vegas in December. The ITTF officials felt Las Vegas to be an excellent alternative choice to Atlanta.

By combining these two events, we will minimize the costs and insure excellent spectator interest for television matches while bringing the best in table tennis to the membership. This event will be a great service for our members, who can participate in the U.S. Nationals by day and while watching the best players in the world compete for large cash prizes at night. The cost of hosting this event is very reasonable, as the prize money is already secured. The prize money will ensure that the event is taken very seriously by the television audience and the news media.

b) 1992 U.S. Open—The ITTF wants to help promote the U.S. Open by making it an ITTF AIBS Series event. The top six players on the circuit will attend the U.S. Open, and the ITTF will also help the prize money fund. It was also discussed that the growth of the U.S. Open should continue as we approach the 1996 games in Atlanta.

c) 1995 TSP World Team Cup—This event will be held in Atlanta as a trial run for the Olympic games. The tournament will be played in the same hall as the Olympic Games competition. This event is the premier team event of the year, and also has a $160,000 prize-money fund.

d) 1996 Olympics in Atlanta—There was a general discussion on the state of table tennis in the U.S. and what should be done over the next four years to promote and publicize the sport. It may be the most important years in our history.

In many ways this was a historic meeting for the USTTA. Opening up communications between the ITTF president and the great events we will be working with them together on will benefit everyone. USTTA members, sponsors, television—all will benefit greatly through these events.

March/April 1992

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

by Kae Browning

Citius, Altius, Fortius—Swifter, Higher, Stronger.” The Olympic motto is ringing loud and clear at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs as the U.S. Table Tennis Association prepares to host the North American Table Tennis Qualifier. The United States and Canada will go head-to-head in fierce singles competition to determine which athletes will march in the opening ceremonies in Barcelona, Spain. Larry Hodges profiles the top contenders in his article on page 10.

The focus of the competition will be on the athletes, as well as it should. This Qualifier will showcase the intense mental concentration, physical stamina and sheer grit. May the best men and women win—especially if they are wearing U.S. colors. However, there is more at stake than just a place on the team. The 1992 Olympics mark the second time table tennis will participate in the Olympics as a full medal sport.

Many of you know that the United States was a powerhouse in table tennis at its beginning. Over the years, Asians and Europeans have taken the lead. Little by little, U.S. athletes have climbed back up the world rankings. The men’s team now ranks 15th; the women’s team 17th. Yes, we must pull out all the stops to help today’s top contenders succeed, but the formula for long-term success involves building a solid foundation. Grassroots programming, such as the National Schools Program, introduces the sport to young hopefuls with potential. Clubs, leagues and tournaments provide opportunities to play, practice and improve. Of course, we need to expand our cadre of knowledgeable officials and coaches to keep us on the right track.

While we are making progress in these areas, clearly there is so much more to do. So when a new day dawns at USTTA headquarters and the in-baskets are overflowing, we’re inspired. Citius, Altius, Fortius.

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**RAMBLINGS FROM THE EDITOR**

by Larry Hodges

Here is the second issue of the year, and my second issue as well. I had an editor’s report for the last issue, but there was so little space I decided to cut it. I couldn’t face the writer who would look at me with mournful eyes, knowing I’d cut his story so you could read such ramblings of mine...

Starting with this issue, each issue will be mailed out on the 1st of the two-month cover date, i.e. this issue, the March/April, went out on March 1st. You should receive it about two weeks later. There may be occasional changes to this, so that I can cover larger tournaments in separate issues. I will notify readers of any change in the preceding issue.

Feel free to send in your articles, but remember—I usually have too much material, and I simply have to reject much of it. I will never reject a writer—at least not until it becomes obvious. And yes, a glossy issue would, therefore, cost six times as much (due to printing costs for that are something like three times as much (not including paper cost). Anyway, if you are one of the top World junior players to meet. At the same time, there are hopes for the future, as well. When I hear that team competition be substituted for singles events only. The Japanese team is far more likely to field one of the 32 doubles pairs than one of the 12 teams. I will keep you posted.

**ITTF MEETING IN CHICAGO**

I and other USTTA officials meet with ITTF President Ichiro Ogimura and other officials in Chicago recently to discuss the future of U.S. table tennis. We discussed and planned the upcoming Butterfly World Doubles Cup in Las Vegas this December, the 1992 U.S. Open (now an ITTF AIBS Series event), the TSP World Team Cup in Atlanta in 1995, and the Olympics in Atlanta in 1996. Dan Seemiller will cover this meeting more thoroughly in his report for Topics.

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**KENNEDY’S KORNER**

by George “Gas” Kennedy

**GREAT YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS**

ITTF President Ichiro Ogimura has informed us in his Newsletter that, “The purpose of this event is to stimulate the often forgotten generation between juveniles and adulthood, and give two opportunities for the top World junior players to meet.” At the present the program is in the planning stage, with hopeful funding of $750,000 by the Kasahawa Foundation of Japan. An additional $300,000 would also be required.

The arrangements call for the athletes to receive travel costs as well as competing for $100,000 prize money for teams and individuals. The junior category would have singles events only. The Japanese Table Tennis Association is hoping to secure ITTF participation in the sponsoring, and we are prepared to do the same if necessary. However, it must be noted that they will not agree to an increase in the number of medals, so this is a possible compromise. No decision has been made yet on the proposal.

Mr. Hodges said that the participation of the best teams in the World would be considered more important than the geographic spread of the participants. The ITTF Board earlier agreed that it would not be necessary or desirable to hold continental qualifying matches. The Olympic Program Commission has made it clear that they will not agree to an increase in the number of medals, so this is a possible compromise. No decision has been made yet on the proposal.

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The elections are set for the end of May, with two new ITTF Executive Directors—Mike Lawless, ITTF Promotions Director, and Ruford Harrison, ITTF Equipment Chairman. We should be hearing from them soon regarding their plans.

**OLYMPIC GAMES 1996**

The IOC President, Mr. Samaranch, met with the ITTF Executive Director in Barcelona recently. The ITTF proposed that team competition be substituted for doubles competition at the Olympics, starting with the 1996 Olympics. The Olympic Program Commission has made it clear that they will not agree to an increase in the number of medals, so this is a possible compromise. No decision has been made yet on the proposal.

**USA/ITTF MEETINGS**

I and other USTTA officials met with ITTF President Ogimura and other officials in Chicago recently to discuss the future of U.S. table tennis. We discussed and planned the upcoming Butterfly World Doubles Cup in Las Vegas this December, the 1992 U.S. Open (now an ITTF AIBS Series event), the TSP World Team Cup in Atlanta in 1995, and the Olympics in Atlanta in 1996. Dan Seemiller will cover this meeting more thoroughly in his report for Topics.

**1992 WORLD VETERAN’S CHAMPIONSHIPS**

I am pleased to announce that Tim Boggan will be the contact person for USTTA members who wish to go to the 1992 World Veteran’s Championships in Dublin, Ireland, June 15-20. Those over 40 are eligible to compete. If you are interested in going, call Tim at (516) 868-0434.
From March 19-22, twelve U.S. and twelve Canadians will have it out at the North American Olympic Qualifier at Colorado Springs, for the right to go to the Olympics. When the dust clears, two men and two women will go.

The U.S. had its Olympic Qualifier at the Nationals in December to decide which six men and which six women would try out. These twelve Americans will vie for the right to not only go to Barcelona, Spain this summer, but also for the tens of thousands of dollars such a trip will mean in income through sponsors and grants.

Who are these athletes? Here they are, the twelve U.S. players competing for a spot at the Olympics—all in training for

**CLASH OF THE TITANS!**

**United States, in order of finish at the Qualifier:**

**MEN**

1. Dan Seemiller, Pittsburgh, PA—President of the USTTA and five-time Men's National Champion, Danny takes administrative and athletic achievements to a new USTTA high. Playing with the unique "See-miller" grip, Danny hits his forehand like a backhand. When he hits a backhand, however, he rotates the racket around, wind-shield-wiper fashion, and "punches" the ball, using the same side for both strokes. This gives him an "off" side, where he keeps a sheet of antispin to flip to as a variation, and to return serves.

Danny, who is lefthanded, plays a change-of-style game with a powerful forehand loop combined with a consistent backhand block. He switches easily from an aggressive forehand game to a consistent backhand block, moving opponents in and out by flipping between his varied and inverted surfaces. Because he mostly attacks from one side, he is often hustling about the court, attacking with the forehand. He is known for his great backhand serve and forehand loop. He has spent three years training at the Olympic Training Center at Colorado Springs.

Seemiller is known for his powerful forehand loop. Despite being over six feet tall, he is able to cover nearly the entire table with his forehand. He has an excellent return of serve, and is able to take the attack against nearly any shot. He forces opponents to match up their forehand with his, a matchup he almost always wins. Very few players can even attempt to pull off the shots that Seemiller can, and win or lose, he is one of the most exciting players to watch. Not known for his backhand, Seemiller has been working hard to improve it under the coaching of U.S. Coach Li Zhenshi. Although Seemiller's play can be erratic at times, he is always at his best in important matches.

2. Sean O'Neill, McLean, VA—Like See-miller, Sean is a five-time Men's National Champion. Danny takes administrative and athletic achievements to a new USTTA high. Playing with the unique "See-miller" grip, Danny hits his forehand like a backhand. When he hits a backhand, however, he rotates the racket around, wind-shield-wiper fashion, and "punches" the ball, using the same side for both strokes. This gives him an "off" side, where he keeps a sheet of antispin to flip to as a variation, and to return serves.

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3. Jim Butler,.analytics, CA—The 1986 U.S. Men's National Champion, Hank is the perennial champion of California. He has been training recently at the Westfield club in New Jersey. He is one of the best backhand loops in the U.S., and great athletic ability.

4. Khon Nguyen, Santa Clara, CA—Khon is the perennial champion of California. He won the college nationals in 1988, and the Corporate Games in 1989, and recently won the Pacific Rim Open. He was also the 1987 Pan American Gold Medalist in Mixed Doubles with Insook Bhushan.

Khon plays a backhand two-sided attacking game, with great power from both sides. He is known for his continuous attack throughout a rally, and for his powerful shots. He has one of the best backhand loops in the U.S., and great athletic ability.

5. Dhiren Narotam, Ames, IA—Dhiren, 26, was the U.S. Junior Champion in 1988, and won nearly every junior title possible before that. A resident of the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs since 1985, Dhiren was a member of the U.S. Team at the Worlds in 1989.

Dhiren has among the quickest feet in table tennis. He plays nearly an all-forehand looping game, and is one of the best at finding loops to pull out at the start of a rally. Although he plays a shakehand, his game is similar to a forehand-attacking penholder. He is working hard to improve his backhand, but only a few players in the U.S. can consistently force him to use it.

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7. Lily Hugh, Cocoa, FL—Lily has made the semis of the last two U.S. Nationals. Originally from China, Lily finished in the top ten at the Chinese National Championships twice, and finished third in Women's Doubles in 1980. She also was the Guangdong Provincial Champion in 1982. She was the Florida State Open Champion in 1990. She won gold medals at the 1991 Pan Am Games for team and doubles, as well as a silver for Women's Singles.

Lily is a vintage pips-out penholder hitter. She likes to serve and hit, and rallies very fast, ending the point quickly. She tries to smash most forehands while playing a jab-blocking backhand. She plays an extremely fast game, and forces most players to back away from the table, setting up her forehand. She has been training recently at the Westfield club in New Jersey.

8. Diana Gee, San Carlos, CA—A member of the 1985 U.S. Olympic Team, she trained at the Olympic Training Center for three years. She has won the gold medal for Women's Singles at the U.S. Olympic Festival four times, and was named Sports Woman and Female Amateur Athlete of the Year in 1985. Diana won gold medals at the 1991

9. Insook Bhushan, Aurora, CO—Insook recently won her 11th National Women's Championship, and will surely go down in history as our best player ever. Her list of titles is too long to put down here, but at 39 she is still the best in the U.S. She has won Women's Singles at the last three Pan American Games, and was a member of the U.S. Olympic Team in 1988. She will be eligible for induction to the USTTA Hall of Fame this year. Insook also is the U.S. Olympic Representative on the USTTA Executive Committee. Originally from South Korea, she immigrated to the U.S. in 1974.

