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TABLE TENNIS TOPICS
Official Magazine of the
U.S. Table Tennis Association

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COACHES' REPORT

by Larry Hodges
National Coaching Chairman

A few changes from last issue:

Bill Lui of California's correct area
code is (510).

Gwyn Jones, previously from Texas,
now lives in Arlington, VA, and her phone
number is (703) 528-5107.

Dave Strange, who is listed in Warren,
MI, now lives in Kent, OH, and his phone
number is (216) 673-2614. He commutes
between the two states, and is available
for coaching in both locations.

Congratulations to Hank McCoullum,
of State College, PA, (814)
238-7962, who is now the Coaching
Director for Eastern Pennsylvania. Hank
is also newly certified as a Level II State
Coach. (Because I've been so busy put-
ting together some stories, I still haven't
sent him any materials, but hopefully I'll get
something to him before he gets this.)

Also congratulations to Carlos D.
Ebro, of Silver Spring, MD, (301)
4185, Frank W. Hanley, of Naples, FL,
(813) 643-7294; and Danny L. Rominger,
of High Point, NC, who are newly
Certified Level I Club Coaches after pass-
ing the Instructors' Test.

One of my most common duties is
writing letters of recommendation for
coaches who are starting new programs.
If you can start a coaching program, I can
give you a USTTA letter of support on
letterhead. I can even fax it to you. (And
you can fax requests—see fax number below.)

I have been told that in the coaches
letters of the last issue, I did not make it
clear that the various levels for coaching
are reached not only by expertise, but by
wages from work often offset the love
of officiating for many certified um-
pires.

The solution adopted by the E.C. is
to approve an Officials Committee, com-
prised of the following umpires:
Allen Barth
Erich Haring
Y.Lee
Jimmy McClure
Tom Miller
Bob Partridge
Terry Timmins

The committee will meet at this
year’s Nationals and World Doubles Cup
to choose among themselves a chair
and delegate other duties as necessary.
The Officials Committee will decide of-
cially policy, consistent with the
Bylaws of the USTTA, as well as public
relations, grass roots development, ad-
mnistering the officials development
budget, and liaison with USTTA, ITTF,
and Rules Committee. The new Offi-
cials Committee will essentially abso-
and absorb the existing Umpires Com-
mittee.

To fund the objectives of the Offi-
cials Committee, the E.C. approved a
$1 per player fee for all USTTA san-
ctioned tournaments beginning January
1, 1993. This fee shall be sent to the
USTTA as part of the tournament report
for deposit in an Officials account. It is
to be dispersed only by the Officials
Committee for its stated objectives, with
50% designated for officiating the U.S
Open and Nationals tournaments.

Local tournament directors may submit umpire development proposals to the Officials Committee for use of up to
50% of each tournament’s officials fees
submitted, as recorded in their tour-
nament report. Those of us who offici-
ate look forward to providing the fairest
possible playing conditions for all.
Thank you to all of those many people
who have written, contributed and sup-
ported this proposal.
You Don’t Have to Travel to Barcelona to Be a Winner. Just Try One of Butterfly’s New Blades for 1992.

**Clearfield**  Fast 7-ply blade which has “softness ’n vibration,” the element liked most by European players. Even though the wood is same as the Manarsa, the 7-ply make this an effective offensive blade. Medium head size. Flared handle. Thickness 6.3 mm. 96 grams.

**Manarsa** Light, European 5-ply blade is highly flexible and gives a soft feeling at impact. Wood composition, new to Butterfly, provides excellent control & touch. Good combination of spin, speed & control. Medium head size. Flared handle. Thickness: 4.5 mm. 75 grams.

**Arylate Keyshot-FL,ST**  Arylate represents a third generation of blades after wood and carbon. 5-ply whose combination of speed, softness, and non-vibration is made possible by this new material called Arylate. Thickness: 5.8 mm. FL 87 grams, ST 85 grams.

**Euro 5-FL,AN**  Fast 5-ply African wood blade. Compact head size. The center ply is thicker and the outer plies are thinner than other African wood blades. Thickness: 5.3 mm. FL 92 grams, AN 86 grams.

**X Star-AN,FL**  This 5-ply basswood blade is successor to the Surbek blade. Good control. Thickness: 5.4 mm. AN 87 grams, FL 95 grams.

**Hermosa-FL,ST**  A medium speed African wood blade. It gives a good combination of topspin, back and hit capabilities. Medium head size, 5-ply. Thickness: 5.1 mm. FL 90 grams, ST 87 grams.

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RAMBLINGS FROM THE EDITOR

by Larry Hodges

As you can see, this issue of Table Tennis Topics is not Table Tennis Today—not yet. Red tape has forced the renaming of the magazine to be rescheduled for the Jan/Feb, 1993 issue. So today it’s not today, but it will be today tomorrow.

A quick apology about the change in name to Dan & Judy Todd of Missouri, who already edit a Missouri newsletter entitled Table Tennis Today. I did not consciously realize that I was stealing their name, yet they’ve been sending me their magazine for a long time—it must have sunk into my cranium somewhere and began whispering sweet nothings at me, "Table Tennis Today! Table Tennis Today!" Anyway, I did do a study of USA Today in graduate school a couple of years ago, and that is where I thought I’d gotten the idea.

In the last issue of Topics, it was inadvertently reported that Marianne Bessinger represented the U.S. at the 1996 World Championships. Marianne reports that she is not a member of a national team, not as a member of the team. As asked by a reporter, she stated that she played at those Worlds, and this was misinterpreted to mean that she represented the U.S. Topics regrets the error.

Also, it needs to be noted that it was Roger Chin, not Ronald, who was runner-up for gold in the 1976 Olympic Games. Fallicoff was also co-project director of the new computerized Sitco robot. Fallicoff was also co-project director of the new computerized robot. Fallicoff was also co-project director of the new computerized robot. Fallicoff was also co-project director of the new computerized robot.

I hope you like the cover photo of World Champion Residency Participant, who won the $15,000 Sears International Invitation tournament. Make sure to read about how close Jim Butler, Dan See-miller and Huaxiang Xu came to beating him!

Advertising revenue has doubled this past year, while production costs have dropped 33%. This is why the magazine, originally planned at 32 pages/issue for this year, is instead 44-48 pages/issue. Next year’s initiative: to increase subscriptions, which currently stand at about 70 (excluding the 7,000 USTA members who get the magazine as part of membership).

The response to both the NBC petition and Topics survey have been excellent. I’ll be sending in the petitions in early December, and publishing the survey results in the Jan/Feb Table Tennis Topics (I’ll need all petitions by December 1.)

The deadline for all articles and photos for the Jan/Feb 1993 issue of Table Tennis Today will be December 1, 1992. (This excludes the Nationals—space will be reserved for that.) If you have something important that can’t make that deadline, contact me.

BATS AND BALLS

by Dan Ganz

My name is most likely looking back in time, unless it brings back memories such as the first time we met Timmie Bogert. Is that it? I hope if you will the great Timmie in the beautiful Table Tennis room of Mary Larsen TELLING YOURS TRULY WHAT A GREAT table tennis player he was, and that he was a bridge master at the age of 15, and then losing to yours truly 21-10, 21-7. Truthfully, would you believe this wild story?

Without telling my age, and it’s almost the same as the great Sol Schiff, and although we must admit he looks years older, we like to remember the wonderful player’s yester-year, and here to the best of my recollection ARE A FEW OF THE BEST.

It all started about the year 1936 on a wonderful street called Jerome Ave, where I first got my hands wet with a sport called Table Tennis. Jerome Ave and West Burnside on the second floor to be exact. The Creme de la creme to be exact played there. We remember the weekly tourn-aments featuring the best players in the east. Yet, the first prize of a few bucks for Charlie Schmitt, the best defensive player of the day, was always telling his sadly beaten opponent, "You was playing Gut, but I was playing better."

We had Bobby Wilkenfield, Howie Orner, Sol "The Redhead" Schneider, Sid Jacobs, and a host of other names that went of the way of the buggy whip with the advent of sponge.

First we had Waffle sponge, 1/2 inch thick, that made yours truly one of the better players on Long Island, until everyone got one used to the trick spikes and crazy bounces of the ball. After unifying the thickness of the sponge, the next thing that came up was the advent of the loop. It seems like only yesterday that the Long Island Table Tennis Association invited two nondescript players from England named Babbedly and Jacobsen to show us our best players the advantages of using the loop. That evening, beautiful wife Ververick fed Miles, Klein and five other hot dates and all bragged how they were going to make the English take their loop and stuff it. But when push came to shove, the English did the showing. The best any of our stalwarts could do was 10 points. The one that really came out ahead was Erwin Klein, as his dinner at our house could have fed an extra three players.

Then we once again glanced back in time and saw that wonderful coordinated pair of Sy Sussman and Ed Finner, SY with the great backhand, and Ed with the great forehand. Eddie, who gave up table tennis and ran a bridge club instead, has since passed away. SY, we are happy to report, is still hanging in.

Remember some of the top players and teams that I revere in some of the past players, the Schein brothers, Doug Cartland, Milt Silber, Leah Neuberger, Manny Moskowitz, Bernie Bukiet, and the late great “Let’s change the sponge” Dr. Gal.

American World War Two came the new breed, with pimpled rubber still in vogue. We had Peggy’s, Schiff, Miles, Mr. Show- man Mary Reisman, and a host of class “A” players too numerous to mention. Moving right along to the days of Frank Davison and the superb playing of Bernice Leiber, Phil Malamud, Bobo Rosenthal, Dave Cox, Chris Schlotterhause, and a guy who played an entire season with his left hand because of a broken right hand write down the name of Chuck Quirman.

It was there that we started the L.I.T.T.A. and had many a meeting held at the “House of Ganz,” the watering and eating place for the mob. Remember guys, the next private place you have to play. Less you forget the last one, it was not in New York, but in good old Rockville Centre, on Broadway, at the home of Mary Larsen. For a lowly table tennis player, this was sheer heaven. Two tournaments each week, with the winner taking home half the entry fee collected. I must admit that playing for the past 60 years has been fun, and who knows— I may find a magic Racket somewhere and try again.

USTTA EXECUTIVE MEETING

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
September 25-27, 1992

A meeting of the USTTA Executive Committee was held September 25-27, 1992 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The following are descriptions and outcomes of the motions discussed at the meeting. The complete minutes package is sent to each club and committee chair. Copies are available to members from headquarters upon request.

The following board members attended the meeting: Shonie Aki, Insook Bhushan, Scott Butler, Roy Dickson, Gus Kennedy, Jimmy McClure, Shirley O'Dougherty, Barry Rodgers, Donna Rader and Linda Gleeson. Topics Editor/National Coaching Chairman Larry Hodges was also in attendance.

Motion #1: Passed 11-0-0 Scemiller

Appraisal of June Executive meeting minutes.

Motion #2: Passed 11-0-0 Timmins

Propose that Executive Board endorse RTP Administrator Charlie Wright’s rules and policies for the RTP Program.

Motion #3: Passed 11-0-0 Kennedy

Move that Rufford Harrison be the USTTA’s recommendation for the ITTF Merit Award designation.

Motion #4: Passed 11-0-0 O’Donougherty

Propose that the USTTA accept revised Umpire Proposal presented by Terry Timmins, including the formation of the USTTA’s Officials Committee and its funding structure, effective 1-1-93.

Motion #5: Passed 6-0-1 Dickson (Aki abstain, Bhushan, Kennedy, McClure, & Sakai absent)

Move to separate the Junior National Championships from the Junior Olympics and hold the 1993 Junior National Championships in Potomac, Maryland. In addition, two by-law changes were made by mail vote since the June 1992 meeting:

Motion: Passed 10-0-2 McClure (Bhushan & Butler absent)

Move to revise USTA Board of Governors bylaws to read as follows:

The Olympic Athletes’ Representative must be an active Adult member of the USTTA and will be elected by and from among those players who have represented the USTTA in the World Championships, Olympic Games, or Pan American Games within the previous ten years. All players who have represented the USTTA in the World Championships, Olympic Games, or Pan American Games within the previous ten years, regardless of age, will be eligible to vote for this position. To be nominated and/or elected to the position of Olympic Athletes’ Representative, the player must be a United States citizen prior to the beginning of the term of office.

Motion: Passed 10-0-2 O’Donougherty (Aki & Butler absent)

Move to change eligibility requirements

DEFINITIONS:

ITTF ELIGIBLE: (ITTF Rule 4.7 IN PART)

A PLAYER SHALL BE ELIGIBLE TO REPRESENT AN ASSOCIATION IF HE WAS BORN IN THE TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THAT ASSOCIATION OR HAS RESIDED IN THAT TERRITORY FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST SIX YEARS, PROVIDED HE HAS NOT REPRESENTED ANOTHER ASSOCIATION IN THE PREVIOUS SIX YEARS AND IS NOT CURRENTLY SUSPENDED BY AN ASSOCIATION HAVING JURISDICTION OVER HIM... PLAYERS WHO BY JULY 10, 1988 HAD ACQUIRED ELIGIBILITY UNDER THE PREVIOUS TWO YEARS OF RESIDENCY REGULATION WILL RETAIN THAT ELIGIBILITY (GRANDFA- THER CLAUSE).

ALSO, EFFECTIVE MAY 18, 1992, THE SIX YEAR RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL ELIGIBILITY WILL NOT APPLY TO PLAYERS WHOSE PERIOD OF RESIDENCY BEGAN BEFORE THEY WERE 16 YEARS OF AGE WILL BE REQUIRED TO HAVE A GREEN CARD (1-151 ALIEN REGISTRATION) AND ONE YEAR RESIDENCY PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT. (1-94 FORM TO BE REQUESTED AS PROOF OF ENTRY DATE).

OLYMPIC ELIGIBLE: UNITED STATES CITIZENS OR LEGAL RESIDENTS WHOSE WAITING PERIOD FOR OBTAINING CITIZENSHIP WILL EXPIRE 180 DAYS BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE NEXT SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT.

PAN AM ELIGIBLE: UNITED STATES CITIZENS OR LEGAL RESIDENTS WHOSE WAITING PERIOD FOR OBTAINING CITIZENSHIP WILL EXPIRE 180 DAYS BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE NEXT PAN AM GAMES PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT.

WAITING PERIOD GUIDELINES: 1) POSSESS A VALID GREEN CARD FOR A PERIOD OF 5 YEARS OR 2) IF MARRIED TO A U.S. CITIZEN, POSSESS A VALID GREEN CARD FOR A PERIOD OF 3 YEARS.

6 Table Tennis Topics

November/December 1992
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Weight: L - light; M - medium; H - heavy

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On September 19th at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, the first annual Sears International Invitational was held. Sears, one of the largest retailers of table tennis equipment in the U.S., was unveiling its new table, "The International," with a black surface. This event was televised on Sports Channel in the Chicago area, and on Prime Network elsewhere in the country, and had a purse of $15,000. The crowd was peppered with table tennis enthusiasts from the Schaumberg club, which also supplied the volunteers for the tournament—selling tickets, publicity, etc.

