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Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles for the fourth straight USA Nationals.

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- June 23-25, 2000
- July 28-30, 2000
- August 18-20, 2000
- Sept 29-Oct 1, 2000

**Event**
- Butterfly Open
- Eastern Open
- Golden Gate Open
- Matthew Murad Memorial Open
- Mid-Atlantic Open
- Western Open

**Location**
- Raleigh, NC
- Baltimore, MD
- San Francisco, CA
- Landover, MD
- College Park, MD
- Sacramento, CA

Enter using the registration card in this issue or register online at [www.ttsuperstore.com](http://www.ttsuperstore.com). Credit Cards accepted online. Sponsored by Butterfly.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Champion</th>
<th>Finalist</th>
<th>3rd-4th</th>
<th>5th-8th</th>
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**Venue Location:**

For specific directions, see our website.

**Hotel:**
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Planning for the Future of USA Table Tennis
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

Happy New Year! In the last issue of the magazine I outlined the goals of our new High Performance Plan (Plan) and our proposed markers for 2000. In this issue’s “association primer,” I will discuss our final markers for 2000, continued implementation of USATT’s Plan, highlights of our budget for 2000 and some recent USATT news.

2000 Markers
The USOC approved the first four of our proposed markers, but rejected our fifth marker (the projected improvement in our teams’ world rankings) as not challenging enough. Since we had the option to have only four markers, we decided not to negotiate an acceptable fifth marker. The four remaining markers for 2000, described in greater detail in the November-December magazine, are a club enhancement program, a youth enhancement program, a youth/cohorts trip to China, and achievement of world rankings by two youth athletes.

Implementation of USATT’s New Plan
Our approach in implementing USATT’s new Plan will be both top-down and bottom-up. We will focus on incorporating the Plan’s priorities into our business practices, Board and committee action, and our public relations activities. I will also attempt to resolve a number of governance irregularities that have become apparent over the past several months. I expect the Board to consider a number of proposed solutions during the Board’s next meeting.

Approval of 2000 Budget
At the November Board meeting, the Board approved the budget for 2000. Three changes in USATT’s bookkeeping functions within a four-month period, a new executive director, a new president, a new treasurer, a new Finance Committee, a newly-adopted Plan, and a new direction in our markers made for an overwhelming onslaught of too many changes at once. As a result, the process was very time consuming, but we all worked together to fashion a budget that reflects this administration’s priorities.

Here are some of the highlights:
• For the first time, the Finance Committee will have a semi-annual meeting to reassess the mid-year status of the budget and to propose adjustments.
• The Youth Committee’s budget increased by nearly 50%. We would have liked to increase it by even more, but because both the world championships and the Olympics will take place this year, we felt obliged to direct most of our centralized funding money to the National Team.
• Funding for the Club Development and Membership Services Committee increased significantly.
• We allocated some seed money to the League Committee to develop a regional league proposal.
• To compensate for the additional expenditures that caused a negative variance in the budget, we project additional income from corporate sponsorships and other funding sources that we were confident Executive Director Ben Nisbet could secure during the year.
• The end result is a balanced budget of about $1.1 million.

Team USA Set to Wear Stiga
I am pleased to announce that Team USA Table Tennis has already entered into its first new sponsorship deal of 2000. The Table Tennis Pioneers, in partnership with Escalade Sports and Stiga, signed a 4-year clothing contract with USATT just as the magazine was going to press. The total value of the sponsorship — including apparel, cash payments, and joint marketing activities — is over $100,000. Thank you, Stiga! See page 44 for additional details.

Magazine Advertising Sets New Record
Editor Larry Hodges reported that this issue of the magazine set a new record for advertising revenues. The USATT Awarded USOC Contingency Grant
USA Table Tennis applied for and was granted partial funding for USATT’s 2000 world championships expenses. Since the 1999 joint team/individual event in Belgrade was canceled, the ITTF re-scheduled the individual event in 1999 and the team event in 2000. Thanks, USOC, for helping us shoulder this unanticipated budget item.

January’s Budgetary Impact
When added together, the cash payments from Stiga, the additional advertising money and the USOC grant, USATT — in January — is already roughly halfway toward meeting the extra revenues required to keep our budget balanced for the year!

Improvements Slated for Local and National Tournaments
At the recent North American Team Championships and the U.S. Nationals, I had the opportunity to chat with many members. I am pleased that participants expressed positive comments about both events.

Improvements are always welcome though. In our new Plan, we have committed our association to creating a more professional tournament structure. This year in lieu of allocating All-Star tournament funding, USATT decided to devote that money toward the creation of a comprehensive tournament production manual. We believe that the manual will ultimately benefit both the general membership and the elite players more than the All-Star tournament funding did.

USA Table Tennis intends to dramatically improve the staging of the U.S. Open and the U.S. Nationals. USATT will also take on a more prominent role in the national team event.

President’s Choices for Awards
I would like to implement a three-category “President’s Awards” in order to recognize our outstanding athletes and volunteers. Had I made these awards at the Nationals, I would have given them as follows:
• Michelle Do and Mark Hazinski for their U.S. Nationals performances, described in more detail in the tournament write-up. Also see pages 68-69 for a profile on each of them.
• Alan Williams for his outstanding volunteer contributions. Alan and his wife Erin suffered the loss of their daughters in a fire that destroyed their home in November. Yet they both helped run the North American Team Championships and the Nationals. Earlier in the fall Alan had created awe-inspiring club development and membership service materials. After the fire, he re-created the required membership documentation for our 1999 markers report.
• Aly Salam for excellence in tournament administration. Aly personally funded a meeting of key U.S. Nationals tournament coordinators over Labor Day weekend in order to implement scheduling improvements. This meeting resulted in a smoother-running tournament, tables operating at over 90% efficiency, and almost a 100% “on time” daily track record at the Nationals.

Superstars Put on Show at the Nationals
Last September Chen Xinhua, a former member of China’s world champion team also known as “the chopper from England,” called to offer his support when he learned that I had become president. I asked him to perform an exhibition at our Nationals. As a favor to me, he said that he would and he also agreed to waive his usual show fee.

Cheng Yinghua accepted our invitation to be Chen Xinhua’s exhibition partner — also at no cost to us. Cheng even allowed us to schedule the exhibition on his most grueling day of the tournament.

President’s Report

Chen Xinhua and Sheri Pittman

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2000
On behalf of USATT, I thank both Chen Xinhua and Cheng Yinghua. The 1999 Nationals videotape (see page 42) beautifully captured the entertaining combination of their world-class skills and humorous antics. (See page 51 for write-up of their world-class skills and Liu Hua.)

I also want to thank both Escalade Sports/Stiga and Butterfly for their cooperation with USATT in planning the logistics of the exhibition. Our U.S. Nationals sponsor, Escalade Sports/Stiga, graciously granted their permission for the performance of the exhibition, which was financially supported by Butterfly and featured Butterfly-sponsored players.

Exhibitions Used to Attract Sponsors and Fund Elite Players

USATT's Executive Director Ben Nisbet has fashioned a new joint role for exhibitions. Generous stipends to the exhibition participants, underwritten by the potential sponsor, provide our elite players/top youth hopefuls with an innovative funding mechanism.

Bonus Paid to Pan Am Team Medalists

Last July our Pan Am team members - David Zhuang, Eric Owens, Todd Sweeris, Gao Jun, Amy Feng, and Tawny Banh - swept both the men's and women's team gold medals. Additionally, David Zhuang won men's singles, Gao Jun won women's singles, and Amy Feng took the bronze in women's singles. Their accomplishments brought to the fore the fact that there was one century into the next. I am confident that as we adhere to our Plan by setting new and higher standards for USATT, we will bring increased recognition and visibility to the wonderful sport of table tennis.

USATT presented the bonus money to them at the Nationals. Pan Am team captain Todd Sweeris thanked the donors, Team Leader Bob Fox, and coaches Dan Seemiller and Doru Gheorghe for their support.

On behalf of the association, I extend my thanks to the following companies and members whose generous contributions enabled the athletes to receive monetary recognition for their wonderful achievement: Butterfly, Escalade Sports/Stiga, California Table Tennis Company, Table Tennis International, and Paddle Palace. Individual contributors were: Jerry Young, Dr. Jiing Wang, Ross Brown, Patrick Lee, Tong Lee, Alex Li, James Do, Khoa Nguyen, Ben Nisbet, Marius Wechsler, Sheri Pittman, Barney Reed and Dennis Taylor.

Spotlight on Our Junior Members of the National Team

The latest issue of Table Tennis Illustrated dubbed Michelle Do and Keith Alban as “tomorrow's stars.” Congratulations, Michelle and Keith. For USATT's renewed focus on youth players, turn to the new “Youth Pages” on pages 68-69.

Onward and Upward

Pivotal changes slated for - and already occurring - in 2000 mesh well with our association’s journey from a sport of table tennis. The latest issue of Table Tennis Illustrated featured Michelle Do and Keith Alban as “tomorrow’s stars.” Congratulations, Michelle and Keith. For USATT’s renewed focus on youth players, turn to the new “Youth Pages” on pages 68-69.

Effective January 1, 2000, USA Table Tennis will be restructuring membership fees for clubs and individuals. This is being done in an effort to streamline the membership process, simplify categories, and eliminate confusion as to what types of memberships and club affiliations are available. A summary of the membership rate changes are shown below:

- **Elimination of the category of Junior Without Magazine** - USA Table Tennis will be focusing heavily on youth during the coming years, and USA Table Tennis Magazine is an invaluable tool for all youth.
- **Increase the cost of Junior memberships from $12 to $15** - This will allow USA Table Tennis to sell Junior memberships “at cost” rather than losing money on each membership sold.
- **Name change and definition of the Family membership** - This category will now be referred to as the Household membership and will be limited to two adults plus any minors residing at the same address.

The new membership categories and fees are shown below:

- **Adult (18 Years and Older)**
  - One Year - $25
  - Three Years - $60
- **Junior (17 Years and Younger)**
  - One Year - $15
- **Household**
  - One Year - $45
- **One-Time Tournament Pass**
  - $6
BUCKEYE OPEN TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT
MARCH 18-19, 2000

Venue: The Jesse Owens Rec Center (North) on the campus of The Ohio State University, 2151 Neil Ave. (@ Lane Ave)

Sponsors: Macy Block, Berndt Mann, and the Buckeye Open Table Tennis Association

Sanction: USA Table Tennis and the Ohio Table Tennis Association

Rating: Four Star, ($5,000 prize money)

Committee: Steve Slaback - Director, Charles Hill - Asst Director, Dan Seemiller - Advisor
Chris Williams - NR

Eligibility: Open to all members of the USATT. Non-members may join by paying the membership fee with their entry. Details on entry form. Eligibility for events: Open Singles and Doubles - everyone is eligible. Players are eligible if their rating is below the rating listed for the event. We reserve the right to restrict unrated players from events below their estimated playing level. Unrated players WILL NOT advance out of round robin events.

Senior: Players 40 or older by December 31, 2000.

Rules: The laws of Table Tennis as published by the ITTF and all USATT regulations apply. Classic hard bat rules for hardbat events. The Point Penalty System will be used.

Equipment: Only USATT approved equipment will be used. Butterfly and Stiga tables and nets, orange Butterfly balls. The floor is asphalt (for indoor tennis).

Clothing: The USATT dress code applies.

Deadline: Entries must be received by Wednesday, March 1, 2000. Payment must accompany entry. A surcharge of $6.00 will be applied to telephone and late entries. We reserve the right to refuse phone entries.

Remittance: Pay by check or money order payable to BUCKEYE OPEN TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION (BOTTA) and mail to:
Steve Slaback, 697 Waxwing Ct., Westerville, OH 43082-1024  (614) 899-1415

Check in: Players must register at the control desk not later than 15 minutes prior to the starting time for the earliest event.

Cancellation: The tournament committee reserves the right to cancel any event if there are insufficient entries. Fees will be refunded for any canceled event.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLEASE CIRCLE EACH EVENT YOU ARE ENTERING:</th>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26</td>
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Event Fees: $
USATT #: (Must specify for dbls)
Rating:___
Birthday:_____

USATT Membership: $
Doubles Event Partner:_________

+ Rating Fee: $ 5.00
Tee shirt: $ 15.00
Circle one: S M L XL XXL

= Total Due: $

Address: ___________________________ City, State, Zip: ___________________________

Phone: _____

I will abide by the rules of the USATT and will comply with the rulings of the tournament Director and referee. I exempt the tournament sponsors, Ohio State University and USA Table Tennis from any and all liability connected with this tournament.

Name: _____________________________ / (Parent must sign for minor)

Print / Sign
BUCKEYE OPEN TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT

$ 5,000.00 prize money March 18-19, 2000

VENUE: Jesse Owens Rec Center, North, The Ohio State University Campus - Cols., Ohio

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* Must specify partner. Prizes contingent upon 14 teams, otherwise percentage paid.

Hotel: Holiday Inn, 328 Lane Ave, Col. OH (614) 294-4848. $89/room with 2 dbl beds. Hotel is across street from venue.
Free airport shuttle service, free parking. Mention Buckeye Open TT.
Venue: (Indoor tennis ct) Jesse Owens Rec Ctr North, Neil at Lane, OSU campus. (2151 Neil Ave)

Driving directions:
From North: S. I-71, W. I-270, S. State Rt (SR) 315, E. Lane Av.
From South: N. I71, N. SR 315, E. Lane Av
From West: E. I-70 N. SR 315, E. Lane Av
From East: W. I-7-, N. SR 315, E. Lane Ave

Thanks to the main sponsor: Macy Block!
Thanks to Berndt Mann for the Harbat events!
Greetings – I hope the New Year finds everybody in good health and spirits. As I mentioned in the October/November issue of USA Table Tennis, I am optimistic about our sport’s future in both the short- and long-term. I continue to remain so.

We have a number of potential developments, which I hope to announce to you in the next few months. In the meantime, I wish to report to you the activities and accomplishments of our office staff and the measures we have taken to move Table Tennis into the 21st century.

**Grassroots Programs**

1. Rochester NY – Established a partnership with Joe Krysz Jr., President of the Warren Company, to develop a table tennis in/sports program in a suburban community outside of Rochester. Table Tennis is one of six Olympic Sports included in this developmental program.

2. Colorado Springs, CO – In conjunction with the Sporting Goods and Manufacturing Association, USA Table Tennis and with support from Scott Preiss and Coach Li Zhenshi, we are introducing Table Tennis to several middle schools in Colorado Springs.

**Public Relations**

1. Engaged McClarran and Williams, on a pro-bono arrangement, to develop and complete a public relations and media outreach strategy. With McClarran and Williams, USA Table Tennis has received a noticeable uptick in national media coverage. Please visit www.NBCOlympics.com, www.usatt.org and www.usoc.org for articles, interviews and press releases.

2. Hired Victoria Ulrich as our full-time media and public relations director. Victoria, who will start January 17, 2000, will be a welcome addition to the staff.

**1999 National Championships**

1. Held the National Championships. Thank you to USATT staff members Fran Boardman and Jan Dreher, and in particular Margaret Smith, who managed to complete their respective tasks with one less employee (Linda Gleeson resigned in August). Also special thanks to the volunteers, in particular to Aly Salam, Norm Chouinard and Alan Barth (Tournament Operations), and to Dewayne Zint of Stiga, for without you the entire event would not have been possible. Lastly, a special thanks to our customers, all 709 of you (a record!) who entered the tournament. And in particular those of you who so generously contributed from the open line item on the entry blank to help both the National Team and Youth Team. Your monies are precious and will be spent wisely!

**Relationships**

1. Colorado Springs Sports Corp. – Hired an outside accounting/bookkeeping firm with extensive Not for Profit Sport Organizational experience. CSC is efficient and brings years of knowledge to USA Table Tennis.

2. Holme Roberts and Owen – Engaged a well-respected legal firm with a large sports practice as our in-house counsel. HRO has proven invaluable in its legal advice over the past five months.

3. United States Olympic Committee – I have personally formed relationships and networked with other Executive Directors (my peers), USOC Olympic Properties (the marketing division), USOC Community Development Group and USOC Grants and Planning. The USOC has tremendous resources and is a partner for USA Table Tennis.

I look forward to the future and will continue to rely on my 25 years’ experience as a devoted member to promote our sport.

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**They Said It...**

By Larry Hodges

“The verbal Ping-Pong match between the two rivals for the Democratic presidential nomination over their different approaches to health care and retirement benefits continued today.” Opening sentence in article in Washington Post, Dec. 2, 1999.

“Being John Malkovich” plays Ping-Pong with our heads, but the beauty of it is how lightly it tosses its ideas around.” From review of the movie “Being John Malkovich” by David Ansen, Newsweek, Nov. 1, 1999.

All You Ever Wanted To Know About TT

Harvey A. Boller, a sophomore Cornell student studying law in 1966, was very likely successful in “attempting to speak almost continuously (with only two minute breaks to eat and go to the bathroom) for 82 hours.” He wants to break a local record “for speaking continuously on any one subject ... and only once about any facet of his subject.” His subject? Ping-Pong. “After a three hour introduction and a 21 hour dissertation on the ping-pong table, Boiler discusses the derivation and placement of white lines on the table.” The Cornell Daily Sun, April 29, 1966. Contributed by Tim Boggan

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**USATT PLAYERS AND TEAM OF THE YEAR**

USATT players and teams of the year are selected by vote of the USATT Board of Directors, Team Leaders and Coaches. All winners automatically become candidates for the U.S. Olympic Sportsman, Sportswoman and Sports Team of the Year. Final results were as follows:

**MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

David Zhuang

**FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

Gao Jun

**TEAM OF THE YEAR**

Pan American Team
36th St. Joseph Valley Open

University of Notre Dame
South Bend, Indiana

**** Four Star ****

May 27 & 28, 2000

$20,000 Cash & Prize Awards

$5,000 Open Singles First Prize

Sponsored by Newmar Corp.

The St. Joseph Valley Playing Site - You Gotta See to Believe!
Coaching Committee Update

By Dan Seemiller
USA Table Tennis National Coaching Development Director and National Men's Coach

Plans for next year's coaching budget have been submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. Mark Nordby, Doru Gheorghe and myself hope to re-energize the coaches of the USATT and help improve their knowledge as coaches.

Masaaki Tajima, CA
National Coach

Coaches will be interested to note that this year we are planning to:
- Establish a video library for coaches to utilize at little cost. We plan to stock all the current videos that we feel coaches would benefit from. We will also stock current books.
- Conduct a survey of all certified coaches to identify current levels of activity, and to document which coaches are actively coaching juniors and how many. This survey will also establish communication from the coaches to the committee.
- Hold two coaches training camps at Oakbrook with National Women's Coach Doru Gheorghe. 16 coaches will be selected based on their junior development and overall coaching activity for a three-day coaching seminar. The cost will be subsidized by the committee.
- Rework the club and state certification tests.
- Hold one junior development camp for coaches. Mark Nordby and Dan Seemiller will conduct this camp at the South Bend TTC to discuss youth coaching and recruitment.
- Update the instructor's guide for school coaches.
- Award the 10 most active coaches in junior development with high-quality Olympic tracksuits at the 2000 U.S. Nationals in December. This is a small way to help recognize our most committed coaches.

USATT members who are interested in becoming a certified coach:
- You must have achieved a 1000 to 1500 rating, or have been a USATT member for at least three years, to take the club certification.
- You must have achieved a 1500 to 2000 rating, or have been a USATT member for at least four years, to take the state certification.

Stan Talifero, MI
State Coach

SAMARANCH A LIFETIME USATT MEMBER

Left: Jimmy McClure gives IOC President and new USATT member Juan Antonio Samaranch an official USATT tie and pin. Right: McClure with Misha Kapetanic of Yugoslavia, members of the ITTF President's Advisory Council, along with Xu Yinsheng (CHN), Ranga Ramanujan (IND) and Henry Yue (HKG).

Jimmy McClure, as a member of ITTF President Adham Sharara's President's Advisory Council, was in Lausanne in late October. While there he had a meeting with IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch. The two of them got to talking, and it turned out that Samaranch played quite a bit of table tennis in his youth—"That was my sport," he said. McClure said he'd heard that Samaranch really wasn't a member of any individual sports association, and when that was confirmed, Jimmy said, "Well, you are now!" He awarded Samaranch an Honorary Lifetime Membership in USATT, and in a further show of goodwill presented him with a USATT tie and lapel pin. It's always nice when you go abroad to have a few "Ping-Pong Diplomacy" presents at the ready, eh?

Fred Grobee Ailing

Long-time California table tennis player and supporter Fred Grobee of "Grobee Cove in Garden Grove" isn't his usual cheerful self these days. Whenever he sleeps he has to be on a Bipap machine that helps him expel carbon dioxide from his damaged lungs. Our sympathies to Fred, and to his helpful wife Carol (they've been married 56 years), and other family members. Fred, who over the years has written articles and taken many photos for the USATT magazine, is probably best known for his catchy song "Table Tennis is a Game of Skill and Fun." Well-wishers, please drop Fred an encouraging card at: 11922 Jacalene Ln., Garden Grove, CA 92840-2524.

