Chicago Ping Pong Festival
Aug. 3 - Sept. 24, 2000
Pages 13 & 14

USA's Albert Lau Takes Gold at World Veteran's Championships
Page 20

$20,000 ST. JOSEPH VALLEY OPEN CHAMPION DAVID ZHUANG

North American Tour Page 34
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David Zhuang
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<th>Events</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<th>Time</th>
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Executive Director’s Report

By Ben Nisbet

What will be the biggest table tennis event in 2000? A. The World Championships; B. The Olympic Games; or C. Chicago’s 2000 Ping-Pong Festival. Hint come visit the windy City in August to find out.

On April 26th, the City of Chicago announced that it will run a six-week citywide “Ping-Pong” festival, Aug. 3 - Sept 24, 2000. The Daley administration via the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, will place over 300 tables around the city over the six-week period and recruit an army of over 300 volunteers in what is likely to be the largest table tennis event in the history of our sport!

Lois Weissberg, Deputy Commissioner of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs, expects over half a million people to participate in the festival. She has history on her side. Last year the city successfully ran its internationally acclaimed “Cows on Parade” festival. The Chicago press is already labeling the Ping-Pong festival as an encore to last year’s event.

What does the festival mean for table tennis? I see tremendous opportunity to assist the City of Chicago, in a consultant’s role, in order to showcase the professionalism and internationalism of our sport. Additionally, since so many people already enjoy table tennis, we have the ability, through competition, to help the city of Chicago pull together the many diverse peoples of the city under the umbrella of activities and competitions.

Last weekend I flew to Chicago to meet with Ms. Weissberg and her staff. Accompanying me was Larry Gajderowicz of Escalade Sports (Escalade Sports is the registered owner of the trademark “Ping Pong”). Together we discussed how we could help the city of Chicago achieve its goals and I was personally very impressed with Ms. Weissberg and her Staff’s goals, ambitions and understanding of how to run a major event. Chicago already has a long list of local sponsors ready and willing to help. Interestingly, the Ping-Pong festival will have a large cultural and historical element attached to it. Not only does Chicago want to engage its residents, but it also wants to make the festival an endpoint destination for many national and international tourists.

What is USA Table Tennis’ role you ask? With our “know how,” Chicago has made us a “presenting sponsor,” and I will have a seat on the Ping-Pong festival committee. USA Table Tennis will help Chicago activate and educate the volunteers needed to oversee the competitions. We will also work to bring top athletes in to perform exhibitions and work with our membership in Chicago to stage a national or international tournament.

What happens after the festival? The city of Chicago Parks and Recreational Department is very interested in establishing a permanent youth program in 5 to 10 of its facilities. They are looking for advice on how to establish a program that has staying power and allows participants to become engaged in our sport.

Interestingly, many other smaller towns have approached the City of Chicago and cities across America with the common goal of replicating the successful “Cows on Parade” festival. If we can assist Chicago and prove that table tennis is a great choice for a festival theme, we are in a great position to have a successful festival theme centered on “Ping Pong” as a working marketing platform.

I look forward to working with the City of Chicago in the months ahead and encourage you to visit the city and participate in the festival. July and August were supposed to be catch-up months for USA Table Tennis. We will now have to place catch-up on the backburner and work with Ms. Weissberg’s office to make this event a smashing success.

An Official’s View

By “Dr. Azmy”

Several complaints have risen lately about the behavior of a few individuals, behavior which is disgusting to them, to others, and to the sport in general.

Players have been involved in intimidating behavior. Some are involved in shouting matches and confrontations. In fact, I witnessed a physical confrontation between a prominent player with another player at the table. Players sometimes misuse their liberties when umpires are not assigned to a match.

According to Larry Kesler, Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee, “Our sport cannot afford to have players who intimidate others through physical violence, or any intimidation that one player imposes on another.”

The impact of such behavior is disturbing to the sport. It discourages spectators from attending matches, and discourages them and their children from joining the sport.

It is true that the referee has to deal with these situations at the table, but that apparently is not enough. It is recommended that Referees should report any misbehavior to the Disciplinary Committee. The Chairman is ready to enforce actions ranging from reprimands to suspensions.

To avoid such problems players should use their wisdom. Table tennis is a refined and friendly sport, where players should show sportsmanship. There is no situation which warrants a player to engage in insulting or intimidating behavior.

A player should not accept any form of intimidation from another player.
A player should not engage in counter-intimidation or confrontation with another player.
A player can withdraw from a situation calmly and refer the matter to an umpire, referee or the director.
If there is no one to settle the matter, a player can write a letter to the Disciplinary Committee (care of USA Table Tennis) describing the incident in detail, as well as the names of witnesses.

Misbehavior is not limited to players. Officials should realize that they represent the sport. Players, spectators and other officials are watching them. Some officials misuse their privilege to be at the court site and engage in unacceptable behavior.

Some parade at the court while other matches are taking place on the next court. Some bring extra chairs and sit in an unauthorized place to watch matches. Others engage in illegal coaching. Some come to the court to confront, intimidate or obstruct other officials from performing their duties.

Umpires and officials should not be at the playing court unless they are on duty. They should not approach other officials who are performing their duties. They should leave their disputes with other officials to be settled on their own personal time. Writing a note to each other could be sufficient to facilitate useful communications.

Moving to other issues, I would like to clear up some questions raised regarding the time-out enforcement during tournaments, and the information about the size of the ball in use.

One ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. The most adequate way to deal with these issues is through the ENTRY FORM.

Generally time-out should be limited to umpired matches only. However, a player may not ask for an umpire just to have a time-out. The entry form should specify the umpired matches such as semifinals and/or finals. A player can ask for an umpire in other matches to settle problems but not to have a time-out.

Another issue which is confusing to some is the size of the ball. Tournaments are allowed to use the 38mm ball as well as the 40mm ball. Only international tournaments have to use the 40mm ball after October 1, 2000.

Such information has to be stated clearly on the entry form. That means that from now on the size of the ball as well as the color of the ball has to be announced in advance.

I hope the above information will help tournament organizers and directors to prepare for tournaments.

Editor’s Note: The following two position statements are from the Officials Committee.

1. The ITTF Time Out rule has been adopted by USAIT as one of our official rules. It is in effect right now.
2. Restrictions on the application of the Time Out rule can only be specified in the Entry Form, under unusual situations by the Tournament Director with the approval of the Referee, or during the tournament by the Referee in an emergency situation.
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USA Table Tennis Visits TVLand!  

In the last issue, USA Table Tennis Magazine visited the movies. Now we invade TV! Here are TV shows that featured table tennis. If you know of others, let us know!

Gary Shandling Show  
(30 min, 1980s)  
This is the best table tennis show of all — if you can find a copy. It's a takeoff on the baseball movie "The Natural," starring Robert Redford — one of the greatest (if not the greatest) sports movies ever. In the Shandling Show, Shandling's background is told in flashbacks — how he carved a paddle out of a tree that had been struck by lightning, how he challenged and beat "The Champ" (actually muscle-man and 2400 player Craig Manoogian) in a match in an open field, how The Champ's girlfriend pretended to be his girlfriend, and then shot him in his playing arm as soon as they were alone. (All of this mirrors what happens in "The Natural.") You also meet the Goddess of Ping Pong along the way. After the flashbacks, we're back to the present, where Shandling still has his paddle (which he named "Paddle"), and he's recruited as part of the company team against another company. In the big company match, we see 2100 player Chi Ngo losing to 2300 player Masaru Hashimoto (and saying how he has disgraced himself for this), until finally Shandling goes up against Hashimoto. Despite the return of his old arm injury during the match (as in The Natural), and a broken "Paddle," Shandling wins, with the game-winning smash going up into the lights and setting off sparks everywhere (again, from "The Natural"). This is a must see — if you can find it.  
-Table Tennis Quantity: 5 paddles  
-Table Tennis Quality: 5 paddles  
-Show Quality: 5 paddles

The Odd Couple  
"The Pig Who Came To Dinner" Episode  
I didn't see this episode, but it's rated one of the best. Tennis star Bobby Riggs visits the Odd Couple, and bets Oscar that he can beat him at ping-pong using anything available. He beats Oscar using the heel of his shoe, and wins the apartment. Felix has to win it back, but I don't know how. Both Bobby Riggs and Billie Jean King are in the episode as themselves. (Most of this info was contributed by John Vos.)

Sesame Street  
On April 6, there was a Sesame Street episode where Alan gets a Ping-Pong table. Miles tries to teach Elmo to play, even though he thinks Elmo's too small to play. Alan assists by holding Elmo up by the waist. Alan teaches Telly to play Ping-Pong, and they sing "The Practice Song." Telly imagines he can play Ping-Pong while playing the tuba and eating.  

Most Sesame Street episodes include a 10-minute Elmo's World segment. In each segment, Elmo learns about a subject. Table tennis appears in a Elmo's World segment where he learns about balls. In the segment, Elmo's fish Dorthy imagines Elmo playing several sports that include balls: Football, Golf, and Table Tennis. Elmo is shown hitting several forehands until his opponent smashes the ball past him. His opponent is another Elmo. Elmo is left-handed and plays shakehands style. (Most of the info regarding Elmo's World was contributed by Kevin Walton.)

Everybody Loves Raymond  
As we were going to press, I was told that there is an episode of this that features a series of macho table tennis matches and rematches between Raymond and his father.

Get Smart  
"Die, Spy" (Episode #86)  
I didn't see this episode, and was unable to locate a tape of it — they are not for sale anywhere, so to get a copy, you'll have to tape it yourself. (If you do, let me know — I want one!) The show is a takeoff on an episode of "I Spy," and even features "I Spy" star Robert Culp in a cameo as a waiter. In the show, Smart and a fellow agent become traveling ping pong performers, which is just a cover for their spying activities. It's rated one of the best Get Smart episodes.

In Memoriam  
JIM LEGGETT  
Aug. 25, 1935 - Apr. 6, 2000  
Jim passed away from a heart attack in Bogota, Columbia, South America, where he was living with his beloved wife Dora since moving from Houston, TX, two years ago.  

Jim started playing table tennis while in the army. He loved the sport so much that in an interview he gave in Fort Lauderdale, he said, "I will play table tennis until the day of my death." God helped Jim make that happen. Death took him while playing his favorite sport.  

When they moved to Columbia, he started playing table tennis with the Cundinamarca Table Tennis League in Bogota, and he was very proud because he recently was chosen to represent the league in a tournament. A few days before his death, he was proudly presenting his league t-shirt to his relatives. He took that t-shirt to his final resting place. He was very excited to be making arrangements to go to the U.S. Open in Florida this summer. It was his wish to go, not just to participate in it, but to see his table tennis friends.  

The people that met Jim will always remember him as a truthful, sincere and friendly man who always gave of himself to others.  

His wife, Dora, thanks everyone for the friendship and love that everybody always showed Jim. Her address is: Mrs. Dora Leggett, Kra. 76 # 8A-88, Bogota, Columbia, South America.  