The players invited were placed in two round robin groups of four. The top two finishers in each group would move to a single elimination semifinals.

GROUP A—Peter Karlsson (Sweden), Sean O'Neill, Dan Seemiller and Huazhang Xu. Round One: The fireworks started immediately with Xu winning the 1st and going up 11-5 in the 2nd against World Doubles Champion Karlsson. Karlsson rallied to win the match in three, but very easily could have lost it to Xu two straight. Seemiller, attacking everything, posted a 2-0 upset win over O'Neill at 19,18. Winning 2-0 would help O'Neill in danger of being beaten by a Sony! 

GROUP B—Jim Butler, Joe Ng, Darko Rop and Guillermo Munoz. Round One: Jim Butler took care of a dangerous Darko Rop at 20,13. The 1st game was a statistic Darko Rop upset at 19,17. Karlsson was leading the 1st game all the way, then faded badly at the end. Seemiller won going away in the 2nd.

Group B, Round Two: Jim Butler wins 2-1 over Munoz after losing a tough 1st game 26-24. In a most important match Darko Rop upsets Joe Ng, 2-0. Darko pins Joe Ng on his backhand side and controls the rallies, while Ng is playing soft and backhanding up too quickly. This puts Darko in excellent position to advance to the semifinals.

Group A, Round Three: O'Neill wins the 1st game at 19, but Karlsson turns it on to win 2-1. Seemiller, needing only one game to qualify, rolls over Xu easily at 15,17. Karlsson wins the group, and Seemiller is 2nd.

Group B, Round Three: Jim Butler only needs one game against Ng to advance. Butler, who is playing very well these days, wins easily 2-0. Rop defeats Munoz 2-1. Butler wins the group, and Rop is second.

SEMINFALS:

Rop vs. Karlsson
Karlsson, who had lost the 1st game in all of his round robin matches, doesn't this time, and overpowers Rop three straight. The games were close, but Karlsson, sensing the $6,000 1st prize, was not to be denied in this match. Darko played well, but just couldn't win the big points.

Seemiller vs. Butler
Karlsson wins the group, and Seemiller is 2nd.

This was a rematch of the Olympic Trials which Seemiller won over Butler, but Karlsson wins the trials and qualified for Barcelona. In the 1st game, Dan was leading 14-11 but a late run by Jim gave him the lead, 1-0. The second game is obviously the pivotal one as Seemiller cannot afford to go two down against the favored and higher rated Jim Butler. Jim turns it on is up 12-4, but Butler rallies, and with a backhand to Dan's wide forehand, 17-13. Jim serves, and it quickly back in the game, scoring four of five to go to 17-18. A moment later it's deuce. Two points later and Butler completes the comeback and goes up 2-0. Seemiller wins a tough 3rd game 25-23 (at one point diving into a TV camera, leading one spectator to yell "Danny, you've been beaten by a Sony!").

Butler vs. Karlsson
Jim and Peter play for the club in Sweden's top league, and the way they play it looked like they really knew each other's game inside out. This was one of the finest matches played on U.S. turf in several years. The rallies were spectacular with very few unforced errors. Jim is outplaying Karlsson through three games, 1up-2-1. In the 4th, Karlsson turns it on up 12-4, but Butler rallies, only to lose it at 19. In the fifth, Jim is up and controlling play at 13-9. At this critical juncture, Jim seems to lose patience and tries to win points too quickly. Peter, showing his international experience, wins 9 in a row to go up 17-13. Jim was never behind in this match until this late 5th game run by Peter. Karlsson won on to win the $6,000 1st prize while Butler just have to wait till next time.

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November/December 1992
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195 players combined to make the 1992 $7,000 SUN TV Open one of the most successful ever. The large turnout (fuelled in part by the importing of an even 40 members from the Potomac Table Tennis Club in from over 200 miles away) led Director Dan Seemiller to hire Chris Manglat at the last minute to haul five tables 200 miles to Pittsburgh from the National Table Tennis Center in Maryland, for a total of 25 tables.

A players’ party was held at the Pittsburgh Sports Garden, the largest sports bar in Pittsburgh. A large number of spectators watched as Olympic Team members Lily Hugh and Jim Butler did exhibitions, with Stan Carrington the charismatic referee. A number of other tournament players (myself included) were dragged in front of the crowd (kicking and screaming) by Stan to entertain the crowd. All in all, it was a pretty successful event.

The powerful Open draw included seven players over 2500, including top seeds Cheng Yinghua and Jim Butler at 2777 and 2743. Meanwhile, Butler would be facing a showdown with other U.S. players in the American Allstar Men’s event, with Sean O’Neill, John Onifade, and others all lying in wait. In the women’s Allstar event, Lily Hugh was seeded first by over 300 rating points.

Some early round matches in the Allstar Men started the tournament on an interesting note. In the first round, lobber/loopster Hung Pham, newly arrived from California as part of the Potomac contingent, led 2-0 in games and 20-19 match point on Dicky Fleisher before succumbing in five to Fleisher’s long pips-on-the-forehand attack. Fleisher, who’d almost given newly-arrived from China Amy Feng a similar welcome at the Hall of Fame tournament, is getting to be the welcoming committee for new arrivals in the U.S. and/or east coast—a scary thought. However, Fleisher went down in the next round in three straight deuce games to John Onifade. Another good early-round battle was Randy Seemiller’s five-gamer over Barney J. Reed. However, every match went about as expected into the quarters.

Three of the quarters matches were 3-0, with Butler over Randy Seemiller, O’Neill over Derek May, and Onifade (now using feint long pips on the backhand) over Dhiren Narotam in a 22,17,19 battle of loops. The last quarters, Dan Seemiller versus Todd Sweeris, was one of the matches of the tournament, as well as one of the most emotional—with 38-year-old Seemiller, five-time U.S. champion but now president of the USTTA, still holding part of the torch that up-and-coming players such as Sweeris so coveted.

Danny easily won the first 21-13. But in the second, Todd controlled the rallies from the start, and Danny finally swatted two balls into the net at 11-19 to end it.

In the third, Danny pulled away quickly, and went up 20-15—only to lose five in a row! Then Todd looped to Danny’s forehand, Danny looped off the bounce—and Todd counterlooped right back off-the-bounce! Up game point, Todd served short, and Danny drop hit the ball. Todd is caught off guard, expecting a deep return—but leaps in and flip-kills a winner! Game to Todd as Danny smacks the ball high up into the rafters in despair.

In the fourth, spectators get dizzy as the players trade strings of points. Down 0-3, Danny then goes up 6-4, down 8-10, then up 16-11, and pulls away to a comfortable 21-16 win.

In the fifth, Todd goes up 3-0, but then Danny starts scoring, and soon leads 14-10. But Todd scores four in a row, and is soon serving at the end down 17-18. But Danny quickly wins the next two to go up 20-17, and after dodging disgusted Todd’s drop-kicked racket, an apologetic Todd quickly loops into the net. Match to Dan Seemiller, 13-12, 20,16,17.

The semis start off with Jim Butler versus John Onifade. In the first, John goes on a loop-killing binge, but Jim holds on to reach deuce. At 20-20, John gets a net, and Jim returns on the net for a winner. When John loops off the end, Jim wins the final, 20-19. A very unhappy John seems to lose something in his game from there on, and although the points are good, Jim wins the next two at 16 and 18 to advance to the final.

The first 30 points of the O’Neill/Seemiller semi-final is close as the two go to 15-all. But Sean scores six straight to win that game, and then wins the second 21-5. The third is again uncontested, but this time it is Danny who wins, 21-13. In the fourth, Sean pulls away halfway through to win 21-15.

The Men’s Allstar final between Butler and O’Neill was a classic five-gamer, yet the score again goes lower—Sean could have won all five games. It’s a game of inches, but it’s also a game of momentum, with the tides changing throughout.

In the first, Jim scores consistently bylooping to Sean’s backhand. But Sean comes back at the end to win 21-19. In the second, Jim leads 14-9, then it’s 14-14. A disgusted Jim pretends to swat a ball at some kids that run by, then goes back to business. Jim ties it up at 19-all with a backhand kill when Sean’s from-the-backhand backhand counterkill just misses. Jim misses, then makes a backhand kill, 20-20. But Jim wins a counter-looping rally, and up game point, returns Sean’s net ball. Sean misses a loop attempt, and game two to Jim.

In the third, the score again goes 14-14. (In fact, the score would reach 14-all in the first four games.) But Sean pulls away, and wins 21-15.

In the fourth, Sean leads 6-14 and seems to have the momentum. But an extremely aggressive Jim scores seven straight points to win 21-16.

In the fifth, Sean takes the early lead, going up 4-0 with what, for almost anyone else, would be classified wildly swatting. Sean is moving all over the court, seeming to thrive on the tennis-type flooring that some said they didn’t like. Jim comes back as he fights for the attack, and Sean’s attack seems to slow (5th game exhaustion?) and soon it’s 13-13. But in a case of deja vu, Jim scores eight straight, and the wins the Men’s Allstar event over Sean, 19-20,15,16,13.

The Women’s Allstar was a disappointment, with #2 Lily Hugh the only eligible player in the top ten showing. She easily weathered the competition without giving up more than 15 points in a game, defeating Kristey Reed in the final, 15,7,14. (Kristey, by the time you read this, may make that top ten list.) It is unfortunate that after nearly a year in the U.S. Amy Feng (from China, and not yet eligible for the Allstar Series) still has not played against Lily Hugh, Insook Bhuslan or any of the other top women players. Amy had to make due with winning the 2500’s here over Todd Sweeris, and going down in the third against Dhiren Narotam (with one match point). Amy had also watched the women’s competition from the sidelines at the Hall of Fame tournament, while winning the 2450’s there.

The junior events held extra excitement because there were awards of $50 and $30 for the top two players in the U18, U16 and U14. In the U14 event, U.S. National Boys’ U12 Champion Sunny Li won out in the all-Potomac club final round robin over Junior Olympic Boys’ U14 Bronze medalist Jeff Hsian and National U12 Girls’ Champion Vivian Lee. Jeff won his $30 match for second place over Vivian.

Barney J. Reed had an easy win over Dave Fernandez in the U16 final (although the actual scores are now lost to posterity), with each winning in straight games in the semifinals over Richard Lee and Santo Vasquez, respectively. Barney also won out over Dave in the U18 semifinal to advance to the final against Randy Cohen, who had defeated Jason St. George in the other semifinal. Barney had earlier defeated Randy in the Allstar Men’s event, but this time Randy took a 18-10 lead in the first, and won 21-15. Randy often would serve deep, allowing the left-handed Barney to loop, and then counterloop a winner, often right off the bounce. Randy got even more aggressive in the second game, playing nearly all forehand, right over the table, in winning 21-13.

The only early round upset in the Open (with every match through the final played best of three, for better spectator interest) was chopper Derek May’s 11-22,14 win over John Onifade. But May then went down in straight games (14,19) to Jim Butler in the quarters, who he’d upset at the U.S. Open. Dhiren Narotam had his already-mentioned win from down match point over Amy Feng, while Huazhang Xu, after losing the first game at deuce, won out over Todd Sweeris.

Three quarters matches went as expected, with Cheng Yinghua defeating Dhiren Narotam 10,14, Hong Tong Sheng defeating Dan Seemiller 14,15, and Butler’s win over Derek May. In the last quarter, 3rd seed Huazhang Xu again had three-game trouble, and this time he went down to Sean O’Neill, 18,18,16.

Hong Tong “Jack” Sheng defaulted his semi-final open match to business partner/practice partner/long-time teammate Cheng Yinghua. They would also split the prize money for the over 30 final, as would senior finalists Parviz Mojaravian and Dave Sakai. Meanwhile, Jim Butler and Sean O’Neill were gearing up for another crackerbox match. Sean held on to win the first 21-18, but quickly fell behind 10-1 in the second, losing it 21-13.

In the third, the umpire motions for the players to switch sides when Sean leads 10-5. A fluttered Jim Butler appeals to the desk, thinking the match was best of five, but to no avail. But he battles back, and with help from an edge ball, pulls to 13-14. They play even to 16-17. Jim serving, but Sean scores two in row to lead 19-16. It had been great play up until this point, but it ends quickly when Jim pushes two balls in a row
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From the left:
J.O. Waldner—1989 World Champion
Guenther Schroeder—T.G. Enterprises Owner
Joergen Persson—1991 World Champion

Table Tennis Topics 11

November/December 1992
The 1992 Canadian National Exhibition Open was held over Labor Day weekend in Toronto, Canada. This tournament is a unique affair as it is held in one of the largest fairs in the world. The CNE is a combination amusement park, sports park and music show.

The Ontario Table Tennis Association has been responsible for holding this long-standing event and this year over 200 players attended. The atmosphere is carnival-like and noisy, but most competitors know this and really enjoy the extras. The food court is only minutes away with every choice imaginable. I have attended this tournament with parents and friends and everyone enjoys the tournament and its surroundings.

In the Men’s event Yong Jiang Liu defeated Joe Ng for the $1,000 prize. This was an intense five-game match, with Ng leading 6-1 in the fifth, but he couldn’t hold on. In the semis, Dan Seemiller lost to Yong Jiang Liu 3-1, with Liu winning the first two games by identical 21-19 scores. Joe Ng had an easy time with Francis Trudel, 3-1, after Trudel had upset Dhiren Narotam in the quarterfinals.

In the women’s event, up-and-coming superstar Amy Feng won the event and the $700 first prize handily. Amy is rated about 2500, and recently had wins over Darko Rop and John Onifade. In the final, Amy defeated May Hui Tong of Toronto, 3-1.

The CNE is a great vacation tournament to bring your family with you. Congratulations to the Ontario Table Tennis Association for a well-run event.

Results:

Men’s Singles-Final: Yong Jiang Liu d. Joe Ng 19,17-12,16,15; SF: Liu d. Dan Seemiller 19,19-16,15; Ng d. Francis Trudel 21,6,15; QF: Liu d. Parviz Mojaverian 9,12,11; Ng d. Pierre-Paul Rouleau 7,3,11; Seemiller d. Guillermo Munoz 4,16,18, Trudel d. Dhiren Narotam 10,18,22,10.

Women’s Singles-Final: Amy Feng d. May Hui Tong 17,7,16,8; SF: Feng d. Christine Ngo 12,19,15; Tong d. Julie Barton 19,12,19,21.

Men’s Doubles: Joe Ng/Dhiren Narotam d. Dan & Randy Seemiller 18,14.

Women’s Doubles: Amy Feng/Becky McNight d. Christine Ng/Olivia Barton 22,20.

Mixed Doubles: Dan Seemiller/Amy Feng d. Joe Ng/May Hui Tong 21,20.