-Tim Boggan
The first annual North American Hardbat Championships were held in Baltimore, Maryland, starting on Thanksgiving day. All matches were played on individually barriered, red-floored courts, later reserved for elite competition in the team tournament. This proved to be a smart move on the part of the organizers, for the arena seating drew many spectators oohing and ahhing at the intricate rallies of alternating offense and defense. The hardbat “tournament within a tournament” was the largest hardbat event in recent memory. It featured FIVE events (Open, U2000, Open Doubles, U4000 Doubles, and Over 50), with nine of the top 25 UHRL-rated players in attendance (including the top three). Most importantly, there were quite a few additions to the list of active hardbatters, some of whom helped to change the face of a tournament already graced by the presence of such luminaries as Hoff, Yip, Hodges, and Reisman.

The first ever North American Over 50, Under 2000, and Under 4000 Doubles Champions (using hardbat ratings, not USAATT ratings)? In order, Che Him Leung, Mark Nordby, and Mark Nordby/John Oros. Open Doubles featured the first of several upsets as the team of Che Him Leung and female partner Wang Li Jun quickly disposed of the top-seeded team of Hoff and Hodges (15, 19) in the quarterfinals. In the semis, the husband and wife team of Lily Yip and Barry Dattel defeated harbat newcommer Tahl Leibovitz and chopper extraordinaire Steve Berger (13, 18), and the team of Dylan Martis and Ashu Jain edged out Leung/Jun (-25, 12, 21). The final was an enjoyable three-game thriller, with Dattel/Yip over Martis/Jain (22, -18, 12).

In the first quarterfinal, Lily Yip won a hard-fought match against the talented Tahl Leibovitz (9, -22, 13, 19). Tahl’s appearance in this elimination round of Hardbat Open Singles was no doubt the first of many to come.

The next quarter was between the seldom seen but greatly feared #1 hardbat-rated player, Coach Xin Peng. In addition to his top spot on the hard rubber slate, Augusta-based Peng is soon-to-be the top USATT-rated sponge player over 50 years of age (turning 50 on January 21, 2000), tipping the scales at 2449. The match began with Steve Berger winning the first game, 21-14! Steve then payed dearly for his insolence, as penholder Peng swept the remaining games at 5, 10, 11.

The third quarter featured a rematch of a ‘99 U.S. Open match between Ty Hoff and Ashu Jain (won by Ty). After Ty won the first at 12, Ashu buckled down, using his wicked serves and breathtaking back-at-the-barriers defense to take the next two at 10 & 19. Ty fought back to take the fourth at 19, but Ashu proved to be the steadier winning the final game 21-15. The defending U.S. Open and U.S. National Hardbat Singles Champ was out! The youthful University of Michigan undergrad took his place in the semfinals.

The final quarter was a rematch of a recent Spin Open semifinal between Larry Hodges and Robert Mayer (won 19-in-the-third by Hodges). Hodges took the first two games convincingly and led 15-5 in the third with his patented forehand hit. Something changed — perhaps Hodges started glancing over at the Hoff/Jain match taking place at the next table while Mayer found his range? In a remarkable turn-around, Mayer won the match, -17, -14, 19, 16, 13. After the match, Robert proclaimed that the tide turned when he “remembered how to hit a forehand.”

For his Herculean efforts, Mayer was rewarded with a lesson from Coach Peng in the semifinals. Peng, like Leung, unleashed penhold backhands even more severe than his excellent penhold forehand to deliver a two-winged (9, 5, 7) beating.

In the other semifinal, Lily Yip fought against Ashu Jain in the most heavily spectated and cheered match of the event. Lily’s speed and focus won, -15, 14, 15, 21.

The final was a classic match between two close-to-the-table penhold fast attackers. Similar as they seemed at first, however, the two competitors quickly showed their differences. Xin Peng versus Lily Yip unfolded as consistency and placement versus explosive power. Both started a bit nervous at first, as Peng won the first, 21-18. In the second, Peng used wide angles to dominate the quick exchanges, 21-9. Lily fought hard in the third but to no avail, as the rock-solid #1 seed finished her off, 21-16. After this display, it was clear to all present that his top spot on the UHRL list was well deserved.

All told, the Hardbat Championships were a resounding success. New high-level players made their entrance into hardbat competition, old rivals battled it out, and many spectators were introduced to Classic Table Tennis for the first time. During the final, this reporter even saw members of Sichuan 1 (the eventual winners) of the North American tournament in the front row, enjoying the curiosity of a woman and a 50+ year-old man competing with no-sponge rackets. Who knows — maybe this experience will entice one of these young monsters to try their hand at the Hardbat Open next year. Watch out, Coach Peng!

Open – Final: Xin Peng d. Lily Yip, 19,9,16; SF: Peng d. Robert Mayer, 9,5,7; Yip d. Ashu Jain, -15,14,15,21; QF: Peng d. Steve Berger, -14,5,10,11; Mayer d. Larry Hodges, -17,14,19,16,13; Yip d. Tahl Leibovitz, 9,22,13,19; Jain d. Ty Hoff, -12,10,19,-19,15.


Over 50 – Final: Che Him Leung d. Marty Reisman, 8,19; SF: Leung d. Marvin Plevinsky, 9,10; Reisman d. Tim Bogdan, -16,17,16.


U4000 Doubles: Mark Nordby/John Oros d. Tim Bogdan/Mike Kuklak, 13,14,19.
t the annual North American Team Championships, held Thanksgiving weekend in Baltimore's Inner Harbor Convention Center, the Defending Sichuan Men's team, with its returning teenage stars Chen Junjie and Ye Routing, again defeated the (father-coach/son-player) Zoltan Varga-led Hungarian team, re-formed and re-named this year to "Portland" because of the addition of Chinese-expatriate Fan Yi Yong, not only the Northwest's but the U.S.'s #1-rated player. First place was worth $6,000, second $2,400. Last year's winning Sichuan Women's team didn't enter this year, but a China University Women's team from Shanghai, championed by 1993 World Women's Doubles holder, Qiao Yunping, helped showcase play by taking the title and the sole prize of $1200 from China's Guangdong Provincial team. 

This was Richard Lee's second Baltimore extravaganza - 199 teams, 770 players, 143 Bowie Martin-provided Butterfly tables (a number of which, for the Elite teams, were spaced on Taraflex flooring) - and, since Johnny Hess's software quickly let me see the players and their ratings, I had to conclude that no such Championship in U.S. history had so strong an in-depth field, most noticeably among the women. (Problem was: granted the elite players weren't forced to wear flimsy, cheapening identification numbers on their backs, how could a non-initiate care enough to try to match names and faces without photos and bios of these seldom if ever seen players?) Ably supporting Richard were tournament co-directors Feng Hsu and Alan Williams. Among those assisting were Alan's brother Dave, the McAfee family - Richard, Diane, and Sarah - Registration Director Wendy Troy, Richard's family (patrons Patrick & Therese Lee and sister Vivian) and a corps of visiting umpires, mostly Japanese, under the guidance of Tournament Referee Zhaoming Yang and Assistant Referee Joe Lee.

The Washington-Baltimore 2012 Olympic Coalition, pleased to show they could help promote such a large international sports attraction in the area, hosted a Friday night reception for the tournament staff, and was graciously thanked by attending USATT President Sheri Pittman who seized the opportunity to urge further USATT - 2012 Olympic Coalition cooperation. Not surprisingly on Sunday morning a local TV channel came bright and early to provide a little hype for the day's upcoming finals, and the Sunday Baltimore Sun had a front-page color photo of matches-in-play at the Convention Center, along with an accompanying article.

Certainly from opening Turkey Day on, there was quite a bit of color on and off the courts. Pete May's resplendent, buttoned-to-the-neck, color-coordinated suspender-outfits so broke with Boos Brother tradition that he had persuaded '95 U.S. World Team member Razvan Cretu to play for fun - and with very little practice Eric finally agreed. In fact by Baltimore I had acquired enough polish both to beat Derek May earlier in the tie, and to now be at 19-all in the 3rd against Cohen. Fearlessly Randy attacked, looped in a low ball, which Levi rather luckily got back via a net ... and thereafter the game, the match, and the tie swung to the Maccabi team.

The deciding 9th match pitted Eyal Adini - who in an earlier tie had lost to Diana Gee (now, after retiring in '95, preparing to try to become a three-time Olympian) - against Scott Butler, a winner over both Dattel and Idan. Scott had been brought back into competing at these Team's because his 9-year-old son Ethan wanted to play. Although he said he 'd never lost to Adini, he managed to do just that in this tie-determining match, and with the greatest of ease. Thirty pounds or more Scott had gained since I saw him last: "Good eating," he said and laughed, "plus a fat banker's job and lots of golf."

**Round Robin: Group I**

From each of the Division I four round robin groups two teams would qualify for the third, single elimination stage. In Group I play, the Under 18 Sichuan Men's I team didn't lose a match, and the Canadian men, Team 2008, also easily advanced.

The only contested action centered on Dave Sakai's Senoda team and particularly on the unexpected reappearance of former U.S. Closed/U.S. Open Champion Eric Bogdan after an 8-year absence from these Team's. For days, weeks, maybe even months, Dave had urged Eric to come and socialize, play for fun - and with very little practice Eric finally agreed. In the late-starting Friday night tie, Dave, Eric, and 5-time U.S. World Team member Ricky Seemiller who also, with the exception of a tournament now and then, had been retired for many years, faced the China University Women's team - and promptly lost their first six games. However, Eric then beat Shao Lili (estimated rating 2500) in three. After which, Dave lost a second match, 12 and 9, to Wang Peng (who'd later defeat long-time Canadian International Horatio Pintea), and the Senoda team was down 4-1.

When Ricky dropped the first game at 14 to chopper Shen Nan (like Wang an estimated 2400 player), Eric changed to his street shoes, and per-
happens even out of his playing shorts, but then was caught up in Ricky's resurgent play that won him the second, and, on looping ball after ball in, the third at 19. China University 4 – Senoda 2.

Now Eric (“I’m sore, I’m hurrying.”) had to rechange and reluctantly go out to the table to face Wang Peng and her pips. Was this fun? Especially when he lost the first at 13? Now it was Ricky’s turn to change, for it was getting late and he had to drive home to a promised obligation on the morrow. But Eric, retired or not, did not like to lose a match he could win, and after a number of countering points, prevailed at 19. On into the end-game 3rd, and on and on, struggling, they went, Eric, lamenting, “I don’t want to be in this match! I don’t want to play! Why am I here?” but often following up his serves and complaints with winning anti forehands, until he finally prevailed, 25-23 in the 3rd. China University 4 – Senoda 3.

Maybe now, Eric, playing was fun, just a little? ... Or after Ricky, splitting 23-21 games, brought the tie to 4-4? ...

In the 9th match against Shen Nan, could Sakai’s comradely adrenaline-high somehow be enough to offset his relatively low 2171 rating? ... With the score close in the 3rd, more heroes are in the offing, and some added soap opera. The Chinese Coach, coaching to the extent that reportedly she tells her player to kick the ball over the barrier so she can the better instruct her, is yellow then red-carded. However, she refuses to leave and puts up such a fuss that it may be Security will have to escort her out. But alright, alright, everyone cool it, quiet down.... If for no other reason than that Dave, capping his Team’s remarkable comeback with a 17 in the 3rd win, can let out a war-whoop – resonating his exuberance round the now empty Hall, reviving echoes from distant but never quite forgotten glory days. Surely now, Eric? ...

In a losing 5-3 Senoda team effort on Saturday, Eric, who really was having a good time socializing anew, also swept the New York Table Tennis Club’s winning ($400) Senior team of Liu Hui Yuan, Rey Domingo, and Alex Tam – all aging champions who, in taking two matches from China’s University Women II, continued to show their indefatigable love for the Game.

Round Robin: Group II
As expected, in Group II, Fan Yi Yong’s Juic-sponsored Portland team, 20-1 in their matches, quickly advanced, as did the Sichuan III team – though young Xie Yuzhang lost a match to the reappearing veteran Atanda Musa who, 17 years ago, as 1982 Commonwealth Champion and World #48, led his Nigerian Skypower team to a victory in these Championships. “Mansa” was older, heavier now, but across his playing shirt were the words “Demand More.”

Of interest also was the Canadian Women’s 5-2 victory over a Senior Canadian junior team that included Bence Csaba, the Canadian Closed Under 17 Champion who at 14 must have been one of the youngest players at the ‘99 Eindhoven World’s. Earlier, Csaba, who’d trained in Hungary (his father is a Hungarian table tennis coach), had defeated 2568-rated Abass Elam of Musa’s East Coast All Star team.

Round Robin: Group III
Group III saw the two advancing teams engage in a fierce battle for a favorable position in the quarter’s draw – with China University Women I having to just get by Sichuan Men II, 5-4.

These University women, who also beat the ($400) 1st-place U.S. Junior Girls team, U.S. Junior Women Power, hadn’t played in our annual Team Championships before, but a connection had been made earlier when ’92 U.S. Olympic Coach Zh-Yong Wang had taken our U.S. Women’s team to Shanghai to train, and also when in June of ‘94 a Shanghai Shenggu University team had come to South Carolina to compete against Head Coach Richard McAfee’s Anderson College team.

Sichuan was Cheng Yinghua’s Province – he’d had his roots there as a world-class player and been Head Coach there. So, though he’d just become a U.S. citizen – had to write sentences like “The official in the highest office can usually be found in the White House” – he bonded with two returning Sichuan II players, though realizing perhaps this might put him in a somewhat awkward position. After Cheng and Sun Ting had built up a 4-2 lead, the tie was Ting’s to win, but he was beaten by the beautifully fluid strokes and steady nerves of Qiao Yuming, deuce in the 3rd. Cheng was then taken down (though likely not embarrassed) by Tie Yana, two straight, when Tie, up 20-19 match point, let loose with a backhand worthy of Cheng himself and the ironic, admiring smile it drew from him. Now the tie was Sun Meng’s to win, but he was stopped, 16 in the 3rd, by the heretofore twice beaten Chen Min.

Round Robin: Group IV
The USATT Men struggled with Budapest for Group IV supremacy – and lost 5-3.

Hungary’s returning 1998 Closed Champion Robert Pagonyi scored a tie-winning swing in the very first match when he outlasted Eric Owens, 19 in the 3rd. Then lefty newcomer Attila Turbok, winning 4 out of every 5 points on many of his serves, downed Todd Sweeris in three. Neither Turbok nor Pagonyi, who sported pearl-bright mini b.b. balls, as it were, on an interconnected
The Return Of ERIC BOGGAN

By Larry Hodges

At the North American Teams, players and spectators got a special treat: former USA superstar Eric Boggan back in action after a 5-year tournament absence! Sure, he was out of practice, not in top form — but still playing with his vintage up-to-the-table hitting & blocking game (Seemiller grip), with anti and inverted.

Eric, the highest ranking USA player in the modern age (#18 at his peak) and 2-time U.S. Men's Singles Champion, was talked into playing by Dave Sakai. Although Eric hasn't played seriously in years, he still likes to visit players and friends from his playing days, like Dave in Maryland and Mike Laidon in California. It was during one of these visits to Dave that Eric, realizing he had a free weekend, was talked into taking the plunge. So the team of Eric Boggan, Dave Sakai, Ricky Seemiller (another many-time USA team member and star from the past — although still playing in about one tournament per year) and (in a few team matches) North American Teams President Richard Lee. As you'll read about in the write-up of the Teams, this team had one of the more unlikely comebacks in a team match.

When Eric first stopped training seriously in the late 1980s, he told me, "I used to be a Ferrari, tuned to perfection. Now I'm hands up in consternation to her eyes and ears — unbelievable! But Cao was just warming up. (Later, she'd defeat Sweeris, and against Pagonyi in her Budapest tie she'd -23, 30, 21 win the marathon match of the tournament). Sunny Li, he'd go on to beat Owens, but could he beat Cao? Nope. Hair styled in blond-streaked Statue of Liberty-like spikes, he had nothing inspiring in hand to contest the 3rd. Nor could Freddie Gabriel divine for his mates even so much as a 1-1 split-games message of hope.

Quarter's: Sichuan Men I (5) — U.S. Men (1)

Sweeris's start against Ye Routing of the Sichuan I team is not encouraging. On losing the 1st, he's disgusted at himself for getting only 12 points — the more so because, though proud papa Dell is grinding out matches somewhere in the bowels of the D Division, a number of Todd's fellow co-workers from Deloitte and Touche who've never seen him play before are in the audience. Todd comes back to Coach Danny Seemiller and, as if offering an accounting not of self but of the other guy, says, "He's giving me slow, heavy serves... curls the forehand... is very steady," Danny gives him what advice he can. This, however, is not particularly helpful, for in the 2nd game Todd is down 17-4. Coming back to his bench, eyes averted from the stands — but, Eric Boggan, you take note — he says, "That was fun. I enjoyed every minute of that." To which I thought I heard in response, floating over from some indulgent spectator, the matchingly ironic "Touche!"

Now it's Zhuang's turn — he's in his 10th match of the day (prompting someone on his bench to say, "Doesn't the ITTF have some rule about how much at any one time a world-class player can be expected to play?)! David's opponent, Qiu Yike, who looks to me the youngest of the teenage Sichuan players, is up 15-10 and after every winning point arduously shouting "Show!" David, on serving off, helps him along — shouts "Show!" for him, which draws laughter from the spectators.

Down 1-0, David begins the 2nd by loudly exclaiming, "Let's go!" — then serves off. As for Qiu's serve, it's unique — he looks on his first downward motion as if he might throw the racket at you, but that quickly proves a feint. Of course by the end of the first game, Xiao Zhaou, the Chinese Coach, had been yellow-carded; now he's yellow-carded again. So there's a momentary buzz as to "Shouldn't he be red-carded?" At 19-all David turns a winner into a loser — misses putting away an easy ball... but then deuces it. As the end approaches it's at least dramatic. David smashes one — to the accompaniment of which the pro-U.S. crowd yells appreciatively, "YEAH!" Only to see Qiu balloon the ball back — and Zhuang miss the putaway. David picks up the ball and puts it into his mouth. He's swallowed it?

More like a sport car, out for fun." When I reminded him of this quote, he said, "Well, now I'm more like a Model T!"

What has Eric been doing all these years? Eric went to college in 1986, and received a bachelor's degree in sociology, along with a minor in psychology, from Long Island University in 1990. He contrasted his table tennis versus college experiences: "In Europe," he said, "I was the man. In college, I was a nobody."

Eric signed up with the U.S. postal service in Long Island, NY, in 1991. He spends about three hours per day at the postal office sorting and organizing mail, and five hours per day delivering it. From his table tennis training, he says he is a perfectionist in his job, far more than some of his fellow workers.

Besides traveling, he likes to go to the beach and see movies — especially ones with good stories and emotion, like Titanic and American Beauty; and sometimes crazy ones, like From Dusk Til Dawn.

With hardly any preparation, Eric did pretty well this year — going 9-2, with wins over a number of 2300 and 2400 players, including a dramatic 18-in-the-third win over old rival Rey Domingo (rated 2368). His only losses were to Nan Shen of China and Carl Xuan (rated 2579) of Canada. Will he play next year? "I'd like to, but I'd have to put in more preparation."

Eric said that when he now hits or watches the best U.S. players, he finds it hard to imagine how good he must have been — he can't believe he once could compete with these players. He said he doesn't even have a good mental image anymore about how he used to play — he doesn't even have tapes of himself at his peak. (Meanwhile, an entire generation of players still has vivid memories of Eric during his peak years — while Eric was out there playing, we got to watch!) Eric requested that I ask that if anyone does have a tape of him during his peak years, please contact him at 516-868-0434.

Photo by Mal Anderson © 1999
Certainly it seems safe to say U.S. chances have disappeared ... along, I might add, with the loss of Owens’ bracelet (It was talismanic? “Wore it for five years,” he says. “Don’t know where it went, but I feel really weird without it”). Faced with grim-looking Chen Junjie, one of China’s best prospects ever since he won the Cadets in that ’96 Asian Hopes Grand Prix tournament in Kobe, Japan, Eric, down 1-0, but only a point behind in the end-game 2nd, allows U.S. hopes to momentarily reappear. Then down 18-17, fearing Chen’s curled-into, heavy backspin serves that set up all-out vicious forehands, he fails to return one, two, three of them.

Zhuang vs. Ye prompts a red card ... to player Chen Junjie, sitting there on the bench. There’s talk among the U.S. Team if that might mean he’s banished from the room — ergo the cavernous Hall itself — never to return, his previous win forfeited. Since David is about to lose the first game, our 7th straight, we’ve got to come up with something. Chen is not chagrined, but he does retreat to the second row of spectators directly behind his players’ bench. A few points later, the umpire is called to task — though not by a player, or by Coach Zha, but by someone else sitting oh so casually, though with a seemingly nervous mannerism or two, at the end of the Sichuan bench. Up he springs, anything but casual, to intensely protest to the umpire. “Who’s this guy?” shouts one, shouts all, of the U.S. Team. “I just want the umpire to make the right call,” he says. “I don’t care who wins.”

Unexpectedly, David takes the next two games — finishes by shouting delightfully in the 19-16 up, end-game 3rd. “My serve!” That’s it for the U.S. though — Todd and Eric lose two matches, there would be no prize money for the initial two losers, and a play-off among the winners for either the $800 5th or $500 6th place prize. Further, a shorter format would be used — the same that those teams still vying for the Championship through the semi’s and final would be playing. Though three players per team would still be participating, not the best 5 of 9 but best 3 of 5 matches would determine the winner — which meant that a tie order would be established that looked like this: A vs. X, B vs. Y, C vs. Z, and, if need be, A vs. Y, B vs. X.