-Dave & Pat Miller
**TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE:** Y.C. Lee, Lily Yip  
**REFEREE:** Christopher Lehman IU. IR

**EQUIPMENT:** DoubleFish (Official 45** World Championship) 3 star 38mm white balls, nets and tables.

**ENTRY DEADLINE:** Entries must be postmarked at August 1, 2000. Late entries by August 8 will be charged $20.00. Entries may be rejected if space does not permit.

**ENTRY POLICY:** All entries must include full payment. Non-members MUST join USATT at the tournament. USATT membership: $25/yr, $60/3yr for adults; $12 for juniors; $45/yr for household (2 adults + minors). Adult players who have never been USATT members may purchase a One-Time Tournament Pass for $6. Junior players must be under the event age in their selected junior event as of the tournament date. Senior players must be 40, 50, 60 or 70 by December 31, 2000. Novices (0-2 years experience no USATT Rating). **Players ratings will be based on the July, August 2000 issue of the USATT magazine.**

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**ELIGIBILITY:** All USATT laws and regulations apply.

**RULES:** All USATT laws and regulations apply. I accept full responsibility for my participation and relieve all sponsors, USTTA and all tournament officials of any liabilities for injury to myself or my property. I agree to abide by all decisions of the tournament officials.

**SIGNATURE/Parent or guardian if minor):**

**DIRECTIONS:** From the North: Take the George Washington Bridge to the NJ Turnpike south to exit 14. Take 78 West to Exit 36. Make a left onto King George Road, follow Road for about 2 miles. The Club entrance is on the right. From the South: Take the NJ Turnpike North to exit 10. Take 287 North to 78 East. Take 78 East to Exit 36. Make a right on King George Road and follow for about 2 miles. The Club entrance is on the right.

**INFORMATION:** Contact: Lily Yip 732-748-9712, Email atlanta96@msn.com or www.doublefish-us.com

Make checks payable and send to: Lily Yip Sports Inc., 14 Dock Watch Hollow Road, Warren, NJ 07059

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**List Events by event # add doubles partner**

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The 10th World Veterans Championships, held in three venues at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, May 21-27, drew the second largest entry ever for these biennial Championships — 1867 players in Over 40 through 80 Singles and Doubles events. Quite a turnout — though, alas, not enough for the bonus money the CTTA would have received from Canada's International Conference Services Ltd. had the entries reached a record-breaking 2,000.

Fifty-seven countries participated — with Germany (roughly 560 players) and Japan (roughly 300 players) leading the way. England had more entries than Canada itself (about 100), Canada maybe 15 more than Sweden. The fact that Czechoslovakia, France, Chinese Taipei, Australia, and India all had a larger entry than the U.S. (a mere 40 players) was very disappointing — particularly to Hans Westling, Veterans Executive Committee Chair who'd begun these Championships in 1982, and to Klaus Traeger, head of this year's Organizing Committee, who told me he'd anticipated 200 U.S. entries!

The conflicting May 27-28 St. Joe Valley Open at South Bend (almost $19,000 in prize money), and the June 2-4 Meiklejohn National Senior's at Laguna Woods, CA (more than $14,000 in prize money), were thought to have dissuaded many players from coming, especially those who needed to cut expenses, for of course these Veterans Championships, though prestigious, offered no prize money.

What was offered here, perhaps even more than the competition (for as many as 1,000 of these come-from-away players were relatively weak), was social interaction. Player identification cards had the first name of the participant written large, the full name and country in smaller print — thus encouraging strangers to be openly familiar, friendly. A good idea — for, according to Bowling Alone, a new book by a Harvard University professor (reviewed coincidentally this very week in a Vancouver paper), more and more Americans increasingly over the last four decades have been spending less and less time with others. How many U.S. table tennis players at any major tournament today have the social capital of knowing many of their fellow competitors? And certainly in Table Tennis, as in Bowling, participation in local league play has severely declined from what it used to be, for nowadays people seem to prefer sitting alone at their computers and TV sets.

Well, some USA Players Were There! By Tom Boggan

A number of Americans here — even, say, Richard McAfee, minding the sole exhibitor’s booth (for sponsor Butterfly), or Deputy Referee Larry Kesler, or Umpires Irina Borisova, Terry Canup, Joe Lee, and Tom Miller — might feel they’d not been socially active enough. But the players! During the first day of Singles, as well as the next day of Doubles, one participated in a round robin group of four, or occasionally even three — that alone was the competition (with the top two players or teams advancing to the Championship proper, the others to the Consolation). The third day was totally free — except for those who’d represented their country at World Championships who were attending the afternoon Swaythling Club reception hosted by President Di Schoeler.

So what did one do during all those non-playing hours — at least before the often exciting last rounds were played on the sixth day, or before leaving early for home? Muddled with, cheered on, friends ... from all over the world? Uh, how many such Championships abroad had many of these Americans ever been to? Who did they know? Introduce themselves to?

The 4th day saw Singles single elimination matches, the 5th Doubles single elimination matches — fast exits in both the Championship and Consolation for most. Luckily you had an early morning match and lost quickly? Time still to take the ferry over to the inimitable Butchart Gardens in Victoria, perhaps come back by sea plane. But if you won a match or two? I was told to be ready to play single elimination at 10:30 a.m., so I left downtown early, got out to the University at 8:00 o’clock ... to find, like many another, I’d drawn a bye, didn’t play until 4:30 that afternoon ... then 6:30 ... then 9:30. At the end (how much really, in my 70th year, could I have practiced, even if I’d wanted to?), a wearying 14-hour day.

Of course, I, more than most Americans, had old acquaintances to renew, especially from English-speaking Canada — Bill Cheng, Bina Chohan, Canadian National Coach Mariani Domonkos, Brian Hacksenz (who years ago directed many a Toronto CNE tournament), CTTA Executive Director Tony Kienenhofer, former Ontario TTA Executive Director Ken Kerr, his wife Marie and daughter Donna, Zedplin Law, former Canadian Men’s Champion Larry Lee (who reached the quarter’s of the Over 40’s here), Maurice Moore, Violetta Nesciukatis (one of North America’s best-ever Champions), Detlev and Sheila von Nottbeck, Ralph Spratt (who for two years now, in a successful transplant, has literally the heart of a 19-year-old), and long-time CITA Historian Marge Walden.

CTTA President and ITTF Vice-President for North America Bruce Burton told me that, on seeing action shots in the Vancouver Sun of Sydney, Australia’s 89-year-old Dorothy de Margo, a woman called and wanted to know if Marge Walden might possibly still be on the table tennis scene. Put in contact with Marge, the woman identified herself, and said, “Do you know who this is?” “Sure,” said Marge, now in her mid-80’s. “We used to work together in the 1940’s.”

For these Canadians I’ve mentioned — some of whom I’ve known since the ’60’s coming to Vancouver was a labor of love, though the official workers among them were helped out, entitled to free accommodations, meals, and part of their transportation expense. I also passed the time (while my wife Sally was Touring about) by trying to keep abreast of how the Americans in particular, often playing in different venues, were doing (up until the last day, results were very difficult to come by), by writing an article (accompanied by a Robert Enders’ digital photo) for Chandra Madosingh’s Media Committee and their daily “Talking Stick” Newsletter, by snacking and reading, and by watching matches, often rather disinterestedly.

Eighteen years ago I’d organized a U.S. group to the first Veterans Championships in Gothenberg, Sweden. Now I no longer had the desire or energy to organize another. Nor, apparently, did anyone else in the USATT.
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• Chinese National Team, 1976-83
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• Former U.S. Senior and Men’s Doubles Champion
• USATT’s Developmental Coach of the Year, 1997
• Full-time Coach

Coach Larry Hodges
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• Author of Table Tennis: Steps to Success
• Director/Manager/Coach at Resident Training Program for Table Tennis at Olympic Training Center, 1985-89
• Many-time U.S. Junior Team Coach
• Certified by USATT as a National Coach
• USATT Coaching Chairman, 1991-95

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Lim Ming Chui and Jiri Hlava, USA's Over 50 Men's Doubles medalists - USA's only bronze.

quite focused and showed exceptional patience and determination in winning his last three do-or-die matches.

In the quarter's, against Siegfried Lenke of Germany, a backhand-pips picker, Lau, on losing the 1st at 12, was advised by Dawidowicz, his corner man, to steady his play and forget trying to power shots through. But on being up 13-8 in the 2nd then down 16-14, Albert was in trouble. However, from 19-all, steady topspin play kept him alive. In the 3rd, after Bohdan had re-emphasized his warning to keep the ball away from Lenke's backhand - and, despite the fact that during one point Albert's racket slipped out of his hand to go high-flying into the next court - much of the match resulted in an unspectacular forehand pushing duel, which, pursuing this correct strategy, Lau won.

In the semi's, opposite Dieter Lauk, another German pusher/picker, Lau again lost the 1st at 12. Then, up 19-17 in the 2nd, he faltered to go match-point down. But careful, long-point backhand pushes, followed by Lau's missed backhand picks, helped Albert to survive, and at 22-all he got successive point-winning forehands in to even the match. After that, the German's concentration was broken.

Lau's final opponent was Chinese-Taipei penholder Sung-Ming Liu. Up 9-2 in the 3rd, Albert appeared to be a winner. But, as Chui would say, "Liu then played like a youngster - smashing ball after ball" to lead 15-12. Lau knew what he had to do, though - and from there on in, both players fought for the offense. Down double match-point, Albert again raised his level - defended, countered, scored four in a row - and so at these Championships became our only gold medal winner.

The Women's 70's, with a draw of 75, saw the Americans would advance ... up to a point of course. I particularly liked Jerry Wartski's line, "I lost to an International Um-
The Forehand Loop of
KHOA NGUYEN
2000 USA Olympic Team Member
By Dave “Lefty” Williams

World-class play is defined by power, spin and quickness. In this rarified air of extreme physics, elite players must refine their strengths through a combination of hard training and outstanding athletic talent. Within that continuum, U.S. Olympic team member Khoa Nguyen is all about power and quickness. Khoa sets up shop a step or two from the table and uses the power of his opponents’ shots against them, striving to rifle away winners with sharp angles and ball speed. When playing his best, as he did at the Houston Olympic qualifier, Khoa has a World Top 100 offense.

As shown in this forehand loop sequence, Khoa uses his body efficiently to generate his strokes. In contrast to Waldner’s creative approach that uses a variety of arm motions to generate spinny forehand loop variations (as recently shown in this section), Khoa’s loop is a “body shot” that primarily uses waist, torso and shoulder rotation to generate forward speed with topspin control.

**Frame 1: Preparation**
From his ready position Khoa is already thinking forehand as the sequence begins. His weight is evenly distributed and his feet are set just a little wider than his shoulders as he begins his backswing.

**Frames 2-3: Backswing**
Khoa’s shoulders rotate downward and backwards, reaching a position almost perpendicular from the table end-line. This rotation pulls his waist back to about 45 degrees, torqued and ready to work in concert with his right leg to push off when the stroke unwinds forward. In this stroke, Khoa achieves classic paddle-behind-the-knee preparation by rotating his arm backwards at the shoulder (not by opening his elbow), indicating that this stroke will be a loop drive with most of the energy used to create forward speed.