Hi Five Open: Yong Jiang Liu d. Dan Seemiller 7,3,17,21,7,16.

O40 Men: Rey Domingo d. David Sakai -18,14,17.

O50 Men: George Brathwaite d. Houshang Bozorgzadeh 11,29.

O60 Men: Ron Eckerstall d. Louis Radzeli 18,15.

O40 Women: Donna Sakai d. Loren chamber 7,8.


U21 Women: Julie Barton d. Blanca Hernandez 16,16.

U240: Guillermo Munoz d. Ke Xuan 11,8.


U1800: Majid Hussain d. Marc Lafort 19,16.


U1400: De Dongq d. C.J. Lee 16,15.

U1200: David Luci d. Sandy Chu 19,15.

U1000: Kalman Veber d. Chuck Ng 12,15.


U17 Girls: Amy Chan d. Lanu Chow 13,17.


U14 Girls: Lana Chow d. Joanna Koskala 9,10.

TEAM MATCHES:

Men: Canada d. USA 3-1: Yong Jiang Liu (CAN) d. Dhiren Narotam (USA) 18,17,14; Joe Ng (CAN) d. Dave Sakai (USA) 14,18; Randy Seemiller (USA) d. Francis Trudel (CAN) 21,16,13; Joe Ng (CAN) d. Dhiren Narotam (USA) 10,18,22,10.

Women: Canada d. USA 3-2: May Hui Tong (CAN) d. Donna Sakai (USA) 10,10; Amy Feng (USA) d. Julie Barton (CAN) 16,22; Tong/Barton (CAN) d. Sakai/Feng (USA) 16,8; Amy Feng (USA) d. May Hui Tong (CAN) -13,9,13; Julie Barton (CAN) d. Donna Sakai (USA) 48.

Men Youth: Canada d. USA 4-0: Diego Ramirez (CAN) d. Robert Su (USA) 8,13; Pierre-Paul Rouleau (CAN) d. Aymar Ali (USA) 15,10; Ramirez/Yannick Hervieux (CAN) d. Su/Ali (USA) 18,11.

Senior Men: USA d. Canada 3-1: David Mahahir (CAN) d. George Brathwaite (USA) 10,14; Rey Domingo (USA) d. Larry Lee (CAN) 17,13; David Sakai (USA) d. Alain Thomas (CAN) 5,7; George Brathwaite (USA) d. Larry Lee (CAN) 20,15.

Unofficial Friendship Match—Women Youth:

Mexico d. Canada 3-2: Amy Chan (CAN) d. Luz Salazar (MEZ) 6,8; Blanca Hernandez (MEX) d. Barbara Kontes (CAN) 16,12; Chan/Lana Chow (CAN) d. Salazar/Hernandez (MEX) 7,8; Blanca Hernandez (MEX) d. Amy Feng (USA) 18,16; Luz Salazar (MEX) d. Barbara Kontes (CAN) 19,13.
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Top-ranked Cheng Yinghua breezed to victory in the Potomac Country Table Tennis Club Fall Open Tournament September 26, defeating PCTTC rival Huazhang Xu in straight games in the best-of-five final.

Although the open draw featured 6 of the top 10 in the United States, Cheng’s win came without dropping a single game to any of his opponents. The most serious threat to his perfect tournament came from the top-ranked woman in the country, Amy Feng, who threatened to take the first game of their quarterfinal match, but finally succumbed at 19.

In the best-of-five semifinal against fifth-seeded Darko Rop, Cheng dominated the big left-handed looper in the first game. From the outset Rop seemed tight, unable to go through Cheng from either his forehand or backhand side. Cheng established a strong lead at 8-2 and never looked back, capitalizing on Rop’s inconsistency while easily blocking shots away from him. Rop could manage no more than 9 points.

The second game saw a more determined and more consistent Rop, whose serve-and-attack improved significantly. Still, he was clearly outmatched by Cheng who went on to win both second and third.

Rop trailed throughout, losing at 16. By game three, Rop found his form, only to discover that his best would not be good enough. While Rop looped with maximum effort three and four ball attacks, Cheng seemed content to counter, using Rop’s own force against him. Rop stayed close, though, and the score was tied at 15. Cheng was unnervingly calm, continuing his counter-attacking strategy, then taking the offense at his first opportunity. Up 18-17 on his serve, Cheng closed out the match without allowing Rop another point.

The match of the tournament proved to be the semifinal between third seed Huazhang Xu and second seed David Zhuang. This was a test of strategy and stamina, with Xu the shakhand player with inverted rubber, and Zhuang, the pips-out penholder. It was apparent from the outset that this semifinal would be a battle, with Xu taking the largest lead of the first game at 9-6. Both players served out to get the exchanges going and then following up with all-out attacks. Xu proved to be the more consistent in the first game, however, finally coming out on top and winning at 19.

In the second game, Zhuang was still finding his game, forcing his forehand attack at every opportunity. By this time, Xu had settled in and seemed cool throughout, taking control at 10-14. With Zhuang serving, Xu widened the gap, only allowing Zhuang to score one more point. Zhuang’s strategy in the second game started to pay off in the third game, however, as he played even more aggressively and his shots started coming on. Xu could do little to contain Zhuang’s explosive play, as Zhuang’s relentless attack took him to a decisive lead of 18-7. Zhuang closed out the game at 11.

Zhuang’s momentum carried into the fourth game, only to have Rop jump out to a 9-6 lead. Zhuang, looking concentrated and poised, served in the net, then flipped the ball past Rop for the second deuce, 21-all. Then, in a controversial move, Zhuang interrupted Xu in the middle of his serve, calling a let for no apparent reason other than to break Xu’s rhythm. The fourth such interruption of the match, Zhuang received a stern warning from the umpire, but the damage was already done—on Xu’s serve, Zhuang won 3 out of 5 and inched ahead to 13-12.

The game went even all the way to 18-17, with Xu seeming to have a slight advantage. But Zhuang had served the first for the last 5 points, and with the help of three unforced errors by Xu, had two match points at 20-18. Now it was Zhuang’s turn to go cold, missing a backhand smash to allow Xu within one point. Xu then took advantage of an off-ball and drove it past Zhuang to get to deuce.

Xu, looking concentrated and poised, served and attacked to gain a match point, only to loop the next ball into the net for the second deuce, 21-all. Again serving Xu got his second match point, and this time would not be denied, moving into the finals with a 23-21 win in the fifth.

The final was played only 20 minutes after Xu’s marathon match, and, while Cheng appeared relaxed and confident, Xu seemed somewhat drained. In fact, though Xu and Cheng are usually closely matched, Xu never looked threatened, falling to Cheng at 11, 6 and 13. “I was ready for a tough game,” Cheng said, “but Xu didn’t have the fire in him today. I don’t know why.”

A not-too-disappointed Xu explained: “I used up all my energy playing David (Zhuang). And it’s been difficult for me because I am in school at the University of Maryland and have not been able to train. I am very happy about my semifinal. Now I am looking forward to Detroit.”

(Site of the U.S. Open Team Championships in November.)

Notes:

U.S. Top-ranked woman Amy Feng (2437) had an outstanding tournament, scoring two major upsets in the Open. First, she defeated Darko Rop (2633) in a tough three-game match. Surprising Rop, she held Rop to just 10 points in Game 1. Rop adjusted to her lightning quick counter attacks, however, and won the second game at 18. Feng came back fighting in the third game to win at 18. The top two players advanced from the round robin groups, so Rop still advanced.

In the first round of single eliminations, Feng won her first two matches before losing, 16-21, 21-19, 11-19 to Carlos Ramirez in the third round.

Amy Feng won the 2450’s, had wins over 2629 Darko Rop and 2551 John Onifade in the Open, and teamed with Chris Manglitz to win the 4200 Doubles as well. Only Open winner Cheng Yinghua could stop her.


U2400—Final: Amy Feng d. Carlos Ko 14,11,8; SF: Feng d. Hung Phan 15,10; Ko d. Stephen Yeh 14,14,18.

U2300—Final: Nazrul Arasgali d. Tal Fuchs 18,18,19; SF: Arasgali d. Dave Sakai -19,17,14; Fuchs d. Tony Soong -8,21,21.

U2200—Final: Maximus Vasquez d. Charles Feng 18,18,18; SF: Vasquez d. Ron Lilly 15,18; Feng d. Mike Heikert 14,17.


U1700—Final: Pradann Raina d. Mohamned Onibahou 11,16.

U1600—Final: Tim Pham d. Danny Huia 12,16.


U1400 Final: Michael Wong d. Jared Mudge -17,15,15.

Novice: Gideon Deutsch d. David Croyce -12,14,11.

400D: Steven Kaplan d. Dave Sakai 19,16,16; SF: Kaplan d. Pat Lui 16,16; Sakai d. Cheng-Dong Chang 12,12.

4200 Dbls: Amy Feng/Chris Manglitz d. Bamey J. Reed/Kristey Reed -11,18,22.


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The following interview took place on October 3, 1992. Igor Fraiman acted as interpreter, although Boris’s English is now good enough that he answered many of the questions himself in English. Boris, who now lives in Baltimore, had a long career as the Soviet National Men’s coach, during which time the team became a world power in table tennis. He and his family emigrated to the U.S. in 1990. Shortly afterwards, the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

**Topics:** Tell us about your playing background.

**Boris:** In 1963, I finished my career as an active table tennis player. I had played on the national team several times, and was ranked in the top five in the country. I represented the Soviet Union as a player in foreign tournaments several times.

**Topics:** Tell us about your coaching background.

**Boris:** I graduated from the Institute of Physical Culture and became a table tennis coach from 1965 to 1988. I worked with national team from 1982 to 1988, and was the head coach for the men’s national team. Many of my players became elite players. It was my whole life. I started with 80 kids, and five of them won Soviet National Championships. The Soviet team finished third at the Dortmund World Championships in 1989.

**Topics:** How did you get started in table tennis?

**Boris:** When I was about 15 or 16, I was involved in basketball and team handball. One of the coaches asked me to try table tennis, and that’s how I got started. For a while, I played all three sports, but eventually I had to choose which one to concentrate on, and I chose table tennis. Then, at the Institute of Physical Culture, I specialized in table tennis when I worked on my physical education degree.

**Topics:** How good were you as a player?

**Boris:** I was fifth in the Soviet Union at my best. In 1961, I represented the Soviet Union against the Chinese in a major Russian tournament. But because I was a chopper, the Russian Coaching Committee decided to use other players on the national team normally, because they didn’t think a chopper could do as well.

**Topics:** Tell us about the players you have coached or worked with before.

**Boris:** Until late 1988, I coached the national team. Strokotov had already left the team. Some of our players included the Mazunov brothers (Andrei and Dmitrij), Dvorak (who now plays in Spain), Orscharov (who now plays in the German League), Sheitin (a chopper who also plays in the German League), Rosenberg, Bulatova, Solepov, Podnosov, and Markevich, who won the European Junior Top Twelve in 1986.

**Topics:** How did table tennis differ in the Soviet Union from the United States?

**Boris:** Unlike in the U.S., you have to travel around and do forehand loops. When I became coach, I saw the lack of international experience. For the Soviets, training is a full-time job. Here it is different.

**Topics:** Did the Soviet Union and the whole Communist world matter to you?

**Boris:** Whether or not the system was different in the Soviet Union, it was the way of life for me. I faced a lot of problems with the Soviet system, but I am Jewish. It also hurt my students. One, Markevich, won the European Junior Top Twelve in 1986, beating Rosskopf, Feiz, and many others, but because he was my student, they wouldn’t let him play. He was very talented. But it’s all politics. It’s hard to explain. What mattered was who you knew. Life didn’t always make sense.

**Topics:** What is your college background?

**Boris:** I have the equivalent of a Master’s degree in physical education. You can’t work with kids in the Soviet Union without a higher education. I was trained for five and a half years in physical education. I have the highest certification in the country, given only to those who prepare Olympians and national champions.

**Topics:** Tell us about your family.

**Boris:** My wife’s name is Taluya. I have a son, Slava, whose Americanized name is Steve. He goes to Catonsville Community College near Baltimore, but he is going to Georgetown University next year. He is 20 years old.

**Topics:** How did you meet Igor “Gary” Fraiman?

**Boris:** When I was in Russia, the coaches from my town told me that there was a Soviet coach in the U.S. Also, I knew his students because my students competed against his sometimes.

**Topics:** How do you make a living right now?

**Boris:** It’s very hard to make money at table tennis in the U.S. So I became a carpenter, and I make furniture. No one believes that I’ve never worked for a living (outside of table tennis).

**Topics:** What advice can you offer our Topics readers?

**Boris:** First of all, you have to always read Topics.

**Topics:** Exactly!

**Boris:** Second, we need more people. Without more mass, we can’t go anywhere. It doesn’t matter what level right now, just more people playing. We have to educate the public about the sport, get them interested. Without the masses playing, you can’t produce anything.

**Topics:** Tell us about the differences in the system used in training the national team in the U.S. vs. the Soviet Union.

**Boris:** The USSR National Team had five players. A total of 18-20 players trained full-time, and they prepared only for about two big tournaments each year. Nothing else mattered. They may play other tournaments, but they were not important. Every month, the National team trained together for about ten days. The rest of the time, they train in their own provinces. It’s a year-long system. Those who make the team are well-known in their provinces as World Team Members. Often, players who weren’t in the top 20 trained with the team for experience. A few years down the road, they become team members. I’m not sure how it is done in the U.S., but I heard how they prepared for the Olympics, and there was a real lack of international experience. For Russians, training is a full-time job. Here it is different.

**Topics:** Anything to say about the backhand loop? The USSR is famous for that, especially with the Mazunov brothers.

**Boris:** All I can say is that Andrei was born to backhand topspin. It was a natural. He was always in a backhand position. The coach before me who worked with Andrei was never really a player, and he tried to make Andrei step around and do forehand loops. When I became coach, I saw that Andrei was a natural backhand looper, and I encouraged it. We planned all our drills around the backhand loop, 70-80% of our time training the backhand loop.

**Topics:** What are you doing in table tennis right now?

**Boris:** Igor and I started a club, the Woodlawn Table Tennis Center. We have a group of kids, all ages, and we are open three times a week, with eight tables. We are trying to bring table tennis to a higher level in the Baltimore area.
PLAYING IN THE SWEDISH LEAGUE

Notes From Sweden
by U.S. #1 Jim Butler

This is my first year competing in the Elite division of the Swedish League. Last year I competed in the first division (one below the Elite division), where I finished with an 18-3 singles record. By doing well in division one, and increasing my world ranking this past year from 156 to 104, I was able to play in the Elite division for Falkenberg.

The opening week of the season has just ended. We (Falkenberg) wasted no time with our first opponent, Kalmar, beating them 6-2. I won my only singles match, against Magnus Valgren. Winning has been the tradition of this club, which has been quite dominant over the years. This year will be a challenge, however, as the team debuts two new players, and features the youngest team in the league.