Money Matches

In Division I’s post-quarter’s crossover matches, there would be no prize money for the initial two losers, and a play-off among the winners for either the $800 5th or $500 6th place prize. Further, a shorter format would be used — the same that those teams still vying for the Championship through the semi’s and final would be playing. Though three players per team would still be participating, not the best 5 of 9 but best 3 of 5 matches would determine the winner — which meant that a tie order would be established that looked like this: A vs. X, B vs. Y, C vs. Z, and, if need be, A vs. Y, B vs. X.

Matches to Avoid 7th/8th Place

U.S. Men (3) — Sichuan II (1). Some prize money the U.S. Men were going to — but they came close to getting nothing. Feng Lin, the only Sichuan player to be identified in the Program, opened against Owens, and quickly did to him what he’d done earlier to the Hungarian Viteck. But thereafter the U.S. won all the close games.

Quarter’s: Hungarian #3 Vitsek (after losing to Sun Ting), beat him 12 and 17, it would seem he didn’t care. However, “Chen” (his familiar at the Maryland Center don’t pronounce the “g”) obviously wanted a win over Fan Yi Yong (2842) who’d replaced him as the highest-rated U.S. player — and he got it, and 14, and 19. But then with both Varga and Fan Sun-proof, the Portland team advanced to the semi’s.

Quarter’s: Canadian 2008 Team (5) — China University Women I (2)

The unchivalrous task of being the first team to beat the China University I women falls to the Canadian men. But after Carl Xuan’s defense is not exactly impregnable, the tie is tied at 3-all. Kurt Liu, however, wins his 3rd straight straight-game match, and Pintea, who’d split 3-game matches earlier, losing to Tie but rallying for a much needed —12, 21, 15 win over Qiao. finishes off Chen Min in a tie Team 1999 might well have lost.

Quarter’s: Portland (5) — Sichuan Men II (2)

Cheng Yinghua (2764) was going to lose some rating points this tournament — but, as the Hungarian #3 Vitsek (after losing to Sun Ting), beat him 12 and 17, it would seem he didn’t care. However, “Chen” (his familiar at the Maryland Center don’t pronounce the “g”) obviously wanted a win over Fan Yi Yong (2842) who’d replaced him as the highest-rated U.S. player — and he got it, and 14, and 19. But then with both Varga and Fan Sun-proof, the Portland team advanced to the semi’s.

Post-Quarter’s Change of Format for Money Matches

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Quarter’s: Budapest (5) — Sichuan Men III (0)

Aside from just the one 27-25 game Pagonyi lost — how high his thrown-up racket spiraled, how like a trick-shot gunslinger, bat-slinger, he adeptly caught it, one-handed, hip-high ... that dropped game occurring in the last-match 5th to a die-hard Xie Yuzhang — the Budapest team totally blanked the Sichuan III team.

Photo by John Oros ©1999

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2000
Clockwise, from lower left: Long-time Teams Control Desk Extravaginaires Sarah & Diane McAfee; Wendy Troy tells it like it is at the control desk; USA Team Members Todd Sweeris and David Zhuang give pointers at the Butterfly Clinic at the Teams.

Sichuan II (3) - China University Women I (1). In the other avoidance tie, Cheng Yinghua, winning in his single-match C position, again puts the burden of a victory on his teammates. This time, however, landing their best Sunday punches, they regain their honor, each enjoying what they couldn’t do before - posting wins over Qiao Yunting.

**Match for 5th/6th Place**

Sichuan Men II (3) – U.S. Men (1). After Owens had leveled his opening match against Sun Ting with a 21-11 win in the 2nd, it was the more disappointing to follow his dismal 10-2 demise in the third. But these Sichuan players with their body-obsstructing, curling inside-out serves continued to hide their service contact point.

Reed, with a 19 first game win over Sun Meng, hoisted up the clenched-fist flag of hope, but this match, too, was about to be evened, as Barney, echoing Eric, exclaimed, “I’ve missed five serves and I’m down 19-14!” In the 3rd, Barney was doing all right until, at 9-all he didn’t put a ball away that he should have, lost the point, and, as if in exiption, wanting to rinse away the thought from his throat, began ... a gangle ... that, my god, seemed to turn in a moment into a head-shaking epileptic fit! By the time he recovered he was 18-11 down, and the Sichuan team soon zip up.


Barney, back against Sun Ting, and losing the 1st badly, and again feeling he was being victimized by these Sichuan serves, began blatantly serving illegally himself – with of course no objection from the umpire. On returning to Coach Barney says, “He serves so quick out of his body.” Danny knows that everyone’s illegally hiding the serve back. Says, “It’s really not that hard to be an umpire. Just give the offending player a good warning and have him keep the serve honest.” Exasperated by the officials’ refusal to do anything about the serves, Barney, down 11-8 in what will be the tie-ending 2nd game, finally returns one with his foot – and only then does a discussion ensue between the Referee and the umpire.

**Women’s Pre-Final Matches**

Canadian Women (5) – U.S. Women (2). Because both of these teams finished 4th in their round robins, even the winner would not be able to continue contending for the title. U.S. Champ Gao Jun, World #20, who, for whatever reason, often chose not to play ties, easily won her two here. But Alberta’s 18-year-old Xiao Xiao Wang, who emigrated from China two years ago, and who got to the last 16 of the Women’s Consolation at the Eindhoven World’s, opened with a close-match win over Lily, hampered by an over-stretched ligma band, either when managing to get the drop on husband Barry Dattel in an earlier match here, or in some later off-court warm-up exercise with him.

Lily was also beaten in three by Petra Cada, who’s back now from her Prague-based Super League play. Petra, despite being in her 4th year at the University of Ottawa, where she’s majoring in Human Kinetics, nevertheless finds time to play six days a week at the National Center. “Carded” Canadian players are required to play at least five days a week and are given bonus money if they play all seven.

Tawny Bahn, distracted perhaps by her studies – she was worried about having to analyze a firm’s Annual Report and make an oral presentation on it – lost, lost, lost, to Vancouver’s Chris Xu, 22-20 in the 1st, to Xiao Xiao, 19 in the 3rd, and to Cada 22-20 in the 3rd. “I wasn’t nervous in the end-game against Tawny,” said Petra. “I never freeze, never make such a mistake – it’s the worst – because I know I’d regret it later.” As for Tawny, who’d earlier lost two matches to the strong China University I players, all she said gloomily was, “I don’t want to talk about it. This whole tie I was unlucky. Period.”

Guangdong (5) – China University Women II (3). Having finished a respectable 3rd in their round robin groups, these two teams met in a play-off to decide who would face the strong China University I team in the final. Guangdong seemed confident, for they gave their #3, long-time veteran Wang Lijun, formerly the Hunan #1, extra play in the 7th spot, even though it might mean she’d lose all 3 matches – which she did. But, no problem, her teammates picked up the slack, won 10 straight games. Before emigrating to the U.S., our Olympian Lily Yip played eight years for this Guangdong Province team and still follows their progress. It was a good bet that since favored Guangdong had finished seventh in the most recent China National Team Championships, they would win this tie. And an even better one that their post-tournament sightseeing would take them to Atlantic City and Las Vegas.

**Men’s Semifinals**

Sichuan Men I (3) – Budapest (1). Underdog Budapest got off to a great start when Pagonyi, favoring a half-century update of legendary countryman Victor Barna’s backhand play, downed Chen Junjie in 3. At 17-all in the 1st, Chen misses an easy ball and looks in open-mouthed astonishment at Coach Zhau. At 18-all Pagonyi lobs back an edge ... and up 20-19 is given the game when Chen pushes his serve return off. Back the Chinese goes to Coach Zhau who for a full minute talks and gesticulates while Chen never says a word, just sways a little back and forth. Pagonyi then grunts and shouts his triumphant way through the 2nd. But the Hungarians can’t follow up. Turkod drops his two matches, and Kriston, in losing in straight games to young Qiu, is of course not the World #35 who 13 years ago had been runner-up to World #5 Teng Yi in the final of the Miami Beach U.S. Open.

... Portland (3) Team 2008 (0). In their earlier round robin tie against Sichuan I, I heard Canadian Coach Joe Ng encourage Kurt Liu, as he moved from down 20-8 in the 1st to 20-9, to keep playing (“Good, Kurt, c’mon”) and then, as Kurt’s up in the 2nd, to “Take risks!” Here in Canada’s last tie of the tournament, which it will lose in uncontested straight games, Coach Ng’s advice to Pintea after he’s come up first-game short with Fan Yi Yong is, “Go and have fun!” But Hory did not have fun, for, after scoring all of 10 points in the 2nd, he comes back to his bench, shaking his
head, irritated that he hasn’t made Fan work more for his points. “Don’t worry,” says Joe. “We’re 2008, we’ve got time.”

Women’s Final

China University I (3) – Guangdong (1). In an improvised four-sided arena setting (to further the desired “boxing-ring” effect, could the chairs have been brought in even closer without damage to the Taraflex floor?), and in what was certainly a Women’s final (two women umpires, four women scorekeepers), the Guangdong team looked with their at-the-ready start as if they might be able to upset China University I. Cao Xing Li, though down 9-3 in the 1st, won it at 18 when Tie Yana just seemed to slap at the ball in disgust. Then in an improvised four-sided arena setting (to further...

Men’s Final

Sichuan Men I (3) – Portland (2). In the 1st, Chen Junjie, down 19-14 against Fan Yi Yong, continues to exchange unhesitatingly quick strokes that couldn’t be more point-decisive. With his lead cut to 20-19, Fan gets in a winner and follows with a few improptu pogo-stick steps, while all the while staring balefully at his opponent. However, the turnaround, single-digit 2nd game, all topspin and counter-topspin, goes to Chen. In the 3rd, Fan can’t handle Chen’s serves, is down 5-0... (Amazing, 50 years ago, Dick Miles, one of the world’s best, just unconcernedly pushed his serves into play....) The gap remains – Fan is down 11-6... 15-11. Eric Boggan has remarked earlier how much faster the game has gotten just since he retired. Now, tempus fugit, where’s the tempora...

ing shot? It’s been passed by. Fan rallies – draws to 17-15 ... then pushes consecutive serve returns into the net. But now he has the serve, and is dramatically on the attack. The audience rallies too – begins rhythmically clapping for him. Deuce. But, oh, he pops up his serve return ... only to see Chen push his serve return into the net. Deuce again. Fan closes with a 22-21 counter, then serves and 23-21 zips a backhand in. Quite a swing.

This is one of the largest crowds I’ve seen for the Team Championships. There are many interested Chinese in the area? Certainly there are a lot of little Chinese kids running around having a great time. Varga (World #129) stands second to no one in throwing the ball back behind him on serve – but Ye’s not bothered by this, beats him easily. Ye, someone wielding a camera on a tripod tells me, at 17 is about #70 in China.

With the tie all even, Qu Yi Ke and Attila Vitsek, head-binding bandana making his thick dark hair stick out like earmuffs, go at it fast and furious, but in the end game the Hungarian pushes two serve returns into the net and loses it at 19. In the 2nd game, Vitsek keeps backing up point after point, loses 21-12.

China #70 and USA #1 begin their deciding 3rd with Ye getting an irretrievable net ball that forces Fan to turn his back on him while-time out – he has a few private words with Fate. He then backhands in four hard loops ... and is up 6-4. From there he never falters, predictably serving short backspin balls into the center of the table – until the turn to the Hungarians.

With the tie again all square, and this the final match, and Chen 16-11 up on Varga, the whole Hungarian bench is offering animated advice to their teammate, and the whole Chinese bench is impassively robotic. Game at 16 to Chen. In the 2nd, Chen, down 16-17, begins a rally and is really on a roll when he catches Varga with a fast down-the-line serve that brings him 17-16 close.

At which point there’s an eruption – which few in the audience without talking to the principals could understand. This apparently is what happened. Chen, Varga thinks, did his usual whirled-into, discus-like serve, but this time the ball not only hit his racket, it then grazed his free arm hitting the ball, and went on to become a seemingly normal serve. Varga raised his hand, called “Let,” and made a good though obviously very soft return. Chen, then, with a very puzzled expression on his face, caught the ball in his hand. The umpire ruled that because Varga called “Let” he in effect disrupted play, prevented his opponent from continuing, and awarded the point to Chen. This judgment, many thought, might be to the letter of, but not the sportsmanship spirit of, the law, and it was a while before play could proceed. Whereupon, all the turmoil proved not to be detrimental to Varga after all – not at least with regard to the outcome of this game, which he won at 18.

The $6,000/$2,400 prize money split now depended on one last game, and with the whole Sichuan I, II, III contingent hyped over the brouhaha, and cheering with mad delight at every won point, Chen had a 21-9 easy time of it.

The Hungarians, I’d heard, were disinherited, and might not be back. So perhaps next year we’ll see Sichuan I, II, III, and IV in the quarter’s. And in the years hence... also V, VI, VII, and VIII?

Division 1 – Final: Sichuan I d. Portland, 3-2; SF: Sichuan I d. Budapest & Team 2008, 3-0; 3-4: Budapest & Team 2008 split; 5-6: Sichuan II d. USATT Men, 3-1

Women’s Final: China University I d. Guangdong, China

Division 2: Mission Impossible d. Mid-America
Division 3: Mexico Boys d. Quebec Sandwich
Division 4: Jan’s Olive d. Mars Stars
Division 5: We’re Mad d. Guyana B
Division 6: UEAA I d. Smashers
Division 7: Guyana Slammers d. Too Hard to Hold
Division 8: Oort Cloud Perturbance d. Bermuda II
Division 9: Track Data Corp d. 5 Deadly Venoms
Division 10: NYTT C d. ECDDAO I
Division 11: Wolverine TTC d. Repentigny Hope
Division 12: UEAA I d. Fearless Underdogs

Highest Senior Finisher: NYTT C
Highest Collegiate Finisher: China University I
Highest Junior Men’s Finisher: Sichuan I
Highest Junior Women’s Finisher: USATT Junior Women Power

Chef Patrick May and Viking Jim Williams battle in the “Best Hat” competition (with Patrick demonstrating revolutionary new backhand technique, and Jim the authentic “Hammer” grip)
USA PARAPANAM GAMES
USA Wins Team Trophy
Mexico City, Mexico • November 4-14, 1999
By Raul Pernites

The 1999 ParaPanam Games were held in the beautiful country of Mexico City, Mexico. Athletes from North and South America spent seven days of competition in Table Tennis, Athletics, Basketball and Swimming. Eighteen countries competed.

The Table Tennis venue was held at the Centro Paralímpico Mexicano (Mexican Paralympic Center) and the ENED gym, a college for athletes. The college students of ENED were gracious to volunteer their services. Buses and vans were provided for transportation.

The USA team won a total of 31 Medals: 16 Gold, 14 Silver, and 3 Bronze, which won the U.S. Team the 1999 Team Trophy.

The 1999 ParaPanam Table Tennis Team

Men's Team: Sebastion Defrancisco (CA), Raul Pernites (VA), John Violante (CA), Mike LoRusso (NY), Tony Lara (CA), James Hall (CA), Chuck Focht (NY), Andre Scott (MD), Mike Dempsey (CA) Joshua Bartel (KS) and Norman Bass (CA).

Women's Team: Terri Tierney (NY), Ruth Rosenbaum (FL), Jackie DiLorenzo (NY), Terese Terranova (FL) and Jennifer Johnson (NY).

Coaches: Rong Lillicroos (OK), Pei Zhong Shao (NY), and Jim Bedford (FL).

Mike Dempsey celebrates gold medal.

$1700 POTOMAC OPEN
Potomac, Maryland • November 20-21, 1999
By Larry Hodges

Could it be the dawning of a new era? 17-year-old Sunny Li, a long-time junior prodigy with a rating of 2451, made a major breakthrough by winning the Potomac Open, upsetting such higher rated players as Todd Sweeris (2640) and Sean Lonergan (2530). He also became $500 richer. (New rating: 2546.)

In the final, Sunny dominated, rolling up big leads four straight games. Sean came back from down 13-17 to win game #2, but after Sean went up 5-0 in the fourth, Sunny pretty much ran it out — from down 9-6, Sunny scored 5 in a row and 9 of 10. Final to Sunny, 11, -20, 16, 21.

On the other hand, Sean Lonergan (who had just eked by Origene Chang d. Katherine Wu, 18,19; Sunny Li, USA #1 Under 22 Under 18 at 2546.

Over 40 — Final: David Sakai d. Larry Hodges, 19,10; SF: Sakai d. Han Xiao, 15,16; Hodges d. Nazruddin Asgarali, 13,18.

Women's Open Doubles

Women's Open

Women's Standing Doubles

Women's Class 3

Women's Class 2

Women's Team Class 2&3 Gold

Women's Team Class 4&5 Silver

Open — Final: Sunny Li d. Sean Lonergan, 11,-20,7,16; SF: Li d. Todd Sweeris, 14,-12,17,17; Lonergan d. Shao Yu, 20,-17,-19,16,21; QF: Sweeris d. Han Xiao, 19,19; Li d. Qasim Aziz, 12,12; Shao d. Stephen Yeh, 15,16; Lonergan d. Origene Nyanguile, -17,16,19

U2350 — Final: David Sakai d. Larry Hodges, 19,10; SF: Sakai d. Han Xiao, 15,16; Hodges d. Nazruddin Asgarali, 13,18.


U2000 — Final: Cheng-Dong Chang d. Katherine Wu, 18,19; SF: Chang d. Mike Eng, 11,16; Wu d. James Duan, 17,17,19

U1800: Guenther Wessel d. Frank Riddick, -16,12,18.

U1600: Akmal Meunier d. Yao Xu, -15,17,12.

U1400: Ming Luo d. Roger Abbott, -14,18,8.

U1100: John Vos d. Wei Fan, -19,18,19.


Under 11: 1st Ming Luo, 4-0; 2nd Anthony Shen, 3-1; 3rd Jeremy Brodsky, 2-2; 4th Robert Yang, 1-3; 5th Kevin Ma, 0-4.

U4200 Doubles: Julian Waters/Napoleon Reyes d. Han Xiao/Wayne Zhong, -15,12,16.

U3600 Doubles: Larry Hodges/Mike Terao d. Julian Waters/Terry Bell, 15,-21,18.

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By Larry Hodges

Could it be the dawning of a new era? 17-year-old Sunny Li, a long-time junior prodigy with a rating of 2451, made a major breakthrough by winning the Potomac Open, upsetting such higher rated players as Todd Sweeris (2640) and Sean Lonergan (2530). He also became $500 richer. (New rating: 2546.)

In the final, Sunny dominated, rolling up big leads four straight games. Sean came back from down 13-17 to win game #2, but after Sean went up 5-0 in the fourth, Sunny pretty much ran it out — from down 9-6, Sunny scored 5 in a row and 9 of 10. Final to Sunny, 11, -20, 7, 16. Sean, who has one of the best serves in the U.S., said, "His serve is better than mine. You can’t tell where it’s going — depth or direction." Sunny also pulled out a down-the-line serve that aced all of his opponents several times a match, catching them stepping around the backhand corner.
1999 MILLCREEK OPEN
Erie, Pennsylvania • October 2-3, 1999
By Sam Steiner

Millcreek Open Champion Ashu Jain

This year’s 8th installment of our annual Erie tournament drew 93 entries, 17 off from our peak in ’97 and ’95. Combined with 3-star status and the loss of last year’s sponsor Sun TV, this meant finishing in the red financially, though from a quality perspective this may have been our best ever. Ashu Jain, now attending college at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, plays sporadically and had a sprayed wrist but still managed to pull out a 19-in-the-5th Open final over Dan Seemiller of South Bend. This was the 2nd year in a row where Dan came out on the short end of a 19-in-the-5th match. Thanks, Dan, for putting some extra excitement into our tournaments! Also in the Open, Dan’s protégé Mark Hazinski came out on top in another 5-game thriller over Randy Seemiller — a long exciting match where Randy ran out of gas toward the end and Mark hung tough.

We may, however, have set an attendance record at the tournament party, with about 45 people enjoying snacks, cider, beer, and excellent garage snacks. Thanks to Tom and Kathy Burik for the hospitality.

Next year it looks like its back to 2-star status unless we can locate a sponsor. Anybody out there interested?

Open Singles – Final RR: 1st Ashu Jain, 3-0 (d. Dan Seemiller –17, 13, 17, -8, 19; d. Randy Seemiller 9, 13, 16; d. Mark Hazinski 18, 17, 10); 2nd Dan Seemiller, 2-1 (d. Hazinski 12, 16, 11; d. R. Seemiller –23, 11, 17, 14); 3rd Mark Hazinski, 1-2 (d. R. Seemiller –19, -18, 17, 19, 18); 4th Randy Seemiller (0-3).

Open Warmup RR Winners: Dan Seemiller, Ashu Jain.


U1900: Bala d. Radecki –13, 18, 15.

U1750: Cud d. Spetsios 13, 18.

U1600: Grandalski d. Leventhal 7, 16.

U1500: Anselmo d. Klobusnik 11, 14.

U1400: Dorn d. Haverstraw 16, 14.


U1000: 1st Ashu Jain; 2nd Rich Moss Sr.


Over 40: Tony Young d. Luichio 21, 10.

Over 35: Don Young d. Fumio Yoshikawa 20, 15.