**Frames 4-5: Contact**
These frames confirm that this loop is going to be “more wood than rubber.” With his weight now firmly planted over his right leg, Khoa pushes off and comes forward over the ball from perhaps only twelve inches or so below it, uncoiling his torso to create forward racket speed and power. Again, note how little elbow motion is used in the upward and forward motion. In many ways, the fewer moving parts the better when it comes to being able to replicate an aggressive shot under fire.

**Frames 6-7: Follow-Through**
Khoa’s compact and efficient body motions certainly show in these frames. Despite launching a 2500 plus topspin forehand, he is still under control. His weight is evenly distributed again and his shoulders have decelerated and are only a few inches past the neutral position. He’s well on his way to reloading, even though the ball has barely left his racket.

When watching the play of national and international caliber competitors it is easy to be impressed with the obvious quality of their attacking and counterdriving strokes. What this sequence illustrates very well is the importance of replicable, controlled technique that players must develop before that can compete effectively at higher levels.
The Forehand Serve of Michael Maze

Denmark’s Rising Star • By Wei Wang, USATT Certified National Coach

Photos by Diego Schaaf ©2000
Michael Maze hasn’t had his big breakthrough yet. He hasn’t had time; he’s only 18 years old. But all the indications are that it will happen. He caught my eye at the 1999 Singles World Championship in Eindhoven. Rarely before had I seen a young player with such a wide range of technique. It was obvious that the two things he’s lacking are experience and patience – one will come to him easier than the other. After buzzing through the qualifying rounds, allowing his opponents an average of 10 points per game, he was the victim of veteran He Zhi Wen in the first round of the main draw, who beat him in five games, not really by technique but by quietly “managing” Maze’s hot temper until it boiled over. Yet, Maze has had a meteoric rise in the top 50 range for many top world players. At the team event of the European Championships in Bremen, Germany, in April of this year, he had an outstanding record, beating, among others France’s Christoph Gentig and Damien Eliot (both tied at #18 in the world), Germany’s Jorg Rosskopf (world #21), and Yugoslavia’s Slobodan Grubic (world #60). Already he is mentioned in Chinese table tennis circles as one of the “threats” of the new European generation.

Among the skills that hold so much promise are his outstanding inventiveness, supreme touch, great physical ability and a sense for strategy that belies his age. His service game is an integral part of that strategy. We can pride ourselves to have had one of the pioneers of the modern serve game among our National players: Jimmy Butler was among the first to develop this new “brand” of serves, ones played with great intensity and much variation, all brought out from basically the same beginning motion. Now, the second generation of these serves has developed. In essence they are the same, but they are delivered much more smoothly and with even greater deception.

Deception is the key to a successful serve. Today’s receiving game at the top level has become so strong that it is critical not to telegraph too much to the receiver. As it is, the much-referred-to service advantage is nowhere near what it is often believed to be, particularly at the top level. It hovers in the low 50% range for top world players. Even now a match between serve intensive players like the Schlagter – Liu Guoliang encounter at the 1999 Worlds yielded a mere 56% point wins for the server.

Now we can bring the rest of our arsenal to bear. If you’re a right-hander and have difficulty understanding the pictures, look at it in a mirror. You’ll be surprised how clear it becomes. I’ve patterned the backhand loop for one of my students after Rosskopf using that technique, watching his matches in a mirror. Not everything translates all the time, since many strategies for lefties are different, but technically, there is much that can be learned that way.

The first of the three serves above is a driving cross-Court side-topspin serve. Maze sets up, standing literally sideways, with his right leg way in front. During the toss, he shifts his weight back to the right leg and pulls the racket back by raising his elbow behind his body. At the end of the backswing, the racket head points straight down and he almost completely releases the handle to allow greater adjustment. He turns the racket face in the direction where he wants the serve to go, then pulls the tip of the racket back a little and on contact drives the ball by snapping the tip forward across the ball slightly to the left of center, thus imparting side-topspin and the necessary pace to avoid too strong an attack. The whole motion is accented with a distinct step forward onto his right leg into the contact.

On the second serve he starts the same way, but at the end of the backswing, he pulls the racket tip toward his stomach, points the racket face upward and rotates his upper body a little to his right to create enough space to complete the stroke. He does the same weight-shifting motion as before. To contact the ball, he now “stabs” forward and outward to brush across the lower-left side of the ball, which imparts underspin and clockwise sidespin. The ball stays short and breaks to the right.

This spin, by the way, has been called “corkscrew” spin because of its mostly longitudinal axis. It is very effective, because, when received by a right-hander’s forearm, it is effectively underspin, but the same ball, when received with the backhand, is effectively topspin. In a later article I’ll explain that phenomenon in detail and discuss how to deal with it.

The third serve again starts the same way, but this time he raises the racket tip at the end of the backswing, with the striking surface pointing forward. Performing the same weight transfer motion, he then chops down around the ball a little left of the center and follows through underneath it. The ball now spins in the opposite direction from the previous serve.

Each of these serves by itself is difficult enough to deal with, but put together they demand a lot of concentration from the opponent and can discourage him from trying to attack too violently. This gives the server a good chance to get into the point in a position of dominance. Now we can bring the rest of our arsenal to bear.
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**Final North American Olympic Doubles Teams**
(In some cases, singles players who did not qualify as doubles players are paired as doubles teams. Rules for doubles teams selection are at [www.usatt.org/news/DoublesSelection.html](http://www.usatt.org/news/DoublesSelection.html).)

**USA Men:**
Cheng Yinghua/Khoa Nguyen,
David Zhuang/Todd Sweeris

**USA Women:**
Gao Jun/Michelle Do, Jasna Reed/Tawny Banh

**Canadian Men:**
Johnny Huang/Kurt Liu

**Canadian Women:**
Lijuan Geng/Marie-Christine Roussy

**Men's Final RR**
1st Cheng Yinghua/Khoa Nguyen (USA), 2-1 (d. Zhuang/Sweeris, 18,17,15,12; d. Lonergan/Shodhan, 12,17,6 - carryover); 2nd David Zhuang/Todd Sweeris (USA), 2-1 (d. Owens/Reed, 11,17,13 - carryover; d. Lonergan/Shodhan, 20,17,16,16); 3rd Sean Lonergan/Shashin Shodhan (USA), 1-2 (d. Owens/Reed, 19,9,18,20); 4th Eric Owens/Barney J. Reed (USA), 1-2 (d. Cheng/Nguyen, 12,18,18,11,13).

**Men's Preliminary RRs**
**Group A**: 1st Cheng Yinghua/Khoa Nguyen (USA), 3-0 (d. Peter-Paul/Csaba, 12,14,15; d. Therien/Kamkar-Parsi, 11,17,24; d. Lonergan/Shodhan, 12,17,6); 2nd Sean Lonergan/Shashin Shodhan (USA), 2-1 (d. Peter-Paul/Csaba, 15,-15,-10,18,15; d. Therien/Kamkar-Parsi, 20,19,-17,-12,17); 3rd Pradeeban Peter-Paul/Bence Csaba (CAN), 1-2 (d. Therien/Kamkar-Parsi, 18,19,-13,9); 4th Xavier Therien/Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi (CAN), 0-3.

**Group B**: 1st David Zhuang/Todd Sweeris (USA), 2-0 (d. Pintea/Su, -15,12,13,20; d. Owens/Reed, 11,17,13); 2nd Eric Owens/Barney J. Reed (USA), 1-1 (d. Pintea/Su, 18,19,-18,18); 3rd Horatio Pintea/Dennis Su (CAN), 0-2.

**Women's Final RR**
1st Gao Jun/Michelle Do (USA), 3-0 (d. Wang/Cada, 13,13,11 - carryover; d. Geng/Roussy, 17,15,19,14,18; d. Reed/Sung, 16,11,10); 2nd Lijuan Geng/Marie-Christine Roussy (CAN), 1-2 (d. Wang/Cada, 18,14,9); 3rd Wen Xiao Wang/Petra Cada (CAN), 1-2 (d. Reed/Sung, 15,18,24); 4th Jasna Reed/Virginia Sung (USA), 1-2 (d. Geng/Roussy, 16,19,16,12 - carryover).

**Women's Preliminary RRs**
**Group A**: 1st Gao Jun/Michelle Do (USA), 3-0 (d. Wang/Cada, 13,13,11; d. Chiu/Pilon, 12,17,8; d. Yang/Gee, 19,17,14); 2nd Wen Xiao Wang/Petra Cada (CAN), 2-1 (d. Chiu/Pilon, 11,9,13; d. Yang/Gee, 18,16,11,15); 3rd Simone Yang/Diana Gee (USA), 1-2 (d. Chiu/Pilon, 9,9,17); 4th Wennin Chiu/Erica Pilon (CAN), 0-3.

**Group B**: 1st Jasna Reed/Virginia Sung (USA), 2-1 (d. Geng/Roussy, 16,19,16,12; d. Gagnon/Zheng, 14,9,6); 2nd Lijuan Geng/Marie-Christine Roussy (CAN), 2-1 (d. Banh/Yip, 14,14,19,14; d. Gagnon/Zheng, 8,13,9); 3rd Tawny Banh/Lily Yip (USA), 2-1 (d. Reed/Sung, 16,12,17,16; d. Gagnon/Zheng, 12,13,7); 4th Jo-Annie Gagnon/Pei Pei Zheng (CAN), 0-3.

Photos on pages 30-31 by John Oros ©2000
Under 18 Boys' Singles – Final: Bence Csaba (CAN) d. Faazil Kassam (USA), 12,19,15; QF: Li-bye; Csaba d. Mark Hazinski (USA), 16,8; Kassam d. David Ramdeen (CAN), 17,8,11; Alban-bye.

Under 18 Boys' Doubles – Final: Sunny Li/Keith Alban (USA) d. Bence Csaba/Faazil Kassam (CAN), 20,18; SF: Li/Alban d. David Ramdeen/Peter Yao (CAN), 17,15,11; Csaba/Kassam d. Mark Hazinski/Adam Hugh (USA), 20,7,11.


Under 18 Girls' Doubles – Final: Michelle Do/Jackie Lee (USA) d. Marie-Christine Roussy/Erica Pilon (CAN), 22,13,20; SF: Roussy/Pilon d. Allison Seibel/Whitney Ping (USA), 11,11; Do/Lee d. Wennin Chiu/Pei Pei Zheng (CAN), 20,13.

Men's Singles – Final: Khoa Nguyen (USA) d. Eric Owens (USA), 17,16,17,14,14; SF: Nguyen d. Todd Sweeris (USA), 18,16,15; Owens d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN), 16,13,18; QF: Sweeris d. Johnny Huang (USA), 14,7,21; Nguyen d. David Zhuang (USA), w/o; Peter-Paul d. Kurt Liu (CAN), 21,13; Owens d. Cheng Yinghua (USA), 8,13; 8ths: Huang-bye; Sweeris d. Horatio Pintea (CAN), 9,20; Nguyen d. Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi (CAN), 16,18; Zhuang-bye; Peter-Paul-bye; Liu d. Bence Csaba (CAN), 16,14; Owens d. Dennis Su (CAN), 15,22; Cheng-bye.