Insook is a chopper, with medium-long pips on the forehand and inverted on the backhand. She is an expert at mixing up spins. Although she plays primarily defensively, she does have a strong pick hitting game. Very few of her pick hits come back because of surprise and placement. Very calm under pressure, nothing bothers her as she calmly wears down opponent after opponent. Currently rated 2466, she shows few signs of slowing down yet.

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Lily is a vintage pips-out penholder hitter. She likes to serve and hit, and rallies very fast, ending the point quickly. She tries to smash most forehands while playing a jab-blocking backhand. She plays an extremely fast game, and forces most players to back away from the table, setting up her forehand. She has been training recently at the Westfield club in New Jersey.

13. Diana Gee, San Carlos, CA—A member of the 1985 U.S. Olympic Team, she trained at the Olympic Training Center for three years. She has won the gold medal for Women's Singles at the U.S. Olympic Festival four times, and was named Sports Woman and Female Amateur Athlete of the Year in 1985. Diana won gold medals at the 1991
Pan Am Games for both Women's Team and Mixed Doubles.

Diana plays a close-to-the-table, quick-hitting shakehands game. She has inverted on the forehand, but plays with pips on the backhand, which she hits extremely flat, quick and consistently. Her basic game is counter-driving and hitting, and she uses her backhand quick-hit to set up her forehand very well. She likes to serve fast and deep, and follow with aggressive drives from both sides.

Against backspin, she attacks well either by quick-hitting with her pips or with a consistent forward loop, and tries to smash the next shot.

4. Alice Kimble, Great Neck, NY—Alice is both the National Champion and top-ranked senior woman in the U.S. At the past Nationals, she won her title without giving up more than 12 points in a game. A former four-time member of the U.S. Women's Team, Alice is back on the U.S. Team after a decade's absence.

Alice is a chopper/batter. She plays with short pips on both sides of her racket, and favors chopping on the backhand. She makes it very tough to build up a rhythm because of the constant changes from offense to defense. Her forehand smash is especially dangerous.

5. Li Ai, Colorado Springs, CO—Li has been the top-ranked junior girl in the U.S. for four years, since she was 13. Now 17, she has finished third at the U.S. Nationals three times already. She was the Olympic Festival Women's Champion in 1989, and won Women's Doubles Lily Hugh at the 1991 Pan Am Games.

Like Lily Hugh, Li is a vintage pips-out penhold hitter. A constant threat to smash, she also has a very good backhand counter, and uses it to force players away from the table to set up her forehand.

6. Peggy Rosen, Sugarland, TX—For many years the top woman player from the South, Peggy dominates women's events in the Texas/Louisiana area. A quarterfinalist at this year's Nationals, Peggy also won a gold medal at the 1987 Olympic Festival for mixed doubles. She was named Thailand's sports woman of the year in 1974 before moving to the U.S.

Peggy plays a quick-blocking, close-to-the-table game. She uses quick angled blocks to force errors and to set up her forehand. A shakehands player with inverted on the forehand and pips on the backhand, her backhand block is known as a wall, and many players have fallen apart trying to attack through it.

Who Will the U.S. Players Befacing in the Clash with Canada?

Canada's tryouts aren't until March 7-8, but here are some of the likely contenders:

Men:


Horatio Pinten—A member of the 1988 Olympic Team as Ng's doubles partner, "Foner" was also the 1987 North American Men's Champions. He is a two-time Canadian National Men's Champions. At the 1991 Pan Am Games, he won a silver medal for Men's Doubles, and bronze medals for Men's Singles and Men's Team. He won the gold medal for Men's Doubles at the 1987 Pan Am Games.


Alain Bourgonnais—1987 & 1988 Canadian National Champion. Alain was a full-time tennis player for many years. Recently he has been less active, but if back in top shape he can be a major challenge.

Women:

Julie Barton—The 1988 Canadian National Women's Champion, Julie won the Canadian National Junior Girls Championship four times. She was the 1989 North American Junior Champion. She is the 1991 Canadian Women Youth Champion, and won two bronze medals at the 1991 Pan Am Games, in Women's and Mixed Doubles.

Helene Bedard—She finished fifth at the 1991 Pan Am Games. She is the 1989 Canadian Mixed Doubles Champion, and was the Canadian Junior Athlete of the year in 1985.

Barbara Chen—Ranked number two in Canada. Barbara is the 1989 & 1990 Canadian Women's Champion. She also won the 1989 North American Women's Doubles Championship.
Whenever I coach a child that has never played before, I not only feel a great sense of responsibility, but I also recognize in charge of upcoming young players when team, where team members were often put on charge of the new player. There was only one way, the classic way: to lay a solid foundation. It made sense to coaching people without any previous experience. It had always been that way. Coaching kids who are already good at something doesn't have the benefit of hours of daily training. As kids, we were always worked on the forehand steadily first of all. And although it was an effective way, I began wondering if it really was the most effective way. Unlike team players, my parents didn't have the benefit of hours of daily practice. They had their reasons, maybe they played a little more and then put their rackets away for a few days to resume their regular lives. More and more, I felt that there were certain techniques that seemed to be more useful to them than others. Mainly, I was looking for a way to correct one big problem: After having achieved a relatively steady stroke, they often still faced the same problems as in the very beginning when they had to play a match. They didn't play against Uphill. That was so in China, too, but there, we had so much more time to train. As kids, we were not supposed to be “good” yet. Our career was supposed to build to a peak after about eight years of training. If I tell a boy here that it will take eight years until he can be good, he will drop out of the sport. And I always felt it that they didn't really have to take that long, particularly if a player could reach a certain level of competence relatively early so that he would generate his own motivation. Outside motivation—be it from the parents or other sources—can only last for a while. By then, the player's own achievements and expectation for improvement has to become a self-renewing source.

Enter the topspin game. Whenever my students “graduated” to looping, their attitudes changed. They suddenly seemed to have extra time. By then, the player’s own achievements and expectation for improvement has to become a self-renewing source.

Since the model he suggests coincides in large part with the tendency I have been following myself, I tried to implement his suggestions verbatim. I was completely amazed at how well it worked. I had expected a little improvement, but wound up with this: One 30-year-old beginner is looping every kind of ball, underspin, topspin, after four lessons! A ten-year-old boy was able to play hand in hand backhand and forehand the first twenty minute lesson. And he was having so much fun! A month later, after practicing with his dad, he was playing and holding his own with adults. There are other examples, but I had to be careful, not wanting to appear to be propagating a “wonder medicine.” Of course, they were not strong, spiny shots, but they were good enough to keep rallies going, and they were definitely enough to give players motivation. There might be drawbacks that we haven’t run into yet, and I’ll cross that bridge when I get to it. But I have seen faster improvement than ever before. A little slower, but still improving, were those who already had counter stroke, confirming yet another point the article makes.

In my own development, I remember the struggle to learn a loop after already having a solid hit. Until very recently, I always felt an interference from one to the other. Now, partially thanks to my coaching people without any previous experience, it has become clearer to me that the key to a comfortable loop is to repair the damage that was done in the first years of my career. I found that my depth perception drastically dropped in accuracy when I moved from the backhand to the forehand. I often see players of the same level making mistakes, and they are not supposed to be “good” yet. Our career is not supposed to be “good” yet. Our career is always felt that it didn’t really have to take much earlier. Early success brings much greater motivation. (The importance of this point for the U.S. situation cannot be overstressed!) Since the loop is a higher percentage shot, the player develops and maintains a willingness to take risks. Since the contact point for looping is defined by the body and not the table, children are not forced to perform unnatural strokes over the table (ref.: early contact points) sooner, since they learn to recognize spin and deal with it much earlier. Early success brings much greater motivation.

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De Tran - Semi-Finalist Men Singles  
Ranked #9 Finish, Men's Olympic Trials

Tawny Banh - U2200 Women Champion  
U2200 Women, Girls' Doubles

Loc Ngo - Rank Number 21 Finish, Men's Olympic Trials

ARMSTRONG COMPANY is well known as the inventor of sponge and sandwich rubber, and we continue to strive for the advancement of table tennis products technology.
CHENG YING HUA: ANALYZING THE BEST PLAYER LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

by Larry Hodges

Cheng Ying Hua, a former member of the Chinese National Team, was hired by the USTTA as a practice partner for the Olympic Training Center in 1988. He later went back to China, but returned as a coach at the Potomac Table Tennis Club in Maryland. However, at 34, he is still quite a player. He’s not as good as he was in 1985 when he won the U.S. Open, but he’s close. He’s the top-rated player living in the U.S. at 2776 (but not eligible to play on the U.S. team for several more years), and has beaten Canada’s number one, Johnny Huang (rated 2794, and ranked 22nd in the world) the last two times they played.

Cheng’s game is a product of his past. He spent a number of years as a practice partner for the Chinese National Team, and was trained to play like Europeans so he would want to use his forehand, he is often willing to stay close to the table, letting his opponent attack while he blocks. Cheng’s many years as a practice partner have made his block one of the most consistent in the world, and overpowering him is nearly impossible. He can also mix up his block, sometimes blocking flat, other times topspinning the ball at contact with a flick of his wrist so that the ball jumps up.

Cheng plays aggressively, he is often waiting, and barely has to move to loop. If an opponent steps ahead to attack with the forehand, he will either serve fast down the line if the player moves too soon, or block to the open court.

Returning his serves short (or serving short) is tough. Cheng usually has the best forehand flip in the country. Any ball that goes short to Cheng’s forehand is in danger of being snipped in for a winner, almost always crosscourt at a wide angle. Although most top Europeans flip with their wrists, Cheng mostly flips with his forearm which gives good control but less deception.

Cheng is also known for the “Cheng Stare.” Whenever Cheng serves, he looks his opponent in the eye with an icy glare. It is a psychological tactic, and many an opponent has wilted under that look. Cheng’s servers are strong so he usually starts with a backhand serve. Cheng either spins it deep, and never seems to miss.

Korea, spurred on by their home-town fans, defeated the World Champions Fetzner and Roskopf of Germany in the finals of the World Doubles Cup in 1990 in Seoul. Now we’re the home team for World Cup II, so come cheer for the U.S.!

ULEGIBILITY: U.S. Citizen or Olympic Eligible, and under 18 years of age. Contact USTTA Headquarters with questions regarding Olympic Eligibility.

QUALIFICATION: Athletes must finish 1st, 2nd or 3rd in an AAI/USTTA sanctioned qualifying tournament at the state/association or regional level to participate in the national championships. Exceptions to this rule include gold or silver medalists from previous Junior Olympic National Championships, or unusual cases approved by the tournament committee.

If you have questions or wish to volunteer to run a qualifying tournament in states where none now exist, please contact Richard Butler, JOTT Chairman, 2626 E. Court St., Iowa City, Iowa 52245, (319) 337-5952.

USTTA President Dan Seemiller and Executive Director Kae Browning met with a number of table tennis equipment dealers at the Supershow in Atlanta early in February with a proposal to hire a table tennis publicist. The dealers agreed, and the USTTA is proud to announce the hiring of Susan Polakoff on retainer. She will be working on-call, although the Olympics come up her hours will undoubtedly increase. Much of her fee will be paid by table tennis dealers.

Mark your calendars to attend one of the events in the next issue of Topics.
I was elected president less than two years ago. What has been accomplished during those two years?

Table Tennis on Nationwide TV
15% Club Increase
1,500 New Members
National School Championships
World Doubles Cup in U.S.

RE-ELECT DAN SEEMILLER
USTTA PRESIDENT

I hope you will also vote for Gus Kennedy, Donna Sakai and Terry Timmins. Without their support, it would have been very difficult to accomplish so much. Thank you Gus, Donna and Terry.

SWEDISH OPEN
November 28-December 1, 1991

Men's Singles—Final: Appelgren (SWE) d. Saive (BEL) 11,15,9,17,18; SF: Saive d. Lindh (SWE) 18,19,8; Appelgren d. Waldner (SWE) 9,-23,12,16,19; QF: Saive d. Persson (SWE) 3-0; Lindh d. Rosskopf (GER) 3-1; Appelgren d. Creanga (GER) 3-0; Waldner d. Lapupseska (YUG) 3-0.