The Swedish league is regarded as one of the best leagues in the world. It’s a system we so desperately need in the United States. The league has six different divisions, with the top division being the Elite division, and the other five division listed as divisions 1 through 5. The Elite division has 8 teams, while the rest of the divisions have 16 teams each, which are divided in half (8 each), according to regions in Sweden. Each year, the top finishing team from each regional division moves up, while the bottom team moves down. The only exception is the elite division, where the bottom finishing two teams move down. A team is allowed a maximum of one foreign player in a team match. The Elite division’s foreigners currently feature four Chinese, one Englishman, and one American.

Teams play each other twice each, once at home, and once away. For the Elite division, the top four teams at the end of the season have a playoff, with the top two seeds facing each other. The one and two players for the entire season. Midway through the season, the remaining two teams may flip-flop positions, if the team requests it and the Swedish TTA allows it. The initial order is always decided before the season, with world ranking and team preference being the factors. I’m currently #3 on my team.

League matches draw an average of about 500 people per match. Almost everyone in the Elite division makes their living from table tennis. This league probably has the second highest payroll, with the German leagues definitely on top. Although Falkenberg has one of the lowest payrolls in Elite, it has always been a league powerhouse. This club is rich with tradition, and now features former world singles champion Stellan Bengtsson as its head coach. Our team players are (in order): 1. Peter Karlsson (world #26); 2. Peter Nilsson (World #160); 3. Jim Butler (world #104); 4. Fredrik Hakansson, Freddie Helgesson, and Joakim Andersson. Fredrik Hakansson and myself are the newcomers to the team. This year our personal goal is to make the playoffs. With the strength of this year’s league, and our young but talented team, we feel this is a challenging but attainable goal. Pre-season predictions put us at the bottom of the league, which we laugh at. I’ll update Topics later on how we are doing.

Systems like this are necessary for a country to produce and support top players. With the current top 20 teams in the world, the U.S. (#15) and Canada (#8) are the only two countries which have no league system. The United States’ top players, past and present, are all forced to compete in European leagues. If we are to have future stars, we must do the same. Might I add that most U.S. players will never get the opportunity, since the one foreigner per team rule, and the level standards, will eliminate virtually everyone. I feel our first step in developing U.S. Table Tennis is a league system. This will enable players to continue to play after high school, will add more money opportunities, and will give the USTTA a bigger talent pool of active players to choose from. Most importantly, it adds great exposure and credibility to the sport. If we don’t develop a successful league system, U.S. Table Tennis will stagnate.

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Who will win?

Five-times National Champion Dan Seemiller wins by looping with Butterfly...

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U.S. #3 Dave Zhuang wins by hitting with Butterfly...

(With a Chinese Carbon blade, Resilon 1.7 pips-out rubber, and Super Chack speed glue.)

When an unstoppable force meets an immovable object...

TO BE DECIDED IN FUTURE TOURNAMENTS

November/December 1992
THE RISE OF GERMAN TABLE TENNIS

A Comparison of the German and Swedish Systems
by Jens Felke, Swedish Professional Coach

The 1992 European championships in table tennis in Stuttgart became a break-through for German table tennis in several aspects. Jörg Rosskopf became the first German player to capture a European championship in singles. The President of the German Table Tennis Association, Helmut Gab, was elected President of the ETTU—the European Table Tennis Union. And as always the Germans managed to organize an excellent tournament.

Politics and economics. Germany has been dominating Europe for a long time. Now they put more and more influence in the development of table tennis. In Sweden we often regard Germans as “the Japanese of Europe.” Behind this joke, like behind most jokes, there is also some general truth. Germans are hard-working people. They are very well organized. They live in a hierarchy structure in which they are taught to take orders from their chiefs and to obey. They are very systematic and logical. They have a formal attitude between each other. They care very much for details. They hate when things are not functioning or when things are not done as they want. They want to regard themselves as “winners,” which means they hate to lose. They are very nationalistic.

All the other—this and of course a lot of other circumstances—creates a nation which is very successful economically. And a successful economy is also necessary for developing sports. In the world of sport, since sports demand material resources, scientific elaboration and working-power, which all requires a lot of money. In table tennis, however, the Germans have had big problems in becoming one of the best. In the sixties Germany had Eberhard Scholer, a wonderful defensive player with a golden heart and a lot of patience. Scholer was hard to beat. From 1965 to 1969 he was one of the five best players in the world. (excluding the Chinese who did not play internationally because of the “cultural revolution”).

But since Scholer there have been no really good players. On the national team there either have been talented players, or talented but lazy ones. One thing they seem to have in common: earning money is more important than winning the big titles. This applies to both Germany and the other countries of the European Table Tennis Union. In Germany the organization of table tennis on the national team level is weak. The players have been satisfied playing for their club in the German League, earning good money both there and with contracts with different table tennis companies. The urge to higher ambitions such as becoming among the top ten in the world has been lacking. Since 1981 there has been a change.

That year Hans Wilhelm Gab was elected President of the German Table Tennis Association. Gab is a big table tennis fan. As a youngster he played some matches and tournaments for the German national team. After reaching his personal top level, he started with great ambitions to make a career in his civil life. For that purpose Gab handled table tennis very well. He is vice president of the European Department of General Motors.

With Gab in the lead, the German association has been more international in its attitude and its work. The goal was to become number one in Europe and in the world. Gab cooperates very closely with the former world champions. They concentrate their work on developing a more professional attitude among the top players, including a higher goal of achievement, and on making table tennis more popular for television, other media, and therefore also more attractive for sponsors. Like most Germans, Gab and Scholer work with a strong will-power to come through with their goals.

The most promising player is Jörg Rosskopf, now ranked fourth in the world. He is a left-hander with great mental strength at the table and a powerful, very German game (based on power and speed more than on variation and spin). Rosskopf became number one in Germany around 1986, when he so impressively reached the semifinals at the European Championships in Paris. Rosskopf was then 19 years old. His topcapacity is very high, but it is still quite easy for the very best players to “cheat” him with spin and speed variations, and placement of the ball. His blocking game is relatively weak, and when he is forced to distance himself from the table he is at a disadvantage. He plays much better when he is serving when then his opponent serves.

At the World Championships in Dortmund (Germany), 1989 Rosskopf became world number one in Germany around 1988, when he was one of the five best players in the world. (excluding the Chinese who did not play internationally because of the “cultural revolution”).

The effectiveness of the Swedish model is based on the strong activity in the clubs. They make it almost impossible to miss a talented player, since most clubs have at least one club coach to teach the children and help them develop their game. In Sweden active young-

The table tennis topics – Table tennis topics

= The rise of german table tennis

A comparison of the german and swedish systems

by Jens felke, swedish professional coach

The most promising player is jörg rosskopf, now ranked fourth in the world. He is a left-hander with great mental strength at the table and a powerful, very german game (based on power and speed more than on variation and spin). rosskopf became number one in germany around 1986, when he so impressively reached the semifinals at the european championships in paris. rosskopf was then 19 years old. his topcapacity is very high, but it is still quite easy for the very best players to “cheat” him with spin and speed variations, and placement of the ball. his blocking game is relatively weak, and when he is forced to distance himself from the table he is at a disadvantage. he plays much better when he is serving when then his opponent serves.

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Jörg rosskopf, world #4, german #1, and current world doubles champion (with steffen fetzner).

- organization in clubs
- opportunity for players to compete
- practice sessions with coach (employed per hour in club)
- theoretical level of coaches
- practical experience of coaches
- teaching young kids
- system of getting young players to the hall
- standard of hall and equipment
- professional players
- employed national team coaches (full-time)
- employed regional level coaches (full-time)
- employed club-level coaches (full-time)

The Sweden table tennis clubs are quite active in arranging tournaments. for the clubs this is a way to earn money. for the youngsters this means that every weekend they have the opportunity to compete and show their skill (which also means that their problems at the table become evident). there are about five tournaments every weekend, from september to the beginning of may. in each tournament there are categories for all ages and for all different levels of playing.

In germany, on the other hand, there is a system of top 12 tournaments for different ages, with events for everyone from 12 years old to the twelve best players of the country. First the twelve best in each category meet in the city, then the best ones qualify for the top 12 in the region, and from there the best ones qualify for the top 12 in germany. The system is very inflexible compared to the Swedish one, which has plenty of opportunities for players not quite in the top twelve for their age group. If one young player fails in the first stage in the german system, he or she must wait one, or maybe two years for a new chance. Of course there are some other changes in Germany, but the number of tournaments — and opportunities for the youngsters to compete — are far less.

That is the difference when talking about the base. When the youngsters develop and become among the best in their category, there are suddenly a number of very professional demands, and a lot of money resources. But here the german model is limited by a very old-fashioned way of thinking about table tennis. The practice drills at the national team camps in germany use drills that Swedish coaches have regarded old-fashioned and for wrong 10-15 years. Quantity is more important than quality during the practice session for the Germans. All this is very similar to how the Swedes practiced in the 1970’s, which means 15-20 years ago.

Even though Germany is coming along strongly now, with rosskopf now ranked fourth in the world, there is a gap after him. Their next player, fetzner, is ranked 27th in the world. behind them is Peter Franz, 36th in Europe, but with a spectacular hard-hitting smash and loop game which can be dangerous for any player in the world.

At the European Youth Championships Germany is one of the strongest nations. But quite often the young stars have problems developing as top players. quite often this has to do with the bad organization of the practice at the club level. also, the talented players get bad coaching in the beginning, which limits their technique, which creates great difficulties in their later years.

Following the discussion above, the most important people behind the development of German table tennis are not Germans. Mainly, they are foreigners. For example, Jorg Rosskopf, a former national team player for Yugoslavia who coaches the team during big tournaments and important national team matches.

Amecic, another Yugoslavian (or croatian, to be more accurate these days), who has been a full-time coach for dusseldorf for four or five years, is directly responsible for the development of rosskopf and fetzner, who both play in dusseldorf which is by far the most successful team in German table tennis history.

Eva Jeler, a former female player for Yugoslavia, has coached in Germany since 1985, and since 1989 has been a head coach for the national team. Jeler’s contribution is more as an organizer than a high level coach like cordes and amecic.

In the long run, the most important thing in the development of modern sports is the economical standard and level of the country. here Germany is by far the strongest in Europe. in table tennis they now have a very strong organization for the national team for both seniors and juniors. when they have found a better system of finding and taking care of the talents all over the country, and when they have become more modern in the thinking of table tennis, Germany will lead in ways other than money and organization. Germany could become equally dominant at the table tennis table.

31 Next player, Steffen Fetzner, is ranked 27th in the world. Behind him is Peter Franz, 36th in Europe, but with a spectacular hard-hitting smash and loop game which can be dangerous for any player in the world.

At the European Youth Championships, Germany is one of the strongest nations. But quite often the young stars have problems developing as top players. Quite often this has to do with the bad organization of the practice at the club level. Also, the talented players get bad coaching in the beginning, which limits their technique, which creates great difficulties in their later years.

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Mitch Seidenfield: An American World Champion
by Sheri Soderberg Pittman

“‘No, no, no, no, no! Don’t recite yet, you morons! I’ll say when. And when you do, get it right. If you don’t, it’s back to the asylum. And you know what that means, don’t you?’

As Manager of the Pinheads in the play “The Elephant Man” at The Loring Playhouse in Minneapolis, Mitch Seidenfeld shrieked those lines. He enjoyed his acting experience; in real life he array of activities that consume his time. academic advancement. “It was the spring- getting something done the right way, mir-

urgingasense of action and commitment to Arts degree in English Literature from the University of Minnesota. He attributed much of his success in Barcelona to his academic advancement. “It was the spring- board for giving me the confidence to feel like I could do something really big in Barcelona. It was a big accomplishment for me because finishing my college re-

quirements was something that I had been putting off.” Although Mitch had won the World Disabled Championship in his class in Holland in 1990, he felt that this year would be more difficult to win because he was more vulnerable as the reigning world champion. His victory was especially sweet for him because when he started playing at the age of 13, other beginners were the ones that everybody expected to see compete at higher levels in the future. “Everybody encouraged me to play and have fun. The coaches at the club wanted me to take coaching, but there was never any expectation that I could become a top player. I mean, I never got that feeling.” Mitch thought at any rate that he might have more fun playing table tennis than he would have if he had focused his energies on his previ-

ous sport of choice: basketball.

Mitch participated in coaching clin-

ics along with such players as Brandon Olson and Dan Wrig, but he soon discov-
ered that he had to modify the advice that was oriented toward able-bodied athletes. So, he shortened his strokes and just took advantage of the opportunity to train. Strange as it may sound, he says that he never even began to set any goals in table tennis until after he realized that he had already achieved higher-level ratings.

He contends that his dad was his best coach of all. But he says that other players in Minnesota helped him indirectly. Mitch credits John Soderberg, who was the state coach of all. But he says that other players like you!

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Résumé only to:
Cheryl Thomas
P.O. Box 407
Anderson, S.C. 29622
SSD# 1024988

November/December 1992
in fact, his impetus for testing his acting abilities. "Since I'm writing a role where I may have to play the lead character, I thought it best that I figure out if I could act first. It turns out that a lot of people think I can, so I'm going to pursue it and finish up writing the screenplay this year." The working title of his film is "Nets and Edges" and it has to do with both table tennis and differences and disabilities.

Mitch lectures and runs workshops on differences and disabilities at schools in Minnesota and Iowa. In actuality, though, he prefers not to refer to himself or others as disabled. "I'm still very confused by the term 'disabled' and being labeled as disabled. But, when it comes to being able to participate in sporting events and associations that are clearly positive for gaining self esteem, developing skills, and relating better with people of all types of differences, then I can begin to accept that if someone needs to be able to call me disabled, or if I need to be able to call myself disabled, I need to be able to do that for those purposes."

As Minnesota's official liaison with the National Schools Program, he plans to combine his work in introducing table tennis to school districts with his work in the area of differences and disabilities. "During the time that I work with the school districts, maybe I can plan some exhibitions and National School Program workshops to introduce table tennis. I am planning to combine using my reputation as a Paralympic gold medalist with my workshops."

Unfortunately for Mitch, though, he has to limit his playing time because practicing exacerbates some of his physical conditions. He says that his chiropractor, Aaron Flickstein, who is also a table tennis player, told him that continuing to play competitively would be detrimental to both his spine and his hips with the type of dwarfism that Mitch has, which is called pseudo achondroplasia.

Although Mitch is a dwarf, he prefers the term "little people" because it doesn't have the same negative connotations as either "dwarf" or "midget" to do. He is actively involved with the group Little People of America and the sporting organization, the Dwarf Athletic Association of America. The DAAA sponsors him when he competes in international competitions by funding his trips and providing support staff.