Women's Singles – Final: Lijuan Geng (CAN) d. Gao Jun (USA), 14,18,18; SF: Geng d. Tawny Banh (USA), 14,13; Gao d. Wenxiao Wang (CAN), 13,18; QF: Geng d. Simone Yang (USA), 7,19; Banh d. Jasna Reed (USA), w/o; Wang d. Chris Xu (CAN), 9,17; Gao d. Virginia Sung (USA), 15,26; 8ths: Geng-bye; Yang d. Lily Yip (USA), 21,14; Banh d. Michelle Do (USA), n.s.; Reed-bye; Xu-bye; Wang d. Marie-Christine Roussy (CAN), 11,13; Sung d. Petra Cada (CAN), 13,21; Gao-bye.
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After nearly a year of planning, it's finally on – the North American Tour! With six stops – San Francisco, Sacramento, Raleigh, and two in Maryland (they have sponsors!), the first year is finally underway.

Despite a relatively low turnout, the tournament was a success, except perhaps financially. The playing courts were world-class sized at 46 by 20 feet (the feature courts even wider), and all courts were individually barriered. The matches were on time, and when problems with shadows over some of the tables was discovered, matches on those tables were relocated.

**THE OPEN**

Other than perhaps Sean Lonergan or the soon-to-be-better-known Kwaovi Didi de Souza, the Open looked preordained for a Todd Sweeris-Gao Jun final. When Sean lost in the preliminaries to Lee McCool, he still advanced, but got stuck with Gao in the quarters – where, perhaps not recovered from his unsuccessful Olympic Trials, he didn’t put up too much of a fight. When the tired-looking Souza went down to junior star Han Xiao, the Sweeris-Gao match-up became near-certainty. But even they had to take care of business, and that they did.

In one semifinal, Todd Sweeris gave a clinic in serve & receive against Lee McCool. Lee has spectacular shots, but Todd is a technician, who systematically disarms his opponents with his varied serves and receives. Match to Todd, 16, 7, 11.

In the other semifinal, Gao Jun gave a clinic in controlled blocking. There aren’t too many places to put the ball against a powerful two-winged looper like Mark Hazinski, but Gao found every nook and cranny, moving the ball side to side, in and out, and possibly into hyperspace in her 10, 11, 13 win.

The final was one bang-bang rally after another, with Todd coming at pips-out penholder Gao with continuous backhand pips-out hits and forehand loops. But when the games were close, Todd would always run off several points in a row. Open final and $1000 to Todd Sweeris, 17, 16, 17.

**"KWAOVI DIDI DE SOUZA"**

You can almost put the name to music for a Disney animated movie. However, at this tournament, the only song was those singing his praises – or more likely, asking, “Who is this guy?” So, he won the Under 2250 event – he was seeded there, with a 2182 rating. But he also won Under 2600, and led 17-10 in the third on Lee McCool in the Under 2500 final before losing to the only player in the tournament who can match

---

**Photos, clockwise from top left:**
- Gao Jun, Open Singles Runner-up and Women’s Singles Champion;
- Todd Sweeris, Open Singles Champion;
- Marcus Jackson, Under 10 Champion;
- Kwaovi de Souza, U2600 & U2250 Champion, and U2500 Runner-up;
- Lee McCool, U2500 Champion and Open Singles Semifinalist;
- Mark Hazinski, Under 22 & Under 18 Champion, U2600 Runner-up, and Open Singles Semifinalist;
- Han Xiao, U2375 Champion, Open Singles Quarterfinalist, and Under 22 & Under 18 Runner-up.
- Photos by John Oros ©2000
his two-winged loops, flash for flash.

Who is he, and where did he come from? Kwaovi had been a former top junior for Toga, and had moved to the U.S. just 10 months before. He had gotten the 2182 rating by playing in two local tournaments in Atlanta before getting in practice. In his third tournament, not yet processed for this tournament, he had defeated U.S. Team Member Barney J. Reed. With a win over Sean Lonergan and two wins against Mark Hazinski, we’ll be singing his name a lot in the future.

TOUR POINTS LEADER

Dave Sakai, the new “Road Warrior,” took the early lead in the Tour Circuit Points standings, and with his announced plans to attend all six Tour events, and to enter in eight events each time, he will be tough to top. (But with five Tour Point Awards, that leaves four spots open – go to www.natabletennis.com for complete info on The Tour and Tour Points.) Here at Stop #1, Sakai was all over the results: first in Over 50 and Under 4200 Doubles (with Tim Boggan), and second in Under 2375 and Under 2250.

THE SENIOR REPORT

You’ve already read of the exploits of Dave Sakai. But there were others in the graybeard categories that brought home prizes and circuit points. Tim Boggan was in four finals, winning Under 4200 Doubles (with Sakai) and Under 2000 Hardbat over John Oros. He was also in the hardbat final, losing to fellow senior Jim McQueen, and in the Over 60 final where he lost again against Bill Neely. Tim lived life dangerously in the hardbat event, losing in the preliminaries to Simon Brain and going to deuce in the third against Oros. But in a battle between former USATT Presidents, Tim defeated home-town favorite Jim McQueen in the preliminaries, and both advanced – only to meet again in the final. This time, Tim wasn’t able to pull off enough “No-Look” forehands against McQueen’s quick-angled pushes, and McQueen pulled out the final, 19-18.

In the Over 40 event, it was Humberto Gil over George Cooper. But the best match of the senior events was probably Dave Sakai’s all-out countering match with Joe Griffis in the Over 50 final.

THE JUNIOR REPORT

Four juniors had outstanding results at this tournament. Leading them all was 15-year-old Mark Hazinski, the Under 22 and Under 18 winner, and the Under 2600 runner-up. He won all three of his epic battles with rival Han Xiao (13), the Under 22 and Under 18 runner-up. Han got his first-place win in Under 2375, and even showed that “Kwaovi Didi de Souza” was human, or at least got tired, in taking him out of the Open. Elaine Kwok got second place in Women’s Singles (what more can be expected when Gao Jun is entered?), and also won Under 16 Singles. Marcus Jackson, the “mini-me” of the Jackson Two (now on tour in The Tour) won Under 10.

Open Singles – Final:

Women’s Singles: 1st Gao Jun; 2nd Elaine Kwok.
U2600: 1st Kwaovi de Souza; 2nd Mark Hazinski.
U2500: 1st Lee McCool; 2nd Kwaovi de Souza.
U2375: 1st Han Xiao; 2nd David Sakai.
U2250: 1st Kwaovi de Souza; 2nd David Sakai.
U2125: 1st Joe Griffis; 2nd Humberto Gil.
U1850: 1st Ilya Bushkanets; 2nd Robin Hwang.
U1700: 1st Raymond Chen; 2nd Amir Amidi.
U1550: 1st Steve Carlson; 2nd Susan Salzgeber.
U1400: 1st Corey McElveen; 2nd Don Sorrell.
U1200: 1st Lai Bik-yin; 2nd Michael Lessering.
U1000: 1st Andy Claytor; 2nd Tim Boggan.
Hardbat: 1st Jim McQueen; 2nd Tim Boggan.
U2000 Hardbat: 1st Tim Boggan; 2nd John Oros.
Over 40: 1st Humberto Gil; 2nd George Cooper.
Over 50: 1st David Sakai; 2nd Joe Griffis.
Over 60: 1st Bill Neely; 2nd Tim Boggan.
Under 22: 1st Mark Hazinski; 2nd Han Xiao.
Under 18: 1st Mark Hazinski; 2nd Han Xiao.
Under 10: 1st Marcus Jackson; 2nd Reed Turchi.
U4200 Doubles: 1st Dave Sakai/Tim Boggan; 2nd Danny Hill/Jim McQueen.
U3200 Doubles: 1st Victor Kan/BobSerika; 2nd Alex & Mike Tatusov.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE - July/August 2000
The Zhuang dynasty? Joannie Fu, Zoie Zhuang, David Zhuang.

25 events, 22 champions. That's spreading it around!

There were five players who won two events, offset by two doubles events (which produce two champions each). Double-winners were David Sakai, in Over 50 and Under 4200 Doubles (expanding his circuit point lead); Han Xiao, in Under 22 and Under 18 Boys; Katherine Wu in Under 18 Girls and Under 16 (Katherine also made the Under 2000 final); Jerica Marrero in Under 13 and Novice; and Martin Qian in Under 10 and Under 1000.

The turnout wasn't great, perhaps because Sunday was Mother's Day, or perhaps because there are simply so many tournaments in Maryland, and so many 4-star tournaments all over the U.S. (mostly due to the North American Tour). Or the prices might have been a bit high - Tournament President Richard Lee is changing the price structure for future events, with lower prices. However, the tournament was smoothly run and right on time.

David Zhuang faced serious challenges in the semifinal and final of the Open, but each time the challenge fell flat and he ended up winning relatively easily. In the semifinals, he faced Razvan Cretu, now living in Dallas. Razvan, who essentially retired from tournament play for a couple of years, is back in training, practicing regularly with Idan Levi. "This year you're going to see a new Razvan," he said just before his match with David. And Razvan immediately jumped out to a 7-0 lead - David looked like he already needed a two-minute break! But the rest of that game, David made Razvan look like the Baltimore Orioles bullpen (I had to put that somewhere...), tying it up at 11-all, and winning 21-13. However, Razvan, with probably the most spectacular two-winged looping attack in the country (Under 2500 Champion Lee McCool comes close) put it back together in the second, and from 16-all won five in a row to tie things up. In the third, it was 13-all - but in came the Orioles bullpen, and eight points later it's 21-13 for David. The fourth was no contest as David wins, 13, 16, 13, 12.

Serving at 16-17 in the first game of the final, Todd Sweeris (who'd taken out practice partner Sean Lonergan in the semifinals) served and whiffed. At 16-18, he served into the net. Shades of his match with Zhuang at the Olympic Trials, where he's also served into the net and missed a couple of easy balls at key times? Serving from down 17-18 in the second, Todd served into the net again, and David wins 21-19 on a cross-courte ace flip off a serve that catches Todd already stepping around. Two extremely close, fantastically paced games, and a 2-0 lead for David. (Surprisingly, the receiver seemed to outscore the server in this match - these two may have the best receive in the U.S.) The third is no contest, and Open Singles goes to David, 18, 19, 10. Todd consoled himself by terrorizing the draw in Hardbat Singles.

The upset of the tournament was the Under 22 final between U.S. #1 Junior Sunny Li, rated 2552, and U.S. #1 Under 14, Han Xiao, who had just recently broken 2000. The 95-pound Han had been up 2-0 in games and 17-13 in the third the last thing they'd played, with Sunny winning in 5. Sunny went into the match determined to win the first game, and he did. But Han won the next two games. "I watched Lee McCool play Sunny, and he won a game by dropping the serve short or flipping - he mixed it up," said Han. "So I did that. I tried to use speed and quickness against Sunny, since he'll win on power. Last time I played him, I didn't really have a backhand loop. This time I surprised him with it."

Han also won Under 18 Boys over Khaled Asgarali. Khaled also got second in Under 16, and won Under 4200 Doubles with David Sakai. His dad (Nazzrudin or "Oscar") made the final of Under 2375.

The other "upset of the tournament" was Origene Nyanganle's taking Shao Yu out of Under 2600, and helping pave the way for Han's win in the final over Abbas Ekun.