Under 17: 1st Eric Leventhal; 2nd Yukio Kamizuru; 3rd Andy Cochran.


PENSACOLA OPEN
Pensacola, Florida
By Bert Saria

I would like to express my warm and sincere thanks to the following sponsors and individuals for making the tournament a success: City of Pensacola Department of Leisure Services and Mr. Raul Cellos, Paddle Palace, Mr. Ray Thrift, Albertsons Food and Drugs, Barnhill’s Buffet, Days Inn Downtown Pensacola, Risa & Steve Sebastian, the Pensacola Table Tennis Club Players (headed by Bruce Hunt, Bill Redding, Ray Thrift, and L.A. Johnson), and the Eglin Table Tennis Club players (JJ Jordan, Donald Barton, Kyle Franks, and Russell Wyatt).

After some last-minute withdrawals due to players’ pressing personal commitments, the 1999 Pensacola Fall Open saw 25 players compete for $495 in prize money and trophies. In a nutshell, the Open Final between the John Beaumont and Ken Onuka was a thriller. It was a battle between youthfulness and experience, topspin and pips. Who won? Just see below.

The double round robin tournament started at 8:30 AM and completed about 7:00 PM. After a whole day of “YESSS...’s” and “NOOO...’s”, the following emerged as winners:

Open: 1st John Beaumont; 2nd Ken Onuka; 3rd Jesse Gruen; 4th Tommie Dailey St.

A Division: 1st Russell Wyatt; 2nd Billy Carlisle.

B Division: 1st Donald Barton; 2nd Herbert Bennett.

C Division: 1st Robert Saria; 2nd Anthony Okafor.

D Division: 1st JJ Jordan; 2nd Ray Thrift.

NORTHWEST OPEN
Minneapolis, Minnesota • Sept. 18-19, 1999
By Greg Miller

L-R: Runner-up Pratap Arangil; Semifinalist Michael Liu; Champion Mitch Seidenfeld; Semifinalist Duc Luu.

The first table tennis tournament held at one of the Northwest Athletic Club facilities brought out 70 players and many more spectators. Northwest Athletic Clubs, a Twin City area chain of health clubs, is owned by Club Sports International, a Colorado-based company. The Moore Lake facility is a beautiful 213,000 square foot facility in the north suburban metro area. The conditions were great with 10 tables on wood flooring and lots of room for spectators.

Tournament Director Mitch Seidenfeld, the Table Tennis Director for Northwest, won the Open division with wins over Michael Liu and Pratap Arangil. Mitch runs a tight ship when it comes to tournaments and every event started within five minutes of its scheduled time.

Mitch created a table tennis program for Northwest more than three years ago. With tables in three of their metro area facilities, Northwest offers league play, lessons and now tournaments for their 90,000 members. Ted Rajtar, General Manager for the Moore Lake facility, would like to hold two events per year. Ted and his team made the environment so friendly for participants and spectators alike that most people can’t wait for the next tournament. (The free Power Aid helps.)

Two notable returning players were Duc Luu, who, despite a sore elbow, won the seniors, and Brandon Olson, who won the hardbat event over top-25 Mitch Seidenfeld.

Open: 1st Mitch Seidenfeld; 2nd Pratap Arangil.

U2000: 1st Noi Sackpaseuth; 2nd Dau Ton.

U1800: 1st Tien Lam; 2nd Gerry Miller.

U1600: 1st Joe Podvin; 2nd Gerry Miller.

U1400: 1st Magdalena Dziub; 2nd Jim Zwack.


U1000: 1st Abraham Langseth; 2nd Jed Heuer.

U800: 1st Art Fudenberg; 2nd Chuck Hayes.

Over 40: 1st Duc Luu; 2nd Terry Drassal.

Under 18: 1st Michael Liu; 2nd Joe Podvin.

Under 14: 1st Brett Wieber; 2nd Anders Truelson.

3800 Doubles: 1st Gerry Miller/Michael Liu; 2nd Greg Miller/Len Witz.


Hardbat: 1st Brandon Olson; 2nd Mitch Seidenfeld.
Players from around the South once again convened at Chastain Park Gym to take part in the very popular Giant Round Robin Format. The preliminary round robin saw few upsets. However, John Mar (1920) upset Jeff Steif (2165) to win his group. John, a member of the AGT TA Junior Team, would go on to have another excellent win in the Championship division, defeating the always-tough George Cooper (2044).

Keith Evans, coach and player for the Jamaican National Team, dominated the Championship division defeating Atlanta’s Lee McCool. Keith, who has been preparing for the upcoming Latin America Olympic Trials, was very sharp indeed and displayed a consistent experience prevailed in three straight games.

While Virgo isn’t training regularly these days, during his last “season of serious knocking” he managed to win the U2300 event at the 1998 U.S. Open.

State Championship Events


Over 65: 1st Don Feltenberger 2nd Richard Blackall.

Open: 1st Irving Goldsten 2nd Mark Davis.

Hardbat: 1st Dean Doyle 2nd Mikhail Kozatsky.

SYRACUSE 2-PLAYER TEAMS

Syracuse, New York • October 23, 1999

U3600 Teams: 1st Mike Halliday/Gurhan Gudzu; 2nd Ira Goodman/Brian Pollard; 3rd Harvey Hawk/Dave Lawrence; 4th Mike Seaman/Chris Gibbs.

U2300 Teams: 1st Scott Bellinger/Erich Bellinger; 2nd Jay Samant/John Ermisse; 3rd Sam Samant/Al Badger.
**SAC-REC OCTOBER OPEN**
Sacramento, California • October 16, 1999
Open: 1st Freddie Gabriel; 2nd Peter Zajac; 3-4: Auria Malek & K. Viswanathan
U2350: 1st Avishy Schmidt; 2nd Chris Yong.
U2200: 1st David Rudesill; 2nd Auria Malek.
U2050: 1st Leon Kwan; 2nd David Rudesill.
U1900: 1st Seishi Onishi; 2nd Winston Chen.
U1750: 1st Wil Baird; 2nd Joseph Yick.
U1600: 1st Michael Ramirez; 2nd Alex Paras.
U1450: 1st Brian Coakley; 2nd Ruben Kalinga.
U1300: 1st Sergei Gutkin; 2nd Martin Hanken.
U1150: 1st Levy Klots; 2nd Ray Pugh.
U1000: 1st Lewis Chan; 2nd Ray Pugh.
U800: 1st Lewis Chan; 2nd Jenny Chen.
U550: 1st Rajun Sonik; 2nd Jenny Chen.
U3500 Doubles: 1st Winston Chen/Allison Seibel; 2nd Auria Malek/David On.
Hardbat: 1st Freddie Gabriel; 2nd Dean Doyle.

**T&M FALL OPEN**
Phoenix, Arizona • October 23-24, 1999
Open Singles: 1st Matthew Winkler; 2nd Mark Wampler.
Open Doubles: 1st Matthew Winkler/Mark Wampler; 2nd Robert Trudell/Cecilio Licos.
USATT Under 16: 1st Justin Case; 2nd David Pike.
Women's Singles: 1st Yolly Seedtibood; 2nd Leslie Barns.
Women's Doubles: 1st Yolly Seedtibood/Grace McDonald; 2nd Debbie Setzler.
Open Consolation: 1st Mindy Szeto; 2nd Jin Tran.
Women's Consolation: 1st chóng Thi Tran; 2nd Jin Tran.

**ARKANSAS CLOSED**
Little Rock, Arkansas • September 25, 1999
Open Singles: 1st Wee Hui Kit; 2nd Don Jackson.
Open Doubles: 1st Jamey Hall/Hong Chuong; 2nd Andy Bloxom/Marty Simpson.
Women's Singles: 1st Yolly Seedtibood; 2nd Debbie Setzler.
B Singles: 1st Gan Wei Shong; 2nd Eric Duquet.
C Singles: 1st Alex Tripod; 2nd Leslie Barns.
U1800: 1st Hong Chuong; 2nd Tony Godman.
U1500: 1st Eric Duquet; 2nd Gary Moore.
U1200: 1st Ken Hubbard; 2nd Jason Ward.
U1000: 1st Brian Harper; 2nd Will Pugh.
Under 40: 1st William Hall; 2nd Marty Simpson.
Under 60: 1st Vic Merideth; 2nd Clem Volpert.
Under 18 Girls: 1st Daniela Stixen; 2nd Nicole Pike.
Under 18 Consolation: 1st Justin Coe; 2nd David Pike.
U2300 Doubles: 1st William Hall/Leslie Hall; 2nd Lee Morgan/Richard Mowrey.
Under 18 Doubles: 1st Asha Bhambra/Alex Tripod; 2nd Jonathan To/Matt McConnell.

**THREE RIVERS OPEN**
Fort Wayne, Indiana • October 16, 1999
Editor's Note: Was this the first U.S. tournament with 40mm ball events? This could be historical!
Open: 1st Mark Nordby; 2nd Mark hazinski; 3rd Randy Hewitt.
Elite Over 2050: 1st Mark Hazinski; 2nd Don Hamilton; 3-4: Mark Nordby & Randy Hewitt.
Open Doubles: 1st Mark Nordby/Don Hamilton; 2nd Lee Hallman/Brian Fowler.
U2100: 1st Lee Hallman; 2nd Jared Lynch; 3rd Jordan Lynch.
U1900: 1st Jordan Lynch; 2nd Ercel Kerner.
U1700: 1st John Cud; 2nd Joe Clemmons.
U1600: 1st Michael Lacey; 2nd Michael Casey.
U1400: 1st Eli Kain; 2nd Ronald Kolb.
U1200: 1st Carl Kain; 2nd Ben Kolb.
Non-USATT Open: 1st Howard Newcomer; 2nd Arif Hamsedd.
Non-USATT Under 16: 1st Chris Pommer; 2nd Nicole Lynch.

**ROCKFORD FALL OPEN**
Rockford, Illinois • September 25, 1999
Open Singles: 1st Mark Nordby; 2nd Dan Truong; 3rd Englebert Solis; 4th Kent Mok.
U2250: 1st Dan Truong; 2nd Englebert Solis.
U2000: 1st Dan Truong; 2nd Naved Nazar.
U1900: 1st Mike Menzer; 2nd Craid Tafel.
U1750: 1st Craig Tafel; 2nd Mike Baldwin.
U1500: 1st Ricard Jablonski; 2nd Dave Fossett.
U1250: 1st Joel Rombach; 2nd Robert Hagerstrand.
U1000: 1st Mike Palm; 2nd Bob Lake.
U750: 1st Mindy Szeto; 2nd Jin Tran.
Over 40: 1st Sonny Henderson; 2nd Kent Mok.
Over 60: 1st Houhshing Bozorgzadeh; 2nd Marty Ofergeld.
Under 18: 1st Alex Mehrabian; 2nd Jim Waltz.
Under 15: 1st James Waltz; 2nd Eli Kahn.
Under 12: 1st Mindy Szeto; 2nd Jin Tran.

**ZAR ZAINAL OPEN**
Schaumburg, Illinois • October 23, 1999
Open: 1st Englebert Solis; 2nd Michael Bartl; 3-4: Arvid Aemirredy & Spenser Lam.
U2250: 1st Arvid Aemirredy; 2nd Tony Gutierrez; 3-4: Englebert Solis & Spenser Lam.
U2000: 1st Aaron Avery; 2nd Tony Gutierrez; 3-4: Milan Djakovac & Dave Abbott.
U1800: 1st Bobby Douglass; 2nd Leon Li.
U1600: 1st Tim Loecercher; 2nd John Lau.
U1400: 1st David MacGregor; 2nd Andy Moy.
U1250: 1st Damien Barron; 2nd Jed Hear.
U1050: 1st David Nalls; 2nd Cameron Marantz.
U850: 1st David Nalls; 2nd Adil Dhanani.
**FRENCH OPEN**

*November 11-14, 1999*

French Open Men’s Singles & Doubles Champion Kong Linghuai.

**SWEDISH OPEN**

*November 18-21, 1999*

**Men’s Singles – Final:** Kong Linghuai (CHN), 14, 15, 12; **SF:** Kong d. Torben Wosik (GER), 13, 19, 15, 12; Wang Liqin d. Jean-Philippe Gatien (FRA), 17, 16, 20, 19; **QF:** Kong d. Chiang Peng-Lung (TPE), 21, 16, 17; Wosik d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), 8, 10, 18, 15, 17; Wang Liqin d. Ma Lin (CHN), 26, 14, 16, 16; Gatien d. Christophe Legout (FRA), 19, 11, 12; 8ths: Kong d. Yoo Seung Min (KOR), 18, 10, 18, 16; Chiang d. Kalinikos Kreqange (GRE), 18, 12, 11; Wosik d. Petr Korbel (CZE), 15, 14, 21, 14; Persson d. Yan Sen (CHN), 13, 13, 22, 12, 9; Ma Lin d. Geir Erlandsen (NOR), 14, 10, 16; Wang Liqin d. Peter Karlsson (SWE), 18, 14, 13; Gatien d. Allan Bentsen (DEN), 13, 11, 7; Legout d. Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE), 15, 23, 19, 22.

**Women’s Singles – Final:** Sun Jin (CHN) d. Yang Ying (CHN), 21, 19, 15, 12; **SF:** Sun d. Ryu Ji Hye (KOR), -19, 17, 15, 12.

**Swedish Open Men’s Singles Champion Wang Liqin.**

**CZECH OPEN**

*December 9-12, 1999*

**Men’s Singles – Final:** Chiang Peng-Lung (TPE) d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 19, 13, 16, 17, 15; **SF:** Chiang d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), -18, 15, 19, 16; Saive d. Peter Karlsson (SWE), 15, 17, 18, 21; **QF:** Karlsson d. Peter Nilsson (SWE), -19, 15, 16, 14; Saive d. Ricahrd Vornborn (CZE), -1, 10, 15, 13; Chiang d. Patrick Chila (FRA), -17, 18, -13, 17, 13; Persson d. Christophe Legout (FRA), 9, 8, 12; **8ths:** Nilsson (SWE) d. Werner Schlegner (AUT), 20, 18, 19, 19; Karlsson d. Marek Klasek (CZE), 19, 22, 19; Saive d. Josef Plachy (CZE), -1, 15, 19, 15, 12; Richard Vornborn d. Chang Yuan-Su (TPE), 9, 18, 13; Chiang d. Armand Phung (FRA), 16, 12, 18, 8; Chila d. Matthew Syed (ENG), 16, 14, 16; Legout d. Johnny Huang (CAN), 8, 20, 15; Persson d. Toshio Tasaki, -17, 7, 16.

**Women’s Singles – Final:** Otilia Badescu (ROM) d. Xu Jing (TPE), -1, 11, 12, 19, 19; **SF:** Badescu d. Kristzina Toth (HUN), -1, 11, 7, 11; Xu d. Xia Liu (AUT), -9, 14, 18, 17; **QF:** Badescu d. Chen Jing (TPE), -15, 18, 14, 18; Toth d. Vivien Ello (HUN), 18, 14, 9; Xu Jing d. Maria Fazekas (HUN), 10, 15, 11; Liu Jia d. Li Jia Wei (SIN), 20, 9, 17; **8ths:** Chen Jing d. Agnes Lelannic (FRA), 18, 11, 9; Badescu d. Elisabeth Gradieux (FRA), 7, 14, 8; Ello d. Agatze Costes (FRA), 16, 10, 9; Toth d. Ana Valantova (CZE), 15, 15, 12, 14; Jing Xu d. Paulina Narkiewicz (POL), 13, 10, 14; Fazekas d. Katia Nieminen (FIN), 11, 15, 16; Liu Jia d. Anne-Clare Palut (FRA), 17, 9, 17; Li Jia Wei d. Akiko Takeda (JPN), -16, 11, 14, 18.

**Men’s Doubles – Final:** Werner Schlegner/Karl Jinkrak (AUT) d. Chiang Peng-Lung/Chang Yuan-Su (TPE), 17, 16; **SF:** Chiang/Chang d. Christophe Legout/Damien Eloi (FRA), -1, 16, 15, 16; Schlegner/Jinkrak d. Qian Qian/Olivier Marem (AUT/FRA), 20, 19, 21.

**Women’s Doubles – Final:** Chen Jing/Xu Jing (TPE) d. Jig Liu/Judit Herzag (AUT), 20, 15; **SF:** Chen/Xu d. Vivien Ello/Maria Fazekas (HUN), 15, 10; Liu/Herzig d. Li Jia Wei/Jung Jun Hing (SIN), 16, 18.

**Prague, Czechoslovakia**

**Swedish Open Women’s Singles Champion Otilia Badescu.**

**Photo by Houshang Bozorgzadeh © 1999**
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The Yasaka DO has excellent spin for the offensive strategist. High quality rubber with a tacky surface for good ball control. The top sheet is made in China, sponge made in Japan.

Speed: 80
Spin: 96
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1.5 or 2.0

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Speed: 92
Spin: 91
Control: 80
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YASAKA "MARK V GPS"
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Speed: 85
Spin: 92
Control: 82
1.8, 2.0, 2.5

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The four-star Stiga Pacific Rim Open, now an All-Star tournament, drew 200 players from North America competing in 27 events on 20 Stiga Expert tables at pleasant and spacious Portland Community College. Scores of paying spectators enjoyed the fine and sportsmanlike play at the well-run tournament of experienced director Jim Scott, assisted by many members of the Portland Table Tennis Club: Referee Bill Mason, photographer Dat Bui, food provider Bopha Ping, and sign painter Stan Jensen. Special thanks to the enabling sponsors and patrons, especially Escalade Sports and Bob Vidlewich.

**Men's All Star**

In the quarters, Shao Yu beat Todd Sweeris in three close ones, -18, 19, 17. Their play featured at times spectacular backhand-to-backhand countering between these two pips-on-the-backhand players.

In another three-game quarterfinal, Khoa Nguyen upset Cheng Yinghua, 16, -20, 10. Perhaps because this event took place on the first day of the tournament -- on Sunday Cheng would play well in the semis and final of the Men's Open -- Cheng's reactions seemed slower than normal, but not Khoa's. Khoa fired hard and spiny loops, which Cheng often blocked back somewhat soft, allowing Khoa's successive attacks. And when Cheng missed, many missed.

The third quarterfinal upset saw Sean Longeman comfortably beating Eric Owens at 12 & 9.

Only the remaining quarterfinal ended according to seeding, with David Zhuang beating Michael Hyatt at 10 & 8.

The two semifinals were both straight-game wins, with Khoa, down 12-8 in the first, winning at 18 & 17, and David Zhuang over Shao Yu at 12 & 13.

The final, between David Zhuang and Khoa Nguyen, was a best-of-three rematch on Saturday after David's win in five in the quarterfinals of the Men's Open. In the first game, David attacked much more actively than he had in the quarters. This, along with many of Khoa's loops missing, gave a commanding 12-4 lead, and Dave went on to win, 21-10. In the second game, Khoa took over the attack to good effect, but David caught up to tie it at 14-all. Then the attack alternated, heating up with counterattacking toward the end. But again David came out on top, 21-17, to win the Men's All Star.

The final of Men's Singles pitted Pac Rim defending champion Fan against Cheng for the third time in the United States -- but not for the third time, because the number one and two players in the U.S. knew each other as members of the Chinese National. The match opened as a contest of looping to the corners, Fan ahead. With power and spin, then with pace variation, Fan led 8-2. Fan built up an eight-point lead, then seemed to dribble it away as Cheng deuced the game from down 18-20. Fan won, 23-21. When Fan attacked early in the point, he sometimes would pin the ball on Cheng's body with a series of loops. He also had some edge-of-racket misses. Cheng often scored with his patented leap-in-the-air forehand loop over the table.

In the second game, Cheng ran up a seven-point lead, but Fan caught up at 12, then deuce, got the ad at 21-20 on a loop off the back edge of the table, and won on a hard forehand loop down the line, out of reach. Game three is all Fan's ferocious looping: 13-3, 15-4, 16-7, 17-8, 21-8. Pac Rim Men's Singles champion, Fan Yi Yong, with a prize of $2,000! One supposes that Fan's game has benefited from his recent stint back in Hungary, playing in the European Superliga.

**Women's Singles**

Women's Singles featured the most exciting match of the tournament, the semifinal between U.S. number one junior Michelle Do and Simone Yang, former member of the U.S. Team. Having played very little the past year or so, Simone's reactions were too slow at first, as Michelle chucked up a 21-11 first-game win and a 20-16 match point lead in the second. Tenacious and unfailable, Simone deuced it. Then Michelle's spiny loop gave her another match point. Michelle next hit one extra hard crosscourt -- but misses. Simone took the lead for the first time as Michelle got a slightly high ball but smashes it into the net, then it's 23-21 for Simone, as Michelle loops into the net. In the final game, Simone goes up 18-15, but Michelle ties it up, 18-18. Michelle hits one into the net, then one off the end, and now it's Simone's turn to go up match point, 20-18. At 20-19, Simone hits a fast backhand block, and Michelle goes into the net to end the match, -11, 21 19.

On the other side of the draw, Gao Jun dispatched the Pings sisters, Whitney and Emily, in the quarters and semifinals, respectively.

In the final Gao defended her Pac Rim championship title against Simone. Simone scored many well-earned points and stayed with Gao for much of the first game, but Gao pulled away to win at 14. There is one memorable point where Simone won a quick backhand-to-backhand duel close to the table. Even with a strong display of power, however, Simone could not upset the number one player in the U.S. and former Chinese National Team member (now U.S. Team Member) as Gao wins the match, 14 & 12.