Women's Singles—Final: Deng Yaping (CHN) 15,15; Qiao (CHN) d. Hyun (KOR) 20,11; Hong/Hyun (KOR) d. Chen Zihe/Liu 2-0; Ziao Hong (CHN) d. Hong Cha Ok (KOR) 3-2; Sonnet/Keen d. Korbel/Javurek (TCH) 2-0; (GER) d. Sonnet/Keen (BEL/NED) 6,-17,13,12; SF: Deng/Qiao d. Batorfi/Gao Jun 3-2.

Women's Doubles—Final: Rosskopf/Fetzner d. Appelgren/Waldner (SWE) 2-1.

World Doubles Cup in U.S.

INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

KOREAN NATIONALS
December 14-19, 1991

Men's Singles: Yoo Nam Kyu d. Kim Tae Soo 16,-16,16,13; Women's Singles: Hyun Jung Hwa d. Hong Cha Ok 19,12,19,25; Men's Doubles: Kim Tae Soo d. Han Hee Chan 12,16,-15,14,19; Women's Doubles: Hyun Jung Hwa/Hong Cha Ok d. Yuk Sun Hee/Yoo Hae Jung 21,-21,8; Mixed Doubles: Yoo Nam Kyu/Hyun Jung Hwa d. Kim Tae Soo/ Hong Cha Ok 13,12,12.

JAPANESE NATIONALS
December 18-22, 1991


1991 CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS
Orofunato, Japan
December 8, 1991

Final: Yu Shentong (CHN) d. Paul Haldan (NED) 15,18,12; SF: Yu d. Jee Ove Waldner (SWE) 18,39; Haldan d. Ma Weine (CHN) 16,-18,12; QF: Waldner d. Iwakawa (JPN) 18,11; Yu d. Saive (BEL) 15,18; Haldan d. Appelgren (SWE) 20,18,11; Mu d. Shobutani (JPN) 13,10.

Photo by Mal Anderson ©1991

Olympic Gold Medalist Yoo Nam Kyu didn’t quite win last year’s U.S. Open, losing in five games to Zoran Primorac. But he did win the Korean Nationals in five, beating Kim Taek Soo in the finals.

USTTA EXECUTIVE MEETING
December 22, 1991

Las Vegas, Nevada
An informal E.C. meeting was held at Las Vegas. The following is a description and outcome of the single motion discussed at the meeting.

The following board members attended the meeting: Shoshie Aki, Issosk Bishir, Scott Butler, Larry Hodges, Jim McClure, Sheila O'Dougherty, Donna Sakai, Dan Seemiller, and Terry Timmins. Kae Browning, USTTA Executive Director, was also in attendance.

Motion: Passed 9-0-0

That the revenue projections for the 1992 USTTA budget be approved as submitted. Other topics discussed included:
- status of San Diego Olympic Training Center— the USTTA will retain Colorado Springs as our primary training center
- upcoming meeting with ITTF President Ogimura, Mike Lawless and Rufford Harrison—Kae, Danny, Gus and Jimmy will meet Ogimura in Chicago to discuss such items as North America’s Olympic allotment, World Cup Doubles event, U.S. Open, Olympic eligibility rules
- U.S. Open—The 1992 U.S. Open will be held in Midland, Michigan June 10-14. Kae, Danny, Donna and Linda had a successful meeting with the Midland committee in late November.
- U.S./Canada Olympic trials—Scheduled for March 19-22 in Colorado Springs
- future EC meetings—Tentative schedule for future meetings was discussed: March 23 & 24 in Colorado Springs, June in Midland, Michigan, and November (location TBA).

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Sakai
USTTA Secretary
1992 DOW CHEMICAL U.S. OPEN
DON'T MISS IT!

Get your tickets now for the 1992 U.S. Open in Midland, Michigan! The U.S. Open, which is now an ITTF Allstar event, will feature the best players in the world. Last year's winner, Zoran Primorac, came back from down 2-0 to win in five against the Olympic Gold Medalist, Yoo Nam Kyu. Primorac had beaten China's #2, Ma Weinge, in the quarterfinals.

And what happened to China's #1, Chen Longcan, last year? He'd been knocked out by the U.S.'s very own Eric Boggnan in the eights, 3-1, in front of a screaming U.S. crowd. So come support our players—we can compete with these guys!

Last year Dow Chemical was the largest sponsor of the Open, but they wanted to see how we'd do before they'd put their name on it. They liked what they saw, and now the Open is officially the Dow Chemical U.S. Open. If Corporate America likes what they see, the American public can't be far behind.

This year's Open will feature 65 events and $53,000 in prize money. The 17 rating events start at 1000 and go all the way up to 2550, and include rated events for both women and seniors. There are also 26 championship age events. And for you nostalgia buffs, there's even a hard rubber singles event!

For spectators, you get to see the best players in the world compete for the $10,000 first prize in men's singles. You can also see the best U.S. players compete in the American Allstar Series event, as well as the American Allstar Senior events. Or you can watch the team competitions—last year the U.S. Junior & Senior Teams swept all the competition, and they are looking to repeat.

For your convenience, shuttle service will be provided from the hotel to the playing site each day. It will also take you to nearby shopping centers to help you enjoy your stay. You might even want to go on one of the popular Dow Chemical tours.

The entry blank for this year's Open is printed on pages 21-24. You will also get one in the mail in a few weeks, so you don't have to tear apart Topics to enter!

In December, the USSTTA set a record for the most entrants ever at a Nationals. We're going for a new U.S. Open record—so come, play, watch, enjoy—and support U.S. Table Tennis.

MEMBERSHIP ADVERTISING

You may notice in the upcoming Butterfly Report an ad for USSTTA membership. Butterfly and Robbins Sport have both agreed to this, and there will probably be an ad in the upcoming Robbins Sport magazine as well.

These magazines go to 20,000 non-USSTTA members, all of whom have bought table tennis equipment from these two distributors. Topics would like to thank them for their support! Next issue will tell you how many new members we picked up. Keep those fingers crossed!

MACCABIAH GAMES

For the last issue, the phone number for those interested in playing in the Maccabiah Games was incorrect. The correct number is (212) 777-6241. (See ad on page 30.)
The Prodigy table tennis club is now better than ever! For those of you who missed the Computer Corner article by Walt Gomes in the last edition of *Topics*, a software program called Prodigy now has a table tennis club. To access Prodigy, you must have either an IBM (or compatible) or Macintosh computer; a modem; and the free Prodigy software, which you can get by calling 1-800-776-0836, extension 801.

What is Prodigy? The Prodigy Interactive Service, made nationally available in mid-1990, now boasts 1.1 million members, making it easily the most popular service of its kind. In addition to the table tennis club, accessible from the Sports Club listing in the service, Prodigy has many other excellent features. Perhaps the most popular of these features are the bulletin boards. There, you can talk and exchange information with all Prodigy members. As a junior member, I frequently read and respond to bulletin boards in "The Club," a club for kids. The other popular bulletin boards are the Travel Club, the Computer Club, the Arts Club, the Food and Wine Club, Money Talk, the Homelife Club, and of course the Sports Club. If you like discussing current issues, the Close Up Board will also interest you. In addition to the bulletin boards, Prodigy has up-to-date news of all kinds, as well as money advice, travel information, an on-line encyclopedia, literally dozens of merchants from whom you can actually buy on-line—the list goes on and on!

And what about the table tennis club? The Prodigy Table Tennis Club is a great place to ask table tennis advice, exchange information, just about anything relating to the sport. Here is just a sample of the many things we've had on the bulletin board just recently:
- Advice for players about blades and rubber, specifically for their style.
- Quick and detailed results from all the major and many of the minor tournaments.
- A meeting at the U.S. Nationals of Prodigy members was arranged on-line.
- Players have offered to look up clubs for beginning players.
- The Nationals.
- An umpire answers any questions about rules.
- Whether women's prize money should equal men's.
- The expedite rule, especially in the Men's Final at the Nationals.
- How to start a club.
- Dan Seemiller, USTTA President, has addressed Prodigy members, and will do so about once every month.
- At the Nationals, we met many more Prodigy members, and the number of Prodigy table tennis players is constantly increasing. Among our newer members are Topics Editor and National Coaching Chairman Larry Hodges and Vice President Barry Rodgers. If you have a question for them, here's the way to do it! (They promise to answer all questions sent to them on Prodigy.)
- "What does Prodigy cost?" As opposed to all other major on-line services, which charge you by the minute or hour, Prodigy charges a remarkably low, flat monthly fee of only $12.95. If I spent the same amount of time monthly on Compuserve, Prodigy's chief competitor, as I do on Prodigy, the bill would come out to roughly $320/month, almost 25 times as much. Trust me, Prodigy is worth it!

What might the Prodigy Table Tennis Club be like in the future? With Prodigy being potentially accessible to 60,000,000 people, the service looks like the logical place for table tennis information in the future. All the reports of tournaments have been terrific. As I said before, Dan Seemiller has addressed Prodigy and will continue to do so monthly. While *Topics* can hope to go monthly in the future (Hear! Hear! The Editor), Prodigy will be a source for table tennis information each time you log on.

How do I get to the Table Tennis Club? To get to the Prodigy Table Tennis Club once you have logged on, from the Main Highlights screen Jump to Sports Club, select Bulletin Board twice, open the first window, press PgDn and select Other Sports, select an appropriate date you want to read listings from, select "yes" (so you can read replies), select "OK..." type "TAB" in the box on the top left, and select table tennis in the list that follows to enter the Prodigy Table Tennis Club. Hope to see you soon!
ATHLETES IN TRAINING!

The USTTA Resident Training Program

by Susan Manning

You've probably seen a lot in topics about our top men players training at the Olympic Training Center at Colorado Springs—Sean O'Neill, Dhiren Narotam and Todd Sweeris. There are also eight juniors who train there full-time. They go to high school by day, train in the late afternoon and night, and study between mouthfuls at dinner. (Well, I hope not.) So here is a quick introduction to the eleven players training full-time in Colorado. (Profiled next issue: Coach Li Zhenshi)

LI ALI: Li is from Colorado Springs and lives at home with his parents, the world renowned former Chinese coaches, Liguu and Henn Li Ai. Both Liguu and Henn, former RTP coaches themselves, were a great inspiration to Li's table tennis career. Although Li at home, he trains with the RTPs regularly. This member of the Ai family has her own titles, including U.S. Junior Olympic Champion, U.S. Open Under 18 Champion, and U.S. Olympic Festival Champion. He is a pips-out penholder. He is a mighty mite. Standing 5'7" tall, this aggressive player

JASON ST. GEORGE: Jason is probably the most improved top junior in the U.S. in recent times, as his rating skyrocketed from 1356 to 2272 while training at the Eastern Training Center and the Olympic Training Center over the past 18 months. He won the USTTA's first annual National High School Championships in December, upsetting top-seeded Eric Owens in the finals. He finished 3rd in under 18 boys at the 1991 Junior Olympics, and won under 18 doubles at the 1991 U.S. Open. He was a member of the "B" team winner at the 1991 U.S. Open Team Championships.

TODD SWEERIS: Todd has been training at the Olympic Training Center since 1986. He didn't break 2000 until he was 16, but over the last two years he has shot over 2400. Now, 18, he graduated from high school last year and is now attending University of Colorado part-time while he trains. Todd was the 1990 National Junior Champion, and through the years has won a huge collection of junior titles. He finished 8th at the recent U.S. Men's Olympic Trials, including a win over 1986 National Champion Hank Teekwonsok. Todd is an all-around top player with a looping forehand and a strong backhand.

KRISTY REED: Kristy, 15, is the youngest among the RTP athletes at the Olympic Complex. She started playing at age six. Crediting her early start to her dad, Kristey has won nine gold medals and four silver medals at the Junior Olympics, and was a member of the 1991 Junior Girls title, and was a member of both the CNE and U.S. Open Junior Girls Championship teams. She won a bronze medal at the 1989 U.S. Olympic Festival and a silver in 1991. She is a pips-out penholder, from Enola, PA.