Overheard at the tournament: one player said to another, "You played a great point out there, where you hit all those great shots, and the other guy kept bringing them back until you finally killed a winner." "Oh, you saw that point?" the other responded. "No I didn't - everyone has one point like that."


U2600: 1st Razvan Cretu; 2nd Abbas Ekun.
U2500: 1st Lee McCool; 2nd Eyal Adini.
U2375: 1st Rich Burnsise; 2nd Nazzrudin Asgarali.
U2250: 1st John Wetzler; 2nd Joe Griffis.
U2125: 1st Khurram Aziz; 2nd Richard Bowling.
U2000: 1st Haka Pellum; 2nd Katherine Wu.
U1850: 1st Harry Hawk; 2nd Wang Chao.
U1700: 1st Reginald Willis; 2nd Trey Alexander.
U1550: 1st John Miller; 2nd Amie Stux.
U1400: 1st William Robinson; 2nd Joseph Lee.
U1200: 1st Michael Nester; 2nd Philip McClung.
U1000: 1st Martin Qian; 2nd Mark Cohen.
Novice: 1st Jerica Marrero; 2nd Alma Maldonado.
Over 40: 1st Liu Hui Yuan; 2nd Abbas Ekun.
Over 50: 1st David Sakai; 2nd Joe Griffis.
Under 22: 1st Han Xiao; 2nd Sunny Li.
Under 18 Boys: 1st Han Xiao; 2nd Khaled Asgarali.
Under 18 Girls: 1st Katherine Wu; 2nd Wang Chao.
Under 16: 1st Katherine Wu; 2nd Khaled Asgarali.
Under 13: 1st Jerica Marrero; 2nd Barbara Wei.
Under 10: 1st Martin Qian; 2nd Marcus Jackson.
Hardbat: 1st Todd Sweeris; 2nd Larry Hodges.
U3200 Doubles: 1st Rick Martin/Michael Master; 2nd Julian Waters/Michael Teroa.

Roman Gelman had his collection of pins on display at the Eastern, including 862 different table tennis pins, from the 1920s to the present. Want to trade? Give him a call at 410-602-0267.
The idea developed during a very lengthy conversation that I had with Ms. Sonia Fynn while I was in Vancouver, British Columbia, for the 10th World Veterans Table Tennis Championships, May 21 through May 27, 2000.

These Championships are held every two years in a different country for players ages 40 and older and accommodate more entries than any other championships in the world.

A few days after my return to New York, I received a letter from Ms. Fynn, the first paragraph of which I would like to share with you:

“It was an unexpected pleasure to meet with you and to discuss the idea of forming the North American Table Tennis Veterans Association (NAT-TVA). You are an excellent ambassador and are in a position to get the ball rolling through the USATT and the CTTA.”

Who is Sonia Fynn?
Sonia Fynn is a very knowledgeable and charming lady of about seventy years young who resides in Vancouver, BC. She is a member of the BC Table Tennis Association (BBCTA) as well as a member of the United States of America Table Tennis (USATT). She was born in London, England and attended school in Sussex, England where the Headquarters of the International Table Tennis Federation is located. She started playing Table Tennis at an early age and her progress was delayed due to the interruption of the Second World War. In 1957, she migrated to Canada where, after a long absence from the game, she resumed her activity in the sport. She is presently the Treasurer of the Dunbar Table Tennis Club which is now located in Richmond, Vancouver. She has participated in the last three World Veterans Table Tennis Championships, beginning in Lillehammer, Norway, then Manchester, England in 1998, and recently Vancouver, Canada. In Manchester she enjoyed a proud moment when, as the sole Canadian entry and representative, her presence as a participant and competitor made it possible for the Canadian flag to be hoisted and be recognized among the many other countries represented.

As a competitor in Track and Field, Soccer, Cricket and Table Tennis I have always enjoyed a good challenge, and forming a “North American Table Tennis Veterans Association” became a challenge of diversity to me. However, upon realizing the magnitude of this undertaking, I began to wonder who could I seek help from with this project to get the ball rolling as Ms. Fynn had so amply and refreshingly remarked. I needed to contact someone who shared the same passion and vision as she and I did. Someone who would not only verbalize about it but who would also follow through on his commitment. And then it dawned on me, and I immediately sent an E-mail to Bob Tretheway, our Executive Vice President of USATT. Bob and I have spent the greater part of our lives in this sport trying to make a difference in the lives of our members, young and older, and their families. We believe that the USATT Organization should be used as a Forum to support the many talented Athletes and members of our Association. So when Bob received my E-mail about the Association for all Veteran Players, he responded almost immediately by pointing out that he felt this is the kind of innovation and creative ability that we so desperately need. Bob also expressed that the art of introducing new methods and ways of doing things to benefit our membership, and to promote our sport became a reality to him when he received my E-mail and he unhesitatingly welcomed the opportunity to be a part of and support such a project.

We therefore discussed all possibilities and decided that the first step was to form a coalition with Ms. Fynn to work towards forming and establishing the “North American Table Tennis Veterans Association” and to bring this idea and projection to the attention of the many thousands of Table Tennis Veterans in North America through our Internationally respected Magazine. We believe that together we can do what seems impossible because we have the passion and the vision. It is our deep commitment to the values we share and the principles we cherish that will make this new development a success.

We are therefore extremely anxious and proud to alert all Veterans of the prospective existence of this new Association. One of the many specific functions of this Association would be to expand the opportunities, activities and interest of all Veteran players. To designate individuals and Teams in the various age categories from Age 40 and older to represent the U.S. in the various International competitions that exist around the world as well as a potential North American Veterans League competition in these age categories.

It’s really a challenge of diversity to answer to the needs of all Table Tennis Veterans from age 40 and older in the United States and Canada and throughout North America. We also see this as a link in the future that would enhance the Eastern Region as well as other Regional League Programs.

However, we are also realistic and don’t claim to have all the answers. We are aware that progress does not hinge on the accomplishments of one individual and therefore your help and your support is crucial in order to establish and maintain the existence of the “North American Table Tennis Veterans Association.” We believe that our collective thoughts can be a great asset to this enterprise. Please show your support by responding to either Bob at tabletennis@usa.com, to me at chiefghb@yahoo.com, or fax to Ms. Fynn at 604-926-8748.

Table Tennis Veterans, Masters, Seniors, let’s make it happen. Let’s expand. It’s in our best interest. Show your support by expediting your response today with your comments and input. We look forward to hearing from you.
**OPEN SINGLES**

The Open had one early-round casualty. In the round of 32, Razvan Cretu, the left-handed two-winged power-looper from Texas, faced a looping and blocking Randy Seemiller. Too often Randy got easy third-ball loops when Razvan passively pushed the serve back, and Randy won in five, 15-12, 14-11, 10. This would be the only five-gamer until the semifinals.

**EIGHTHS AND QUARTERS OF OPEN**

The 8ths were mostly uncontested, with one surprising exception. Six of the matches were 3-0, with Randy Seemiller’s win over Tai Long Tey (16, -22, 18, 10) one of the exceptions. Emilia Ciosiu’s 12, 19, 16 win over Shao Yu was a mild surprise – and the two would later pull off a larger upset to win Open Doubles over David Zhuang and Todd Sweeris.

The surprise? You’d think the U.S. National Champion would have little trouble with the U.S. Under 16 #1, Mark Hazinski. Granted, Cheng had just overcome arm problems suf-fered at the Olympic Trials a few weeks before (with two recent cortisone shots), but he’d declared himself ready for this tournament – and Mark was obviously ready for him... almost. Mark’s two-winged attack, whenever it got into play, surprised Cheng over and over with its power. Often Mark seemed to barely stroke the ball, but the ball would explode past Cheng like a rocket. But Cheng’s consistency and years of experience came out in the end. Match to Cheng, 16, -18, 11, 22. Confidence and bright future to Hazinski.

The quarterfinals were 3-0, 3-0, 3-0, 3-0, with no game closer than 21-17. The losers still collected $500 each, while the four winners were guaranteed $1000, and the chance for the first- or second-place prizes of $5000 and $2500. Which brings us to...

**THE SEMIFINALS**

Cheng Yinghua vs. Kurt Liu

If you’ve never seen a world-class player push against deep balls to the forehand (excluding choppers), here was your chance. Cheng, perhaps leery of re-injuring his arm, was playing every point either very, very passively, pushing and blocking, or attacking all-out with his forehand and ending the point quickly. It took a game for Cheng’s blocking to zero in on Canada’s Kurt Liu’s two-winged bullet loops, but after losing the first, Cheng built up and maintained leads the next three. Match to Cheng, -17, 15, 13, 17.

**FINAL**

David Zhuang vs. Cheng Yinghua

This match seemed a reply of Cheng’s win over Kurt Liu in the semifinals, only Cheng was Kurt, David was Cheng. After Cheng won the first game, 25-23, David seemed to zone in on Cheng’s shots, and went up 19-15 in the second. Serving at 16-19, Cheng serve and ripped three straight winners – one of them a rare backhand loop kill (against David’s aggressive forehand flip), something Cheng had been holding back on throughout the tournament. At 19-all, David gets a net ball, Cheng gets a counter-net! David quick backhand-jab-blocks, and Cheng misses. At 19-20, Cheng loops loops over and over and over, but David really is zoned in – and Cheng finally misses to tie the match up at 1-1.

But David seems really tuned into whatever Cheng can do, and although Cheng brought his backhand loop out of “retirement,” it just didn’t seem that effective. David won the third, 21-15, and led 20-15 quintuple championship point in the fourth.

“Closed $20,000 price money...” David yelled, referring to the difference between the first- and second-place prize money.

“That’s a mistake” said U.S. Men’s Coach Dan Seemiller. “Now he’s put pressure on himself.” Sure enough, Cheng scored three in a row, and suddenly David seemed less an immovable object while Cheng’s an unstoppable force. Unstoppable? An edge at 18-20 proved he was stoppable. Match and Championship to David, -23, 19, 15, 18.
Under 12 Boys & Under 3200 Doubles
Champ John Leach.

WOMEN'S SINGLES
Emilia Ciosu may have won Open Doubles and made the quarterfinals of the Open, but she had her hands full in the final here with Mimi Bosika. Ciosu won, 13-13, 15, while Bosika went on to make the final of U2400 against Srinivas Ramanathan.

SENIOR EVENTS
Cheng's consolation in losing the Open final was to win Over 40 Singles, by default over Abass Ekun. (Abass would, in turn, get a default win over fellow-New Yorker Shao Yu in the Under 2550 final.) Dave Sakai continued his exploits started in the North American Tour by splitting the Over 50 final with Paul Pashuka and winning Under 2300. Sakai and Pashuka both made the semifinals of Over 40 Singles as well.

JUNIOR EVENTS
Mark Hazinski easily dominated Under 18 Boys, defeating Arturo Shiu in the final, 15 & 18. Laura Xiao upset top-seeded Elaine Kwok to win Under 18 Girls, but Elaine went on to win Under 15 Girls over Laura Leach. Laura Leach's brother, John Leach (namesake of the great English 2-time world champion) then won Under 12 Boys. Completing a sort of circuit, John Leach then teamed with Laura Xiao to win Under 3200 Doubles. Meanwhile, it was Mark Hazinski's sister, Katie, who won Under 12 Girls over Esther Gusov. Then, while Terrence Kalicharan was making the semifinals of both Under 18 Boys and Under 2300, his brother Winston was making the semifinals of Under 12 Boys. Are you getting all of this?