Women's All Star

The Women's All Star semifinals featured Gao Jun versus Michelle Do, and Emily Ping versus Simone Yang. The matches were both two games. Simone at 10 & 18, and Gao at 9 & 13. Gao breezed to a 15, 13 All Star championship over Simone.

**Men's Singles**

Those surviving to the quarterfinals were Fan Yi Yong, Shao Yu, Eric Owens, Todd Sweeris, David Zhuang, Khoa Nguyen, Horatio Pintea, and Cheng Yinghua. Many excellent players did not make it this far, such as Michael Hyatt, whom Shao Yu nipped out in five fast-paced and exciting games at 19, 18, -14, -16, 19. As he did throughout the tournament, Shao attacked with his relentless pips-out backhand, punching any pushes from Michael except the very shortest ones, and counter-hitting off the bounce. Michael had greater power and spin, especially on the forehand, and almost caught up in the fifth from down 15-20.

The most exciting quarterfinal match, between David Zhuang and Khoa Nguyen, went five games: 18, -15, 12, -19, 18 for David. After dropping the first game, Khoa looped powerfully from side to side for winners, usually wide to the forehand. David easily controlled the third game. In the fourth, Khoa led most of the way, but with a 20-15 lead, barely won at 19. In the final game, Khoa adjusted to David's controlled blocks, and if he didn't win with power, he did with spin. Down 6-9, David got to 15-9 before Khoa scored again. By this time, David was loose enough to notch up his attack, including with his penhold backhand, and from up 20-15; won 21-18.

Another quarterfinal match went five games, Todd Sweeris over Eric Owens -22, 19, -15, 9, 12.

Cheng Yinghua beat Horatio Pintea in four: 11, 7, -16, 19. In the third game, Cheng blocked a lot and pushed quick off the bounce. In the final game, Horatio did some ferocious attacking, but was less steady.

In the remaining quarterfinal Fan Yi Yong defeated Shao Yu at 13, 17, 15, with much good counterattacking on both sides.

On Sunday in the semifinals, Fan continued his play against Todd Sweeris, winning at 8, 14, 9. Todd played best in the second game, holding even for the first two-thirds.

Cheng also won his semifinal in straight games at 16, 17, and 12 against Zhuang, with Cheng mostly doing against David's blocking and hitting. The first two games were close halfway, but Cheng pulled away at the end each time.
Pacific Rim Open Results


Women's Singles - Final: Gao Jun d. Simone Yang, 14,12; SF: Gao d. Emily Ping, 14,14; Yang d. Michelle Do, -11,21,19.


Women's Allstar - Final: Gao Jun d. Simone Yang, 10,18; SF: Gao d. Michelle Do, 9,13; Yang d. Emily Ping, 15,16.


U1900: Yousif Fawzy d. Peter Yau, 18,18,18.


U1500: Terry Li d. Bill Cheng, 13,10,14.

U1400: John Leach d. Victor Wong, 11,14,22.


Under 13: 1st John Leach 4-0; 2nd Tiffany Qu, 3-1; 3rd Thomas Nguyen, 2-2.


USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2000
Samsonov Alpha: The Champion's Weapon!

The Blade

Vladimir Samsonov, rated #1 in the world, developed this offensive blade himself, using his gifted intuition. The combination of precious wood outer plies, with an extra strong middle layer, guarantees better ball resilience with more control, ideal for controlled, spin-oriented attacking game with lots of pressure.

Speed: OFF. Weight: 80 gms. Plies: 5. Price: $44

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Born in Harbin, China on Oct. 8th, 1975, Kong Linghui started life in the perfect table tennis environment: His father was the city’s team coach and his mother loved the sport. When it was time to get him into kindergarten at age four, his parents deliberately chose the only school in town that had a ping pong pro-ball that I felt the only possible way to return it was by pushing.

I notice that medium-level players often refuse to push – either because they are too proud (the worst possible reason), or because they’re convinced that they give the advantage to their opponent unless they attack first. The latter may comes to spin variation. With the same motion, he can produce super heavy pushes that even world-class greats routinely loop into the bottom of the net, or he can produce an almost spinless floater. He does this by varying the contact point on the racket. The closer to the front edge of the rubber the contact point is, the heavier
gram. One day, when he was six years old, he jubilantly came home and told his mom: “I made the team! I want to become a really good table tennis player!” At 13 he wrote in his diary: “A life without a dream is not worth living. My goal is to win the World Championship and the Olympic Gold Medal.” With singular dedication, the very smart, quiet boy set out to pursue his goal. His coach reports that in all the years, Kong never missed practice. Sometimes, when practice was not mandatory, he was the only one there. In addition to this dedication, he is mentally and physically perfectly suited for the sport. He’s constantly learning new techniques and is willing to try them out immediately in competition.

If you ask him, his main weapon in the early part of his career was his push. At seven he won his first tournament - he says - pretty much by pushing. During the Atlanta Olympics I was sitting next to where he and Liu Guoliang were practicing. Liu was trying out new serves, and Kong effortlessly pushed all of them back, causing Liu to wonder out loud if his serves had no spin. Later, when they played a practice game, Kong neutralized Liu simply by pushing, Liu said to his friend facetiously, yet mildly irritated, because he couldn’t do anything against it: “All you know how to do is push!”

The fact is that with his masterful pushing Kong stabilizes his game. He hardly ever puts in a horrible performance. He’s almost always able to impose his control game which then eventually gives him the opening for his devastatingly well-placed attacks. In Tianjin, I practiced with him and Deng Yaping before their mixed doubles world championship final match, and my experience of that push was that it is such a difficult

be true to a certain extent, but pushing does not necessarily mean handing over the initiative. As Kong proves, a well-practiced and well-placed push can force a passive return, a ball that might be less well-controlled than a serve and therefore easier to attack. If a push can control the World Champion, chances are it can be beneficial at other levels, too.

In this picture sequence, Kong is practicing with Liu Guoliang in the practice hall at the 1999 World Championships. There are a few key features to his push stroke. Generally, Kong’s ready position is very neutral, but his racket is slightly tilted towards the backhand side. When he gets ready to push, he steps in with his right leg (unless the ball is on his extreme backhand side, in which case he steps in with his left leg). Note that he lands on his heel for a gentle step, not a sudden skip forward, so he can keep the movement smooth and controlled. He leans toward the ball and, while pulling the racket toward his chest, raises it just slightly over the point where he will make contact. At the same time his elbow moves forward and upward, assuming command over the forearm and placing it horizontal and perpendicular to the ball’s trajectory. At the end of the backswing he tilts the racket up with his wrist and then snaps it forward into the contact. Although the whole motion is very smooth, the contact is a definite “chop,” not just a light brushing. His forearm now determines the amount of forward motion. While his hand moves forward, his upper body moves back a little in a counter-balancing motion. After contact, he raises his hand slightly in a natural, relaxed follow-through, moving right back into his ready position.

Kong Linghui is a master of disguise when it the ball. By contacting near the rear edge – just

enough to avoid missing the ball completely – the ball doesn’t have enough contact time to pick up a lot of spin. Since the racket angle is the same, the resulting shot travels on a very similar trajectory and is extremely deceptive.

Although it is not the flashiest technique, the push has a critical role: If you use it too much you’ll be limiting your performance and become a fairly defenseless prey to solid attack players, but its deliberate and technically proficient use will make you a force to be reckoned with.
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By Richard McAfee
USATT Certified National Coach

How to Produce a Great Short Backspin Serve!

Here are sequence photo's showing me demonstrating both the correct form and some of the common errors made when executing this serve.

Sequence 1-3 shows some of the common errors. Notice in frame one, that the racket is starting much higher than the ball. This makes it difficult to contact the bottom of the ball. You can see in frame two that the resulting contact is only slightly below center. Also notice how high above the table contact is being made. This will produce a downward force making the ball bounce higher on the opponent's side of the table. Frame three shows the resulting forword racket motion through the ball adding speed and making it difficult to keep the ball short on the table.

Sequence 4-6 shows the correct form. In frame four, you can see that the racket starts lower than the ball. This allows the server to actually swing up at the ball and contact the very bottom of the ball. Frame five shows the correct ball contact point which produces maximum spin. Note how low to the table the ball is contacted. Frame six shows the short follow-through.

Special Note: Practicing serves will help you develop your fine motor hand skills (touch skills). As these skills improve, your ability to produce heavy spin on all your spin shots will improve as well. Good luck and keep practicing those serves!

TIP OF THE MONTH:
Proper Use of the Back Shoulder

By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach

A common problem for players who smash a lot is to have trouble lifting the ball against heavy backspin when looping. A common problem for players who loop a lot is to follow their opening loop against backspin by smashing a blocked return off the end. The two problems are related, and have to do with the back shoulder - the right shoulder for a right-hander.

Players who smash a lot often do not drop their back shoulder when looping (or don’t drop it enough), just as they don’t when smashing. This costs them lifting power when looping, and leads to a weak loop against heavy backspin. Players who loop a lot often automatically drop their back shoulder for the next shot, as they do when looping. This causes the player to lift slightly when smashing against a blocked return, and so the smash goes off the end.

So remember this rule: when looping against backspin, drop that shoulder; when smashing the blocked return, keep that shoulder up!
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Rather than conventional "event-by-event" coverage, I've decided to present the Nationals exactly as it happened — in the actual order that it took place, day-by-day, using the day-by-day postings I put up on the USATT web page (www.usatt.org) during the Nationals as the draft. The write-ups should be fresh and (hopefully!) vivid. The events are clearly labeled so readers can choose to read them all, or skip ahead to the events they are most interested in.

A record 709 players competed on 78 tables over five days. Congratulations to the players for putting on such a successful event! (Yes, there were some glitches, but that's to be expected in an event this size.)

Congratulations to Tournament Chairman Y.C. Lee, Tournament Director Shonie Aki, Tournament Evaluation Director Jimmy McClure, President Sheri Pittman, Executive Director Ben Nishet, Facilities Director Dewayne Zint, Media and Public Relations Director Alan Williams, Ceremonies and Award Directors Richard McAfee and Joe Lee, Computer Operations Director Marilyn Miller, Disabled Athlete Coordinator Sharon Brooks, Photographer John Oros, Program Manager Lori Pfister, Registration and Event Manager Jan Dreher, Event Manager Fran Boardman, USATT Director of Operations and Event Manager Margaret Smith, Operations Shift Leaders Olga Feingold-Kahan and Wayne Johnson, Referee Aly Satam, Deputy Referee Allen Barth, Chief Umpire Ray Caviechio, Assistant Chief Umpire Bob Partridge, Operations Staff Thomas Anderson, Les Biggert, Connie Biggert, Sue Canup, Robert Chamoun, Juan Escobedo, Bob Fox, Dan Goodman, John Harris, Stanley Kahan, Ann Kesler, Lai Kong, Kam Kong, Herbert Lau, John Miller, Gary Reinitz, Marcelo Rodriguez, Bob Sanders, Suzanne Sanders, Joyce Williams, and Shirley Zint, USA Umpires Irina Borisova, Terry Canup, Valery Elmabanc, Dick Evans, Joseph Helfand, Linda Hisong, Azmy Ibrahim, Ruben Kairy, Larry Kesler, Paul Kovac, Joseph Lee, Cindy Marcum, Tom Miller, Roman Tinsky, Paul Vaneura, Allen Watson, Chris Williams, Zhao Ming Yang, and Joseph Yick; and Visiting Umpires Len Luney-Ott (CAN), Norman Tang (CAN), Henrik Pederson (DEN), Hans-Dieter Vichmann (GER) and Isabella Torrienti (ITA). And congratulations to anyone missed — sorry!

Also special thanks to Event sponsors Escalade Sports, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, Stratosphere Hotel and Casino, Nittaku and Tibhar; to Suppliers Budget Car Rental and United Airlines; and to Exhibitors California Table Tennis, Martin-Kilpatrick Company, Paddle Palace, Stiga — Table Tennis Pioneers and Table Tennis International.

For this Nationals, I decided to do something different: cover every event, all 67 of them! This doesn't mean you have to read them all — each event is marked, so you can skip to those events you want to read. The write-ups were done at the Nationals, the very night of each event. So, to the coverage was Sharon Brooks, who covered the twelve disabled events. A record 709 players competed on 78 tables over five days.

**MEN'S SINGLES**

Cheng completely dominated the event, from start to finish. Except for a slight "hiccup," when he blew a 20-16 lead, he didn't lose a game in the event. Here's how it happened....

**32nds**: The only upset was 38th seed Lee McCool of Georgia (rated 2132) upsetting 18th seed Terrence Lee of California (rated 2340). Of interest was the return of former U.S. Team Member Brandon Olson of Minnesota to the Nationals after an absence of a decade. He defeated Donald Hayes of New Hampshire in the first round, 17-16, 11-16, 16.

**16ths**: In the 16ths, there was only one major upset: 14-year-old Mark Hazinski (IN), the 33rd seed, rated 2185, over Brian Masters (MD), the 11th seed, rated 2493. Hazinski, however, had already shown that rating to be way out of date, having won the Under 2400 event. In the fifth game, Masters took a 9-1 lead — and then Hazinski was up, 17-10! A 16-1 run for the two-winged loopers. Masters, who seemed exhausted by this time, staged a small comeback that came up just short. Match to Hazinski, 22-20, 18-21, 21-16, 18-21, 21-18.

**8ths**: The only closely contested eighths match again involved Hazinski, this time up against 5th seed Brian Pace, rated 2545. Again Hazinski pushed the match to five games (and led 2-1 in games), but this time he came up short, as Pace advanced to the quarters, 20-18, 16-18, 18.

**Quarterfinals**

Cheng Yinghua (MD) d. Keith Alban (FL), 15, 22, 9. Under pressure, U.S. #1 junior Keith pulled off several spectacular counterloops, but Cheng simply had too many weapons. After winning the second game at deuce, Cheng took a 16-4 third game lead, and the match was over.

Eric Owens (TX) d. Sean Lonergan (MD), 16-18, 16, 15. After Eric won the first game, Sean (leading 20-18) pulled off a rare "ace" push return of serve to the wide forehand against the too-soon-stepping-around Eric to win the second game. Spurred on by this, Sean took a 4-1 lead in the third game. It was his last hurrah, as Eric scored the next ten in a row, and won the last two games by holding onto early leads. Eric dominated with his forehand loop — once he got his forehand on a ball, it was usually just a matter of whether his first loop or second one would win the point. Eric also kept loop-killing Sean's serves, which probably were long too often.

Todd Sweeris (MD) d. Khoa Nguyen (CA), 18-14, 18, 19. This was a match of Khoa's physical athleticism and swooping loops versus Todd's quickness and serve & receive game. After losing the first game, Todd...
mostly dominated the rest of the way, mostly because he took away much of Khoa’s game with his receive game – flips, loops, and short & long pushes. In games three and four, Todd led 12-6 and 11-5, respectively, and each time Khoa made late comebacks that fell short, including tying the last game at 19-all after falling behind 17-13. Up 20-19 in the fourth, Todd flip-killed Khoa’s serve about as hard as a ball can be flipped to end the match.

David Zhuang (NJ) d. Brian Pace (FL), 6, 15, 15. Although Brian has great looping power and fast footwork, David worked him side-to-side throughout the match, forcing Brian to either go for off-balance forehands or use his more erratic backhand. Although Brian would sometimes challenge the last two games, David was in command from start to finish.

**Semifinals**

Cheng Yinghua d. Eric Owens, 13, 16, 14. Despite a large cheering section, there wasn’t a whole lot Eric could do in this match. Eric’s fast footwork and looping power scored a number of points, but Cheng controlled most rallies from the start with his serve, receive, and a mixture of blocking and two-winged looping. Often Eric seemed somewhat frozen, not sure of what Cheng would be doing next, and so would get locked up on his backhand, taking his point-winning forehand out of the equation. Afterwards, Cheng told me that Eric had a good game, but didn’t yet know how to use it tactically at the higher levels.

David Zhuang d. Todd Sweeris, 19, -16, 15, 16. Todd led the first 17-15, and seemed to be controlling the rallies with his steady pips-out backhand and forehand looping. But at the end, with David suddenly serving all backhand serves, he got careless in the rallies, and lost. Down 14-8 in the second, David came back to tie it up at 15-all, but Todd ran it out, 21-16. In the last two games, Todd’s controlling, side-to-side backhand became erratic, especially when going down the line. Often Todd would catch David flat-footed with a down-the-line backhand that just missed, and Todd could only stare at the missed opportunities.

**Final**

Cheng Yinghua d. David Zhuang, 10, -20, 10, 16. The final was played about an hour after Cheng had given the exhibition with Chen Xinhua, and so the question many wondered was whether he would be too tired. But Cheng dominated all four games, except for the “hiccup.” Cheng often plays David straight backhand-to-backhand counterdriving, but this time he almost exclusively looped the backhand. In game two, Cheng led 20-16, and for a few points looks slow and flat-footed tired? While David was at his most energetic, winning six in a row. But Cheng came right back, winning the last two at ten (as he had the first).

During the match, there was an ongoing joke about Cheng being tired. David would yell (after Cheng would make a great shot), “He’s tired?”, and Cheng would respond, “I’m tired!” At one point, when Cheng missed an easy shot (but with a big lead after scoring 8 in a row), David, clowning around, yelled, “He’s tired!” and ran around the court showing off his own energy! Cheng responded by faking exhaustion with heavy breathing, hand at stomach, etc. The crowd enjoyed the clowning around almost as much as the great play.

**MEN’S DOUBLES**

David Zhuang (NJ) and Todd Sweeris (MD), seeded #1, proved to be a potent doubles team, probably the dominant team for the foreseeable future. No team scored more than 13 points in a game against them as they won $250 each. Both play close to the table, Zhuang as a pips-out penholder, Sweeris as a shakehand with pips on the backhand and a close-to-the-table forehand loop. Both are receive specialists, and dominated the start of most rallies, no matter who served. In one semifinal, they defeated defeated Eric Owens/Barney J. Reed (TX/TN), 8, 13. In the other semifinal, the second-seeded team of Cheng Yinghua and Sean Lonergan of Maryland defeated Randy Cohen and Shashin Shodhan (L.A./CA), 14, 19. In the final, Zhuang/Sweeris defeated Cheng Yinghua/Lonergan rather easily, 11, 12.

**WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Gao Jun dominated women’s singles even more than Cheng had the men’s play in winning her fourth straight women’s title – in fact, the fourth straight year she’s swept Women’s Singles & Doubles and Mixed Doubles. A player can often challenge a player who is a level stronger, but Gao is two levels stronger than the next best USA
Right: Gao Jun swept Women's Singles & Doubles and Mixed Doubles for the fourth straight year. Tawny Banh, left, was in the Women's Singles Final for the second straight year.

Quarterfinals
There were no surprises up to the quarterfinals, with the top eight seeds all advancing to that round. In the quarters, top seed Gao Jun defeated her doubles partner, Michelle Do, with Michelle playing well enough to win one game - something few USA women have done. Second seed Tawny Banh defeated Simone Yang in straight games. The two other quarterfinal matches were more closely contested. Lily Yip just edged out fellow-U.S. team member Virginia Sung, 19-in-the-fifth, in a classic confrontation between pips-out penholder Yip and chopper Sung. (Earlier, the two had played the Under 2300 final with Yip easily winning at 9, 11, 15-year-old Jackie Lee pulled off the first major upset of the event, defeating third seed Diana Gee.

Quarterfinal results:  
Gao Jun d. Michelle Do, 8, 8, -18, 13  
Lily Yip d. Virginia Sung, 21, 9, -20, 14, 19  
Jackie Lee d. Diana Gee, -13, 19, 18, 18  
Tawny Banh d. Simone Yang, 14, 6, 11

Semifinals  
Gao Jun (MD) d. Lily Yip (NJ), 9, 14, 6. In this match-up of pips-out penholders, Gao's better controlling backhand blocking and steady forehand hitting were too strong for Lily's more agressive, but less consistent game. Gao rarely gave Lily a chance to attack easily, and when Lily's shots landed, Gao seemed able to counter-block back anything.

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**MSF**
- MSF#1: Cheng Yinghua (MD) - Eric Owens (TX)
- MSF#2: David Zhuang (NJ) - Todd Sweeris (MD)

**WFinal**
- WFinal: Gao Jun - Tawny Banh

**MFinal**
- MFinal: Cheng Yinghua - David Zhuang

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- Sheri Pittman, USA Table Tennis President

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- Ben Nisbet, USA Table Tennis Executive Director

“We are all looking forward to working together to make USA Table Tennis bigger and better. We hope all USATT members will join us in our efforts and make this partnership a great success. Looking your best helps you play your best. Best of luck - Team USA!”
- Mitch Rothfelsich, Table Tennis Pioneers President

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- Larry Gajderowicz, Escalade Sports Marketing Director

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- Mats Bandstigen, STIGA (Sweden Table Tennis AB) President

STIGA and USA Table Tennis - Let The Revolution Begin
Tawny Banh (CA) d. Jackie Lee (CA), 14, 7, 16. Tawny’s strong two-winged game – forehand looping, backhand hitting with pips – was simply too much for Jackie Lee’s two-winged looping and hitting game. 14-year-old Jackie showed hints of brilliant play at times, but Tawny controlled the match from the beginning.