Pietrak, two Tae Kwon Doers and 1 took them down one trickery can beat youth and skill—but not if the youth train like this!
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For Information, please contact Serge Fauteux

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ONE OF THE GREATEST TOURNAMENTS IN CANADA
Johnny Huang, Joe Ng, Horatio Pintea, Alain Bourbonnais,
Francis Trudel, Dianna Huang, Lijuan Geng, Julie Barton.
American players expected Sean O'Neill, Jimmy Butler, John Onifade, Danny Seemiller,
Insook Bushan, Lily Hugh, Wang Wei, Dianna Gee.

CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS
01 North Amer. Cup Friday 12:30 pm Qualifications
   men - women
02 North Amer. Cup Saturday 9:00 am 600$ - 400$
   men - women
   (same prize money for the women)
03 Open Sunday 10:30 am 400$ - 200$ -2x100$ 2x200$ - 4x75$
04 Open doubles Sunday 9:00 am 200$ - 100$ 200$

AGE EVENTS
05 U-12 singles Friday 4:00 pm Trophy - Trophy
06 U-14 singles Saturday 9:00 am Trophy - Trophy
07 U-16 singles Saturday 1:00 pm Trophy - Trophy
08 0-40 singles Friday 4:00 pm 100$ - 50$

RATING EVENTS
09 U-500 boys Friday 9:00 am Trophy - Trophy
10 U-500 girls Friday 9:00 am Trophy - Trophy
11 U-700 Friday 11:00 am Trophy - Trophy
12 U-900 Friday 2:00 pm Trophy - Trophy
13 U-1200 Sunday 3:00 pm Trophy - Trophy
14 U-1500 Sunday 1:30 pm Trophy - Trophy
15 U-1750 Sunday 12:00 pm 110$ - 55$
16 U-2000 Saturday 12:00 pm 130$ - 65$
17 U-2500 Saturday 11:00 am 160$ - 80$
18 U-2450 Saturday 1:00 pm 220$ - 110$

For Information, please contact Serge Fauteux
Office: 514-252-3064
Home: 514-389-2529
1992 DOW CHEMICAL UNITED STATES TABLE TENNIS OPEN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

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- MIDLAND TABLE TENNIS CLUB

1991 U.S. Open Men's Champion Zoran Primorac won last year in a five-game battle. Can he repeat against the best China, Sweden and the U.S. can offer?

DON'T MISS IT!!!
I wish to enter the events listed below. I agree to waive any and all rights and claims to television, motion picture film, or any other visual reproduction that may be made during the tournament. I understand that the USTTA and the 1992 Dow Chemical U.S. Open assumes no responsibility for the condition and maintenance of the premises of the tournament or the physical condition of the participants. In consideration of the acceptance of my entry, I hereby release the sponsors, the USTTA, the 1992 Dow Chemical U.S. Open and the tournament personnel from any claims or demands for any loss, damage, or injury sustained to my person or property. I am assuming full risk and responsibility for my participation in the 1992 Dow Chemical U.S. Open Championships.

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*A junior must be 17 or younger as of the last July 1*

**SPECIAL PROCESSING FEES:**
- Late entries: $25 for entries postmarked after April 27 and not later than May 4...
- Doubles fees: $5 per person for each doubles pairing done by tournament committee...

**RATING FEE:**
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**PARTY FEE:**
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**ADDITIONAL ALL-SESSIONS PASSES, $10/EACH:**

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- All memberships (except $5 Junior) include the magazine Table Tennis Topics.

**TOTAL FEES INCLUDING LATE FEES:**

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I ACCEPT AND WILL ABIDE BY THE STATED CONDITIONS OF THE COMPETITION.

**U.S. PLAYERS MUST BE RATED OVER 2100 TO ENTER EVENT 01**

**ONLY U.S. OLYMPIC ELIGIBLES MAY ENTER EVENTS 49 & 50**

**ONLY U.S. RESIDENTS MAY ENTER EVENTS 51 & 52**

**AMERICAN ALLSTAR EVENTS**

49 AMERICAN ALLSTAR MEN**

50 AMERICAN ALLSTAR WOMEN**

51 AMERICAN ALLSTAR SEN MEN**

52 AMERICAN ALLSTAR SEN WOMEN**

**ONLY U.S. OLYMPIC ELIGIBLES MAY ENTER EVENTS 49 & 50**

**ONLY U.S. RESIDENTS MAY ENTER EVENTS 51 & 52**

**INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL EVENTS**

53 MEN’S WHEELCHAIR SINGLES SAT 10:00 AM 150 100

54 WOMEN’S WHEELCHAIR SINGLES SAT 10:00 AM 100 75

55 STANDING DISABLED SINGLES FRI 12:00 PM 100 75

56 TETRAPLEGIC SINGLES FRI 10:00 AM A A

57 HARD RUBBER SINGLES SUN 9:00 AM 150 100

58 FOREIGN MEN’S SINGLES WED 10:30 AM 150 100

59 FOREIGN WOMEN’S SINGLES WED 10:30 AM 125 100

**FOREIGN PLAYERS NOT ENTERED IN THE TEAM COMPETITION MAY ENTER EVENTS 58 & 59**

**OPEN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM EVENTS**

(TEAMS MUST BE NOMINATED BY THEIR NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS)

60 MEN’S TEAMS WED 9:30 AM 1500 700 250

61 WOMEN’S TEAMS WED 9:30 AM 1000 500 200

62 SENIOR MEN’S TEAMS WED 9:30 AM 250 200

63 SENIOR WOMEN’S TEAMS WED 9:30 AM 150

64 JUNIOR MEN’S TEAMS WED 9:30 AM A A

65 JUNIOR WOMEN’S TEAMS WED 9:30 AM A A

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NORTHWEST AIRLINES
NEW TRAINING CENTER OPENS IN BARTLESVILLE

Robert Mayer Named Head Coach

In perhaps the unlikeliest of locations, America’s newest full-time table tennis center has recently opened in Bartlesville, OK, a town of 35,000 situated in rural northeast Oklahoma. The Bartlesville Table Tennis Association, which has been in existence for over 20 years, used to meet twice a week at the local YWCA, and once a week at Bartlesville Mid-High School. With many years of promoting table tennis to youngsters ages six and up, it was becoming apparent that the BTTA could not properly accommodate the needs of increasing numbers of aspiring junior players with the current status of limited access to table tennis. A decision had to be made whether to maintain the present course or try to elevate the program to a new level.

Jim Taylor, the father of years of Bartlesville junior table tennis programs, Jean Oliver, newly appointed president of the BTTA, Roger and Nancy Persaud, active coaches in the junior programs, and others assembled to begin pursuing the dream of having their own facility completely dedicated to table tennis. Collectively, they began assembling the resources necessary to make it happen. First, Phillips Petroleum, which is headquartered in Bartlesville, became the primary benefactor when it offered a $5,000 grant contingent upon the BTTA securing matching funds from other outside sources. Secondly, local businessman and property owner Dick Kane agreed to rent BTTA some prime retail space to be used for its playing facility at a greatly discounted rate, fulfilling Phillips’ grant requirements.

Finally, the need for someone to run the operation full-time was solved when Robert Mayer of Houston agreed to move to Bartlesville and become the Director/Coach for the new facility.

The official opening took place January 11 with a ceremony to dedicate the facility by the namesake Smith-Taylor Table Tennis Center, after Jim Taylor and the late Cliff Smith, a long-time Bartlesville table tennis promoter. Now that the pieces of the puzzle have been put together, this is what we have: a 3400 sq. ft. playing area with eight tables, including a training robot; regular business hours of 3:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and a three-hour group instruction for juniors followed by open play for both juniors and adults, and hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays with a flexible schedule of activities; a downtown storefront location with high visibility; a real table tennis atmosphere with posters on the walls, a TV and VCR for viewing table tennis videos, and displays for equipment for sale.

With good promotion and cooperation of the community newspaper, which printed a great photo and article about the Center, the initial response has been very good with a large number of new youngsters participating in various programs. Although the excitement is high within the BTTA for the potential development of many young players, the reality is that efforts to promote the Center and seek new sources of outside funding must continue. With BTTA’s recent incorporation as a non-profit organization, the prospects for acquiring assistance are becoming more promising. If you would like more information concerning the Smith-Taylor Table Tennis Center, or if you have ideas pertaining to fund-raising, please contact: Robert Mayer, 519 E. 3rd St., Bartlesville, OK 74003 (918) 336-9482 (b) or 337-3611 (center), or Jean Oliver, 600 Brookhollow Ct., Bartlesville, OK 74006 (918) 333-1044.

George Brathwaite (NY, NY) is another highly respected veteran U.S. player who now uses X’s Powerspin™ rubber. George’s many titles include Men’s Singles Champion at the prestigious C.N.E. International Championships in Toronto and recent national senior men’s titles in singles and doubles. George was a member of the historic Ping Pong Diplomacy U.S. team that visited China in 1971. George commented on the “extra kick” his shot’s have gained now that he is using X’s Powerspin™ rubber. George said that X’s rubber has “the best quality topsheet I’ve ever seen.”

Rey Domingo (Palisades, NJ) has been one of the top 15 U.S. players for many years, and is also the highest rated U.S. senior player (over 2440). Rey was World Senior Bronze Medalist in 1989 and has been U.S. National Senior’s Champ since 1987. Rey says he loves X’s. “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.”

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Table Tennis Topics 25
INTERVIEW WITH WEI WANG

February 9, 1992
Orange Coast Table Tennis Club, California
by Dave Williams

Wei Wang was the 1990 U.S. National Women’s Champion, and came within a game of winning it again last year. She finished 5th in the 1979 Chinese Nationals, but now splits her time between playing and coaching. She has a coaching article in this issue on page 12.

Topics: Tell us about your match with Insook.
Wei: This year I didn’t have very much time to prepare for the tournament. I practiced a couple of times with Ron von Schimmelmann and the U.S. girls. I had little time for practices or tournaments—so I didn’t get a chance to practice with choppers. Also, I think I played okay. I don’t feel I played badly. I just felt that Insook changed something, which I didn’t realize till I lost the first two games.
Topics: What did she change?
Wei: She attacked more than before, and she changed her serves. Whereas she used to serve underhand, she now serves topspin, which gave me less chance to start my loop from underspin. At the beginning I didn’t figure out the change in the way she played. About two or three games, I started to realize how to play differently. I changed differently and won easily until the fifth game. In the final game, I had a good lead, but then I became too happy too early, and she caught up a little. Then I focused on the lead and thought I had better play hard again. This brought me to the 14-9 lead and then I thought “I have got it already”—not really feeling that I can win, but very comfortable with the lead. I got one or two “cushion” points at 14-9, playing well, but she played well, too. My concentration wasn’t very tight so I missed a couple of easy shots and she caught up. Then I got so angry because I thought I had won a match already and now I’m going to lose it! Suddenly, I got very frustrated as I didn’t feel I had known what I had done wrong—so to do such a stupid thing like that. But it was too late. I was distracted, and forgot the strategy I used to have gained the lead and success in the previous two games. I tried to look back, but I couldn’t remember at the same time. At that moment, I thought about myself—the match was already in my hand and I let it go. That is what happened. I couldn’t recover. I relaxed too early, thinking I had enough to win. I should have known—she is a famous player. She never gives up. Choppers win by opponent’s making mistakes like that, so I should have known. I just wasn’t playing mentally.
Topics: You mentioned practicing a few times with Carol. Is Carol’s chopping similar to Insook’s?
Wei: No, it’s very different. She uses different rubber than Insook and her own rubber is much better. She uses Digestosn spin, which gives her the opportunity to loop. But when you loop very light, she can hit the ball from the middle of her forehand hit my loop. If I loop very light, she can hit the ball from the middle of her forehand. Usually I do a little bit more before a big game now to when you were playing in China.
Topics: How will you play differently next time you meet her in a tournament?
Wei: I don’t think I would play differently. I just have to be prepared. She is very tough, never giving up. Even though I might have a 9-10 point lead, I still have to be careful playing her. The strategy part all comes during the match. It cannot be prepared. You never really know what will happen.
Topics: Do you do anything to psych yourself up for a major tournament?
Wei: No, not really.
Topics: Would you tell us something about your playing career in China?
Wei: You know, all the Chinese players—good ones—are professionals, like Johnny Huang and others who are playing right now in the U.S. To be able to compete, they are all professional players. I stopped being professional in 1983—a long time ago.
Topics: Is that when you retired from table tennis to study?
Wei: Yes, I wanted to study Chinese literature and art. I graduated after 3-1/2 years of hard study. The university there isn’t like you are 18 or 19 here—I wasn’t living at a school. The teacher came out to certain schools and area and then gave us classes. The classes were very big because most of the people were already adults—not just for students. It’s a good system for China. Some people don’t have a chance when they are young—they have to have to do something else. Now when they are getting older, they can have time to study.
Topics: So the teachers come to you—to an area close to you for a time and then they travel on to a different location.
Wei: Yes, and the books for the class are the same.
Topics: Did you learn English in China?
Wei: Very little. In the school, they teach you a little bit but not very good. I’m learning here.
Topics: What is the first thing you remember about the U.S. when you first arrived?
Wei: Did anything in particular impress you?
Wei: Many things. It is very different from what I had read and “known” and heard about it. Very different. I like it a lot but I don’t think it is as easy as I had expected. I don’t think it is as easy as I had expected. When I got there I was surprised by what I had to do. I had to learn a lot of things about the system and the culture. I had to learn a lot about language, too.
Topics: You have heard a lot about the U.S. culture and new developments in a number of areas. Do you feel like you have changed anything since you first arrived in the U.S.?
Wei: I have been enjoying coaching more and more. Many people ask me if I don’t get burned out. My answer is “Yes I do!” Actually, it is just the opposite. I was a little bit nervous when I first arrived because I knew what was going to happen. I was a little bit nervous, but then, if I have found a balance, I enjoy it more now. I try to do things a lot especially when I see my students playing better. That makes me very happy. In the beginning, coaching is hard. For example, you see them developing after only a couple of months and it’s hard to see their improvement. But after two or three years, you see the seeds you have planted by and now it’s growing.
Topics: What can you tell us about your new style of coaching?
Wei: Since I have this open mind—I talk to the other coaches and have been watching play for so many years, I am always wondering what is the best way to teach—about what is the best way to interest a player and not lose the player’s interest. Also, I try to use more logic in teaching. I used to teach my coach taught me how to play. Now, since I have enough experience, I find my own way and it uses the shortest learning time—very quick and very effective.