Not to be forgotten: Howard Lamb made the trip from Houston to win Under 15 Boys over Joe Podvin. Lamb would also make the final of Under 2100, while Podvin would make the final of Under 1800.

The hometown Cochran brothers didn't go home empty-handed. Andy won Under 1900; Joe was second in Under 1400; and Gordon was second in Under 12 Boys.

HARDBAT
Don Brazzel showed his "upset" win over Dan Seemiller at the recent Buckeye Open was not a fluke, defeating Larry Hodges in the hardbat final. Hodges had defeated Seemiller in the semifinals, deuce-in-the-third, and the conventional-wisdom favorite for the event, Ashu Jain, in the quarterfinals. Let's face it — Don, brace yourself. If you lined up the eight hardbat quarterfinalists and asked a not-in-the-know person to rank them, Brazzel would have come in about seventh. Yet Brazzel, barely moving his feet and looking all of his 46 years of age, just steadily topspins and topspins and topspins from both sides until the other guy misses.

If Brazzel would have come in seventh, who would have come in eighth? One of the best hardbat players in the country, and in fact one of the best players, period, 2274-rated and athletic-looking Mitch Seidenfeld, who also was the gold medalist at the 1993 and 1997 World Dwarf Games, and the gold medalist for Standing Disabled at the 1992 Paralympics.
To GLUE or NOT To GLUE —
Should You Or Shouldn’t You?

By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach

To glue or not to glue?

Speed gluing (“regluing”) gradually revolutionized table tennis, starting in the early or mid-1970s, when a few top Europeans discovered the extra speed and spin they got by using certain types of bicycle glues to attach the sponge hitting surface to the racket. It took another decade or so before gluing was done by the masses, but its benefits made this inevitable. Its use in some ways hit an all-time peak with Mikael Appelgren, a Swedish player who reached #1 in the world in the early 1980s with a style of play almost completely relying on glue — and who not only reglued before a match, but often between games as well, leading to “stalling” rules.

Speed glue adds both speed and spin to the ball for three to eight hours after being applied. The ball literally slingshots off a speed-glued paddle, and the extra speed and spin give the user of that paddle an advantage. The net result is faster and spin-nier loops, and faster drives and blocks. There is also a loss of control on slow touch shots. Speed glue especially works with inverted surfaces, but they also work with short pips-out. Few players use speed glue for long pips or antispin.

Who should reglue? If you ask five coaches, you might get five different answers. A good guideline is you probably shouldn’t reglue until your strokes are pretty well developed. Otherwise, you might not learn to stroke the ball, relying on the glue too much, which will hurt your development later. Most players start to reglue somewhere in the 1700 to 2100 rating range, but some do it even sooner, and some become very good players without regluing. At the highest levels, just about everyone reglues (including pips-out players), except for some defensive players.

So how does one go about gluing?

The first thing to do is understand the safety considerations. Many glues were made illegal for use in table tennis in the 1990s due to the toxic fumes they produce. For a time, there was a lot of controversy because the illegal “toxic” glues were simply better than the legal ones, and so many players used the illegal ones, thereby gaining an illegal and unhealthy advantage. However, by the end of the 1990s, there was almost no difference in performance between legal and illegal glues. (There was also a ban on regluing in the early 1990s, but it was overturned mostly due to the difficulty in enforcing and to protests by players.)

Even legal glues give off fumes which are not healthy in large or concentrated doses. Here are the Safety Regulations from Butterfly’s Master Chack: “In order to avoid unpleasant vapors, use this glue only in ventilated places. Do not use in sports halls, changing rooms or other areas which are not ventilated.”

Once you’ve chosen a speed glue (based on advice from other players or simply from what is said in a catalog or ad), how do you put it on? It seems like everyone has their own pet gluing technique. But the basic method is as follows:

A new sheet of sponge needs to be glued about three times before it is ready. Spread the glue thinly over the sponge with a brush, and allow to dry. Repeat two more times. From here on, this sheet of sponge will only need one layer of glue on it to perform each time.

You also need to put a thin layer of glue on the racket. It dries slower on the wood, so normally glue this side first.

Allow the glue on both the sponge and racket to dry, but don’t let it overdry — you’ll lose the speed glue effect faster if you do. As soon as there are no more wet spots visible (2-5 minutes), roll the sponge onto the racket from the bottom up. If it’s a new sheet of sponge, make sure it is centered exactly so that you’ll be able to center it again when you next reglue.

Speed gluing only lasts a few hours, anywhere from 3-8 hours or so. There are now several long-lasting glues that last up to eight hours, but they take longer to dry.

To make the speed glue effect last even longer, wrap it in plastic and put in a racket case when not using it. This will double the length of the speed glue effect, and often increase the effect itself.

When you first speed glue, expect initial loss of control. However, you’ll regain most of this. For touch shots, speed glue is a disadvantage. However, once you get used to it, speed glue makes it easier to control the ball at a faster pace and with more spin if you are looping.

To glue or not to glue? That is the question that you have to ask of you!


c

CONNECTICUT GRASSROOTS GRANT

NETTA/Connecticut TT thanks USATT

By David Strang, NETTA Connecticut Coach/Clubs Director

I’ve been promoting our sport in Connecticut since NETTA founder Norm Chouinard helped me re-locate in 1993 to promote statewide programs.

During 1998-99, assisted by a $2000 USATT grant, I operated three club locations plus home/office-based individual coaching. The Middletown TTC in central Connecticut, begun by Norm at Riverview Hospital, is in a state foster-care facility, featuring “open” club play and youth table tennis classes.

In 1996 I established the Fairfield TTC in southwest Connecticut, a popular “open” (all ages) club, through the Fairfield Town Recreation department.

Since 1995 I’ve coached and assisted in organizing a youth club in New Haven in South-Central Connecticut in association with Peter Noble’s Fairhaven Athletics/Pequenas Ligas Hispanas, an award-winning multi-sport and mentoring organization. This urban after-school program was funded by charitable and government grants. The USATT Grant helped it to continue after the loss of some public funding in mid-1998.

Other outreaches aided by the grant have included exhibitions at area schools and colleges and the Connecticut Senior Games, and development of a state web site. Since 1993, state-wide youth participation and USATT membership are up. Participation in our annual state tournament doubled and weekly club attendance has increased 20% this past year. I hope our strategies for club growth and retaining “newbies” can be expanded on in a future article.

Again, thanks to USATT, my club members, the previously mentioned individuals and organizations, plus Howard Sosin, Leon Weinberg, and my first coach, Walt Bubley, and my wonderful mother who have all helped me share my love of our sport in Ohio and now Connecticut.

PENSACOLA GRASSROOTS GRANT

The Pensacola Table Tennis Club would like to express its sincere thanks to USATT and all its members for the Grassroots Grant it received for 1998-99. Monies received allowed us to secure a new playing site and additional playing time. Two new tables and net sets were purchased and placed at one of the local YMCA branches. This branch supports many youth sports and now adds table tennis to its repertoire. It also allows players who are not able to make it on our Thursday night session a chance to practice on Saturdays.

Some other activities Pensacola Table Tennis sponsored include an exhibition at a local mall, two training clinics conducted by Razvan Creu and Richard McAfee, as well as our two annual tournaments. We also had good public exposure at “Sports Day,” sponsored by YMCA. “Springfest” drew over 100,000 people and PTTA was there entertaining the crowd and introducing themselves.

We are unable to charge any membership fees due to restrictions imposed on us by our playing site sponsors. This makes it very fiscally challenging for our club to do the things we wish to do. We strive to retain, as well as add to our membership, yet continue to experience the “revolving door syndrome.” We shall continue our mission of promoting table tennis by trying to expand our junior and adult membership and training programs as well as adding to and updating our equipment. The USATT Grassroots Grant went a long way in our endeavors. Pensacola Table Tennis thanks all those involved.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE - July/August 2000
SOUTH BEND OPEN
South Bend, IN • April 22, 2000
Open: Mark Hazinski d. Mark Nordby, 3-0.
Open Doubles: Mark Hazinski/Mark Nordby d. Nate Troyer/Randy Hewitt, 2-1.
U2300: Don Hamilton d. Jared Lynch, 2-0.
U1850: Mark Merritt d. Al King, 2-0.
U1725: Tomasz Jablonski d. George Esters, 2-1.
U1600: Tomasz Jablonski d. Gordon Cochran, 2-0.
U1400: Fred Wang d. Arnold Smith, 2-0.
U1200: Ploy Thithuan d. Carl Kahn, 2-0.
U1300 Doubles: Clark/Amrhein d. Dawson/Weatherly, 2-0.

SCHAUMBURG NO WAITING OPEN
Schaumburg, IL • February 26, 2000
Group A: 1st Arturo Shiu; 2nd Spencer Lam.
Group B: 1st Leon Li; 2nd Rafael Bardo.
Group C: 1st Kaen Li; 2nd Ji rehabilitation.
Group D: 1st Barbara Popiel; 2nd Toraee Raharlo.
Group E: 1st Jim Walter; 2nd Dick Gerasta.
Group F: 1st Peter Hermann; 2nd Octavia Wash.
Group G: 1st Pat Waltz; 2nd Paul Ertner.
Group H: 1st Cameron Marantz; 2nd Keith Ertner.
Group I: 1st Steve Dorn; 2nd Renata Lakomska.

DAVISON TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS
Davison, MI • February 26, 2000
Open: 1st John & Nick Wetzler; 2nd Dennis and Chris.
Junior/Adult Doubles: 1st Peter Herman; 2nd Octavia Washington.
Under 14: 1st Bill Dowell; 2nd Olanda Russell.
Under 18: 1st John Dowell; 2nd Eli Green.
Under 16: 1st Ben Dowell; 2nd Eli Green.
U2300 Doubles: 1st John & Nick Wetzler; 2nd Dennis and Chris.
Junior/Adult Doubles: 1st John & Nick Wetzler; 2nd Dennis and Chris.
Open: 1st Merr Trumbere; 2nd Magadi Renganath.

DAVISON MARCH OPEN
Davison MI • March 25, 2000
Group A: 1st Arturo Shiu; 2nd Spencer Lam.
Group B: 1st Leon Li; 2nd Rafael Bardo.
Group C: 1st Kaen Li; 2nd Ji rehabilitation.
Group D: 1st Barbara Popiel; 2nd Toraee Raharlo.
Group E: 1st Jim Walter; 2nd Dick Gerasta.
Group F: 1st Peter Hermann; 2nd Octavia Washington.
Group G: 1st Pat Waltz; 2nd Paul Ertner.
Group H: 1st Cameron Marantz; 2nd Keith Ertner.
Group I: 1st Steve Dorn; 2nd Renata Lakomska.