Final
Gao Jun d. Tawny Hanh, 11, 13, 18. Tawny had several brief but shining moments – up 9-6 in the first, and almost coming back from down 19-14 in the third – but Gao could pretty much lock Tawny up on her backhand side, and pick-hit with her forehand. Gao controlled play with her serve, receive, backhand block, forehand quick-hit, and general placement. Placement is her greatest weapon – plus the fact that ***she never misses***! Afterwards, Tawny admitted that her goal was simply to get a game from Gao – something few women have done. Tawny came relatively close in the third game, scoring four in a row from down 19-14, but Gao won the next two.

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on the backhand- since she was more of a counter-

OVER 40 WOMEN'S SINGLES
Xiaoying (pronounced “Shy Ying”) Liu of Mary-
land defeated Sharlene Wilson of Indiana in the
final, 18, 13. Liu said she had difficulty with
Wilson’s style—long pips on the forehand, antispin
on the backhand—since she was more of a counter-
driver, and Wilson gave her nothing to counter
against. However, Liu said she sent to light top-
spin serves, and got light backspin returns which
she either looped or smashed for winners. Wil-
son had defeated second-seeded Donna Sakai of
Maryland in the semifinals, 13, 20. In the other
semifinals, Liu had defeated fellow Marylander
Barbara Kaminsky, 19, 16.

OVER 50 MEN'S SINGLES
Rey Domingo (NJ) and George Brathwaite (NY),
long-time east coast adversaries who have
-dominated their age groups nationally for many
years, played one of the best finals of the
tournament. Playing one long topspin rally after
another, the two elder players often counterlooped,
lobbed and smashed in rallies that seemed more
suited to players half their age. The scores tell the
story: Domingo over Brathwaite, 11, -21, 20.

OVER 50 WOMEN'S SINGLES
Barbara Kaminsky defeated sister and fellow
Marylander Donna Sakai in another saga of a long,
35+ years rivalry of the former Chaimson sisters.
Neither lost a game on the way to the finals, but
in the final, Kaminsky’s hitting was too strong
for Sakai’s blocking, 16, 14.

OVER 60 SINGLES
In a marathon between George Brathwaite’s (NY)
steady looping and Richard Hicks’ (IN) steady
chopping, chopping won out at 17 & 12 in this
match of long-time rivals. Hicks had defeated
fellow chopper Bohdan Dawidowicz (CO) in the
semifinal at 16 & 6, while Brathwaite defeated
Nick Mintsiveris (CA), 16 & 14.

OVER 70 SINGLES
Grady Gordon of Waco (“We Ain’t Coming Out”
as Gordon put it) Texas won the Over 70’s for the
second straight nationals, to go with winning Over
70 at three straight U.S. Opens. He defeated Leon
Ruderman of California in the final, 19, 9. Gor-
don said that he really wants to play George
Hendry, 78, the last title-holder in this event that
wasn’t Gordon. Gordon lost to Hendry 24-22 in
the third in the finals in 1997, but Hendry hasn’t
competed since. Look for the profile of Gordon
in the March/April issue of USA Table Tennis
Magazine entitled, “Chasing George Hendry.”

OVER 75 SINGLES
Frank Dwelly (MA) defeated Fred Borges (CA) in
the final, at 16 & 16, to add to his list of previous
age championships. Dwelly had defeated just-in-
ducted Table Tennis Hall of Famer Dr. Michael Scott
(WA) in the semifinals, at 15 & 14, while Borges
received a default from Harry Deschamps (IN).

OVER 80 SINGLES
Top-seeded Arthur Chase of Texas defeated sec-
ond-seeded Henry Rubin of Florida in another
nail-biting final, 21, 20.

OVER 40 DOUBLES
Cheng Yinghua (MD) and Dave Sakai (MD)
easily outdistanced the competition for $100 each
without coming close to losing a game—most
scored against them was 15. In the final, they
defeated Barry Dattel (NJ) and Masaru Hashimoto
(CA), 9, 14. With Sakai playing his steady
countering, pushing and blocking game, Cheng,
the top seed in the tournament, was able to
dominate the rallies almost at will.

OVER 50 DOUBLES
George Brathwaite (NY) and Dave Sakai (MD)
had an unexpected struggle in the final against
Joe Cummings (TX) and Nick Mintsiveris (CA),
but won out, 21, -19, 13.

OVER 60 DOUBLES
Over 60 doubles was the first championship event
to complete at the 1999 Nationals. Winning the
event was the top-seeded team of Richard Hicks
of Indiana and Nick Mintsiveris of California over
Jack “Buddy” Melamed and Grady Gordon of
Texas. Melamed and Gordon had upset the sec-
ond-seeded team of George Brathwaite and Marty
Reisman of New York in the semifinals, 21-12,
21-18. Mintsiveris and Hicks had defeated
Bohdan Dawidowicz of Colorado and Houshang
Bozorgzadeh of Iowa in the semifinals, 18, 12.

OVER 70 DOUBLES
Long-time USATT official and Tournament Chair-
man Y.C. Lee (CA), just inducted into the hall of

THURSDAY NIGHT HALL
OF FAME
BANQUET
Thursday night was the 17th Annual Hall of
Fame banquet—anybody who was anybody was there! Half the table
nis Hall of Fame (as well as numerous
soon-to-be-inducted ones) were there for
the inductions of Dr. Michael Scott (WA)
and Y.C. Lee (CA) (both as contributors
—no players were inducted this year, with
first-time ballotees Cheng Yinghua and
Attila Malek both voted down by a single
vote in their first year of eligibility). Also
awarded was the first annual Marcus
Matthews Lifetime Achievement Award
To Bobby Gusikoff (CA) —made espe-
cially apt by the appearance of Matthews,
the first U.S. National Champion in 1932
(then known as Marcus Schussheim).
More on the Hall of Fame Banquet and
the inductees in the next issue. You can
read profiles by Tim Boggan of most
members of the USA Table Tennis Hall
of Fame on the USATT web page at
www.usatt.org.

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We help schools get down to business.

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The ideal candidate has a minimum of 5 years of experience managing application development projects. The project manager will be responsible for the planning and management of the entire life cycle of the product development process. Familiarity with SQL and/or Visual Basic is helpful. Experience with accounting software is a definite plus. Required skills include: proficiency with Microsoft Access and Project 98, familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint, strong oral and written communication skills, and excellent teaming skills.

**Deployment Project Manager**
The ideal candidate has a minimum of 2 years of experience managing software deployments or similar projects. The project manager will be responsible for managing the entire deployment process which includes participating in product planning, requirement gathering, deployment task identification, scheduling and managing, and deployment implementation planning to ensure total client satisfaction. Required skills include: ability to work with detail, proficiency with Microsoft products including Windows (95/98 and/or NT), Microsoft Access and Project 98; familiarity with Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint, strong oral and written communication skills, and excellent teamwork skills. Familiarity with databases, including SQL, is a plus but not required.

**Deployment Software Engineer**
BS in Computer Science, MIS or Computer Engineering. At least 2 years experience in software development using SQL and data extraction/conversion tools. Experience with MS Visual Basic, InstallShield, and DOS batch files is a plus. Equivalent experience plus a 2-year degree or certification is acceptable. This position will create and maintain all software required to support the deployment of the company’s fund accounting package. This includes standardized programs that are reused with every deployment and custom-built programs that are specifically designed for each client. Responsibilities will include the design, implementation, and testing of reports, data imports/exports, installation programs, utility programs, and batch files.

**Senior Accounting Software Analyst**
Minimum 5-8 years accounting experience and a BS in Accounting or closely related field required. CPA certification and experience with various accounting software environments preferred, but not required. Applicants should have extensive experience in all aspects of accounting functions. Responsible for setting product direction for a national fund accounting product. Daily activities include interviewing end users, consultants, and experts to assist in developing detailed product functional specifications. Proficient in Microsoft Office products, specifically in Microsoft Excel. Clear and concise writing and communication skills required. Fund, governmental, or not-for-profit accounting experience a definite plus.

**Software Engineer/Programmer**
BS in Computer Science, MIS or Computer Engineering. At least 2-4 years experience in software development using MS Visual Basic and/or MS SQL Server. Equivalent experience plus a 2 year degree or certification is acceptable. Maintenance and repair of existing system modules through interaction with the Quality Assurance group. Implement functional and performance related enhancements to existing modules. Implement new system modules from Functional Specification and Internal Design documents. Responsible for implementation of reports, data imports/exports, utility programs, batch files and installation programs.

**Deployment Engineer**
Minimum 2 years experience deploying in an MS Windows NT Server - Windows 95/98 networked environment. Responsible for thorough and professional deployment of a client/server fund accounting system based on MS SQL Server 7.0. Strong customer service and organizational skills. Travel to customer sites required.

**Document Management Specialist**
Qualified candidate should have 2-3 years document lifecycle management experience. Clear, concise writing skills with attention to detail required. Working understanding of client-server software installations required. Governmental or not-for-profit accounting experience a definite plus. Job responsibilities include coordinating and performing document updates to reflect system changes, researching and recommending Document Management tools, setting Document Management project goals and managing the schedule.

Reply to:
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Apta Software’s advanced Windows-based design was a finalist for the coveted Microsoft Industry Solution Awards for Best Mid Market/Financial Management Technology Integration.
fame, teamed up with fellow-Californian Leon Ruderman to upset the top-seeded Texas team of Grady Gordon and Buddy Melamed. The Texans had already gotten another second in Over 60 Doubles (by upsetting the team of George Brathwaite and Marty Reisman on Wednesday in the semifinals).

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' SINGLES & DOUBLES
Top-seeded Keith Alban (FL) defeated second-seeded T.J. Beebe (GA) in the High School Boys' final, 9-14, 10. It was the third time the two would play in this tournament; the third time T.J. would get a game; and the third time Keith would win.


HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' SINGLES
Michelle Do (CA), seeded #1 by over 300 rating points, 2209 to second-seeded Stacy Schoenberg's 1880, defeated the New Yorker in the final at 8 & 12. Stacy had defeated Huikai Luu (FL) in the semifinals, 6 & 13. Michelle had a bye in the semifinals...because there were no other players, just the three of them in the event.

BOYS' JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SINGLES & DOUBLES
Mark Hazinski (IN) added still another notch to his tournament winnings, defeating Aurora Malek (CA) in the final, 15 & 17. Hazinski already had won Under 2400 and Under 2200. His rating of 2185 has now officially been launched into cyberspace, never to be seen again.

Hazinski added title #4 by winning Junior High School Doubles with Terrence Lee (CA), defeating Aurora Malek (CA) and Vadim Sherman (CA) in the final, 9 & 17.

GIRLS' JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SINGLES
Only top-seeded Jackie Lee's (CA) win over Whitney Ping (OR), 15 & 13, in the semifinals stopped an all-Ping final of Pong. In the final, Emily Ping (OR) defeated Jackie in a long battle, 18-19, 18. Emily had defeated Allison Seibel (CA) in the other semifinal, 10 & 16.

BOYS' PRIMARY SCHOOL SINGLES
Adam Hugh (NJ), already the Under 2100 winner and top seed here, won the final over John Leach (CO), at 8 & 12. Rated about 400 points higher than the next highest rated competitor in the event, Adam wasn't really pushed, although Jimmy Viet (CA) gave him a good second game in the semifinals before losing at 9 & 15. Leach, namesake of the 2-time world men's singles champion, had defeated Gordon Cochran (IN) in a well-contested semifinal, 8-20, 16.

GIRLS' PRIMARY SCHOOL SINGLES
Until the last game in the final, Laura Xiao (KS) was not challenged, with no one getting more than 14 points against her. After winning the first game in the final against Judy Hugh (NJ), Laura found herself down 17-16. Said Laura, "The first game was easy. But in the second game, she surprised me. I led all the way until she went up 17-16. My heart was beating too fast - I had to calm down. I scored the next two points to go up 18-17. Then I told myself to relax and just win the next three points, and I did." Laura scored the last five points to win the final at 10 & 17. "I was taught by my dad to treat all players like they were very good players, so I would play my best. So even when I played lower-rated players early on, I played them like they were 1700 players," said the 1489-rated Laura.

BOYS' ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SINGLES
Top-seeded Andrew Lin (FL) defeated Brian Lam (FL) in the final, 15-19, 14. Brian had upset third-seeded Anders Truelson (MN) in the quarterfinals by huge scores, and then upset second-seeded James Cole (SC) in the semifinals at 16, 10.

HARDBAT SINGLES
The Hardbat singles was, next to Men's Singles, the single most watched event in the tournament. There was so much excitement and specializing for this matches, that it's getting extra coverage.

The finals of hardbat singles featured one huge upset: chopper Steve Berger's win over Jeff Butler, 14-20, 16. Butler, who has retired from sponge play, was competing in the hardbat event only.

FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS
Friday night was "meeting night," with both an informal "Informational" Board meeting, and the Hardbat Committee meeting. There were numerous other meetings throughout the tournament as well - officials committee, umpires, tournament operations, regional tournament coordinators, staffing meetings, ratings committee, selection committee; and others that I probably was not aware of. Asiny Ibrahim ran a referee's seminar, and there was also a 1979 World Championships reunion meeting.

The Informational Board meeting was lightly attended, but a number of presentations were given. Board members attending were President Sheri Pittman, Executive Vice President Jing Wang, Vice President Tong Lee, as well as Executive Director Ben Nisbet.
Ty Hoff won his second straight U.S. National Hardbat Singles Championship to go with his U.S. Open Singles title.

Quarterfinals
Steve Berger (NY) d. Freddie Gabriel (CA), -20, 12, 18, 16. Freddie was the only “elite” junior playing in the tournament, and to many who have seen him play, was the pre-tournament favorite, along with Butler. However, as good as players like Gabriel and Butler were against attackers, where fast reflexes were key, they seemed to have more difficulty against a chopper like Berger – and so both were taken out of the event, to the relief of many.

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Derek May (GA) d. Dean Doyle (OR), 17, 4, 16. Derek, who plays hardbat regularly with Ty Hoff and others, was simply too strong for Dean, who is coming back after retiring in the mid-80s. Derek can still do a lot of things well, but he doesn’t do them as well as he used to, at least not yet. Many eyes are watching to see if he will regain the form he once had. Meanwhile, Derek showed the best balance of attack and defense in the tournament, equally comfortable attacking or chopping.

Ty Hoff (GA) d. Barry Dattel (NJ), 11, 17, 13. Ty’s two-winged steady attack was too much for Barry, who has a steady backhand, but not much power, and a suspect forehand. Barry can keep the ball going, but Ty could too, and he could put the ball away almost at will after a shot or two in most rallies. Barry recently made the switch from chopping to blocking, and seems better with his new style. Ty’s game, with a family contingent of about 10 people watching, began to play better and better – a hint of what was to come.

Brian Masters (MD) d. Lily Yip (NJ), 15, 18, 16. This match surprised a lot of people. Lily had made the finals of three straight national hardbat tournaments – the U.S. Nationals last year, and the U.S. Open and North American Championships this year. Brian, although steady, had not seemed a great threat in doubles, although he and Derek May had won the event. However, his steady blocking backhand and topspinning forehand worked wonders in this match, and like Berger’s “upsets” of Butler and Gabriel, led to sighs of relief from some of those still left in the event.

Semifinals
Derek May d. Steve Berger, 13, -15, 13, -18, 17. In a nutshell ... wow! This may have been the match of the tournament. Although Berger is primarily a chopper, while Derek usually plays about 50% offense, 50% defense. in this match the roles were somewhat reversed. Berger attacked more, but his attacks were not as strong or effective as Derek’s. However, although Derek could make unbelievable returns, his returns were generally not as strong as Berger’s, so Berger would continue to tee off on them, leading to spectacular rallies – especially since Berger, with a very slow...
1999 USA NATIONALS DISABLED EVENTS

By Sharon Brooks

Youth, side-by-side with the veterans, was the name of the game at this year's Nationals. With the Paralympics in sight, some of the younger set were hungry for a shot at the "big boys."

The first events of the tournament created the first evidence of these upsets. In class events, the most highly contested events were the Class 1 Men's (which was combined with Class 2 Men's) and Class 3 Men's events. In Class 1, a talented young newcomer, David Wagner, from Washington, in his first year of competition, shook up the field by coming in second to previous international medalist Brett Weymouth from Maine. This match, which went to three games, determined the first and second place finishes in this event. In Class 3 Men's Singles, Michael LoRusso, returning from over three years of "retirement" from the game, came back to win the event. Coming in second was, once again, the youth of the event. Tony Lara, who had a highly successful year at the World Championships in Paris, and at the Pan American Games in Mexico City, defeated James Hall, a recent regular on USA National teams. His later defeat of both LoRusso and Hall earned him a spot on the 2000 USA Paralympic Team headed for Sydney.

The Open Class events brought about only one surprise result. Men's and Women's combined Tetraplegic Open Singles, which brought together predominantly International level players, was the venue in which David Wagner finally made his mark. In this highly competitive field, David took the first place trophy and alerted us all to watch for him on USA National teams in the next millennium. The Finals of the Men's Wheelchair Open singles between Andre Scot (NJ) and Michael Dempsey (CA) was won by Scot in one of the more grueling matches of the tournament. The scores of 18, -28, and 15 tell all we need to know about the ferocity of this match-up.

For only the second time in five years, an under 19 (in disabled sport parlance-Junior Division) event was held. 13-year-old Michael Applegate (CA), in his first USATT event, defeated 14-year-old Josh George (VA) in this now annual event, at 14 & 16 blade, didn't smash as hard as Derek, and so took more shots to score. However, after half the tournament stopped to watch the match, it finally ended when, from 12-all in the fifth, Derek began to pull away, and went up 17-13 and finally 20-15. At that point, Berger went on an all-out forehand attack binge, and overpowered an atrbarriers chopping Derek two straight points, however, at 17-20, Berger served off the end, and the match was over.

Ty Hoff d. Brian Masters, 17, 13, 9. Ty plays hardbat full-time, while Brian was just trying it out, and it showed. Brian could keep the ball in play, but Ty attacked relentlessly, and although the rallies were often long and furious, Ty controlled play throughout. Brian, although still living in Maryland, is about to move to Georgia and join Ty, Derek & Pete May, and Xin Peng in their daily hardbat practices.

Final

Ty Hoff d. Derek May, 14, 15, 15. The scores do not tell the tale of this match between the two Augusta practice partners - Derek spent most of the match chopping, and he was bringing back Ty's best smashes (and hardbat loops!) over and over - but Ty rarely missed. Ty's attack was overpowering and unstoppable - Ty's many hours of practice with both Derek and Derek's father, Pete, both primarily choppers, showed. This is the second straight year that Ty has been National Hardbat Champion. He is also the U.S. Open Hardbat Champion.

HARD BAT DOUBLES

The top-seeded team of Derek May (GA) and Brian Masters (MD) defeated the defending champions, Ty Hoff (GA) and Larry Hodges (MD), in straight games in the final, 15, 10. While May and Masters cruised through the event, Hoff and Hodges came back from down match point in the semifinals against Steve Berger and 69-year-old legend Marty Reisman, 16, -16, 21. In the first game, Berger and Reisman led 14-11; in the third, they led 9-4 and 21-20. At 20-20, one of the longest, most spectacular points of the tournament took place, with Hoff and Hodges forced to the barriers lobbing over and over before losing the point and going down match point.

UNDER 2000 HARBAT SINGLES

Ralph Stadelman (NV) won the nail-biting match over Tim Boggs (NY), -15, 17, 21, but it was Boggs' action at 17-all in the third that will be remembered. Stadelman got an edge ball, and Boggs let out a loud cry of disgust. However, he simultaneously managed to make a reflex return of the ball. Stadelman returned the shot, but Boggs caught the ball, awarding the point to Stadelman for so distracting his opponent. For Boggs, it was the third nail-biter in a row. In the quarterfinals, he had defeated Allen McDermott (CO), 22, 15, 18; in the semifinals he had defeated Bernard Savitz (CA), -19, 21, 19. In the other semifinal, Stadelman had defeated Pete May, 18, 14.

UNDER 1400 HARBAT

Larry Garland (MI) came back from a bad first game to win the next two games easily in the final over Tim Wright (AZ), -12, 12, 9. This was the first hardbat rating event ever held in the U.S. Nationals. (There was also an Under 2000 event, but that wouldn't start until Thursday.) Larry & Tim - you made history!

UNDER 2400 SINGLES

14-year-old Mark Hazinski of Indiana, scowling down at his opponents from his imposing 6'1" frame, upset a long array of opponents to win the event with his powerful two-winged topspinning game. Seeded 16th in the event and rated just 2185, Hazinski upset seventh-seeded Avishy Schmidt of California in the eigthths, third-seeded
Barry Dattel of New Jersey in the quarters, second-seeded Peter Zajac of California in the semifinals, and sixth-seeded Lily Yip of New Jersey, a member of the USA National Team, in the final, 17, 11. Mark had led 9-3 in the third against Yip in a match at the North American Team Championships three weeks before, but had lost the match. According to Coach Dan Seemiller, Hazinski handled Yip’s serve better, and was able to mix up the speed and spin on his loop, looping steadily until he had the right one to loop at full power. He also used a sidespin forehand loop effectively. Top-seeded Rey Domingo, while he would win Over 50 Singles later on, went down in the quarterfinals to Maryland’s Richard Lee, 15, 19, 13, but Richard’s mind was perhaps on the six or seven 4-star tournaments (plus the teams) that he’ll be running in 2000, and went down easily to Lily in the semifinals.