In a communist country, since you have so much time and you are a professional player, you practice and practice. No matter how difficult a shot is, you practice so much, the difficulty becomes easy. In the U.S., the junior players especially, don’t have enough practice partners or enough places to play. So they will never be able to compete with any other country. I feel that the challenge to me is “What’s the best way to teach them? What’s the best way to improve them?” One helpful source to decide which is the best way to go is found in the techniques and new developments in a German table tennis magazine. There are lots of good articles, but one stands out. I read it, my eyes opened up, and I said “That’s it!” This is what I have been looking for a long time. “Now I know what I should do.” I tried it for about the three last months and it works wonderful—excellent.

March/April 1992
Now, more than ever, coaching is more interesting and I want to share the new strategy through a new video tape, as well as continue to write articles as the techniques are proved and improved. America definitely needs to change this situation to provide more benefit to more people from different levels.

Basically, the strategy is to teach students how to topspin from the first day—the very beginning. It used to be that in our old coaching system, we teach them how to hit the ball until they hit it well, then teach them to loop. This is logical because looping is a more advanced stroke—a more difficult shot. We are supposed to loop later, but then we meet our first problem: After you returned ball, they have this general idea. They serve an underspin ball. With the new strategy, when they start to play against a spinning ball, they are not afraid of it. 1 f you give them an underspin ball, a topspin ball

National Table Tennis 101

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PHILOSOPHY OF TABLE TENNIS STYLES
by Danny R. Todd
USTTA Certified State Coach

Table tennis is an extremely complicated and unique game because of all the intricate spins that can be imparted on the ball. Reading these spins makes our sport a lot more complicated than a simple game of ping pong—battling the ball back and forth. Not only must we read these spins, but, utilizing proper footwork and stroke position, we must counter the spin and impart spin of our own to send the ball back across a nine-foot table with speeds in excess of 100 mph. Well, there has been, and will continue to be, successful styles of table tennis to do this. But which style is best? Is an attacking, all-out defense best? What about a defensive chopping, lobbing style? Or a combination of both?

Due to the evolution of the sandwich inverted sponge racket, probably better than 90-95% of players today play table tennis with the emphasis on offense. This style of driving, looping and killing, or all-out attacking, does seem to follow as the current trend of our generation. Serve and kill, or serve, loop and kill are the characteristic three- and five-ball attack techniques. This has been a favorite strategy of the Chinese player for years. What can you say, other than that they have had tremendous success with it, winning most world championships. However, recently, the Chinese have been challenged, not only on their penholder grip because of their backhand but, also, their sternness in not treating on defense. The Chinese seemingly are making the transition to the shakehands grip style, and many of the up-and-coming young Chinese players are learning this style. Apparently the Chinese team got tired of losing points to the constant looping and driving of their opponents to the backhand, which would pin them into a mostly blocking defense, a relatively passive return. So, let’s examine what could be said in favor of an all-out attacking type style.

1) Most of the players currently utilize this style; 2) it has been a proven winning style by the Chinese, Koreans, etc.; 3) a player utilizing the forehand predominantly, can work on the same stroke in practice with a better chance of near perfection. For example, serve, loop and kill. 4) The closer you are to the table, the less radius you have to cover in terms of table area. It seems, therefore, reasonable to conclude that an up-and-coming young player would copy this style of offensive play. Now, let’s consider a defensive style of play. 1) Defense, at one time, was utilized greatly and was a proven winner in the 1940’s and 1950’s: 2) New defensive rubbers on the market (long pips, antispin and other slow, spinny/control rubbers) have helped players adapt to the super spins and speed; 3) This may be the very style to use to confuse many opponents, giving the necessary edge to win matches, since most players are accustomed to changing strategy against offensive players; and 4) This style of game is especially conducive to a person with a passive, patient personality. So, it might be reasonable to conclude that it could be the winning style of the future for the person with great athletic, physical skills and a passive type of personality. Now, one more aspect I would like to look at is the all-around type player. In its favor, one might say 1) an all-around player can attack or defend equally well on both wings; 2) this would permit attacking any weakness of an opponent; 3) if one strategy didn’t work, you would switch to another—for example, offense to defense or constant changes of the speed and spin on the ball; and 4) a player, at the highest level of expertise, could theoretically defeat anyone in the world with this style. However, I feel that this style of player will have to be a superior athlete, both physically and mentally, due to the constant stress of switching from offense to defense and knowing tactically when to switch.

Looking back at the totally offensive style, I always wondered what a person would do if he encountered someone who could just out-hit him or someone who could out-chop him. Logically, I think that this will be the future direction of the ultimate style in our sport is the development of the all-around player.

Looking more closely at this style, I have noticed basically two types of all-around players. I think the Swedish players (like Waldner) play a topspin version of this. Waldner blocks, loops, drives and kills close to the table, but he can also do these strokes at any distance from the table, throwing in an occasional chop or changing the spin and speed of the ball. I feel this constant changing keeps opponents off balance. Another type of all-around style is played by Chen Xinhuu from China (now living in England), who goes back from the table, chopping nearly every ball back. However, when least expected, he can take the attack by looping or smashing. He always seems to freeze his opponent when he uses this technique, and wins the points outright.

Personality also plays a big role in the style a player adopts. If a person is aggressive, he usually is an attack-style player (sometimes referred to as a "bash'er"), who hits everything. A person with a passive personality tends to be more defensive. I believe all good coaches should recognize the natural tendency in their students and develop the natural strength, but the coach needs to push each player to shape skills opposite to the natural tendency. In that way, a person may be an all-around player with an emphasis on defense. Either way, I believe this to be the direction for the future champions in our sport.

THE DAVID LETERMAN TOP TEN LIST: THE TEN CRAZIEST THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED IN TABLE TENNIS THAT I KNOW OF
by Larry Hodges
(Send in your own table tennis stories!)

10) A top woman player at a training camp ran up an $800 phone bill in five days talking on the phone to her boyfriend. She didn’t miss a practice session.
9) I saw two players arguing during a match. They both agreed the score was 17-12 in the third—but claimed to be in the lead. Match had to be replayed.
8) I saw two players argue at the desk over who played which match they had just played. Witnesses came forward to finger the poor loser, whose response was to get into still another argument at the desk a few hours later over who had won still another match. Witness for nabbed him again. The poor guy’s rating must have plummeted.
7) I was in a car going home from a tournament. We had to go 300 miles due south. Six hours later, the driver discovered he’d accidently gone 300 miles due north. Only 600 miles to go!
6) I injured my leg so severely one time that I was limping and couldn’t play table tennis for a week. It happened sitting while sitting down, umpiring a match. (Sean O’Neill vs. Dhiren Narotam, 1987 Olympic Festival.) Please don’t ask me how it happened...it was an accident.
5) A top junior player I was traveling with pulled out a very realistic BB gun. We went to an airport and aimed it at a ticket agent while saying, “I have a gun.” We made the flight—barely.
4) A player, when asked by the umpire to remove his warmup pants, took off his warmup pants. Then he took off his warmup pants. He was wearing a Speedo swimsuit underneath. He played the match in it. He won.
3) A player I didn’t even know gave me the finger 22 times in the first seven points of a match in a tournament. I won.
2) I saw a player eat a table tennis racketbook after losing a match. High in fiber, but relatively tasteless.
1) I signed three autographs at the 1986 U.S. Open as Jan-Ove Waldner. I wear glasses now so people can tell us apart.

ANDERSON COLLEGE TO HOST THE 1992 ACUI NATIONAL COLLEGE CHAMPIONSHIPS
by Richard McAfee

Anderson College will host the 16th annual National Collegiate Table Tennis Championships on April 25, 1992 in the Abney Athletic Center, which features excellent playing conditions.

These Championships will be the climax of more than 700 college and regional competitions being held in February and March. The 16 men and women regional champions qualify to compete in the ACUI (Association of College Unions International) Nationals.

Past participants in this event as well as many other table tennis enthusiasts will be on hand to take part in the tournament. (Note: There will be a fee for admission.)

The tournament director will be Richard McAfee, Head Coach and Director of AC’s Table Tennis Program. Students from various courses within the Sports Administration Program will be assisting, along with other AC staff members.

“We are looking forward to providing each participating athlete a positive experience that will last a lifetime,” summed Anderson College’s President, Dr. Mark Hopkins.

TOPICS SURVEY

If Topics were upgraded, would you prefer: (circle one)
a. More pages
b. Better appearance
c. More often
d. Other

What types of player profiles do you prefer to read? Rank in order of preference: (1 = most important)
1) Top Juniors
2) Top Seniors
3) Top Juniors

Are there any articles or writers that especially impress you? Or ideas for improvement? If so, please list them separately, and include it when you send the above in.

Thank you.

Return all surveys to: Larry Hodges, 6007 Sprinhill Dr. #202, Greenbelt, MD 20770. Thank you.

March/April 1992
The New York City Mammoth Club’s 118-year-old January Open was the U.S.’s #4 Ist-stage qualifier. It’s only a few blocks from Penn Station and its proximity to restaurants and delis makes it a natural for enthusiasts of all ages who want to spend some serious table time improving their games. Taking up a whole 3rd floor, the Club houses 36 tournament-quality tables, has every court barriered off, and offers very good playing conditions (all wood floors, excellent lighting). All business, there’s serious-minded Darko, one of the U.S.’s top professionals for whom table tennis is very much an everyday way of life. And when you want to take a rest, have a drink or a cold drink (though he himself says cold drinks are bad for his sinuses), you can enjoy yourself socially with others while yet improving your mental game by watching video tapes of the world’s greatest players.

Mammoth January Open
New York City, January 18-19, 1992
by Tim Boggan

March/April 1992

Mammoth January Open

The $5000-to-the-winner final is 3-game-sequence play when David leads 17-14 in the 3rd... 15-13 in the 2nd... 11-9 in the 1st... 12-10. You should probably write this down in your notebook... He does it all the time... 20-19 in the 2nd... 15-11 in the 1st... 11-5 in the 3rd... 15-13 in the 2nd... 17-15 in the 1st. He does it all the time...

The results:


Women—Final: Lily Hruby d. Alice Kimble 15,12; R.D. Group 1 B: 1, H. L. Kimble; 2,0; 2, Blanca Alejo; 1,3. Catharina Tjoek, 0-2.