MARYLAND CIRCUIT
Gaithersburg, MD • April 22-23, 2000
Open – Final: Han Xiao d. Nazruddin Asgarali, 21,18,19; SF: Xiao d. John Wetzler, 24,23,18, 21,18; Asgarali d. Larry Hodges, 15,18,14.
U2200 – Final: Ching Ming Duan d. Pat Lui, 19,18,18; SF: Duan d. Vijay Madhavan, 19,14,15; Lui d. Lixin Lang, -11,11,15.
U1600: Roger Abbott d. Nobuhiko Koyama, 18,14.
U1300: George Williams d. Craig Costa, 16,11.
U1000: Rong Xu d. Shiang Liu, 11,22.

MARYLAND CLOSED
Eldersburg, MD • April 29, 2000
Open: 1st Magadi Renganath; 2nd Ricardo Menendez.
U1400: 1st Ben Dowell; 2nd Olanda Russell.
Novice/Under 18: 1st James Duan; 2nd Eric Mccone.
Under 14: 1st Ben Dowell; 2nd Eli Green.
Under 16: 1st John Vos; 2nd Fong Hsu.
Open: 1st Mark Cohen; 2nd Alan Pruce.
Handicap: 1st John Vos; 2nd Renganath.
Handicap: 1st Mark Cohen; 2nd Alan Pruce.

MARYLAND OPEN
Gaithersburg, MD • April 22-23, 2000
Final: Han Xiao d. Nazruddin Asgarali, 21,18,19; SF: Xiao d. John Wetzler, 24,23,18, 21,18; Asgarali d. Larry Hodges, 15,18,14.
U2200 – Final: Ching Ming Duan d. Pat Lui, 19,18,18; SF: Duan d. Vijay Madhavan, 19,14,15; Lui d. Lixin Lang, -11,11,15.
U1600: Roger Abbott d. Nobuhiko Koyama, 18,14.
U1300: George Williams d. Craig Costa, 16,11.
U1000: Rong Xu d. Shiang Liu, 11,22.
ATLANTA SPRING OPEN
Atlanta, GA • April 22, 2000
Open: 1st Kwaavi de Souza; 2nd John Mar; 3rd Messan Lawson.
U2150: 1st George Cooper; 2nd Xiaolei Hu.
U1900: 1st Daya Budiman; 2nd Rohit Desai.
U1650: 1st Keith Arnes; 2nd James Lee.
U1400: 1st James Lee; 2nd Leo Gordon.
U1000: 1st Matt Johnson; 2nd Phillip Gustavson.
Over 40: 1st Thomas Nunes; 2nd Xiaolei Hu.
Under 18: 1st Robert Anderson; 2nd Matt Johnson.
Under 16: 1st Osman Faruqi; 2nd Edima Ufot.
KANSAS LATE WINTER CLASSIC
Wichita, KS • March 11, 2000
Class A: 1st Mark Nordby; 2nd Yufei Xiao; 3rd Masaaki Yana; 4th Joshua Bartel.
Class B: 1st Carl Miller; 2nd Jerry Gustafson.
Class C: 1st John Oroz; 2nd Tom Kluth.
Class D: 1st George Taplin; 2nd Cliff Matzger.
Class E: 1st Cortney Spaven; 2nd Charles Rucker.
U3600 Doubles: 1st Mark Nordby/Cortney Spaven; 2nd Venkatesh Movva/Rob Kyker.
ARIZONA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Phoenix, AZ • April 22, 2000
Open Singles – Final: Siemon Potaychuk d. Leo Lucas,
16,19,16; SF: Gotsch d. Arina Boileau (FRA), 19,17; SF: Liu Guoliang (CHN), 18,19.
Over 20 Singles: Gotsch d. Arina Boileau (FRA), 18,16,19; SF: Chila d. Jean-Philippe Gatien (FRA), 17,16,15.
Men’s Doubles – Final: Patrick Chilla/Jean-Philippe Gatien (FRA) d. Li Xiaopu/Calvinous Kengha (YUG/GRE), 16,15,12.
Men’s Open Team – Final: Sweden d. Germany, 4-1:
Karlsson (SWE), 9,10; Waldner/Person (SWE) d.
Waldner (SWE), 9,10; Waldner/Person (SWE) d.
Women’s Open Team – Final: Ukraine d.
Russia, 4-1: Mariana Petrovna (UKR), 1,10,16,14;
Maryna Pawla (UKR), 19,18,16; SF: Ukraine d.
Women’s Singles – Final: Qianhong Gotsch (GER) d.
Marina Petrovna (UKR), 10,1,16,14; SF: Ukraine d.
Women’s Doubles – Final: Kristina Kulaeva/Cristina Tovchuga (KAZ) d.
Valentina Vasileva/Kristina Kulaeva (KAZ), 13,16,19; SF: Kristina Kulaeva/Cristina Tovchuga (KAZ) d.
Women’s Team – Final: Ukraine d.
Russia, 4-1: Natalya Zhemchugova (UKR), 1,10,16,14;
Natalya Zhemchugova (UKR), 19,18,16; SF: Ukraine d.
Women’s Singles – Final: Qianhong Gotsch (GER) d.
Anja Bouleau (FRA), 12,10,16,14; SF: Ukraine d.
Women’s Doubles – Final: Qianhong Gotsch (GER) d.
Anja Bouleau (FRA), 12,10,16,14; SF: Ukraine d.
Women’s Team – Final: Ukraine d.
Russia, 4-1: Natalya Zhemchugova (UKR), 1,10,16,14;
Natalya Zhemchugova (UKR), 19,18,16; SF: Ukraine d.
The USATT National Ratings List

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TOURNAMENTS INCLUDED IN RATINGS

1999 4th Annual U.S. Nat. Warm-Up  
MTTC 99 Winter Singles  
Friends of Ping Pong  
NJITC December Open  
U.S. Nationals  
Davidson December Open  
City of Atlanta Jr. League Part 1  
STTC Jan 2000  
Cleveland Winter Open  
Maryland January Circuit  
NJITC January Open  
Lincoln Open  
National Team Trials  
2000 Royan Ozark Winter Classic  
Columbus Open RR  
Davison January Open  
Maryland January Circuit Teams  
Midtown Athletic Club TTT  
Schaumburg RR Open  
MDITC February Open  
Star of the North State Games  
Sac-Rec Winter Open RR  
Sooner State Games  
Sports Fitness IAT Series  
Golden Western States Open  
Orlando Winter Open  
Maryland February Circuit  
STTC February 2000  
South Bend Newmar Open  
2000 Augusta Jr. Champ. Open  
Florida One Day RR  
NJITC February Open  
2000 Michigan State Championships  
Davison Athletic Club Open  
Maryland February Circuit Teams  
Schaumburg No-Waiting RR Open  
Arizona Open  
Newark Macy Block Open  
NH Millennium RR Open  
Rochester Giant RR-2000  
Sports Fitness March Series  
Huntington RR Open  
STTC March 2000  
City of Atlanta Jr. League Part 2  
2000 Kansas Late Winter Classic  
Atlanta Giant RR  
Maryland March Circuit  
NJITC March Open  
2000 Millennium Madness Open  
Bumperbetts March Open  
New England “One Star” Open  
Buckeye Open TTT  
Davison March Open  
March Madness Canton Open  
Maryland March Circuit Teams  
Portland Double RR Open  
Schaumburg TTC 14th Anniversary  
2000 Irving Round Robin Open  
Colorado River Open  

Kantar/Aaron Clapp/Clint Sendoff  
Sports Fitness Player Series  
Syncore “April Fools” RR  
Air Traffic Spring Open  
MDITC April Open  
2000 Olympic Team Trials  
Dayton Giant RR  
Pace Table Tennis/Media One  
Potomac Valley Trials Jr Olympics  
Power TTC Spring RR  
Scenic City Open  
Maryland April Circuit  
NJITC April Open  
Spinners TTC  
Arkansas Open  
Three Rivers Spring Tournament

All ratings-related questions should be directed to Megan Kulenburg, USATT Headquarters, One Olympic 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 usat13@iex.net.
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UPCOMING USA TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENTS

July 8 - Sports Fitness Player Series, Clemmons, NC. Contact: Danny Hill, 3 Twin Brook Dr., Clemmons, NC 27012. Phone: 336-764-0010. dhilltt@aol.com

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

July 15 - Bay State Games, Cambridge, MA. Contact: David Marcus, 25 Beacon St. Apt. 16 Somerville, MA 02143. Phone 781-205-7185. davidmarcus@rcn.com

July 22 - Maryland July Circuit Teams, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.

July 22-23 - Daly City Mayoral Trophy TTT, Daly City, CA. Contact: Richard Hernandez, 76 Rey St. San Francisco, CA 94114. Phone 415-584-8220 or 415-469-9718. **

July 29 - Waco 2000 Summer Round Robin, Waco, TX. Contact: Grady Gordon, 4712 Westchester Drive, Waco, TX 76710. Phone 254-772-2838. ggordon@texaninternet.com *

July 29 - Ann Van Vooren Round Robin, Houston, TX. Contact: Roberto Byles, 4997 W. Bellfort, Houston, TX 77053. rbyles@houstonttc.com *

August 5 - Sports Fitness Player Series, Clemmons, NC. Contact: Danny Hill, 3 Twin Brook Dr., Clemmons, NC 27012. Phone: 336-764-0010. dhilltt@aol.com

August 5-6 - St. Louis Gateway Open, Webster Grove, MO. Contact: George Conlee, 1151 N. Dickson St., St. Louis, MO 63122. Phone 314-822-4627. **


August 18-20 - Matthew Murad Memorial Open on the NA Tour, College Park, MD. Contact: Richard Lee, P.O. Box 59451, Potomac, MD. 20859-9451. Phone: 410-366-6547. tour@natabletennis.com ****

August 19 - 2000 Decatur Open, Decatur, AL. Contact: Walt Chenault, 1701 Iris St. SW, Decatur AL 35601. Phone: 256-355-5754. mkwpong@aol.com **

August 26 - Maryland August Circuit Teams, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.

August 26-27 - Florida State Closed, Orlando, FL. Contact: Olga Soltess 1739 Shady Ridge Ct., Orlando, FL 32807. Phone 407-830-4009. **

September 2-3 - Labor Day Open, Warren, NJ. Contact: Lily Yip 14 Dock Watch Hollow Rd., Warren, NJ 07059. Phone 732-748-9711. atlanta96@msn.com ****

September 2-3 - Smack-N-Pack Team Tournament, Billings, MT. Contact: Romona Doll, 1256 Reece, Billings, MT 59105. Phone: 406-255-5210. londoll@imt.net **

September 9-10 - Ralph Robinson Memorial, Waltham, MA. Contact: Lim Ming Chui 65 Main St., Waltham, MA 02451. Phone 781-981-0651 or 781-862-1551.


September 16-17 - Lake Havasu Open, Lake Havasu, AZ. Contact: John Ballard, 1275 Bombay Ln., Lake Havasu City, AZ 86404. Phone: 520-453-8638. **

September 23 - Maryland September Circuit Teams, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.