**UNDER 2300 SINGLES**

After losing the Under 2400 final, Lily Yip of New Jersey came back to dominate the Under 2300 event, not losing a game in the event, and defeating Virginia Sung of New York in the final, 9, 11 in a classic match of pips-out penholder hitting (Yip) versus a chopper. The experienced Yip, however, rarely loses to defensive players, having played them regularly as a province team member in China.

**UNDER 2200 SINGLES**

Mark Hazinski … are we getting tired of hearing about this 14-year-old’s exploits? He’s already won Under 2400, defeated Brian Masters (MD), rated 2493 in men’s singles, and pushed Brian Pace (GA, 2545) to five games … and now here he is, in the Under 2200 event? (And later on, he’ll be winning two school events …) But his rating is legitimate. Just three weeks ago, he played in the Baltimore Teams, and since he was on my team, I can attest to the fact that although he showed signs of brilliance at times, overall he was a 2250 player at that time. A lot can happen in three weeks (especially when your coach is USA Men’s Coach Dan Seemiller), and Mark won the Under 2200’s without losing a game, defeating Shuja Jafar-Ali (CA) in the final at 15 & 15. Shuja had barely gotten by David Sakai (MD) in the semifinals, winning 18, -18, 19, while Hazinski had won out over Lee McCool (GA), 13 & 19, in an all-out power-looping duel.

**UNDER 2100 SINGLES**

11-year-old Adam Hugh (NJ), son of Lily Yip and Barry Dattel and already the #1 player under 12 in the U.S., won the event despite going in seeded #24 with a rating of 2028 (which shows you the depth of the event!). In more recent ratings (not used at the Nationals), he had already gone over 2100. He upheld that rating, winning the final over Randall Ly (WA), 17, -18, 16.

**UNDER 2000 SINGLES**

13-year-old Whitney Ping of Oregon, recently back from Taiwan where she’d played on the U.S. Junior Team, won the final over James Chan of California, 10, 14. All of Ping’s matches were relatively easy, except for her 18, -18, 18 win over Renjie Liu of California in the quarterfinals. She had upset top-seeded Ernest De Los Reyes in the eigthths, 18, 14. The fact that Reyes was top seeded with a 1998 rating, while Ping was seeded ninth with a 1976 rating shows the depth of this draw.

**UNDER 1900 SINGLES**

Seishi Onishi (CA) defeated Thangavelu Dhinaker (AZ) in the final at 15 & 17. Both finalists escaped deuce-in-the-third matches early on. Seishi defeated Mark Adelman (AZ) in the first round (16ths) at -19, 16, 25! Dhinaker had defeated 11-year-old Mikhail Kazantsev (CA) in the 8ths at 14, -23, 22!

**UNDER 1800 SINGLES**

Alex Vizelman (CO) defeated top-seeded Sam Ignazzitto (OR) in the final, -18, 11, 10. In the semifinal, Vizelman had defeated junior Allison Seibel (CA), 15, 18. (However, Seibel would get her rating event – see Under 1900 Women.)

**UNDER 1700 SINGLES**

16-year-old Yukio Kamizuru (IN) defeated hardbat player Jim Raymond in the final at 12 &
12. Said Yukio, a part of Dan Seemiller’s junior program in South Bend, Indiana, “I struggled in the semifinal – I didn’t fight well. In the final, I’m surprised how well I played against the hardbat.” Until the final, Jim hadn’t lost a game despite the “handicap” of using no sponge.

UNDER 1600 SINGLES
Simon Gendler (CA) defeated John Dart (CA) in the final, 11, 7. It probably was a great match – but they got out of there before our ace reporters could talk to them!

UNDER 1500 SINGLES
Bruce Liu (CA), who had already won Under 1300 (with a 1262 rating), started out “slow,” having to win three-gamers in the eightths (-10, 14, 16 over top-seeded Ly Hien Le), and in the quarters (-14, 13, 10 over Rodney Lock). But from the semifinals on, the event was his, as he defeated 10-year-old sensation Sergey Gutkin (CA) in one semifinals, 14 & 16, and Nazih Elhayek in the final, 10 & 19. Nazih had defeated Gary Alcares (CA) in the semifinals, 12 & 20.

UNDER 1400 SINGLES
Gary T. Alcares of California defeated Ly Hien Le of Oregon in the final, 16, -15, 20. In the quarterfinals, Le had defeated Kenton Keading of California after being down match point several times, -21, 27 (1), 14.

UNDER 1300 SINGLES
Bruce Liu (CA) won Under 1300 over Gordon Cochran (IN), 10, -8, 13. Bruce would soon show that his rating was how shall we put this, “out-of-date,” by winning the Under 1500 event as well. He had a number of three-game battles in both events, but won them all.

UNDER 1200 SINGLES
10-year-old Sergey Gutkin (CA), a student of Bill Lui and Avishy Schmidt, defeated Henry Han (CA) in the final, 16 & 16. Gutkin, who would be wealthy if his energy could be bottled and sold, attacked all-out throughout the match. Said Gutkin of the final, “I looped spinnny to set up the shot, then smashed.” Henry, who after a bye and two consecutive defaults, found himself in the semifinals against Lewis Chan, winning at 18 & 13. Gutkin had barely defeated Gene C. Pool (MI) in the semifinals, -19, 21, 6.

UNDER 1100 SINGLES
Gene C. Pool (MI), after losing so close in the Under 1200’s, mostly dominated the U1100’s, not losing a game. In the final, he won two straight close games against Levy Klots (CA), 19 & 18.

UNDER 1000 SINGLES
Minh Nguyen (CA) defeated Kevin Phung (CA) in the final, 19 & 15. Minh had upset top-seeded Joanne Miller (WA) in the semifinals, 19 & 11, while Kevin, after a 19, -17, 18 struggle in the first round with Jeff Seibel (CA), had coasted to the final.

UNDER 1900 WOMEN
Allison Seibel defeated Priscilla Uinel (CA) in the final, 16, 8.

OVER 40/UNDER 1600
David DeMay (WA) got stronger as the competition went on, and won the final over Jose Geronimo (CA) at 11 & 12. He’d had a relatively close 20 & 18 semifinal match against Scott Stidham (WA), who had taken out second-seeded Alex Bisso (MT) in the quarterfinals at 18 & 11.

UNDER 4200 DOUBLES
U.S. Team Member Lily Yip (NY) joined forces with New York junior girl’s star Stacy Schoenberg to defeat Masaru Hashimoto (CA) and John Schneider (CA) in the final, 21-18, 21-12, with both Yip and Schoenberg hitting or looping winners at will. In the semifinals, they had had a harder time, upsetting the top spinning team of George Brathwaite (NY) and Wally Green (NY), 21, 18.

UNDER 3700 DOUBLES
Texans John Dorn and Rick Mueller, seeded #1, escaped one close game after another to win the event. 19, 19 in the final over Dana Jeffries (CO) and Tullie Wofford (CO).

UNDER 3200 DOUBLES
Jesús Sanchez (CA) and Dennis Shapiro (CA), after pulling out early round struggles, romped through the last two rounds to win the event. In the final, they defeated Yukio Kamizuru (IN) and Andrew Cochran (IN), 15, 15. In the semifinals, they defeated Ramon Giron (CA) and Corazon Valenzuela (CA), 3, 13. However, it was their match back in the 8ths that was the key match, when they survived against the team of John Cerd (MI) and Joseph Cochran (IN), -19, 16, 24.

THE AFTERMATH
While everyone else goes home, the work goes on – it’ll take all day and all night, with hordes of workers, to take everything down and packed (and it took even longer to set up). The paperwork for the tournament needs to be done. For some ... the work has just begun. For 709 of us – five days of paradise.

MULTIPLE WINNERS AT THE U.S. OPEN

QUADRUPLE WINNERS: ★★★★
Mark Hazinski: Junior High School Boys’ Singles & Doubles, Under 2400, Under 2200

TRIPLE WINNERS: ★★★
Cheng Yinghua: Men’s Singles, Over 40 Men’s Singles & Doubles
Michelle Do: Women’s Doubles, Under 22 Women, High School Girls’ Singles
Gao Jun: Women’s Singles & Doubles, Mixed Doubles

DOUBLE WINNERS: ★★
David Zhuang: Men’s & Mixed Doubles
Keith Alban: Boys’ High School Singles & Doubles
Richard Hicks: Over 60 Singles & Doubles
Adam Hugh: Boys’ Primary School Singles, Under 2100

TERRELL LEE: High School and Junior High School Doubles
Bruce Liu: Under 1500, Under 1300
Dave Sakai: Over 40 and Over 50 Men’s Doubles

Lily Yip: Under 2300, Under 4200 Doubles

Photo by Mal Anderson 1999 ©

Patrick Gheorghe, 22-month-old son of USA Women’s Coach Doru ... in action at the Nationals!
**1999 USA Nationals Results**


**Under 2200 - Final:** Mark Hazinski d. Shuja Jalali, 15,15; SF: Hazinski d. Lee McCool, 13,19; Jalali d. Dave Sakai, 18,18.

**1999 USA Nationals Results**

**Men's Singles - Final:** Adam Hugh d. Randall Ly, 17,18,16; SF: Hugh d. George Fanger, 15,15; Ly d. Emily Ping, 21,11.

**Under 2000 - Final:** Whitney Ping d. James Chan, 10,14; SF: Ping d. Valentino Avergonzando, 15,20; Chan d. Kamaran Azimzadeh, 19.11,11.

**Under 1800 - Final:** Alex Vizelzam & Sam Ignazzito, 18,11,10; SF: Vizelzam & Allison Seibel, 15,18; Ignazzito d. Greg DiMarco, 16,16.

**Under 1700 - Final:** Yakko Komuzuri & Jim Raymond, 12,12; SF: Komuzuri & David DeMay, 14,11,17; Raymond & Ted Zelnik, 13,9.

**Under 1600 - Final:** Simon Geller d. John Dart, 11,7; SF: Geller d. Nazih Elhayek, 11,10; Dart d. Michael Amren, 17,11.

**Under 1500 - Final:** Bruce Liu d. Nazih Elhayek, 16,19; SF: Tik d. Sergey Gutkin, 14,16; Elhayek & Gary Alcares, 12,20.

**Under 1400 - Final:** Jacky Alcares & Ly Hien Le, 16,15,20; SF: Alcares & Gregory Turner, 17,10; Le d. Jerry Ciesielki, 16,11.

**Over 40 Men's Singles - Final:** Cheng Yinghua d. David Zhuang, 15,13; SF: Zhuang d. Garrett Fanger, 15,13; Zhuang d. Brian Pace, 15,13; Dong d. Adam Hughes, 15,16; Alban d. T.J. Beebe, 18,16,4.

**Under 22 Women's Singles - Final:** Michelle D. Lee d. Jackie Yinghua, 8,8,7; SF: Lee d. Emily Ping, 14,10; Lee d. Whitney Ping, 16,10; Yinghua d. Donnna Sakai, def.; Yip d. Emily Ping, 17,13; Lee d. Khoa Nguyen, 13,18; Lee d. Dong Yinghua, 15,15,15; SF: Dong d. Tawny Hanh, 14,6,11; Dong d. Dong Yinghua, 8,8,-18,13; Dong d. Lily Yip, 11,13; SF: Dong d. Lily Yip, 11,13.


**Over 50 Men's Doubles - Final:** Rey Domingo d. Steve Berger, 13,15,13.-18.11,10; SF: Berger d. Houshang Bozorgzadeh/Tim Boggan, 9,7, SF: Berger d. Houshang Bozorgzadeh/Tim Boggan, 9,7.

**Men's Doubles - Final:** George Brathwaite/Dave Sakai d. Joe Cummings/Nick Mintsiveris, 21,19,13; SF: Brathwaite/Sakai d. Hamid Hayat/Houshang Bozorgzadeh, 10,13; Cummings/Mintsiveris d. Richard Hicks/Bohdan Dawidowicz, 16,11.

**Over 60 Doubles - Final:** Richard Hicks/Nick Mintsiveris d. Grady Gordon/Jack Melemal, 15,13; SF: Hicks/Mintsiveris d. Bohdan Dawidowicz/Houshang Bozorgzadeh, 18,12; Gordon/Melamed d. George Brathwaite/Marty Reisman, 12,12.


**Under 22 Women's Singles - Final:** Michelle D. Lee d. Jackie Yinghua, 18,15,6; SF: Do. Stacey Schoenberg, 10,14; Lee d. Whitney Ping, 16,18.

**Boys' High School Singles - Final:** Keith Alban d. Tawny Hanh, 14,16; SF: Alban d. Terence Lee, 14,16; Beebe d. John Beaumont, 10,16.

**Girls' High School Singles - Final:** Michelle D. Lee d. Stacey Schoenberg, 12,12; SF: Beebe d. Houshang Bozorgzadeh, 16,13,16; SF: Beebe d. Houshang Bozorgzadeh, 16,13,16.

**Boys' Junior High School Singles - Final:** Mark Hazinski d. Aura Malek, 15,17; SF: Hazinski d. Vadim Sherman, 14,10; Malek d. Vincent Cheng, 18,8.

**Girls' Junior High School Singles - Final:** Emily Ping d. Jackie Lee, 18,-19,18; SF: E. Ping d. Allison Seibel, 10,16; Lee d. Whitney Ping, 15,13.

**Boys' Junior High School Doubles - Final:** Mark Dhinaker d. Andrew Y. Liu, 11,12; SF: Dhinaker d. Andrew Y. Liu, 11,12; SF: Dhinaker d. Andrew Y. Liu, 11,12.

**Girls' Junior High School Doubles - Final:** Laura Xiao d. Judy Hughes, 10,17; SF: Xiao d. Atha Fang, 14,11; Hughes d. Diana Yin, 21,16.

**Boys' Elementary School Singles - Final:** Andrew Lin d. Brian Lam, 15,19,14; SF: Lin d. Tony Tittrad, 18,-16,7; Lam d. James Cole, 16,10.

**Boys' High School Doubles - Final:** Keith Alban/ Terrence Lee d. Clement Chan/Kar Ho, 10,18.

**Junior Wheelchair Singles - Classes 1-5: Ist Michael Appelgate: 2nd Joshua George.**

**Men's Class Singles - Classes 7-9: Ist Joshua Dempsey; 2nd Mike Dempsey; 3rd Tony Lara.**

**Men's Class Singles - Classes 4-5: Ist Mike Bomgarden; 2nd Andre Scott; 3rd Charles Foth.**

**Men's Class Singles - Classes 7-9: Ist Joshua Bartel; 2nd Norman Bass; 3rd Les Sayre.**

**Men's Class Singles - Classes 1-2: 1st Brett Weymouth; 2nd David Wagner; 3rd Raul Fernades.**

**Men's Class Singles - Classes 1-2: 1st Jackie Dilorenzo; 2nd Ruth Rosenbaum; 3rd Janet Swert.**

**Men's Class Singles - Classes 3-5: 1st Jennifer Johnson; 2nd Terese Terranova; 3rd Caroline Bottka.**

**Men's Class Singles - Classes 3-5: 1st Andre Scott; 2nd Mike Dempsey; 3rd Tony Lara.**

**Junior Wheelchair Singles - Classes 1-5: 1st Michael Appelgate; 2nd Joshua George.**

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2000
TOP MEN
OR 2843 Fan, Yi Yong
MD 2745 Cheng, Yinghua
NJ 2703 Zhuang, David
MD 2640 Sweeris, Todd
CA 2636 Nguyen, Khoa
NY 2606 Musa, Atanda
TX 2602 Owens, Eric
NY 2549 Boggan, Eric
MD 2546 Li, Sunny
GA 2536 Hyatt, Michael
TN 2536 Reed, Barney J.
FL 2534 Pace, Brian
NY 2531 Ekun, Abass
MD 2524 Huang, Jack
NY 2510 Shao, Yu
NY 2505 Fernandez, David
GA 2505 Jagwani, Mukesh
FL 2504 Alban, Keith
IN 2498 Seemiller, Daniel
MD 2488 Lonergan, Sean
IN 2478 Chui, Chi-Sun
CA 2477 Huang, Yao Xi
CA 2474 Shodhan, Shashin
MD 2473 Masters, Brian
FL 2466 Cohen, Randy
CA 2457 Gabriel, Freddie
IL 2446 Shiu, Arturo Pang
NY 2438 Liu, Hui Yuan
GA 2436 Peng, Xin
MI 2432 Ogundimu, Gbenga

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TOURNAMENTS INCLUDED IN RATINGS
10/10 Chinese One Day RR
14th Annual Bernard Beck Open
Colorado Springs Open
Concord Cup Youth Tournament
1999 Huntsman World Senior Games
Sac-Rec October Open
T-Tonics Classics
Three Rivers TTC Fall Tournament
Tri-City Fall RR
MTTC October Open
October: Augusta Open
Syracuse "2-Player" Team Challenge
Vermont October Open Giant RR

TOURNAMENTS PROCESSED - This list was compiled on 1/7/00 and includes all tournaments played through 12/31/99 except the Davison December Open. Due to space limitations only current members who have played in a tournament since 10/15/99 are included. This document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2000.

All ratings-related questions should be directed to Fran Boardman, USATT Headquarters, One Olym-
pic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. To find out your rating, send a self-addressed, stamped postcard with your name and the date of your last tournament. You may also contact us at 719-578-4583 or by e-mail at USATT3@iex.net.

The Paddle Palace Presents
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US ATT NATIONAL RATINGS

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2000
Laura Xiao of Kansas, U.S. Primary School Girl's Champion and #1 ranked Under 12 Girl.
NATIONAL RATINGS LIST

(In Alphabetical Order by Last Name)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Năstase</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1945-02-29</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Serbolić</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1945-01-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kei Nishikori</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1990-01-24</td>
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<td>Dominik Hrbatý</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1991-01-22</td>
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<td>Alejandro Falla</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>Piotr Bogomolny</td>
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<td>Elbut Borna</td>
<td>1400</td>
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<td>1991-02-22</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Džumhur Damir</td>
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<td>Macedonia</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Andrew Whittington</td>
<td>1400</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nenad Zimonjić</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1993-01-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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February 12 - Maryland January Circuit Teams, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 908-654-9009. **


March 4-5 - Harlingen RR Open, Harlingen, TX. Contact: Bob Salmeron, 1909 W. Harrison St., Harlingen, TX 78550. Phone: 956-428-2002. ★

March 11 - Atlantic Giant RR, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Wendell Dillon, 662 Dorsey Cir., Libbun, GA 30047. Phone: 404-639-3351. ★


March 12 - Olderati Atlanta Closed, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Wendell Dillon, 662 Dorsey Cir., Libbun, GA 30047. Phone: 404-639-3351. ★

March 17-19 - Buckeye Open, Columbus, OH. Contact: Slaback, 697 Waxing Ct., Westville, OH 43082-1024, 614-899-1415. ★★★


March 25 - March Madness Canton Open, Canton, OH. Contact: Terri Weaver, 307 Carrolldale SE, Canton, OH 44707. Phone: 330-929-1901. ★


April 2-3 - Colorado River Open, Parker, AZ. Contact: John Ballard, 1275 Bombay Ln., Lake Havasu City, AZ 86404. Phone: 520-453-8638. ★

April 1-2 - MDTTC April Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 18761-Q Frederick Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20879. Phone: 202-972-1958. ★


April 8-9 - Maryland April Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.

April 15-16 - Tri-City Open Spring Double RR, Richland, WA. Contact: Kirby Parker, 2304 Snohomish Ave., Richland, WA 99352. Phone: 509-375-1587. svfrorx@owt.com ★★


April 28-30 - Butterfly Open/North American Tour, Raleigh, NC. Contact: Richard Lee, P.O. Box 59451, Potomac, MD 20859-9451. Phone: 410-366-6547, natour@itsuperstore.com. ★★★

April 29 - Maryland April Circuit Teams, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.


May 12-14 - Eastern on the North American Tour, Towson, MD. Contact: Richard Lee, P.O. Box 59451, Potomac, MD 20859-9451. Phone: 410-366-6547, natour@itsuperstore.com. ★★★


May 27-28 - St. Joseph Valley Open, South Bend, IN. Contact: Dan Seemiller, P.O. Box 608, New Carlisle, IN 46552, 219-654-7476. ★

May 27-28 - Golden State Open, Walnut Creek, CA. Contact: Phil Shafer, 3904 Bellwood Dr., Concord, CA 94519. Phone: 925-689-7463. philip.shafer@micworld.com. ★


June 17-18 - MDTTC June Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 18761-Q Frederick Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20879. Phone: 202-972-1958. ★


June 24 - Maryland June Circuit Teams, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.

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• Former Chinese National Team Member
• 1985 & 93 U.S. Open Champion
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• Full-time coach

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Signature (Parent/Guardian if under 18)_________________________ Amount enclosed $________
From Nov. 13-19, three delegates from every qualified Olympic sport met in Bankstown (a suburb of Sydney) to prepare for the 2000 Games. Attending for table tennis was Bob Fox (Team Leader), Margaret Smith (NGB Administrator), and myself (Men's Team Coach). You may wonder why we had to go all the way down under for the seminar but I can tell you we all agreed when it was over that it was vital for our preparation. The Olympics, as you can imagine, are enormous and so much information is needed so we can plan and avoid problems.