Mitch plans to participate in the World Dwarf Games that will be held in Chicago next summer. "My role in that organization is more of a technical advisor. I try to coach some of the athletes and to help organize some events for them." Christian Lillieroos, Rong Li, Chris Lehman, and Larry Bavy have also assisted with coaching and planning some of those events.

With the Paralympics behind him, he would rather shift his attention toward the growth of the sport. He wishes that more players shared his desire to promote table tennis. "The energy that people are putting into improving their games 100-200 points could be put to better use. If those people would put the same amount of energy into making our sport grow, they would find that as they help the sport grow, they could improve their games at the same time. You can get good in lots of other ways besides just practicing." For example, if players took the time to teach the fundamentals to others, they could learn a lot more about the game and maybe develop some good practice partners at the same time.

"I would like to see the game rise to a level that it deserves here in this country. To me, table tennis is one of the most fun sports to be training in. It's not like running where you're running and running to train. That can get somewhat monotonous. But, in table tennis there are so many things to practice, so many techniques to develop, and so many strategies to become skilled at. And then to be able to do them in game situations is a whole other level."

Mitch's schedule of activities would probably totally exhaust most of us, but he finds it exhilarating. "I think that each of those different areas is an exciting and important thing to be working on right now and one of the biggest difficulties I am having is prioritizing things and trying to decide what I should focus on first."

Speaking of priorities, Mitch muses that maybe our sport needs to take another look at the role of our players with differences and disabilities.

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NEW SPECIAL OLYMPIC DIRECTOR

Scott Press of Colorado Springs has been named the Table Tennis Director for Special Olympics International. Press is a Certified National Level Coach with the USTTA, and will assist Special Olympics International in developing table tennis programs across the country. Press has conducted clinics and exhibitions in more than 400 cities in the United States and will use his extensive knowledge of the Sport to help promote Special Olympics Table Tennis.

Charlie Greene, the Summer Sports Director for Special Olympics International, welcomes Press. "Special Olympics is pleased to have his expertise to help us develop our table tennis programs."

Special Olympics, founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968, has grown to provide competition and training to nearly one million athletes around the world. Supported by more than 500,000 volunteers, Special Olympics has chapters in all 50 U.S. states and over 100 countries. Year-round training and competition takes place in twenty-three official and demonstration sports including both summer and winter events. Special Olympics athletes train for competitions which are styled after the Olympic Games, and each year over 15,000 such games, meets and tournaments are held in communities worldwide.

To learn more about Special Olympics Table Tennis Programs, call or write Scott Press at 928 North Hancock Avenue, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903, (719) 475-0045. Scott will be at the U.S. National Championships in Las Vegas between December 15-19, 1992. Submitted by Heidi Sheridan, Assistant to the Summer Sports Director.

1992 U.S. NATIONALS AND WORLD TEAM TRIALS

Who is Eligible to Play?

To clarify questions which have arisen regarding eligibility to play in certain events at the 1992 U.S. Nationals and World Team Trials, we have put together the following information. Please note that all events require USTTA memberships valid through December 1992.

Championships and Events

To play in Events 1-5 and 8-21, a player must meet one of the following requirements:

• U.S. citizen
• Permanent resident who has lawfully resided in the United States prior to July 10, 1988, and has an I-151 Alien Registration Card (green card). Proof of I-151 Alien Registration and entry date must be submitted with entry.
• Permanent resident whose waiting period for obtaining citizenship will expire January 20, 1996. Proof of I-151 Alien Registration and entry date must be submitted with entry.

National School Championships

Entries in Events 39-40 are limited to USTTA members as follows:

• High School Division: Grades 10-12, or high school graduates (age 18 and under)
• Junior High Division: Grades 9-7 (age 15 and under)
• Primary School Division: Grades 4-6 (age 12 and under)
• Elementary School Division: Grades 3 and under (age 9 and under)

If you have questions about any of the above or to arrange for eligibility certification, contact USTTA Headquarters at 719-578-5863.

For additional information on the exception for athletes who were under 16 years of age when entering the United States, please contact USTTA.

According to Publication N-17 from the U.S. Department of Justice: "After an applicant has been admitted for permanent residence, he or she must reside in the United States continuously for at least five years before filing a petition for naturalization to court. At least the last six months of the five years' residence, immediately before the filing of the petition, must also be residence in the State where the petition is being filed."

For a person naturalized to a U.S. citizen: "...Instead of the five years' residence and 30 months' physical presence, the applicant must reside in the United States for only three years after being lawfully admitted for permanent residence and just before filing the petition. For at least one-half of that three-year period, or 18 months, the applicant must have been present in person in the United States."
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the exercise of twisting your trunk from side to side can be injurious bouncing motions that can actually tear and strain muscles. Even T. Kearney of the Olympic Training Center. He told us that an evaluation of the 14 juniors in the R.T.P. was done in 1988 and that it was written upon the June-July issue of Topics. We were told that the body should be well warmed up before starting a well defined routine. An adult player should be able to run one mile in under 10 minutes.

Most of our sessions with Coaches Li and Zhang were at Mega Mart, about a mile away from the Olympic Training Center. Mega Mart is a small shopping center that has been bought by the O.T.C. In the scope of this article I cannot, of course, cover every detail of the remaining six sessions with Coach Li & Zhang. I will try and give some points of interest that were covered in each session. If you want more, I can only suggest that you get involved in the coaching program and apply to head coach or to the center or at least some clinic that may be given in your area.

On the F.H. and B.H. counter stroke I learned that I had my racket too open (actually vertical) at the start of the stroke. Coach Li showed that this should be started with a closed racket, at least 16° vertical. He stressed body twist and weight transfer upon contact.

On Foot Work, he said that so many coaches would give their opinion of the strokes. After approximately 30 minutes with both the hitters become coaches and those who were coaches became hitters.

Coach Li went into considerable detail about the penholder grip. There is lot more to this than I thought and after hearing the intricate and subtle moves of the fingers and wrist that are involved with the backhand penholder grip, I decided that I am not qualified to teach students that want to use that grip. Coach Li then spent considerable time teaching us the correct backhand and did his best to fine-tune our strokes.

In our session on sports psychology on Thursday, Sports Psychologist Dr. Jay McCann from the Olympic Training Center gave a talk on potential drains or distractions from table tennis. This included thinking or worrying about other things, not enough sleep, loss of appetite, chemical, under- or over-training, and being too tense or too relaxed.

He also showed us the correct technique for breathing from the diaphragm, how to relax muscles, and how to keep mental focus.

Thursday afternoon our session was running a TT program. Dana Jeffries gave us a run-down of the format of the clinic and told us about their full-time clubs. Larry Hodges told us of his plans on opening a full-time center in the Potomac, Maryland area.

We had a session on Friday with Sports Physiologist Dr. Jay T. Kearney of the Olympic Training Center. He told us that an evaluation of the 14 juniors in the R.T.P. was done in 1988 and that it was written upon the June-July issue of Topics. We were told that the body should be well warmed up before starting a well defined stretching program. Then the exercises should not be ballistic-type bouncing motions that can actually tear and strain muscles. Even the exercise of twisting your trunk from side to side can be injurious if you bounce at the end of your turns. He gave Bob Anderson’s book on exercising a good reference. Some tests that are used to test leg strength are the standing broad jump and jumping as high as you can. TT uses aerobic and anaerobic exercises. An adult player should be able to run one mile in under 10 minutes.

For breakfast if you so desire. We were furnished a van for transportation. All in all it was a great clinic and I want to thank Coaches Li and Zhang, Coaching Chairman/Camp Director Larry Hodges, and the USTTA for sponsoring this event.

November/December 1992

24 Table Tennis Topics

Camp participants slanting into the sun, back row: Doon Wong, Doon Ohmen, Ray Caviechilo, Paul Anderson, George Majeux, John Allen. Middle row: Michael Boyle, Dennis Davis, Joe Tran, Zhang Li, Larry Hodges, Li Zhenshi, Dana Jeffries, Primo Madrigal, Barney D. Reed, Randall Hess. Front row: Paul Dulan, Don Winze, Walt Gomes, Homer Brown.
HITTING THE TABLE JUNIOPOT
by Sheri Soderberg Pittman

November/December 1992

potential from a variety of sources. Sensory
and mental aspects of the sport lift them to a
higher plane; a plane in which their ego
temporarily ceases to become invested. This
word “hori” describes this phenomenon; but the
world’s best players are among the sport’s elite
members in part because they can consistently
induce these heightened states of concentration.
It is not that they love the sport because they are
top players, but that they are top players because
they love the sport. They are just as interested
in manipulating the cellotape ball as they are
in taking part in their own competition.
One way to understand this point is to
compare players with the “killer instinct” to
“finess” players. Players with the killer instinct
often fail to engage their mental faculties fully.
Instead, they try to intimidate their opponents by sheer
force. They pound away ball after ball. They
have one weapon, power, and when that fails, they are victimized by their own
game plan.
Finesse players, on the other hand, have a more holistic approach. They are
the paragon of efficiency. Their tactics control their strategy. They make
good use of severe angles, deceptive movement, and unexpected shots. Because they
expend only the amount of exertion necessary to achieve success, they retain enough
physical energy to take themselves as far as their other skills allow them to progress.
Dominant players’ excess of energy leaves their untrapped reserves of energy at
about the same time as the weaker players begin to falter.
The more percipiscarious players
are, the more they can tune into the
personal dramas being played out in the other players’ psyches by closely observing
their idiosyncrasies. They are psychologically
ready to pounce on any sign of an opponent’s shattered equilibrium. Outward
manifestations of an opponent’s inner
voices may reflect a range from arrogance
and over-confidence to readiness and will-
ingsness to doubt and insecurity.

Research behavior and idiosyncrasies
often reflect their true grit. Discerning
competitors substantiate their opponents’
real mental state by observing how their
opponents behave, even in between games.
Players who appear calm and composed at
the table may blow their cover when they
interact with their coach and teammates
during the game breaks.
Confident players appear unflappable.
They exude a sense of temporal self-
assurance. They accept that all the breaks
will not necessarily go their way. A large
part of their faith in themselves comes from their self-actualizing approach to
training. They are highly motivated. They
have devoted their preparation time to
enabling themselves to arrive at the com-
petition in their best possible physical,
mental, and psychological conditions. They
have not merely hid their time; they have
taken an active role in preparing themselves for the event.
Insecure players inevitably lose their
composure. They have lost even before
their matches have begun. Their tempera-
manship and behavior betray their negative
thinking in their subconscious.
Competitors may expose their vul-
nerability by expressing anxiety during a
tournament. Their negative comments may
disturb the process, the point-by-point
play, and with thoughts about the likely
outcome of the match.
A match official, or even their own
equipment. The more unjustified the remark,
the less threatening the complainer be-
comes as a competitor. Discerning rivals
ever try to capitalize on their opponent’s
frail mental state.
American players may recall
Walder’s incredible come-from-behind
matches that preceded his U.S. Open victory
in 1990 over Appelgren. Very early in the
final match Appelgren loudly ex-
pressed his disapproval after a series of
nets and edges seemed to go all to
Walder’s favor. A nearby Swedish
speaking spectator said that Appelgren
had complained that Walder was relying on luck, for his points, whereas
Appelgren was winning his points by skill. The
worm in the apple may cause him the match.
Better players tend to understand
themselves. They have found their own
comfort zone. They know that anxiousness when they are feeling too
much pressure. They know how to pump
themselves up when they suffer lapses of
concentration. Their behavior reflects a
balanced blend of adrenaline and inner
relaxation. Gregarious players, like
Primorac, benefit from chatting with friends between matches, whereas intro-
verted players, like Gatien, retain their concentration better when they keep to
themselves.
Stronger players know how to supervise
their chances when they are losing. That
they seek to create new opportunities. They are gentle with themselves and forgive
themselves when they err. They adjust.
Effectve players combine their self-
knowledge with their technical skills. They
often calculate the advisability of taking
risks with amazing precision. This
is because they know their own limits. They
know how to cope with their weaknesses
and how to showcase their strengths. They
use deception effectively. They even vary
their winning strategies to prevent their opponents from gaining momentum.
They seek to control rather than to be controlled.
Superior players also revitalize them-
sewby drawing the audience into their
arsenal of weapons. Players who successfully
gain crowd support have an extraordinary psychological advantage over
their rival. This is especially the case
when a player is able to win over a crowd
that initially favored the opponent.
Because of the intensity of the
tournament, the proximity of a certain spectator,
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**1992 U.S. National Table Tennis Championships and World Team Trials**

December 15-19, 1992 - Las Vegas Convention Center

**Entry Deadline November 16, 1992**

Entry postmarked after November 16 will be accepted.

Late Entrants Postmarked After November 16 require $25 late fee.

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**List below a maximum of 8 events**

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**Event Fees (per table)**

- **Late Fee ($25 for entries postmarked after November 16 but not later than November 23)**
- **Doubles Fees ($5 per person for each doubles pairing done by tournament committee)**
- **Party Fee (one ticket provided for each participant - additional tickets are $5 each)**
- **Rating Fee**

**Membership Fees**

- All U.S. players must be members of the USTTA or must include payment for the appropriate membership with their entries. Membership must be valid through December 15, 1992.

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**Eligibility: Entries are limited as follows to USTTA members who are:**

- **Championship Events (Events 1-5 and 8-9):**
  - Permanent residents who entered the United States prior to July 10, 1986, and have F-151 Alien Registration Card (green card) or
  - Legal U.S. residents whose waiting period for obtaining citizenship will expire January 20, 1996.

World Team Trials (Events 6 and 7):

- U.S. citizen or
- Permanent residents who entered the United States prior to July 10, 1986, and have F-151 Alien Registration Card (green card)

**World Team Trials (Events 6 and 7):**

- U.S. citizen or
- Permanent residents who entered the United States prior to July 10, 1986, and have F-151 Alien Registration Card (green card)

**Tournament Party: Saturday, December 19, 9 p.m.-12 midnight, Sands Hotel.**

**Clothing:** The USTTA dress code will be enforced.

**Equipment:** Only ITTF-approved equipment will be used. Butterfly tables and nets and Nittaku 3-star white and yellow balls are to be used.

**Headquarters:** USTTA Headquarters, 1750 East Boulder Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5769

**Late Entries:** Postmarked after November 16 require $25 late fee.

**Entry Deadline:** November 16, 1992.

**Withdrawal:** A $10 processing fee will be charged to any participant who withdraws from the tournament prior to November 16, 1992. There will be no refunds after this date.

**Ratings: Men's and women's championship events will be best three events of the final round. All other events will be best two events of the final round.**

**Ratings:** All U.S. residents, including those of Permanent Residency Visa status and those with Alien Registration Card (green card), are eligible to play in the 1992 U.S. National Table Tennis Championships and World Team Trials. Permanent Residency Visa status and Alien Registration Card (green card) are accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship.