R.R. Group B: 1, Eric Boggan; 2,0.2. Blanca Alejo; 1,3. Catharina Tjoek, 0-2.


U1200: Michael Shin d. Marc Monaster 17,19,19.

U11200: Lawrence Thompson d. R. R. Group A; 1, Hugh; 2,1; Ann Alvarez, 13. Flora Ng, 1-1.3. Catharina Tjoek, 0-2.

U1900: Lawrence Thompson d. R. R. Group A; 1, Hugh; 2,1; Ann Alvarez, 13. Flora Ng, 1-1.3. Catharina Tjoek, 0-2.

U2000: Lawrence Thompson d. R. R. Group A; 1, Hugh; 2,1; Ann Alvarez, 13. Flora Ng, 1-1.3. Catharina Tjoek, 0-2.

U2000: Lawrence Thompson d. R. R. Group A; 1, Hugh; 2,1; Ann Alvarez, 13. Flora Ng, 1-1.3. Catharina Tjoek, 0-2.

U2000: Lawrence Thompson d. R. R. Group A; 1, Hugh; 2,1; Ann Alvarez, 13. Flora Ng, 1-1.3. Catharina Tjoek, 0-2.

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The Westfield December Open was won by Yugoslavia's 25-year-old two-time University Champion, Darko Rop, who, after being matched in the 4th, defeated former U.S. Open title-holder Eric Bogdan in five, the 3rd, however, Eric was slow to start, and Darko, more determined than ever, built up a 14-7 lead. Eric then began a move that drew him to 13-16—whereupon he served off. Irritated, he lamented loudly "How am I supposed to play? I practice an hour a week!" Would such self-deprecation unconsciously seek its told-you-so fulfillment? But although Rop would win the 3rd game, and in the 4th move from 16-14 down to 18-17 up, he too stopped his own momentum—by serving into the net. Up match point with Darko serving, Eric took more time than usual to prepare himself—then pushed Darko's serve into the net...later lost the game at deuce. In the 5th, at 3-3, Darko got an edge, but was then down 6-4, then up 7-5. Eric made a good angled-off drop, but Darko, having no alternative, looped an incredible shot up and around the net post, so that the ball didn't bounce at all but just literally rolled across the table. Then he got another edge. And, playing beautifully now—as Eric, glowering, commented that the last ball had skidded—Darko moved to 15-9, 19-13, and 21-16 home. So it was Darko and David in the final. I am a little tired," says Darko before the match. But all I want is to play good, I don't have to win.

In the 1st, Zhuang, after taking a 13-12 lead, seems to be hitting the ball long, loses it 16-10. But in the 2nd, he's "(Zhu)" pumped up, around the end, and Darko, down game point, loops it all over. Match all even. Former Dominican Republic star Blanca Alejo in Darko's corner, giving him support, counseling him; when from 6-all Darko begins repeatedly offering advice to himself, exhorting himself on in Serenian, his unstoppable—at least 20-10 runs away with the game. In the 4th, Zhuang's turn to get excited. Down 8-6 and threatened with the loss of another point, David insists vigorously that the ball has hit Darko's skirt. But as Darko says no, and the umpire doesn't see it, it's a 9-6...and then, with Darko himself and blocking much too softly, 13-7 Darko. Fiercely, David staccatos out sonic rocket-ball-hype: "Leth's go! He draws to 14-12 but slips back down 17-12. Rop, though disdains any thought of playing "safe": three times he tries to loop in Zhuang's serve three times he fails. Still, he has a 20-17 triple match-point lead. But Zhuang, tapping, tapping, tapping the ball on his racket, taps into some inner resource as well, and, scoring on a staggered return of serve, 21-16. Now Darko, going for a shot, slips, is down, but manages to keep the ball in play...before David swats it away. Ad up, David ponders his pips, takes a drink, then wins his 5th straight point. He's still in the match.

In the last game, however, David, down 14-10, 14-13, 15-15, 15-17, can't quite recover, and so the Darko's hard-fought day after all. Though, as he says, he may not have to win, the $3000 he gets a buy a lot more than the $75 he would have won as a semifinalist, or the $150 he would have won for being the runners-up. Before Rop settled in the States this past year (he lives on Long Island with his sister Durinka, herself a very good player, and commutes regularly to the recently opened Mammoth Mall in the Kingston City, he's come as a 3-week visitor to the country before all. At that time, he'd tried persistently to find a place to play table tennis in the City, but no one could help him—not even the Manhattan "super"—operator he'd eventually made contact with. Some source of information she was: she didn't even know what "ping pong" was! To get rid of this nut, she finally gave him a number to contact. And talk about a connection: it turned out to be a Chinese restaurant.

I've fantasized that...might they in the interim have come to know Zhuang or at least know of him there at that restaurant...? And might they soon know Darko?...As if it, it's a fantasy.
The 32-entry Westfield January Open, with its top 8 seeds rated on the average over 2600, was surely the strongest U.S. tournament of the year. Home court hero David Zhuang, after getting by Potomac's MD Hua Zhang “Satellite” Xu, 9 in the 4th, upset Antigone ‘Ann’ Alvarez. Recent Pan Am finalist Hayden Wu was hoping to represent the U.S. at this year’s Olympic Games in Barcelona and, before moving on to Colorado Springs for training, is practicing in the New York area. 1973 U.S. Open finalist Kimle tries green finished second—Alice, against a penhold attacker like Lily you have to move to hit the forehand more...that was fellow Long Islander Eric Boggan. ‘This is my last tournament” Fu—lap Lee—but not only surprised Ben Nisbet—who himself in the quarter’s had had a remarkably easy 15, 7, 9 time with the suddenly no longer magical 19, 20 fast upon one another and a change-of-pace slow loop that David blocks off....And they tell me MY serves, learned from another place and time, aren’t thrown up high enough? Not one old ‘Cheng’s into the 5th?). David really didn’t collapse. He won the big 8-7 point. Big? Of course. Even the inexperienced can see it: the magnified holding strong. But at 17-12 he’s limping around to shake off. If in his past he can triumph over a Cantonese/Hong Kong/Macau field, then a couple of months, he can win here. No end-game problem this time. Match all tied up at 2 games each.

In the 5th, Zhuang seems 3-0 ready to streak again. But then it’s 5-7, 7-all. ZHUO! David has won the big 8-7 point. Big? Of course. Even the inexperienced can see it: the magnified holding strong. But at 17-12 he’s limping around to shake off. If in his past he can triumph over a Cantonese/Hong Kong/Macau field, then a couple of months, he can win here. No end-game problem this time. Match all tied up at 2 games each.

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SOONER STATE GAMES
Oklahoma City, OK
January 18 & 25
by Robert Mayer

The 1992 Sooner State Winter Games featured table tennis among such sports as basketball, gymnastics and shooting, with many of these events were showcased as part of Sportsfest '92. Held at the Myriad Convention Center, Sportsfest '92 was a feast of amateur, collegiate, and professional sporting events staged concurrently within the enormous Myriad complex. The Oklahoma University Indoor Releys track meet, an Oklahoma City Cavalry (CBA) basketball game, and a sports memorabilia and trading card show were the premiere attractions, while the Sooner State Games competitions rounded out the events.

The table tennis competition began Saturday, January 18 at the Santa Fe Club, an indoor tennis/hockey center and home of the Santa Fe Table Tennis Club, where players from all over Oklahoma met to start the preliminary rounds for the 18 different events. Play progressed up to the final four competitors in each event, which was then continued the following Saturday at the Myriad. The home town (Oklahoma area) was well represented with medal winners in nearly every category, as was Bartlesville, whose club dominated the junior events. In the Open Championship Singles, Oklahoma City's Christian Lillieroos, in his final appearance before embarking on a full-time national coaching position in Mexico City, made a strong showing, defeating Bartlesville's Robert Mayer 3-1 to capture the gold. Tulsa's Stefan Zolarek took the bronze medal with a win over Tony Chan of Oklahoma City. All in all, 78 players competed, and aside from the inconvenience for some of having to travel back-to-back weekends, it was a well-run and enjoyable tournament.

Results:
Open Singles: 1st Christian Lillieroos 2nd Robert Mayer 3rd Stefan Zolarek
Class A: 1st Tony Chan 2nd Wallace Collins 3rd Joe Williams
Class B: 1st Ronald Sites 2nd Randy Baker 3rd Terry Bell
Class C: 1st Nicholas Agimudie 2nd Taylor Oliver 3rd Steve Spain
Novice: 1st Roger Baresel 2nd James Johnson 3rd Poonam Bheda
30-39: 1st Stefan Zolarek 2nd Tony Chan 3rd Roger Eisenhour
40-49: 1st Dennis Crawford 2nd Ronald Sites 3rd Terry Bell
50-59: 1st William Munch 2nd Robert Kyker 3rd Larry Kesler
60+: 1st Wallace Collins 2nd Ed Freeman 3rd Lois Copley
Women: 1st Rong Li 2nd Kristine Sawin 3rd: Diana Walker
Boys U18: 1st Aaron Struth 2nd Paul Baresel 3rd Taylor Oliver

The Oklahoma University Indoor Releys track meet, an Oklahoma City Cavalry (CBA) basketball game, and a sports memorabilia and trading card show were the premiere attractions, while the Sooner State Games competitions rounded out the events.

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Anaconda Hard in 1.5, 1.8, or 2.1 mm - A clear "Yes" toward offensive play! For attackers who operate with heavy spin and who like the extra speed of hard sponge.

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Four for $4.00 each

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U14: 1st Taylor Oliver 2nd Nicholas Agimudie 3rd Aaron Struth
U10: 1st: Purvi Bheda 2nd Rayna Schindler 3rd: Aaron Bell
Open Dbls: 1st C. Lillieroos/R. Li 2nd J. Skidmore/T. Chan 3rd S.
Zolarek/M. Cheng
Mixed Dbls: 1st C. Lillieroos/R. Li 2nd T. Chan/V. Cheng 3rd D.

March/April 1992
Excellent playing conditions and a super-efficient tournament desk (sparked of the 1991 Richard Farrell Memo-rial Tournament, hosted by the Liberty Bell Table Tennis Foundation. There was $2000 in total prize money, with freebys courtesy of sponsors Butterfly, Reisman’s Pretzels, the USTTA, the PaTTA, the City of Philadelphia, Harrod Hayagbah, Dr. Kermik Gosnell, and Dr. Jeffrey Weiss.

Many came to honor Richard Farrell, a much beloved player, by celebrating life through this memorial. The tournament was part of the American Senior Allstar Series, with the USTTA sponsoring $500 in prize money. This concept was appreciated by the many seniors who are (should be) an important part of the table tennis community. Dave Sakai, Chair- man of the USTTA Seniors Committee, and Larry Hodges, National Coaching Chairman & Topics Editor, apparently got many Maryland players fired up to storm the Philly t.t. scene. And they did!

The best match of the tournament was the finals of the seniors over 40 be- tween Dave Sakai and George Brathwaite. This was a battle between two senior gladiators who were Spartanly fit, mentally tough, and highly spirited. You had to admire them for their endurance! The match saw-sawed back and forth in incred- ibly long looping and counterdrive rallies, reminiscent of the 60’s. The Philly fans loved it. “Diamond” Dave finally edged out the “Chief,” deuce in the fifth, with a rally that brought the house down.

The Chief, however, had a pretty good day overall, winning the esquire singles (over 50), and scoring an upset over Barry Dattel, who sprawled out on the gym floor with sinus trouble. Then there was Rene Tywang screaming in futility at Morris Jackson’s combination bat play. Parvis Mojaieverian raised his fist in triumph as he rocked Garfield Jones.

In open singles, Dennis “Mr. Topspin” Brown suddenly came to life at the end of the match to overtake a stunned Dave Sakai from down 20-16 match point. But here’s the tournament shocker...can you believe it?...Houshang Bozorgzadeh/Hamid Hayatgaib unceremoniously knocked out top-seeded Roy Domingo/ Dave Sakai in the semis of senior doubles, and went on to win the event. We understand that since then, Houshang has been in great demand as a doubles partner.