Saturday, November 13, we three met at Los Angeles International Airport for the 14-hour flight to Sydney. Because of the international date-line we arrived at 7:20 a.m. on Monday, November 15th. Despite being exhausted we had a couple of hours to freshen up and then we were on a bus tour of the Olympic Park and most of the venues. We were impressed. Nearly every venue was finished and the proximity of the housing and the venues (including ours) were only minutes away. The Olympic Park is located in Homebush Bay. We also visited the U.S. High Performance Center. This is a large warehouse that the U.S. Olympic Committee has rented for the games and is to be used by coaches and athletes. There will be strength, conditioning and stretching equipment, extra massage tables and extensive video access. Boxing will also have a set-up there. Because the games are so spread out, this facility will be in a central location, easily accessible to coaches and athletes participating in the games.

Next we went downtown to the convention center where several of the events will be held. We also stopped to see the famous Sydney Opera House and the beautiful bridges that traverse the bay.

Back at the hotel, and the only thing I could think about was hitting that bed (I don’t sleep much on planes), but we couldn’t, as dinner and a three-hour introductory meeting followed. We met our colleagues from the other sports, and USOC directors Greg Harney, Sandy Baldwin, and Doug Ingram welcomed us and gave us a brief outline for the week. Sleep never felt so good.

November 16th, Tuesday: We convened at 9:00 a.m. for four hours where the following topics were discussed for about 15 minutes each: Games Prep. & Services, Accreditation, Team Processing, Transportation, Sports & Venues, Village Operations, Security, High Performance Center, AAC/Code of Conduct, Medical Services, Drug Control, Grant Programs and AT&T Family Programs. I won’t go into details but each subject was interesting and Bob & Margaret continued with their administration process and fact-finding seminar. These coaching sessions were superb. I collected many valuable pieces of information. That afternoon we mostly discussed “What went well in Atlanta and what didn’t work.” The USOC had hired a research firm to contact all the coaches after the games and now the current Olympic coaches were reviewing the findings. We had great interaction and all of us retained several good ideas and plans for Sydney. That evening we attended a fine banquet at the Dockside with the Sydney Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG).

On Wednesday, Bob and I were up at 5:30 a.m. We walked several miles before breakfast. Today we will do site visits to the Olympic Village, Stadium and the State Sports Center where Table Tennis will be played. The first stop of the day is the Olympic Village and the housing – we walked through two homes – one for 16 athletes, one for 22 athletes and Bob said this is the best he’s seen and this is his third Olympics as Team Leader. The two-story homes are all new, and the whole village will be sold and the owners will move in after the games. Next we tour the incredible 115,000-seat Olympic Stadium. Two words describe this venue: Awesome and Spectacular. Standing on the infield just imagining what it would be like to win an event before 115,000 people brought tears to my eyes. We then had lunch on the Promenade deck and met with the table tennis venue manager, Neil Harwood.

I’ve known Neil for years and he is a funny guy. He had us laughing all day. As we found out most of the week, Australians have a great sense of humor. After lunch we walked over to the State Sports Centre – believe it or not, it’s the only venue in Olympic Park (there are 13 of them) that’s not new. Just like table tennis, huh. No respect. The good news is I thought the venue has character and the playing hall is ideal. So, maybe it’s not new, just like table tennis, huh.

On Thursday, Bob and Margaret went upstairs where round table discussions were being held. They had to visit every table (I think 15 of them) and get squared away with each category. This was also the time to make requests for specific needs for our group. I was downstairs in coaching workshops all day from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. You can just imagine the dialogue that went on among 27 head coaches, many with several Olympics under their belts. I sooked it all in. Some of our topics were: “To be an excellent Olympic coach I will...” We also broke up into groups of 5 or 6 and discussed various issues. In my first group we were to ask the group one specific problem that we would like addressed. When my turn came up my topic was: Confidence. Our players tend to be timid and lack confidence against the higher world-ranked players, how can we get them to believe they can do it. A couple of coaches suggested showing them videos of past Olympians who surprised everyone to win the gold. Another said to set smaller goals like winning their group. Another said to make sure they’re motivated and believe they can do it.

After lunch our coaching meetings started and Bob & Margaret continued with their administration process and fact-finding seminar. These coaching sessions were superb. I collected many valuable pieces of information. That afternoon we mostly discussed “What went well in Atlanta and what didn’t work.” The USOC had hired a research firm to contact all the coaches after the games and now the current Olympic coaches were reviewing the findings. We had great interaction and all of us retained several good ideas and plans for Sydney. That evening we attended a fine banquet at the Dockside with the Sydney Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG).

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Thursday evening we were invited to a farewell banquet by the city of Bankstown. The entertainment was a children’s group and they were superb!

Friday: One more coaches meeting, and back to the USA. Right now the seat belt sign is on and we’re having a bumpy ride over the Pacific. In closing, we learned a lot and know what to expect next September. Thank you, USOC and Bankstown!
ANAHEIM TABLE TENNIS GROUP

By John Vos

"We get many inquiries because of the USATT website," says Fritz Baresel of the Anaheim, California Table Tennis Group. "It is our best recruiting tool."

The ATTG organized as a group around 1980 and now boasts 50 members. Play takes place within the Phoenix Club complex at 1340 South Sanderson Avenue in Anaheim, 714-563-4166, on Monday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to noon, on one Joola and five Stiga tables. Of the 50 players, 15 are USATT members, with Joe Tran (around 2000) the highest rated.

The ATTG is an integral part of the larger Phoenix Club, using the Garden Pavilion as the playing area. On special occasions, ATTG members help the Phoenix Club, such as selling food and drinks at the Oktoberfest. There are only a few youngsters now playing regularly at ATTG, but Fritz Baresel hopes that this will change in the future.

Those interested in playing at ATTG can call Fritz Baresel at 714-637-6587 or e-mail him at fritzbaresel@earthlink.net.

DELL & CONNIE SWEERIS MAKE SPORTS ILLUSTRATED’S TOP 50 LIST

Only Table Tennis Players To Make List Of 2500 Top Athletes!

Sports Illustrated recently did a special issue that ranked the top 50 “Sports Figures” from every state. 50 states, 50 sports figures, that’s 2500 total. (They left out Washington D.C.) 49 states didn’t have a single person from table tennis on their list. Michigan ranked USA Table Tennis Hall of Famers Dell & Connie Sweeris as a joint “sports figure,” ranking them 45th in Michigan. This put them just behind Jerome Bettis from the NFL, two spots behind Jim Kaat from baseball (283 major league wins), and ahead of Gene Lipscomb, Terry McDermott, Kathy Arendsen, Wally Pip and Gerald Ford (former Michigan lineman and 38th U.S. president).

Connie, the 1971 U.S. Women’s Singles Champion, was U.S. Women’s Doubles Champion three times. Dell was U.S. Men’s Doubles Champion three times. Together, they won Mixed Doubles four times. Both were long-time members of the U.S. National Team, and were on U.S. teams in the 1971-72 Ping Pong Diplomacy years. (Their son, Todd Sweeris, is also on the U.S. National Team and was on the 1996 Olympic Team.)

We're an Olympic sport, and we only got one out of 2500? Seven horses made the list; Dick Miles, D.J. Lee, Dan Seemiller, Sean O’Neill, Jim Butler, Marty Reisman, Jimmy McClure, Sol Schiff, Erwin Klein, Insook Bhushan, Leah Neuberger, Sally Green, Ruth Aarons, etc., etc., did not. -Larry Hodges

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Since 1994, when she retired from the Chinese Women's National Team and came to the U.S., Gao Jun has won numerous titles in U.S. and North American competitions. Now, at age 30, Gao is still the strongest female player in the U.S., and represents the best hope for the first Olympic medal in U.S. table tennis history.

USATTM: What are your competitive plans for the future?
Gao: Well, of course sometimes I think about the opportunities I might have missed. I have always been very driven as an athlete. Sometimes I think I might have missed a chance to win a Gold Medal in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. But one has to make certain decisions at certain points in time. I love my husband, and family is the most important thing to me. Although sometimes I am nostalgic about my life as a professional athlete, I think I have adjusted to life in the U.S. quite well.

USATTM: At what age did you make the Chinese National Team?
Gao: I entered the Chinese National Team when I was 16.

USATTM: How did you get started in table tennis? At what age?
Gao: I started playing table tennis when I was five. My father was a table tennis fan, so he sent me to one of the best athletic schools in China. I really thank my father for this. Without him, I wouldn't have had my table tennis career. In China, athletic schools are special schools for training future professional athletes. Students in our school majored in different fields, including table tennis, gymnastics, and martial arts. Our school was a boarding school. Every day, after academic classes, we would train for several hours. My first lesson in table tennis was to learn how to use my paddle to bounce the ball against the wall without letting the ball drop. It was a great exercise for steadiness and control. After that, we went on to tables to play, and older students would practice with younger students. Later on, we began competing with other athletic schools in the same province.

USATTM: At what age did you make the Chinese National Team?
Gao: I entered the Chinese National Team when I was 16.

USATTM: When did you become a full-time player?
Gao: I was in the athletic school until age 11, when I was chosen to be a member of the Hebei Province Team. Because I was so young at that time, and because the Hebei Team was one of the top teams in China, I didn't get many chances to play national tournaments initially. However, I was playing very well and very consistent in national junior competitions. Nine out of ten times, I would claim the title.

USATTM: How did the Chinese National Team select its members?
Gao: China has a very comprehensive system. The selection starts at the grassroots level. Athletic schools go to elementary schools and junior high schools to select students. Province Teams select members from the best players in athletic schools. And the National Team selects new members, usually when they are still young, from the best players on Province Teams.

USATTM: When and why did you come to the U.S.? Did you decide to retire from table tennis when you came?
Gao: I came to the U.S. in January 1994, when I married my husband, Frank Chang. At that time, I was at the peak of my table tennis career. I understood that if I left China, I would say good-by to my life as a professional athlete.

USATTM: Do you regret your decision?
Gao: No, I do not. I love my husband, and family is the most important thing to me. Although sometimes I am nostalgic about my life as a professional athlete, I think I have adjusted to life in the U.S. quite well.

USATTM: Who do you practice with? How often? Where?
Gao: Currently, I don't have regular practice partners. Before tournaments, I practice with Todd Sweeris, Sean Lonergan or Sunny Li at the Potomac Country Table Tennis Club or Maryland Table Tennis Center.

USATTM: How would you describe your playing style, and what are your strengths and weaknesses?
Gao: I block with my backhand, and attack with my forehand. I don't really have any particular strengths or weaknesses.

USATTM: Some players say that your best weapon is placement. Do you agree?
Gao: I do pay special attention to placement, especially when I play male players, because I cannot rely on my power or speed to win points. I have to use my strengths to cover my weaknesses in order to win.

USATTM: What are your competitive plans for the future?
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lot of fun. Because team members spent almost every waking moment together, we really became very close. I miss a lot of my good friends there.

USATTM: What was the practice schedule and training like for the Chinese National Team? GAO: The schedule was almost like a full-time job here in the U.S. Usually, training began at 8:30 in the morning, and ended at around 6 p.m.—with a lunch break, of course. Many players, including myself, put in additional hours in the evening. Among us, Deng Yaping trained the hardest. She always put in the longest hours. That explains why she is so good.

USATTM: How many of your teammates are still actively competing? GAO: Although we are all retired from the Chinese National Team, almost all of us are still actively competing. For example, Chen Jing [former Chinese team member] is on the Taiwan National Team. Of course, most of us are now married, and have other jobs besides table tennis.

USATTM: What was the most memorable event that has happened to you in table tennis? GAO: I played tournaments around the world for many years, and interesting stories happened almost everywhere. But my most memorable time was when Chen Zhie and I defeated Deng Yaping and Qiao Hong in the 1991 World Championships. That was quite exciting, because we had never defeated Deng Yaping and Qiao Hong before.

USATTM: In your opinion, why is table tennis in the U.S. still not able to reach the world-class level? GAO: I think the U.S. needs a system that encourages and rewards youngsters who participate in table tennis. For instance, in China, youngsters who play well are honored, and there are a lot of incentives to play table tennis. I’m sure there are plenty of talented players in the U.S. We just have to give them enough incentive. Second, we need to give young players more chances to succeed. Let them play in important tournaments, and let them get more tournament experience. Some players may not play well in national tournaments, but they might really shine in international tournaments. We need to give them a chance and let them try. Third, we need to let people know that playing table tennis does not mean giving up academic studies. On the contrary, kids learn much more than table tennis from playing the sport. They learn to excel; they learn how to deal with wins and losses; they also learn how to keep calm under adverse circumstances. These skills better prepare them for life. Look at Todd Sweeris—he is an Olympian, and also a CPA. If we have more kids participating in table tennis, we would have a stronger team.

USATTM: Are you doing any coaching now? GAO: Not really. But I look forward to being the coach for the U.S. Junior’s Team. I realize that a good player does not naturally become a good coach, so I have a lot to learn.

USATTM: Are you interested in becoming the coach for the U.S. National Team? GAO: No. What I’d really like to do is to coach juniors and watch them grow.

USATTM: Any thoughts on how to make table tennis a popular sport in the U.S.?
Gao with husband, Frank Chang.

GAO: I don’t think table tennis is not popular in the U.S. right now. Many Americans have tables in their homes. The problem is, most Americans don’t consider table tennis a sport. They consider table tennis a form of basement entertainment. If we want people to get serious about table tennis, we must first begin a serious education campaign. Look at soccer. The American Women’s Soccer Team reached world-class level in a matter of just a few years. And now soccer has become a really popular sport in the U.S. Why can’t we do that for table tennis?

USATTM: You were a world champion, and were ranked #3 in the world in 1995-96. What’s your secret? Can you share with our readers?

GAO: I have three words to share with everybody: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. That’s my secret. That’s the secret for all the top players in the world. Let me elaborate on this a little bit. There are three elements a person needs in order to be successful in sports: diligence, talent, and opportunities. Diligence is the most important. I’m not talking about simple diligence here. I’m talking about diligence with motivation. You need to use your body, and your brain, in practice. When I was competing for the Chinese National Team, I had little notebooks that I brought along every time I went. I would review my notes on other players’ styles before I played them. I’ve always treated each match very seriously, and I don’t make the same mistake twice.

USATTM: Besides practice, are there any shortcuts?

GAO: Definitely no shortcuts. Table tennis requires a lot of practice. It’s not a sport that you can simply rely on power and speed to win. You need a lot of control, strategies and skillful touches, too.

USATTM: How can one become a good table tennis player? What should one watch for in his/her training?

GAO: First of all, you need to spend a lot of time practicing. As I said, there is no shortcut. Secondly, you should never give up. Imprint that in your head — never, ever, give up! Be cool, and fight for every point. It’s not over till 21. Thirdly, you must pay attention to basic training. It might be repetitive and boring sometimes, but it’s critical. You have to learn how to walk first before you can run. Don’t envy those fancy shots. They will come naturally to you after you master the basic skills.

USATTM: You helped run the Potomac Open on November 20-21. Was that the first time for me. Now I understand how complicated it is to run a tournament. If time permits, I hope I’ll have more chances in the future to be involved in running tournaments.

USATTM: Tell us about your family.

GAO: My husband, Frank Chang, is a computer programmer, and a table tennis fan. We live in Gaithersburg, Maryland. My parents are both in China. I have a younger sister who just graduated from college in China. She doesn’t play table tennis, though.

USATTM: What are your non-table tennis interests? Any hobbies?

GAO: I like reading, watching movies, watching TV, and singing. Of course, I like shopping, too. Hey, who doesn’t?

USATTM: You have a full-time job now — tell us about it.

GAO: I work for a satellite communications company in Germantown, Maryland. I really like my job, because it allows me to learn new skills. For example, I had never used a computer when I was in China. Now I am proficient in PC and the Internet. My boss is a very nice person. He really supports my table tennis career, and always makes special arrangements in terms of work schedules so I can play in tournaments.

USATTM: Thank you so much for accepting our interview. We wish you the best in everything you do.

GAO: Thank you. It’s my pleasure.

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As I crane my neck upward while talking to the towering figure of the U.S. Nationals Under 2400 Champion, while observing his coach in the background – 5-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion Dan Seemiller, now the USA Men’s Coach, barely standing to this guy’s shoulders – I remember joking with players on my team at the North America Teams about the players in the first division – they were big, strong, powerful players, much like the guy I’m interviewing. Of course, most of them shave and are past braces.

South Bend, Indiana’s Mark Hazinski is also past braces (at least I didn’t see any), but I doubt if he needs to shave. He’s 14, he’s 6’1”, and (besides Under 2400) he’s also the U.S. Nationals Boys’ Junior High School Singles Champion. And the Doubles Champion. And Under 2200 Champion. In Men’s Singles, he had a win over 2493-rated Brian Masters, and he went five games with Brian Pace (2545) in the 8ths (where he led 2-1 in games).

Did I mention his rating was only 2185?

Going into the tournament, he was actually rated about 2240 in more up-to-date ratings … but 2240 players generally lose around the second round of Under 2400, and spend most of their time chasing balls when playing power-looper Brian Pace. But most players don’t train nearly full-time in hopes of making the 2004 Olympics. (We’re not going to even THINK about the 2000 Olympic Trials coming up in a couple of months … are we?)

Mark started playing at a school club when he was 8 years old. One day, he heard about a tournament, and showed up. There was an offer of a free lesson with Coach Viktor Tolkachev, and Mark signed up – and joined Viktor’s South Bend training program.

Later on, Viktor went back to his home country of Latvia, and Dan Seemiller was hired as the South Bend coach three years ago, and took over the training of then 11-year-old Mark. There are five Varsity training sessions each week in the South Bend club (as well as Junior Varsity and Cadet training), where Mark practices with Dan, Randy Hewitt, Nate Troyer and others. Dan’s assistant coaches, Paul George and Barry Chan, also help by feeding Mark and the others multiball. Few players have the advantage of working regularly with an elite coach such as Coach Seemiller, and the results are starting to show up. Mark has improved to the point where he is now sponsored by Butterfly.

Mark is a two-winged looper, with an emphasis on power on the forehand, control on the backhand. He says he doesn’t really have a short-term goal – just the long-term goal of making the 2004 Olympics, when he’ll be 19. He also has the backup plan of making the Olympics in 2008 when he’s 23, but he’d prefer to use that year to become a two-time Olympian.

To help accommodate his training and tournament schedule, Mark (like Keith Alban, and previously Barney J. Reed and Dave Fernandez) takes home school, where he is helped by his mom and by numerous school-type movies. Home school is daily from 10-3. He likes math (he is currently into algebra).

What does the future see for this up-and-coming player, who just a few weeks before was just another 2200 player trying to break into the big leagues? I don’t know – but I’m sure that from his vantage point, Mark will see his way.
Michelle, 16, pulled off quite a treasure heist at the Nationals, winning Under 22 Women’s Singles and High School Girl’s Singles. Was that enough, sweeping the girls’ events? Nooooo! She then teamed with Gao Jun to win Women’s Doubles over Tawny Banh and Lily Yip, and then made it to the quarters of Women’s Singles, where she would be the only one to get a game against Gao in singles in the past four Nationals!

Michelle’s brother, Andrew, got her started in table tennis in 1992 when she was nine. She’s been practicing and improving ever since, with Dennis Davis and Roger Nguyen her major coaches, mostly at the Palo Alto club in California. She practices 4-5 times/week, with numerous practice partners — either with her coaches, or with players such as Khoa Nguyen, Shashin Shahid, Kevin Au, Jackie Lee or Steve Nguyen. The training has paid off, leading to her making the USA National Team as the “coaches pick” at the last world championships. She is currently rated 2188, and sponsored by Butterfly.

The Women’s Doubles final was something of a breakthrough. Besides being her first major non-junior national championship (she has many national junior titles), she was able to hold her own at the table against such formidable opponents as Tawny Banh and Lily Yip. True, having Gao as a partner was a huge advantage — or should we say an overwhelming advantage? — but the experience can only help her progress.

Sweeping Under 22 Women’s Singles and High School Girls’ Singles were simply “expected” — she was the top seed. Only arch-rival (at the table) Jackie Lee got a game off her, in the Under 22 final, with Michelle coming back strong to win, 18, 15, 6.

Michelle also got a lot of experience in the recent USA Table Tennis sponsored trip to Taiwan. She was most proud of defeating one of the “good” Taiwan girls. She also got to know USA Junior Coach Gao Jun, which helped lead to Gao asking her to play doubles at the Nationals.

She plays a very aggressive forehand looping, backhand hitting game. She can also spin with her backhand. She can play both a strong looping game or a more at the table hitting/counter-hitting game, when needed.

She “admits” that she does like school, with math her favorite subject. She is an 11th grader at a private school – Notre Dame High School (in her hometown, Milpitas, California, not its namesake in Indiana). When she graduates, she hopes to go to Stanford University, where she wants to study to be a pediatrician. She said that even if she goes to college, she will continue with her table tennis.

At first, she claimed that school and table tennis were all she did. But when pressed, she admitted she liked going out with friends, shopping, seeing movies, reading and playing piano. But she’s obviously the driven type, putting in long hours, which is the cost for excellence, whether in sports or school. The cost for excellence in both at the same time can be prohibitive in terms of work.

Besides going to Stanford, she hopes to make the 2004 Olympic team — and maybe someday be the best pediatrician table tennis player in the world! So far, she has been able to balance school and table tennis, and is right on track for both of her goals.

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