**National School Championships:**

- Eligibility: All U.S. residents, including those of Permanent Residency Visa status and those with Alien Registration Card (green card), are eligible to play in the 1992 U.S. National Table Tennis Championships and World Team Trials. Permanent Residency Visa status and Alien Registration Card (green card) are accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship.

**Junior High, Primary, and Elementary School Divisions:**

- Eligibility: All U.S. residents, including those of Permanent Residency Visa status and those with Alien Registration Card (green card), are eligible to play in the 1992 U.S. National Table Tennis Championships and World Team Trials. Permanent Residency Visa status and Alien Registration Card (green card) are accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship.

**High School Divisions:**

- Eligibility: All U.S. residents, including those of Permanent Residency Visa status and those with Alien Registration Card (green card), are eligible to play in the 1992 U.S. National Table Tennis Championships and World Team Trials. Permanent Residency Visa status and Alien Registration Card (green card) are accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship.
Jean-Philippe Gatien. While most watched the great play between these two, I was the Swedish royal family was there. 5,000 spectators who came to watch. Even watching something different: the over United States. NBC showed only a few seconds of the men's singles semifinal, and

Recently, I saw a tape of the 1992 November/December 1992

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These packages are designed especially for table tennis enthusiasts. Guests at the Sands Hotel Casino receive free shuttle bus service to and from the Sands Hotel Casino and the Las Vegas Convention Center.

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- Souvenir program
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- Ticket to gala party and dance
- Souvenir program
- Las Vegas discount book

Deposits: $25.00 per person. Balance due by November 18, 1992.

Cancellations: All cancellations must be submitted in writing and are subject to a $20.00 per person charge.

Hotel Inclusions: All prices are based on two persons sharing a room at host hotel - The Sands Hotel Casino. All prices include hotel room and tax only. Rooms are controlled by hotel and assigned on "run of the house" basis.


Reservation & More Information: United States Table Tennis Association
1700 East Boulder Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5769
(719) 578-4583 FAX: (719) 632-6071

Important Travel Information

Sands Hotel Casino
Make your reservations at the Sands today. Space is limited. Only the Sands Hotel will provide free shuttle service for table tennis players to and from the Las Vegas Convention Center. Reserve your room by calling 1-800-634-6901, Code USTI’92, or by completing and returning the form inside.

United Airlines
Call United at 1-800-841-0460, Code 755BV, to receive a special rate on airfare. By using this code, you will receive rates guaranteed prior to recent airfare increases.

Budget
To rent a car while in Las Vegas, call Budget at 1-800-922-2899, Extension 224, and ask for Connie Scordato.

I don't think the media discriminates intentionally against table tennis. They just don't know. So if we want them to change, we must sell them in the following:

A. It is a physical sport, not just an idle game. Like basketball, a player must move to accomplish a goal. A basketball player dribbles into position to shoot, or moves to defend. Similarly, a table tennis player has to move to the ball to attack, and the opponent then has to move to defend. Since the ball moves so fast, these movements must be faster than a typical basketball player's moves. Yet, conversely, it is not a difficult sport in that anyone can pick up the basics very rapidly. Anyone means 20 million people in the U.S. (according to National Sporting Goods Association Surveys). It's a peoples' sport!

B. Table tennis compares favorably with other sports:
- Contact sports often lead to injuries, and even tennis often causes tennis elbow. Table tennis is basically an injury-free sport.
- Most sports are unavailable to adults. Table tennis is a lifelong sport.
- Most sports have built-in advantages to certain individuals, leaving the rest of us at a disadvantage. A smaller person in football or basketball, for example, is at a terrible disadvantage, while a larger person cannot compete in gymnastics. Table tennis is the most non-discriminatory of physical sports — world champions have ranged from 5'2" to well over 6 feet.
- The sport is not just for males, as many sports seem to be. 40% of the 20 million who play are female, according to polls.
- All sports need a specialized playing site. Hockey or racquetball are good examples. But table tennis needs are relatively minor.
- Some sports have training regimens that are unhealthy. Gymnastics is an example of this. Table tennis training is one of the most aerobic exercises there is — although you can be overweight and play, top players are never overweight due to their training. You can lose weight, get in shape, all while playing an enjoyable sport!

This is not to say that these other sports are not as good as table tennis. But it does show that table tennis is just as good, and for this writer at least, better.

C. Table tennis is good for the country. It is one of the healthiest exercises possible, and it is great fun. A billion people can't be wrong! It is also a family-oriented sport. We talk about the importance of family values to our country, and it is the time for the media to do something for the country — turn our sport, table tennis, into one of America's most popular sports! With their help our elites can earn a fair living, adding to the glamour and appeal of the sport.

How can we use the above facts? Players, promoters, club presidents, tournament directors, coaches, the USTTA — spread the word! Contact the local media with the above facts the next time you have an activity. Above all, we should be ready for the 1992 Olympics in Atlanta (and other large events along the way) to sell the media on the facts that table tennis deserves the same coverage as the many sports that have received far more coverage.
POINT MALLARD OPEN
Decatur, Alabama
August 22, 1992
By Michael Wetzel
Decatur, Alabama — A summertime day full of table tennis in an air-conditioned gymnasium with free food and drink, sounds almost too good to be true. A good time has had by all 49 players in the Point Mallard Open round-robin tournament, even Memphis’ Ron Pickett had the merriest time. And while he was eating pizza and sipping on a Pepsi, his wallet was getting fat. But Pickett will admit winning the tournament’s $100 first prize and 14-karat gold and pearl table tennis tie tack was no piece of cake.

Coming into the tournament as the seventh seed (766), Pickett struggled only once in the morning preliminaries, eking out a 1-21. 17-21. 15-21 victory over boisterous John Conway of Huntsville. But Pickett never found his rhythm in the afternoon competition, Pickett flirted with defeat and his final sisters. But he wouldn’t be tempted.

In his first match against Michael Wetzel of Decatur, Pickett came back from 1-20 to defeat to win the first game 24-26 and slid to 21-18 in the second. His next match had him winning in three games against good friend and practice partner, Leon Curry. However, Pickett couldn’t outlast the point play with Don McClary of Huntsville while advancing to the afternoon championship division. Time after time Pickett’s racket found no return shot to Pickett’s forward hand and Pickett cut them up with a little more ease while defeating the tournament’s third seed Jim An of Birmingham 21-16, 21-19.

But he wasn’t finished with his close matches. In the semifinals, Pickett and Nige- rian native Bryan Asesso of Atlanta traded bulleted loops with Pickett winning 21-14, 14-21, 21-13. Veteran Ralph Kissel of Huntsville defeated his longtime nemesis Don Gaither of Hazel Green, Alabama 21-17 and 21-17 and awaited upset Pickett in the finals. Using his steady and strong backhand game, Kissel squawked by 24-26 in the first game and was up 21-6 in the second. But Pickett refused to succumb to his flaky ways. He found his range on his scrambling loop, took advantage of a service default by Kissel and roared back to win 23-21 and 21-13.

In Class A, W.C. Cleveland of Atlanta revenged an earlier loss to Lamar Scott of Huntsville, Alabama, defeating him 21-18, 21-14, 21-14 in the finals. Cleveland defeated Ed Watts of Huntsville 21-18, 21-5 in the semi’s while Scott was nipping fellow club member Andrew of Decatur 21-8, 14-21, 21-13. Class B saw Memphis’ Rick/ Roberto of Huntsville defeated his longtime nemesis Don Gaither of Hazel Green, Alabama 21-17 and awaited upset Pickett in the finals. Using his steady and strong backhand game, Kissel squawked by 24-26 in the first game and was up 21-6 in the second. But Pickett refused to succumb to his flaky ways. He found his range on his scrambling loop, took advantage of a service default by Kissel and roared back to win 23-21 and 21-13.

In Class C, W.C. Cleveland of Atlanta revenged an earlier loss to Lamar Scott of Huntsville, Alabama, defeating him 21-18, 21-14, 21-14 in the finals. Cleveland defeated Ed Watts of Huntsville 21-18, 21-5 in the semi’s while Scott was nipping fellow club member Andrew of Decatur 21-8, 14-21, 21-13. Class B saw Memphis’ Rick/ Roberto of Huntsville defeated his longtime nemesis Don Gaither of Hazel Green, Alabama 21-17 and awaited upset Pickett in the finals. Using his steady and strong backhand game, Kissel squawked by 24-26 in the first game and was up 21-6 in the second. But Pickett refused to succumb to his flaky ways. He found his range on his scrambling loop, took advantage of a service default by Kissel and roared back to win 23-21 and 21-13.

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Playing doubles in table tennis has always been a driving force for me. The camaraderie and teamwork make doubles play a fun but demanding challenge. In doubles, players have more time to prepare for their shots and the serve return is easier, leading to longer rallies and more spectacular shots. There are also some key strategies to being a successful doubles player:

- Know your partner's game and vice-versa. It is important to understand teamwork since doubles is a team game. In general, one player should be the set-up man and the other the shot-maker. Nearly all successful teams include one player with the advantages of each?

The huge number of racket surfaces on the market are actually made up of a very limited number of characteristics. We know they are made up of a pimpled rubber surface, either facing in or out, and (usually) a sponge padding underneath. What are the characteristics of these surfaces, and what are the advantages/disadvantages of each?

Although I will not name any brand names in this article, almost any manufacturer or distributor will carry some sort of surface with the more popular characteristics. Once you decide what characteristics you want, give them a call and they'll be glad to help you out. Also, since the huge majority of players use regular inverted sponge, this is the surface I will cover in this article. All the "minority" surfaces—pips-out, loop, antispin, hard rubber, etc.—will be covered in a future article. (And please don't call me elitist!)

THE SURFACE

Let's start with the rubber surface, and work inwards. These are the characteristics of inverted sponge that may differ from sheet to sheet:

- Grippiness
- Length, width, hardness, arrangement, and density of the underlying pips

The most important characteristic is the grippiness. The best way to check for this is to rub a ball against the surface gently. Some inverted surfaces, such as antispin rubbers, will have little friction, and the ball will slide across the surface. Surfaces such as these generate little spin (a disadvantage), but also react very little to spin (an advantage). They are difficult to attack with, and are basically defensive surfaces. A more common inverted surface will grip the ball somewhat more, and these are far better for all-around or aggressive play. The grippier the surface, the more spin you can put on the ball—for serving, pushing, chopping or looping.

Some surfaces are chemically treated to create a surface that is extremely sticky, so sticky that it will hold a ball upside down if pressed against the top of the ball. Surfaces such as these are difficult to control, but give the greatest spin of all. These surfaces are generally the most expensive. Many top players use them, but many find them too difficult to control—they react to spin more than a less sticky surface. To get the full benefit of a sticky surface, keep the surface clean, either with rubber cleaner or water.

The pips underneath the rubber also affect the ball's reaction when it hits the racket. Generally, the surface will be firmer if the pips are harder, if there are more of them, or if the pips are thicker. Certain arrangements of the pips will also cause different effects by putting more (or less) pips in the flight of the incoming ball for certain shots. (This assumes a player hits the ball in a certain way, generally so that the ball contacts the racket moving perpendicular to the racket's handle.)

When putting spin on the ball, the ball hits the racket at such an angle that the pips under the surface are bent, and then spring back into position. This means that if the pips are longer or softer, they will give more "spring," and therefore more spin. However, if enough force is used in the stroke in generating spin, harder pips will also be bent, and so great spin is also created. In general, softer & longer pips create more spin, while harder pips allow more speed, with equal spin if enough force is applied.

THE SPONGE

The underlying sponge has three major characteristics. They are:

- Thickness
- Bounciness
- Hardness

The thicker the sponge is, the more speed and spin you will be able to generate when looping. However, the thicker sponge will also only affect spin on shots where force is applied, and so it has very little effect on the spin when serving, pushing, or slow looping against backspin.

A thicker sponge does not necessarily give more speed when smashing. If a ball is hit straight on, so the ball sinks through the sponge into the wood, then the speed of the smash will mostly be determined by the racket and the racket speed at contact.

A thick sponge gives less control when smashing because even a slight mistake can cause the ball to drop. Surfaces such as these are more difficult to control, however, decreases proportionally. It is most effective when used with a soft sponge—especially with controlled looping, counterlooping, all-around play, and off-the-table defense. (A soft sponge is often used in conjunction with one of the modern table tennis speed glues—which actually increases spin more than speed.) Most European loopers use soft sponge with glue, while power loopers use either soft or hard sponge. If a power loopers likes to smash a lot, then hard sponge is an advantage.

THE GLUE

Gluing is the most recent fad in table tennis. Except it's not a fad. It began in the late 1970's by a few top players, and now a majority of top players regulate regularly. All racket surfaces are glued on, but some glues are made to change the characteristics of the surface. Regluing with a speed glue will add extra spin to your loop. It will also add some speed to all your other shots as well. It is most effective when used with a soft sponge—the effect on a hard sponge is far less. Nearly all Europeans regulate regularly. However, before you commit to becoming a "gluer," note both the upside—the extra power or spin on your shots—and the downside—loss of control on some shots, and the need to glue before each playing session. Study the balance, and make your decision.

CONCLUSION

Pick your surface carefully. It's going to become an extension of your table tennis game, so have confidence in it. If you really like to put extreme spin on the ball, get a sticky surface. If you like to smash the ball into orbit, get a hard, fast sponge. If you like to stand back and spin everything, get soft sponge and speed glue. Or, using a different logic, get a surface that helps you overcome a weakness in your game. In general, get the surface that suits your game.

November/December 1992
In a recent tournament I was greeted in my hotel by a player who had never beaten me before and who seemed to always have the answer to my game. In our previous meetings I had blasted loop after loop at 100 mph with authority matching even 10 points per game. Against this blocker I had to come up with something new. Rather then change my style (I am a hopeful loop/sink and spin setter) I decided on a new approach. At the end of which match I won in straight games, my frustrated opponent said "I don’t understand how you won using the style you used before"? Hey, isn’t that the same style you used on your new blade? I had never seen a player change the blade of the racket so that within a period of a few weeks, he became considerably more effective at being able to achieve a fast shot with the blade.

This is an important part of our understanding to categorize the behavior of a table tennis blade depend on the characteristics of the physical attributes of the player together with the type of rubber sheet being used. This clearly would be a Herculean task and would require a book length article based on years of research. What follows is a synopsis of the most important aspects of blade performance based on my observations and discussions with other researchers and players. Many of the conclusions presented are based on subjective analysis and should be taken only as being the opinion of the author. (The ideal weight and balance for a racket is between 80 to 100 grams. The most ideal weight for most players is between 160 and 170 grams. A racket weighing above 180 grams is generally difficult to control for most players. Thus both sides are reckoned the racket can have 8 grams added to it just from the glue build-up!) In the first few hours after two heavy reload sheets are put on the racket over 12 grams of weight of the racket can come from the glue.

Some players put tape on the handle while others use a commercial rubber grip. This tape generally will add less than a gram of weight but the rubber grip typically is 6 grams in weight.