Sparks really flew in what amounted to an under 2250 barnburner with Larry Hodges finally getting the best of Hank McCoulhum. (Hank sez: Larry, when you come to Philly, don’t mess with the net.) Larry, who was fueled on a secret break-fast of my mother’s carbohydrate-rich waffles, responded coolly, not hotly, with even more fired-up play.

In the Women’s Singles blanko Alejo rolled over the field, making it look easy. Fine play, Blanca!

In the semis of open singles, David Zhuang aggressively drove and smashed through Danny Seemiller (who really hadn’t been practicing much). Danny was able to put together one solid game, but it was mostly Zhuang controlling the tempo and the play. Philly t.t. fans were amazed, nonetheless, at Seemiller’s wall-like backhand block and powerful forehand smashes off topspin. (One remarked, “Hey, this USTTA President dude is bad!”)

In the other semis, the newly arrived Yugoslavian (Serbian? Croatian?) Darko Rop controlled the match, defeating Johnny “Be Good” Onifade with vicious topspin play. Onifade seemed to be out of sync or unable to adjust to Darko’s style. (Man, can this Darko spin!) The tall, lean Yugoslav has beaten most of the top players in his homeland, and he brings excit- ing and style to the U.S.

In the finals, Zhuang defeated Rop in four of a battle of Zhuang’s speed and quickness versus Rop’s controlling topspin and power. In this case, speed and quickness came out on top, with Zhuang pulling out the pivotal third game at 19 to go up 2-1. In the fourth, Zhuang was just too much, winning easily at 13.

For Philadelphia, this was the first open tournament in more than ten years. We appreciated the support of Dan See- miller, Larry Hodges, and Dave & Donna Sakai, who have taken an interest in reviving table tennis in the Philadelphia area.

Results:


Women’s: Final: Blanca Alejo d. Donna Sakai 9,9,13; SF: Alejo d. M. Makay 6,4,4; Sakai d. Maryn Hayatgaib 15,21,19

O-20: Final: Dave Sakai d. George Brathwaite 10,19,15,14-20; SF: Sakai d. Parvis Mojaieverian 18,19,20,12; Brathwaite d. Ed Watts 13,17,12


U14: Barney J. Reed d. Jacob Weiss 7,6

U-250: Final: Larry Hodges d. Hank McCoulhum 21-21,15; SF: Hodges d. Alonso Garcia 16,17,16; McCoulhum d. Larry Bandy 17-12,18

U2050: Morris Jackson d. Rene Tywang 15,12

U1750:—Eric Eistey d. Joe Mitchell 18,24

U1575: Peng Wang d. John Thomson 16,18,18

U1000: Darrin Weigle d. Frank Gainey 12,10

Draw Ohio: Rob/Hanson d. Sakai/ Bailey 15,15

The members of the Liberty Bell Table Tennis Foundation and the SE Penn- sylvanina table tennis community are in a state of mourning. At the end of last year, our member, coach and dearly beloved friend Richard Farrell was brutally murdered in his neighborhood. Two eyewitnesses were present. Richard was ren- dered unconscious and rushed to Temple University Hospital, but twenty minutes later he was pronounced dead.

The police arrested one of the alleged murderers, but his accomplice remains at large. Eventually, justice might prevail: however, that won’t bring Richard back.

Richard was friendly, likeable, quiet, easy-going, and peace-loving. He loved to joke and flash a smile. He always greeted everyone warmly. He never caused anyone trouble. Table tennis and the people he met along the table tennis path were probably the most significant, meaningful and positive aspects of Richard’s life.

In the Philadelphia area, Richard’s signature style of steady flat hitting, in- terspersed with loops, was legendary. On the table he was a real craftsman and displayed fine touch. According to Sol Schiff, at one time Richard was possibly the best player in the country. Certainly he was in the top category. Richard at times reminisced about his training with former phenom John Tannehill and touring the nation giving exhibitions with D.J. Lee. At one Rhode Island tournament, Richard played his heart out, beating most of the best players in the country, including Errol Resek, George Brathwaite and Bernie Bukiet. This was accomplished under the coaching wing of John Day. Richard’s stepfather, who survives him.

Richard was also a very fine coach. He displayed good character, selfless service, and a kind patience towards all his students. The Philadelphia table tennis scene will never be quite the same without Richard. May the Lord bless his soul, and may he rest in peace. Roy Arditi
GEORGE HENDRY’S AMAZING WIN
by Dan Seemiller

Many Topics readers know Mr. Hendry very well from his exploits as many times U.S. Over 60 Champion, and more recently as both U.S. and World Over 70 Champion. I’d like to recall for you now one of the most amazing matches of all time.

The place is the 1991 U.S. Open...the event Men’s Singles. George is playing Andre Wong, who is a member of the Peru National Team, rated 2456. I was playing on the table behind George, and I couldn’t help but watch out of the corner of my eye and see that this was a great match. Andre’s inability to read George’s changing spin was apparent as he played safer and safely with each rally. I was amazed at George’s stamina and balance as he brought everything back.

In the end, George pulled off an amazing upset, considering he is 72. In all my career I’ve seen thousands of matches, and this was truly the most amazing win. George Hendry proves it true, table tennis is a sport for all ages.

**YOU ARE OLD, FATHER HENDRY**

Ode to the World Over 70 Champion

(Sung to the tune of You Are Old, Father William, by Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland)

“Your age is old, George Hendry,” the young man spoke,
“Your hair has become very white’
And yet you incessantly hit a hard stroke,
Do you think at your age that is right?”

“In my youth,” George Hendry replied as he reckon,
I feared hitting myself in the head;
My fellow-travellers got my skull dented and pocked;
A few more dents shouldn’t hurt it, I’ve said.

“Your age is old,” said the youth in another retort.
And yet you smash winners from all parts of the court...
Yet you smash winners from all parts of the court—
Pray, what is the reason for that?

“In my youth,” said the sage, as he comb’d his long pipes,
“I kept all my limbs very loose;
Course, it’s this fast sponge that lets me go for those rips,
While the other side’s good for a ruse.

“Your age is old,” said the youth, “and your legs are too weak
To get to the shots that you hit;
Yet I can see that your movements are still very slick,
Pray, how do you manage to do it?

“In my youth,” said George Hendry, “I was a retriever,
And had to run down many balls;
Chase after each shot, that was my endeavor,
Which often meant running through walls!

“Your age is old,” said the youth, “one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced a ping pong ball on the end of your nose—
What made you so awfully clever?

“I have answered three questions, and that is enough,”
Said George Hendry, “no more am I able;
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or get kicked through the table!”

**ST. LOUIS FALL OPEN**

November 16-17, 1991

Open Dbls: 1. Yeh/Yeh 2. S. Henderson/F. Halbig
4. L. Womack

Open: 1. I. Henderson 2. P. Lamme

Open: 1. D. Childress 2. H. Kasten

Open: 1. J. Hildebrand 2. A. Yahaya

Open: 1. M. Hew 2. B. Womack

Open: 1. M. Specht 2. R. Coker

Open: 1. M. Specht 2. B. Bacon


Most Improved Player, 1991: Carlos Bailey, 2nd Scott Dixon

**VICTORY GAMES**

by Marcel Monasterial

The American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association (AWTTA) ran the 1991 Victory Games competition, July 12-18 at Hofstra University, Long Island, New York. The tournament was a combined AWTTA Nationals and trials for selecting the U.S. Table Tennis team to the Barcelona Paralympics to be held in 1992.

The wheelchair events were functional classes from 1 to 5, while the standing disabled were functional classes 6 to 10, for open singles and doubles. Each event was run separately for both male and female.

**Functional Class Singles**

Men:
1. Class 1 Gold Skip Wilkins 
   Silver Bart McNichol 
   Bronze Sebastian de Francesco
2. Class 2 Gold Gary Blanks 
   Silver Ken Brooks 
   Bronze Grover Evans
3. Class 3 Gold Mike LoRusso 
   Silver Robert Kocur 
   Bronze John Gray
4. Class 4 Gold Mike Dempsey 
   Silver Burton Ernst 
   Bronze Ernst Anemone
5. Class 5 Gold Andre Anderson 
   Silver John Smith
6. Class 6 Gold James Lewis
7. No competition
8. Class 7 Gold Mitch Seidenfeld
9. Class 8 Gold Norman Haase
10. Silver Iver Leonard 
    Bronze David Thomas
11. Class 10 Gold Marcy Monasterial

Women:
1. Class 1 Gold Marva Ways
2. Class 2 Gold Ruth Rosenbaum
3. Class 3 Gold Jackie DiLorenzo 
   Silver Diana Richardson
4. Class 4 Gold Jennifer Johnson
   Silver Noella Kertes
5. Class 5 Gold Teresa Terranova 
   Silver Carolyn Bethka

Open Singles - Men
Standing: 
Gold Mitch Seidenfeld
Silver Marcy Monasterial
Bronze Norman Haase
Wheelchair: 
Gold Andre Anderson
Silver Mike Dempsey
Bronze Mike LoRusso
Wheelchair-Quad: 
Gold Ken Brooks
Silver Sebastian DeFrancesco
Bronze Jerry Davila

Open Singles - Women
Gold Jennifer Johnson
Silver Jackie DiLorenzo
Bronze Carolyn Bethka

Men’s Doubles
Standing: 
Gold Monasterial/Seidenfeld
Silver bronze
Wheelchair:
Gold Todd McLaughlin
Silver Dave O’Keefe
Bronze Mike LoRusso

Women’s Doubles
Standing: 
Gold Monasterial/Seidenfeld
Silver bronze
Wheelchair:
Gold Jennifer Johnson
Silver Becky Johnson
Bronze Bronze Bethka/Rosenbaum

March/April 1992
POTOMAC'S CHINESE SATELLITE: HUA ZHANG XU

by Sheri Soderberg Pittman

What happens when a satellite that was launched in China winds up landing in the United States? In this case, the so-called “Satellite,” Hua Zhang Xu, the third highest rated player living in the U.S., has made a dramatic impact on our national table tennis scene. Xu, who was born at about the same time as the first man-made satellite was being launched in China in 1970, acquired his nickname at birth.

Xu says that if you want to get to know him better, you can watch him play at tournaments. Many players had the opportunity to do just that in Detroit over Thanksgiving weekend. Xu found himself in the final along with his Potomac, Maryland-based teammates, Cheng Ying Hua and Huang Tong Sheng, who is known as “Jack.” They lost 3-2 to the Canadian team of Johnny Huang, Joe Ng and Horatio Pintea.

Although Xu lost both his single’s and double’s matches, he was not particularly disappointed. He commented, “Even though I lost, I played well, so I’m still happy. If I play really bad, even if I win, I won’t feel good to have won.”

Xu would rather credit the Canadian team than dwell on the loss. “Our opponents were really strong, so I’m not really upset. All I care about is how I played, and I’m satisfied with my performance in this tournament.” Xu was undefeated in all the team matches going into the final.

In the first match of the final, Xu faced Johnny Huang, ranked 22nd in the world. Xu had defeated Huang at the Eastern Open last May. Earlier in the year, Xu revealed some of the winning tactics for playing against Huang that he had developed along with Coach Li Zhenshi and Hank Teeaveerakit.

But didn’t they expect to make it to the final where doubles was required? Xu, in his mello manner, responded, “We never practiced doubles because we never had time to. It hurt us because with more practice, I could have played a lot better.” Still, Xu contended that he and his teammates “came here to win, not to come in second.”

After they lost, Xu surmised the feelings of his team. “First we were a little disappointed, but it’s no big deal. I don’t think they’ll take it too seriously.” After all, his teammates, who are both in their 30’s, have competed in plenty of international events throughout their table tennis careers. He added, “My teammates are not young, but they are still very good.”

Xu may feel that other players can get to know him better by watching him play, but he projects a different type of energy off the table than when he is playing. He appears to be a scientist calibrating measurements of a potion when he is at the table. Just before he serves, he throws the ball back into his hand, then repeats the sequence. His glasses give him a look of being utterly focused.

His ever-developing quiet confidence translates into quick attacks at the table and into relaxed chats at lounge tables.

At the youthful age of 21, Xu is comfortable with his decision to subordinate practice time to academic pursuits. Currently he is a computer science major at the University of Maryland, where he hopes to eventually get a graduate degree.