In conclusion, choose a blade weight and balance which suits your style of game and physical capability. Don't be afraid to make a change in blade over time and don't let anyone determine the ideal weight and balance for your game. You may be surprised to find you have shots and capabilities you never had before. (I recently suggested to a 2050 rated player that he might do better with a much lighter blade. He immediately felt at home with the new blade and won a 2200 rated event at a major tournament within a few weeks, as it is fairly forgiving for beginners. The weight and balance of a blade is considerably different from that of the final racket and is related to many factors, including the size and weight of the blade, the type of rubber and the glue you use.

1) Blade Weight and Balance. Blade weight and balance generally are different from that of the final racket and is related to many factors, including the size and weight of the blade, the type of rubber and the glue you use.

2) Blade Sweet Spot/Vibration. This term refers to the difference in bouncing ability that occurs between a specific area on a blade and another. Usually there is a particular area on the blade, the so-called sweet spot, which has the least vibration and provides the most control. Players can have a large sweet spot than the all wood variety. They usually achieve this by using a more stiff still mage at the expense of some control. (Many world class players of carbon blades try to get around this problem by either using a soft outer wood to improve control or by reducing the thickness of the blade to make a more flexible paddle.) A novel approach to this problem is the one used in the CarboFlex which makes use of a central ply of carbon as well as outer plies of carbon. The central ply of carbon is typically 1.2 mm thick. The handle control is not affected at slower paced shots, as this layer doesn’t “kick in” until a fast or fast kill is initiated. Another way to increase the sweetness of one’s blade is to replace the outer wood with certain types of rubber instead of rubber based glues in their manufacture. The epoxy acts like a thin layers of carbon. Finally, an approach taken by Butter-Swiffl and other manufacturers is to put a material called Polyarlyte (invented in the U.S. over a decade ago by Union Carbone and similar to polycarbonate) in place of the blade. The result is a low vibration/smooth feeling) blade with a large sweet spot.

For most top players the size of the sweet spot is less important, as they are capable of striking this zone at will even under match conditions. What is more important for these players is the location of the sweet spot. Backhand loopers generally strike a spot more towards the tip of the racket than for a predominantly forehand looper, who hits the ball more in the center or top center of the face. Therefore the backhand looper will prefer a longer and possible thinner shaped blade head, whereas a predominantly forehand looper prefers a compact head design.

High level servers and defensive players who have marked differences in playing characteristics of various types of rubber will require the face of a blade to fool the opponent. (Low level players do it as well, but not always consciously) I myself prefer a large sweet spot. I use a blade with a large head and big ball stop, right on the edge of the paddle. (A situation that I find myself in too often as a forehand looper.)

The so called "vibration" of a racket is
complex phenomena which is related to many factors. Vibration in a racket is considered a good feature by some players and bad by others. I once showed Danny Seemiller one of my blades and he commented, "This is too much vibration," and I thought, "Why?" Most players are aware that they have to give up some vibration as this helps them get a better feel for a shot." I am paraphrasing. It appears that players like Danny somehow move the vibrations on their racket to an area other than the face of the blade. Also, some brands of rubber will create a vibration with a particular blade while others will not.

The location of the sweet spot and vibration forces on a blade are normally related. Typically, as one moves away from the sweet spot more vibration will be felt. Top players consciously adjust this location for each type of shot. As with any equipment which is used by a player, the vibration pattern will depend to a large extent on a bias based on experience with a limited variety of equipment. If one is allowed to play with a wide range of equipment, it is possible to see the advantages and disadvantages of a particular blade for a given stroke. In the end the right blade for a given player is usually a combination of that person's personal strengths and weaknesses.

3) Blade Flexibility/Dwell Time

The dwell time is a term which indicates how flexible or stiff a blade is. Further defining it is the amount of force required to flex the blade to "hold on" to the ball with a given rubber. A blade with a high dwell time allows the player to hold the racket face on the ball for a long period of time during the stroke. Clearly if a player's style and technique plays a major role in determining whether a high dwell time will be of benefit. Someone who plays with quick short strokes is not going to take advantage of a long dwell time type of blade. Whereas a long smooth stroking looper will take full advantage of such a blade.

The dwell time of a blade is related to the flexibility of the blade and the thickness of the outer layer of blade and the thickness, position and physical properties of all the layers in the blade. Bends can be made by elongating them in one direction or making them thinner, weaker and softer materials. (For example, long and narrow width shaped blades work well in this area.) Similarly, rubber based glues are also employed to improve flexibility as opposed to epoxy glues which usually are used to create stiff blades. Bending a blade is done by increasing the amount by employing a roughened material for the outside ply. Another blade design technique for increasing dwell time is to employ an outer thin layer of softer material covering a thick soft inner core.

Blades with a high dwell time and flexibility are usually very good for loops. (Also, the longer the dwell time, the less likely it will be that the player will have a good feel for the ball. So this will limit their use to slow and medium speed loops.) The down side of these blades is that they make it harder for the average player to perform loops and smash shots and can sometimes be difficult to return serve with. (A spiny serve stays on the racket face longer and can have a big effect if the return is not great.) Also the racket will flex and cause the ball to fly off in an uncontrollable manner. This is more of a common problem with fast flexible blades as opposed to slow or medium speed flexible blades. Stiff blades with a short dwell time on the other hand are usually good for block and smashing and with the right rubber they can create a vibration which helps the player feel the stroke. The top players, of course, are usually not affected as much by these considerations and can choose a blade based on their strengths rather than weaknesses.

The dwell time of a racket is heavily affected by the type of rubber sheet employed. The short dwell time of a stiff blade can be reduced by employing a very soft top sheet and sponge rubber. Further, one of the reasons that players rejoice is that the dwell time is dramatically increased. Experimentation with different blade/rubber combinations sometimes pays dividends for the player who has a false perception that it is necessary to accentuate a known set of strengths or hide a known set of weaknesses.

Most players prefer blades which are middle of the road in terms of dwell time. These blades are good at performing all the basic shots but are not as good as high or low dwell time blades when it comes to certain strokes. As before, the trick is to determine whether the blade is the best of your best range of opponents you are likely to face in a tournament. For example, if you are very good at return of serve and blocking and you feel your strength is the reliability of your loop, find a blade with a slightly longer dwell time.

Handle Types

There are five common types of handles used in the design of shakehand blades: the anatomic, the straight, the flared and the super-anatomic. Each of these types of handles is designed to provide a specific service to the player and to help him to perform certain strokes. As before, the trick is to choose the one that feels right for each individual. As can be expected, these issues are very personal and are based to a large extent on a bias based on experience with limited variety of equipment. Some players, myself included, use long or wrapped around handle. The super-anatomic handle is important to find just the right shape and size handle for your hand.

Even a difference of a few hundredths of an inch here can make a huge difference in your feelings of confidence in your blade. Some players, myself included, sand down or wrap around the handle a small amount. Others prefer to use a minor adjustment in their grips. As anatomic handle, it is important to find just the right size and shape handle for your hand. A poor grip while executing these strokes is often given as the reason for this fact. The professional players do it. (They even check the roundness of the ball before they play.) For those of you who are not sure if you have a good grip on the ball, it is important to have a handle which is too small.

6) Size/Shape of Blade

The size and shape of a blade can have dramatic effects on the way it responds to the hand and rubber, even using the same material construction. Blade designers have learned by trial and error how much changes can affect the performance of the player using the blade. This is another reason why there are so many types of blades. For the most part these are well guarded secrets. Here are some facts that are based on common sense and experience gleaned from playing with a large number of prototype blades from Sitco.

Generally, a larger sized head is favored by defensive players as they are easier to control and the increased size makes it more likely that the player will connect with the ball. Many of the types of players which make use of thin-sponged inverted or defensive pips rubber on one or both sides of the blade. In most cases this made from blades with a size less than the 2.0 mm inverted rubber most commonly used by players. (They can add less than 30 grams of weight per sheet to a racket.) Thus the professional players use large blades and the 1.9 mm weight limit is a weight problem for this type of player.

Compact head designs are generally favored by the attack player. With the smaller head size the player is able to make more changes to their grip without changing the weight of the blade. This is important because the blade and wrist. After these various pieces of equipment in table tennis are based on common sense and my experience. In addition, it offers some advantages for certain style of play.

The professional players do it. They even check the roundness of the ball before they play. For those of you who are not sure if you have a good grip on the ball, it is important to have a handle which is too small. Each player designs an equalizer for the player's personal needs. This springboard behavior is liked by many loopers as they can get a lot of stored power into a stroke. More round or rounded designs provide more control of certain shots, in particular block, push and kill shots.

7) Conclusion

I hope that this information enlightens you and starts you thinking about one of the least understood pieces of equipment in table tennis, the blade. Remember that no two blades are alike, and you should buy only those which are manufactured today is made of wood (ITTF rule). Each piece of wood, even from the same tree, has a variation in its grain, density and strength. However, most manufacturers of blades do their very best to make a product with good consistency, variations will occur even in the same model. When you buy a new blade, always a good idea to try out (by bouncing the ball on the blade) a few blades of the same model and then choose the one which feels best to you. They even check the roundness of the ball before they play with it. For those of you who are fanatic, buy yourself a accurate scale which can measure your slice and determine the forces which occur where the handle meets the head. A few manufacturers provide an extra wide top handle for some of their blades, which performs the same function.

To increase the sweet spot on your blade put a thin layer of epoxy glue all along the edge of the head on your blade. This will not only increase the dwell time but may also reduce the vibration on the blade to some extent. In addition, it will provide some protection for the edge of the blade. This can be done with the table tennis table and other objects.

Table Tennis Topics 31

November/December 1992
MY FAVORITE MULTIBALL DRILLS

by Richard McAfee
Head Coach, Anderson College
USTTA Certified National Coach

One of the most challenging facets of coaching is designing practice drills that will prepare the athlete for competition. This can be a difficult task as no training situation is ever perfect. There is always one player better than the others, or perhaps no player of a certain style to practice with.

To cope with these problems, Chinese coaches in the late 1960’s developed the multi-ball system of drilling: inspired, it seems, by watching the Japanese volleyball coaches using similar techniques.

What are Multi-Ball Drills?
As the name suggests, these drills are performed using a large number of inexpensive balls. These balls are fed continuously by a “feeder” to the “student” in a set pattern. There is no replay of the student’s shots. Because of this, 1-star balls will do nicely. Balls are fed until a certain number are hit or a set time period is elapsed.

Advantages of Multi-Ball Drills
1. There is more intense practice in a shorter time frame. Since no time is wasted chasing balls, more strokes can be executed in a shorter time.
2. Ability to practice varied skills without skilled training partners. Since the feeder need not move or return the student’s shots, he/she can easily duplicate much higher level returns.
3. Ability to increase aerobic and physical capacity quicker. A feeder can easily over-load the student, forcing an increase in aerobic and physical capacity.
4. One feeder can work with a number of people at the same time, easily varying the drill to suit each student.

Description of Basic Technique.
The basic technique is quite simple. The feeder stands to the side of the table, near the net (left side of table for right handers). A large container of balls is located within easy reach of the feeder’s free-hand.

To feed topspin, the ball is first placed near the bottom while descending. The feeder, using light topspin, alternately sends one ball to the forehand and then one to the backhand of the receiver. The receiver returns all balls with either forehand or backhand drives.

As the receiver’s skill level increases follow the steps listed in Drill #1.

1. Step-a-Round Drill
This is a drill designed to practice the correct movement for using a forehand attack from the backhand corner of the table.

1. Open Singles
Racket angle and amount of table. Throwing the ball several inches up (slightly backward) the ball is struck near the bottom while descending. Again the racket angle and amount of friction can be adjusted to produce the desired effects.

MOVEMENT DRILLS
1. 2-Position Drill
This is a forehand movement drill. The emphasis is on correct 2-step movement. The feeder, using a light topspin, delivers a ball first to the center line and then to the forehand corner. The receiver, using correct footwork, returns the ball. The receiver may use whatever stroke is being worked on at the time.

As the receiver’s skill increases, the feeder can make the drill more difficult by:
1) increasing the amount of spin being covered from 50% up to 70%;
2) increasing the rate of the balls being fed; 3) having the receiver aim for target areas on the table.

2. Alternate Forehand & Backhand Drill
This drill emphasizes switching from backhand to forehand. The feeder, using light topspin, alternately sends one ball to the forehand and then one to the backhand of the receiver. The receiver returns all balls with either forehand or backhand drives.

As the receiver’s skill level increases follow the steps listed in Drill #1.

3. Step-a-Round Drill
This is a drill designed to practice the correct movement for using a forehand attack from the backhand corner of the table.

The feeder sends all balls, with a slight topspin, to the receiver’s backhand side. The receiver makes one or two backhand drives, steps around the backhand corner and then executes a forehand drive. The pattern then repeats itself.

The emphasis again is on the correct 2-step movement into the corner.

MAMMOTH OPEN

Tournaments November 14-15 and January 23-24

by Butterfly

1. Under 2400
2. Under 2250
3. Open Singles
4. Under 2000
5. Women’s Singles
6. Under 2100
7. Under 1900
8. U-3600 Doubles
9. Under 1700
10. Under 1800
11. O40 Seniors, U1800
14. Under 1600
15. Under 1350
16. Under 1450
17. Under 1200
18. Unrated Singles

* Players under 2000 pay $10; ** Players under 1500 pay $6
# 4th grade or lower; ## 9th grade or lower; ### Unrated players may enter rated events but may not advance past RR

### Winner of U1900, U2000 & U2100 events will receive a free Carbon Blade from care of Mincon High-Tech Sports

Please circle event numbers

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<td>2. Under 2250</td>
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<td>$6</td>
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<td>17. Under 1200</td>
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<td>18. Unrated Singles</td>
<td>RR</td>
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Make checks payable to Mammoth Table Tennis Club and mail to:
Mammoth Table Tennis Club, 550 Eighth Ave. 3rd Fl., New York, NY 10018, (212) 768-2255.

Club is located between 37th and 38th street. Entry deadlines October 8 & November 12.

Late entries and phone entries will be charged an additional $5.

Entry Fee: $ ____________ Name ____________ Male Female
Rating Fee: $3.00 Address
USTTA City ____________ State ____________ Zip
Membership: $ Telephone ____________ Birthdate

Total fees enclosed: $ ____________ Is this address new? Yes No ____________ USTTA Rating ____________ Exp. Date

I wish to enter the events listed above, in consideration of the acceptance of my entry. I hereby release the sponsors, USTTA, tournament personnel and Mammoth Table Tennis Club from any claims or demands for any loss, damage or injury sustained to me or my property. I am assuming full responsibility for my application in this Mammoth Tournament. I shall abide by all USTTA regulations.

Signature ____________ Parent, if minor

* CERTIFIED NATIONAL COACH

November/December 1992
5. Stanek Drill

I named this drill after the great Czech star who taught it to me some twenty years ago. The feeder simply alternates between sending topspin and backspin to the receiver's forehand side.