The American way of education suits him. In comparing the two country’s school systems, he commented, “I’ve never been to college in China, but I can imagine that you have more freedom here. You can choose your major and choose your classes. In China, you can’t do that. The school officials choose for you. In China, it’s hard to get into a college, but once you get in it is easy. I don’t think I would have to stay up until one or two in the morning studying, as I do now, to get A’s.”

Freedom is what he finds most attractive about this country. Xu, however, has no plans to make the U.S. his permanent home. He has a student visa, which means that he is not accumulating time under immigration residency requirements. He also wants to settle in China because he is his parents’ only child.

His father, Yin Sheng Xu, is the president of the Chinese Table Tennis Association. He was a top player in the 1960’s, and the chief national coach in the 1970’s. Surely this Satellite got a boost from both nature and nurture.

His earliest nurturing came primarily from his great-grandmother, Shen Hui. He said affectionately of her, “She’s 94 years old. She took care of me after I was born until I was 12 or 13. She’s the person I love the most.”

So, while Xu is enjoying himself in the United States, he also envisions a time in the not too distant future when he will return to China. When that time comes, Xu predicts, “It will take me some time to readjust, but I will be able to get used to life there when I go back.”

Somehow it seems that this unassuming, yet determined, Chinese-made Satellite will do just fine wherever his orbit takes him.

March/April 1992
THE EXPEDITE SYSTEM AND THE RULES IN GENERAL
by Bob Partridge
International Umpire

Having been in the unusual position of being the umpire who had to call Expedite in the 5th game of the finals of the Men’s Open at the U.S. Nationals, a comment or two seems fitting. First, let me say that I personally feel that Expedite was inappropriate in that situation. However, match officials have no latitude interpreting that and most other rules. Our job is to enforce the laws equally for both opponents so that a fair match can be played. We enforce, we don’t interpret. Since the USATT has adopted the ITTF Laws of Table Tennis without modifications, one must look to the ITTF for rule changes. Incidentally, the Expedite rule was recently modified so that when both players or pairs have reached 19, the clock is turned off. In the Men’s Open Final, the score was 18-16 when time ran out.

All matches umpired by qualified umpires are required to be timed. The clock is stopped whenever both players put their paddles down. Tournaments! (10, -14, 23).

LaFrance, a hitter with a few tricky serves in his arsenal, chocolates with high serves, will find the necessary contacts to Expo his team to the finals. He took out Huntsville’s Ralph Kissel before falling in three games, (10, -14, 23).

Keith LaFrance has been a resident of Alabama for three years. He followed this up by having an American Allstar Series last March/April 1992. We are situated in the center of England, 30 minutes from Birmingham Airport, 40 minutes from the cultural centers of Stratford Upon Avon and Coventry. I would be extremely grateful if you could please help us make contact with a club similar to ourselves who would like to get involved in an exchange.

Bernie has had about as much international experience as our U.S. Team while just growing up. He was born in Poland, but moved to Sweden when he was four. When he was five, he moved to Germany. Finally, when he was thirteen, he came to the United States. Maybe a little Grubba, Kucharski, Waldner, Appelgren, Persson, Lindh, Fetzner and Rosskopf rubbed off on him. Hopefully some will rub off on us. All these great players developed shortly after Bernie’s arrival in their country. (Take note: Bernie’s a U.S. citizen now, and has no plans on ever leaving—except to represent the U.S. in international tournaments!)

Bernie’s a big kid. Did I say big, or BIG??? He’s well over six feet, and still growing—rather impressive for a 16-year-old. When he’s foul- ing in the footsteps of six-foot-six-inch Kucharski of his native Poland, with whom Bernie “has connections,” and with whom he has practiced with during family trips to Poland? They even play the same way—powerful loops from both sides. But Bernie says he is big “because my father is big, and because I drink lots of milk.” However, he also says that “Next to and 10 the Hall of Fame Championships will be held in Augusta, Georgia.

In June, the U.S. Open will host an Allstar event, and in September the Sun TV Open will be held in Pittsburgh. We are hoping that the Greensboro, North Carolina Sports Commission will find the necessary sponsorship to host the Allstar Finals in October.
COACHING
CHAIRMAN’S REPORT
by Larry Hodges

In December, 1991, 39 State Coaching Directors were appointed. Their first task was to compile a list of coaches and potential coaches for their state, with the emphasis on getting at least one (if possible) from each "target area." A target area is defined as any USTTA certified club, or a city with a population over 50,000. The goal is to greatly increase the likelihood that there will be a coach available for new or current members.

Once this state-by-state list is compiled, it will be sent to new members, and current members when requested. It will be sent to all USTTA certified clubs as well.

How can you generate interest? If you have been certified as a coach, than you should be on the list. (Since I became Coaching Chairman, I have found a number of certified coaches who had been inadvertently dropped from the list at some point. If you are not on the list, but think you should be or would like to become one, contact USTTA Headquarters for a copy of the Instructions Guide to Table Tennis, which includes the Instructions Guide test. USTTA members who take this test successfully become certified coaches (Level 1). Or, alternately, send me a coaching resume and you might be certified higher than Level 1. Or contact your State Coaching Director, who can have you certified at the Club Level by sending me a letter of recommendation.

There are two ways a nationwide coaching program can be set up. The “restrictive” method means setting tough criteria, so that the few who get certified are thoroughly qualified. This is appropriate when there are far more potential coaches than spots available. In our case, where we desperately need more coaches, I have adopted an “unrestrictive” method, whereby I consider anyone who has been certified as a coach. In our case, where we desperately need coaches, this method is appropriate as we have far more potential coaches than spots available.

Coaches will be sent a mailing when they become certified which will explain what is necessary to become certified at a higher level. If you are currently certified as a Level 1 coach, you will be getting a mailing by the end of April. (If you do not, please contact me.)

One note to all State Coaching Directors and other coaches—the 20 certified coaches that were considered has been cancelled for now. Checks already sent to you will be returned. Get certified now before we return to it!

I would like to set up a coaches meeting at the U.S. Open on the state of coaching in the U.S. If you would be interested in attending such a meeting, and what topics you think should be covered.

Don’t miss the excellent coaching article on page 12 by Wei Wei! It’s very readable and interesting. Perhaps this could be your ticket to the top?

All questions on coaching certification should go to Larry Hodges, National Coaching Chairman, 6007 Springhill Dr. #202, Greenbelt, MD 20770, (301) 345-9112.

March/April 1992

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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, Bethesda, PA 19071.

Olympic Eligible Men

Maryland Circuit #5
Brooklyn Open

Olympic Eligible Women

Maryland Circuit #5
Brooklyn Open

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**NATIONAL TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE**

March 7-8, CHINESE NEW YEAR TOURNAMENT, Costa Mesa, CA. Contact: Terry Timmins, Orange Coast College, 2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 (714) 432-5833 (American All-Star Series Event)

March 7-8, Mammoth March Open, Woodside, NY. Contact: Michael Shim, Mammoth Table Tennis Club, 550 Eighth Ave., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10018 (212) 766-2255.

March 7-8, Maryland Circuit #8, Columbia, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 5134 Durham Rd. W., Columbia, MD 21044 (301) 750-5626.

March 7-8, San Antonio Winter RR. Contact: Joe Cummings, 635 Robinson Blvd., San Antonio, TX 78209 (512) 828-4055.

March 8, Denver Giant Round Robin. Contact: David Zimmerman, 4721 W. 30th Ave., Northbrook, IL 60066 (708) 425-2342.

March 14, Sun TV Akron Open. Contact: David W. Strang, 728 Allerton St., Kent, OH 44240.

March 14-15, Westfield March Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 4 Laurel Place, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 (908) 232-9659.

March 14-15, Disney Spring Open. Contact: Jim Wilson, 635 Smelker, Beaumont, TX 78621 (512) 856-4424.

March 14-15, Hawthorne/Northrop Open. Los Angeles, CA. Contact: Michael Shim, Mammoth Table Tennis Club, 550 Eighth Ave., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10018 (212) 766-2255.

March 14-15, Maryland Circuit #9, Columbia, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 5134 Durham Rd. W., Columbia, MD 21044 (301) 750-5626.

March 16-17, Westfield April Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 4 Laurel Place, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 (908) 232-9659.

March 28, MIT Open, Somerville, MA. Contact: Dave Marcus, 52 Beacon St., Apt. 16, Somerville, MA 02143 (617) 492-4317.

March 29-29, "Swing Into Spring" Sr. Tournament, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Todd Peterson, 18243 N. 46th St., Phoenix, AZ 85032 (602) 482-7774.

April 4-5, 1992 Spring Round Robin. Westfield, NJ. Contact: Michael Shim, Mammoth Table Tennis Club, 550 Eighth Ave., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10018 (212) 766-2255.

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


May 2, Rockford Open, Rockford, IL. Contact: Paul Erickson, 3248 Montlake Dr., Rockford, IL 61111 (815) 877-2132.

May 2-3, Mammoth May Open, Woodside, NY. Contact: Michael Shim, Mammoth Table Tennis Club, 550 Eighth Ave., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10018 (212) 766-2255.

May 2-3, Maryland Circuit #10, Columbia, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 5134 Durham Rd. W., Columbia, MD 21044 (301) 750-5626.

May 2-3, Spring Space Coast Open, Palm Bay, FL. Contact: Joe Heneke, 740 Barron Lane NE, Palm Bay, FL 32905 (772) 724-4067.

May 8-10, HALL OF FAME CHAMPIONSHIPS, Augusta, GA. Contact: Pete May, 2416 Wilshire Dr., Augusta, GA 30904 (706) 724-0851.

May 9-10, Minnesota Open, Minneapolis, MN. Contact: Mitch Seidenfeld, 1421 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55407 (612) 724-8400.

June 10-14, DOWCHEMICAL U.S. OPEN, Midland, Michigan. Contact: USTTA Foundation Representative, 1750 E. Boulevard Place, North Brunswick, NJ 08902 (908) 232-9659.

June 23-24, Open State Open, Concord, CA. Contact: Pat Partridge, 3147 Washington Court, Lafayette, CA 94549 (510) 933-1014.

June 7-9, Giant Round Robin, Columbus, OH. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 5134 Durham Rd. W., Columbus, OH 21044 (614) 750-5626.


July 10-12, MEIKLEJOHN NATIONAL SENIOR OPEN, Laguna Hills, CA. Contact: Julius Margolis, 2347-D Avenue Sevilla, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 (714) 770-3984.

July 25-August 9, 1992 SUMMER OLYMPIC PICS, Barcelona, Spain.

August 8-15, JUNIOR OLYMPICS/JUNIOR NATIONALS, Rochester, MN. Contact: Richard Butler, 2626 E. Court St., Iowa City, IA 52246 (319) 377-3952.

November 27-29, U.S. OPEN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS, Detroit, MI.

December 16-20, 1992 U.S. NATIONALS & BUTTERFLY WORLD DUAL CUPS, Las Vegas, NV.

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USTTA OFFICERS

President
Dan Seemiller
307 Meritt Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15227
(412) 884-5864

Executive Vice President
George "Gas" Kennedy
20 West Elmwood Place
Minneapolis, MN 55419
(612) 824-0505

Secretary
Donna Sakai
619 Woodstream Turn
Lanham, MD 20706
(301) 794-9527

Treasurer
Sheila O'Dougherty
617 Gibson Road
Baltimore, MD 21229
(301) 644-6811

Vice Presidents
Shonie Aki
1900 Vine Street
Berkeley, CA 94709
(510) 527-1309

Barry Rodgers
399 Prineville Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15235
(412) 825-7225

Terry Timmins
2 Northwinds
Alviso, CA 95002
(408) 562-8185

Foundation Representative
Timmy McClure
7127 Williams Creek Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46240
(317) 255-2758

Olympic Athlete Representative
Insook Bhushan
16951 E. Progress Circle N.
Aurora, CO 80015
(303) 693-0614

National Athlete Representative
Scott Butler
Apartment 6
216 Greene Street
Augusta, GA 30901
(404) 724-4591

Group B Vice President
Matt Dunn
Dunn University
Cincinnati, Ohio
(513) 606-5451

Honoray Member
Roger Nakagawa
Brother International Corp.
200 Cottontail Lane
Somerset, NJ 08873
(908) 356-8880

Executive Director
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Table Tennis Topics

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