The receiver uses either forehand drives or loops and aims for targets on the table. The emphasis is on making the adjustment between the spins.

A more advanced version of this drill would be to combine it with any of the above movement drills.

DRILLS AGAINST CHOP

These are very important drills, as few clubs in our country have a quality chopper available to drill with.

To better duplicate the flight of a chop and give the receiver the proper timing, the feeder now sits in a chair some eight to ten feet behind the table. Sitting sideways to the table and using a forehand stroke the feeder can easily produce heavy underspin chops.

6. Corner to Middle Drill

The feeder sends underspin balls to the forehand court of the receiver.

The receiver uses either forehand drives or loops and aims for targets on the table. The emphasis is on making the adjustment between the spins.

A more advanced version of this drill would be to combine it with any of the above movement drills.

DRILLS AGAINST CHOP

These are very important drills, as few clubs in our country have a quality chopper available to drill with.

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7. Middle to Corner

This drill is the opposite of the above. The receiver hits steady forehand topspins to the middle and kills to the corner.

SPECIAL DRILLS FOR CHOPPERS

In these drills, the feeder takes the standard position at the side of the table. However, a different feeding technique is used. Since the chopper is back from the table, more force must be used in feeding the ball. The feeder throws the ball hard into the racket as well as take a longer swing to generate enough force.

8. Alternate Chopping Drill

The drill begins with the receiver in a ready position some eight to ten feet from the table. The feeder first sends one ball to the forehand side, then one to the backhand side of the receiver. THESE BALLS ARE HIT HARD AT THE RECEIVER.

The receiver returns each ball using correct chopping technique and recovering to the ready position. Emphasis is on speeding up the chopper's reaction time. However, good technique and proper recovery should not be sacrificed.

As the receiver becomes more advanced, the feeder should begin to hit randomly over the whole table, including right at the receiver.

9. Three-Position Chopping Drill

The drill begins with the receiver back from the table in a ready position. The feeder sends one ball to the forehand (hard), one to the backhand (hard), then a drop shot to the forehand side. The pattern then repeats.

The receiver makes one forehand chop, then a backhand chop, and finally moves in and attacks the drop.

The feeder should time each ball to get the maximum effort out of the receiver. This drill should also be done in the reverse, starting with a hard ball to the backhand side, and ending with a drop to the backhand side.

10. Re-loop Drill

In this drill two people are feeding one receiver, with one feeder also being a part of the drill.

The feeder works feeding B easy topspins which B loops hard down the middle line. As the receiver becomes more advanced, the feeder must throw the ball hard into the racket as well as take a longer swing to generate enough force.

The advantages of multi-ball are its adaptability and ease of use. You can easily create a drill for any technique or opponent. Perhaps the most outstanding feature of this system is that you don't need a high-level training partner to get high level results. Multi-Ball Drills are an important tool for Coaches, but they can work just as well for you at home or at your club.
By Tim Bogdan

Unexpectedly Bobby Gusikoff called me and, in the throes of uncontrollable tears and spasmzed speech, gasped out that his long-time friend Erwin Klein had just been shot to death in Los Angeles—killed in an argument on September 30 by a business partner, who then fatally turned the gun on himself.

It was a death that would disturb even those already accustomed to everyday violence, for Hall of Famer Klein—a four-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion and (with Leah “Ping” Neuberger) 1956 World Mixed Doubles Champion—had been a legendary name in U.S. table tennis for decades...literally ever since that U.S. Open day in 1952 when, as an unranked, red-haired, freckle-faced, fun-loving, “Chubby” kid from a California playground, he forced Dave Krizman, U.S. Boys #1, into a tenacious 5-game final.

By the time he was 14, young Erwin, adapting (as he would always adapt) to the rapidly changing technology of the sport, had become the best men’s player in California with either the old hard bat or the new sponge rubber.

At 16, he really came of age: won the Canadian International at Toronto by defeating John Somael, Bernie Bukiet, and Sol Schiff, the U.S.’s 3rd, 4th, and 5th ranked players. He also won the Junior’s, the Men’s Doubles, and the Mixed Doubles, Every thing.

In the 1955 U.S. Open, 4-time World Singles Champion Richard Bergmann, an intensely proud professional, presented his own laurel wreath of respect to Klein, who became the best men’s player in California at Berkeley, then, later, at Northwestern, would continue to have many enviable successes. In the 1957 U.S. Open he was runner-up to Bukiet. In the 1959 U.S. Open he lost in the 1/4’s to Schiff after having Sol match-point in the 4th. That year’s Defending Champion, Marty Reisman (who, strangely, was never to play in Erwin in a tournament), said that Schiff and Klein mirrored each other in their effortless two-winged smooth-flowing strokes. Klein, said Marty, “had perfect anticipation, super-fast reflexes, and a superb touch.”

In 1960, Erwin again won at Toronto—over Houshang Bozorgzadeh. He was also named “Outstanding Player” at the USOCT’s. In 1961 he captured his second U.S. Open by downing Mike Ralston in five. In 1962 he won the Eastern’s, deuce-in-the-4th, from Bukiet. And then, amazing (could it happen to-day?), he’d had a conflicting exam he simply had to take, had notified the U.S. Open Tournament Committee of this earlier, but, even as he was on the plane flying into New York from Chicago, and even though he was the Defending Champion, he was defeated. Frantically, Gusikoff had tried to preserve Klein’s entry, had even gotten Erwin’s first round opponent to cheerfully accept $25 to scratch himself from the draw and declare Klein the winner, but this was disallowed. Nor could Erwin and Bobby take consolation in the Doubles; they were beaten in the final by Miles and Norbert Van de Walle.

In the 1963 U.S. Open Klein lost to arch-rival Bukiet 23-21 in the 4th, but then teamed with him to win the Doubles over Defenders Miles Van de Walle.

By now Klein had abandoned the idea of being a dentist, but with an important industry-contributing, fiber-optic invention would become interested in the business of dentistry. His table tennis didn’t seem to suffer. For the ‘64 U.S. Open he’d incorporated into his game a very good “loop,” which helped him to down defender Bobby Fields in the final. “Most people think table tennis is in the wrists,” he was telling a Sports Illustrated reporter, “actually, it’s in the upper legs and lower back.” In 1965 he won his fourth and last Open—over Bukiet in four; then paired with him again to win their third straight Doubles.

Though Erwin would continue to play in U.S. Opens and also in the ‘67 Stockholm World’s, and would even experiment for a while as a penholder, he would never find the time or interest in the Dal Joon Lee era to do more than at best hold his own with such accomplished players as Jack Howard, Dell Sweeris, and Glenn Cowan. Finally, he just stopped playing in tournaments.

To realize what an intensely interested student of the game Erwin really was though, consider that in 1980 long after he’d left the competitive tournament scene, you could find him in Berne, Switzerland at the European Championships (where of course no Americans were ent ered). There he struck up an at first indifferent conversation with England’s John Hilton, then, following Hilton’s persistent requests, began coaching and encouraging him, round after round, to the Englishman’s increasingly less incredible destiny. Inexplicably though, after Hilton was crowned Champion, this stranger, for that’s what Erwin was to him, didn’t even want to speak to John. “I’ve done my job for you,” he said. And walked out of Hilton’s life forever—though not out of his Memory, his Imagination.

“It brings a tear to my eye to think about his help,” said John 10 years later in Baltimore. “It meant so much to my table tennis career. His name, I found out later, was Erwin Klein. I’d like to see him again. Do you know if he’s here? I never really thanked him enough.”

Amen. It may be that we all never really thanked Erwin enough. He was a unique Champion in our for-hoc-long-shored little world, and so deserves, I’m sure we all agree, a few well-remembered words from us now....
A LITTLE LATE FOR THE UNVEILING

November/December 1992

A Visit to Four-time World Champion Richard Bergmann's Grave
by Tim Boggan

Late April of this year, looking (for something that escapes me now) deep into one of my many, it may be, history-preserving boxes of table tennis articles, press clippings, photos, letters, player-memorabilia of all kinds, I by chance came upon the Notice of an Unveiling of a Monument in Memory of 4-time World Men’s Singles Champion Richard Bergmann. The date was May 2, 1971, the cemetery of Mt. Ararat, located, according to the map accompanying the Notice, just off Exit 33 of Long Island’s Southern State Parkway...more 15 minutes from my home.

I was surprised. I knew of course that, like so many other Europeans, Bergmann had had the most promising of careers devastatingly interrupted—Caio, 1939...Wembley, 1948—and that, from the mid-’50s on after his competitive days were over, he had toured not just North America but most of the world giving half-time exhibitions with the Harlem Globetrotters. But for some reason it had never registered with me that this famous Austrian-born, naturalized Briton had been buried in the U.S., and so astonishingly close to the home my family and I had been quite settled into now for almost thirty years.

On hearing stories about Richard (he was always called Richard) from such well-known players as Dick Miles, Marty Reisman, Bernie Bukiet, and Derek Wall, among others, and from having read his obituaries—in the newspapers, radio, the sports magazines, the Sport’s record books. But to circle back, I tried entrance after entrance, but they were all locked. Why was the place so deserted? Did no one visit there anymore? Surely that was impossible.

I stopped at Wellwood Memorials, the only place of habitation nearby, where stones for the dead proliferated out in every direction—an unkeep poor substitute for the unavailable neighboring cemetery itself. The man who greeted me inside was very obliging. “It’s Saturday, the Sabbath,” he said, answering my question kindly, with apologetic regret. “The cemetery’s open six days a week...but today it’s closed.”

“Oh, of course,” I replied. But I hadn’t realized that Mt. Ararat was a Jewish cemetery or that there were days you couldn’t get in. Had it been the same when I was growing up? You didn’t make a visit on a Sunday.

“I’m looking for Section 14,” I said. “When I come back, which gate do I enter?”

For a Long Islander this man was extraordinarily friendly. He insisted I wait until he’d gone back into the interior of his store to bring me a detailed section plan, and then he tried with an X to direct me to the grave. I thanked him and, with some sense of having partially fulfilled a duty, went home.

The number-synthesis (I was no more than whimsically interested) plus one equals three. Three equals—do you believe it?—of an irresistible pattern.

I went so far as to look up the number 21 in J. E. Celot’s A Dictionary of Symbols. It was imaginatively easy. Two plus one equals three. Three equals—do you believe it?—a “spiritual synthesis.” Three forms “a half circle composed of: birth, zenith, and descent.” Associated with “heaven” and the “Trinity,” it “no doubt appealed to that submerged part of my now more catholic than Catholic consciousness. To me, soon to take my little journey, it was meant to suggest “sufficiency, or the growth of unity within.” Bergmann: off the table, his own worst enemy, said ITTF founder-president Ivor Montague; on the table, a perfect role model. How different the drives we all have to outdo.

Richard the Lion-Hearted he’d been called. What a ladies man he was. “Richard,” a table tennis friend on accompanying him to his flat once asked, “why are there no chairs in the room?”...So the girls will have to sit on the bed,” he answered. “It’s easier that way.”

No halo for this revered Champion; rather (I liked Montague’s phrase), “the aura of insurrection against authority, with which Richard sometimes surrounded himself.”

And in the family plot: Frieda and Theodore Nurick (“Maj. U.S. Army—World War II”)—Frieda being, I assumed, one of Richard’s four sisters. And Frank C. Bryan (“Kind Heart, Gifted Hands, and a Gentle Soul”)—the 8-year’s-now deceased husband of one of those sisters...Spaces for the living remained.

What more, in paid, in hand, was I to silently scribble?...At the end (wrote one of his visitors, Roy Evans, Montague’s long-time referee, historian, feud leader), “Bergmann, in that bed, ‘mute and paralyzed.’ A final suspension. My god, Tim, don’t be stupid. The rogutish Champ, even when hard up, did have a sense of humor. Was it World-runnerup’s Belluk’s line that Reisman so liked? “Bergmann was weak on the backhand—but I never saw him miss one.”

From the right of the monument an outstretched branch of a pine tree shaded the name BERGMANN. A nice touch. I looked down, saw a fallen pine cone, and, picking it up, put it in my pocket. “All I want from your reverence I have, I owe to her...”

One of the landscapers had come close by and I walked over and asked him about them. “The people put them there instead of flowers,” he said—“to show that they’ve been to the grave and paid their respects.”

Returning from the grave, I walked back to the monument. I couldn’t resist—I began to count the stones. Before I was halfway through I had a wild hope as to what the total would be. And then in the next instant, though I continued counting, I was sure. I counted the total, carefully, three times. There were exactly 21 stones there....But whether this was by accident or design, I couldn’t, and still can’t, say.
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National Table Tennis Center, 16810 Oakmont Ave., Gaithersburg, MD 20877

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT LARRY HODGES, 301-330-4334

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ADDRESS ___________________________

AGE ___________________________ ROOM REQUESTED? Yes No (Circle one)

AMOUNT ENCLOED ___________________________ NTTC MEMBER? Yes No (Circle one)
(Minimum deposit $50, non-refundable)
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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, Bethlehem, PA 18017. Because of space limitations, it is official USTA policy that only players who have played in a tournament in the past five months are listed.
Over the last five months, 3,393 USTA members participated in tournaments. Of these, 3,150 were male, and 243 were female. That's a 13-1 ratio! What's the deal?
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<td>December 5</td>
<td>U.S. Open</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Peter S. L. Brown, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 7</td>
<td>National Table Tennis Tournament</td>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>Justin R. Smith, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 9</td>
<td>U.S. Open</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>Robert Utsch, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 11</td>
<td>National Table Tennis Tournament</td>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>Peter S. L. Brown, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 13</td>
<td>U.S. Open</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Peter S. L. Brown, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 15</td>
<td>National Table Tennis Tournament</td>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>Justin R. Smith, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 17</td>
<td>U.S. Open</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>Robert Utsch, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 19</td>
<td>National Table Tennis Tournament</td>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
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<td>December 21</td>
<td>U.S. Open</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Peter S. L. Brown, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 23</td>
<td>National Table Tennis Tournament</td>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>Justin R. Smith, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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<td>December 25</td>
<td>U.S. Open</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>Robert Utsch, National Table Tennis Center</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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(412) 823-7225

Terry Timmins
2 Northwinds
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
(714) 362-8185

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7127 Williams Creek Drive
Indiana, PA 46240
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U.S. TEAM

1992 PARALYMPICS - BARCELONA, SPAIN


Coaches: Christian Lillieroos, Rong Li, Christopher Lehman, Pei-Zen Shao, Larry Bavly.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Mike Dempsey
Silver Medal
Men's Wheelchair Open
Class 1 - 5

Mitch Seidenfeld
Gold Medal
Individual Event
Men's Class 8

Terese Terranova
Bronze Medal
Women's Wheelchair Open
Class 1 - 5

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★★★ Team SITCO ★★★
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