September 29- Oct. 1 - Western Open on the North American Tour, TBD, CA. Contact: Richard Lee, P.O. Box 59451, Potomac, MD. 20859-9451. Phone: 410-366-6547. tour@natabletennis.com ****

October 7 - Sports Fitness Player Series, Clemmons, NC. Contact: Danny Hill, 3 Twin Brook Dr., Clemmons, NC 27012. Phone: 336-764-0010. dhilltt@aol.com

October 7-8 - MDTC October Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 18761-Q Frederick Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20879. Phone: 202-927-1958. *


October 21-22 - Tri-City Open Fall Double RR, Richland, WA. Contact: Kirby Parker, 2304 Snohomish Ave., Richland, WA 99352. Phone: 509-375-1587. slvrfox@owt.com *

October 26-29 - North American Corporate Games, West Palm Beach, FL. Contact: North American Corporate Games, 5840 Corporate Way, Suite 250, West Palm Beach, FL 33407-2040, 561-616-1999. info@nacorpgames.com

October 28 - Maryland October Circuit Teams, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.

November 4 - Sports Fitness Player Series, Clemmons, NC. Contact: Danny Hill, 3 Twin Brook Dr., Clemmons, NC 27012. Phone: 336-764-0010. dhilltt@aol.com

November 11-12 - Maryland November Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.

November 11-12 - Ming Table Tennis RR, Waltham, MA. Contact: Lim Ming Chui, 657 Main St. Waltham, MA 02451. Phone 781-981-0651.

November 23 - North American Hardbat Championships, Baltimore, MD. Contact: Richard Lee, P.O. Box 59451, Potomac, MD. 20859-9451. Phone: 410-366-6547. teams@natabletennis.com

November 24-26 - North American Teams Open Table Tennis Championships, Baltimore, MD. Contact: Richard Lee, P.O. Box 59451, Potomac, MD. 20859-9451. Phone: 410-366-6547. teams@natabletennis.com ****

December 2 - Sports Fitness Player Series, Clemmons, NC. Contact: Danny Hill, 3 Twin Brook Dr., Clemmons, NC 27012. Phone: 336-764-0010. dhilltt@aol.com

December 9-10 - Maryland December Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 14160 Forsythe Rd., Sykesville, MD 21784. Phone: 410-489-7291.
The Best Job Anyone Could Have

By Aly A. Salam

Aly Salam, who can be reached at asalam@karnak.com, is an ITTF International Umpire and Referee, USATT National Referee, an ITTF certified official, and an officer of the Atlanta Georgia Table Tennis Association.

Would you like to be known as one of the best professionals in your field? How about if the job involves world travel? Meeting foreign heads of state? Exploring incredible sites? Learning about foreign cultures? Much of your accommodations, food, and hospitality is paid for by your hosts. Most importantly, you are doing something you love and enjoy very much.

Does this sound too good to be true? Then read on because these are the opportunities available to qualified International Umpires and International Referees representing their associations at foreign championships.

I just returned from the 2000 World Team Championships in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Feb 19-27 representing the USA as an International Umpire. It was a wonderful and exciting experience full of adventure and a lifetime of memories.

After a 28-hour flight from Atlanta, I arrived exhausted but without my checked-in luggage. The host association whisked us to the appropriate hotel and we checked into a quality three star hotel that had just opened a few months earlier. With nothing to unpack I went out searching for adventure and emergency supplies.

Just a few blocks from the hotel I found myself enjoying the sights and sounds of a very vibrant suburb called Sri Petaling. I discovered a large seven-story mall, local food shops, tailors, banks, street merchants and a host of activities that were colorful and mesmerizing. I exchanged some money and bought some clothes to tide me over until my bags arrive. I returned to the hotel to prepare for the Opening ceremony and other festivities.

The ceremony was professionally presented with indigenous singing and dance routines as well as ample opportunities to meet old friends and make new ones. The atmosphere was full of excitement and anticipation with over 100 teams competing in the world title as well as jockeying to improve their overall ranking.

On the way back from the festivities I befriended our taxi driver “Hussein” who was a wealth of knowledge on the country and its customs. He became our unofficial tour guide throughout our stay in Kuala Lumpur. We learned from our hospital friends that Kuala Lumpur is a city of more than one million people. Malays, Chinese and Indians form the backbone while a floating population of Indonesians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Burmese, Portuguese, British, American, Pakistanis and Arabs provide an interesting mix that has a cross-cultural effect.

The Malaysian people are very friendly and accommodating. With English as a prevalent foreign language - from British colonial days – communication and business transactions were a breeze.

The influence of the Malays, Chinese and Indians was strongly evident in the little pockets of culture lifestyles that dot the capital and the country. The blending of the races has given Malaysia a distinctive identity. You can taste it in the food, see it in the dress, hear it in the music and experience it in the many festivals that are celebrated throughout the country.

Over the next five days a few of the foreign umpires and I took many opportunities to explore and experience the Malaysian culture whenever we had a break from our assigned duties. As soon as our shifts were over, I would call Hussein on his cell phone and he would take us around Kuala Lumpur. We saw some of the most incredible sights in Southeast Asia and sampled a variety of ethnic foods ranging from delicious to scorching hot.

We visited the second tallest tower in Asia – Menara Kuala Lumpur, a fascinating butterfly garden, an ethnically diverse national museum, the most impressive twin tower office buildings in the world “KLCC” – and its five story exclusive shopping center – as well as several magnificent Islamic mosques.

The Table Tennis assignments were also exceptional. My USA umpiring partner – Dr. Azmy Ibrahim – and I had several opportunities to umpire some exciting team matches. The women’s team match between Hungary and Hong Kong was the most memorable. The aggressive attacking style of the Hungarian women was similar to their male counterparts.

The main difficulties faced during this adventure were constant heartbeat – from a variety of unusual and spicy food – and the inability to adjust to the 13 hours of time zone change. Getting up at 2 AM every day (3 PM Atlanta time) was a challenge that was fulfilled by occupying my time with work. I would spend several hours every day writing letters, reviewing and responding to emails on the Internet and monitoring the performance of one of my Internet projects www.karnak.com. Surprisingly, I got more work done with a laptop computer and a simple phone line while I was away than a full day at the office with clients/servers applications, gateways and ISDN connections. Probably because there were fewer interruptions and an increased time in meetings or driving to/from work.

On the next to the last day of the tournament I took the opportunity of being in a Moslem country and joined my fellow Moslems in the Friday afternoon prayer service in the mosque near the hotel. After the service was over, I noticed a crowd gathering near the front. The crowd was orderly and appeared to be listening to a distinguished elderly gentleman. With a curious look on my face, the person next to me was kind enough to inform me that this was the King of Malaysia on his weekly visit to one of his favorite mosques in the city. Without much effort, I followed those that were in line to meet the King and introduced myself. He took my hand and wished me more “salamat” for the rest of my stay in Malaysia.

I returned to the playing hall to some more good news. I was selected to officiate one of the most important feature matches of the tournament – the Women’s Team final between China and Taipei. My partner for the match was my longtime friend and fellow 1996 Olympic umpire Mr. Russell Glasson from Australia. To be chosen to umpire one of the most important matches in a World Championship from 122 other umpires was an honor for our country and a culmination of a long and hard journey for both of us. We conducted a flawless match in front of thousands of spectators and live television coverage and ended our tour of duty at the 47th World Championships on a very high note.

The adventure did not end with umpiring a finals match in a world championship. Being halfway around the globe and so near to some of the best beaches and scuba diving sites in the world, I took a few days to visit other parts of Malaysia and enjoy the spectacular scenery that is hidden beneath the waves.

During three days of diving in Redang Island, I came across what most scuba divers would only dream of encountering during a lifetime of diving. There were sea turtles, manta rays, moray eels, guitar sharks, colorful queen angelfish, hot corals, schools of bump head parrotfish and the grandaddy of all marine life – a whale shark. What a fitting end to a wonderful adventure.

The trip back to Atlanta took over 30 hours of continuous travel and crossed the international dateline. However, this time I had a lifetime of memories and new experiences. Reliving each singular adventure and making the most out of each minute made the trip back much easier and less hectic. Representing my association with confidence and pride, meeting old friends and making new ones, officiating a feature match, experiencing the wealth and culture of an incredible society made this the best avocation anyone would hope for.

My deepest thanks and appreciation to the Malaysian government and the host association for executing a successful and memorable world championship; and to the ITTF and the USATT for providing the opportunities to participate and contribute to one of the most exciting experiences available to anyone in this sport.

So, what is the best job anyone could have? It is the one you enjoy doing and can make the most out of with every opportunity presented. That is the opportunity available to all International Umpires and International Referees during many foreign assignments. So, if you are a qualified international official, enhance your experience and share in the excitement by volunteering at the next opportunity available to you. If you are not fully qualified to represent your association at foreign tournaments, what are you waiting for? It is your next best chance of finding yourself on center court experiencing world-class competition and perhaps coming across a King or a Queen “angelfish” on the way. Editor’s note: For information on becoming a USATT certified official, contact USATT Headquarters at 719-578-4583 or usatt@iex.com.
We, the Executive Committee of the Southern California Table Tennis Association, have decided to take a public position on the issue of the Table Tennis rating system.

Our position is that the current USATT rating system must be abolished. We also believe that it must not be replaced by the proposed amended version, which—in our eyes—carries the same fundamental, fatal flaws.

We ask the reader to please follow our thoughts avoiding any emotional prejudice. We take this position without personal attack or judgment. It is simply our honest belief, distilled from decades of our combined experience, confirmed by findings of a reputable sports psychologist.

The fatal flaw of the current or the proposed rating systems has an insidious way of preying on players’ minds in a way that is difficult even for adults to fight, let alone children. Here are some of its effects:

- New players who are initially enthusiastic about the sport—and about tournament play—begin to shy away from competition and eventually abandon the sport after a few tournaments in which they fail to increase or maintain their original rating.
- Players who enter the sport, embrace the rating system, and proceed to find ways to manipulate it to increase their own standing. These players are most likely to only play in events that are far above their assigned rating, in the hopes of upsetting a higher-rated player while not jeopardizing any of their own rating points. The primary emphasis for these players is not on how to improve their play, but rather, how best to increase their ratings.
- Players who work at keeping their ratings artificially low (“sandbaggers”), with the goal of winning a particular event in a larger tournament. The current ratings system is perfect for the sandbagger, because it allows them to dramatically reduce their rating very quickly.
- Players who have performed successfully in a tournament default their remaining matches, even if they’re far into the draw and could potentially win the event, in order not to jeopardize the gains they’ve made.
- Players reach a rating goal and stop playing tournaments for fear of decrease or maintain their original rating.

There is no question that we need a classification system in order to distinguish players of varying playing level. That playing level is the result of a long-term accumulation of skills and is not always reflected in a player’s recent performance history. For classification purposes, it is mostly of interest what level players are capable of playing, and not so much how they actually performed in the last few matches.

While it is possible that a player might not always play up to his/her potential, it is wrong to assume that a level once reached has now been lost. Poor performance can be caused by many factors—mental and physical—but it usually is not the reflection of the loss of a skill. Skills, once truly learned, are not easy to lose.

Although the ability to deal with mental pressure is key in sports performance, we must remember that we are not attempting to build an association of two million pros. The vast majority of players will never compete at a professional level. They will do it because they enjoy it. Adding unnecessary pressure to a competitive situation detracts from that enjoyment and thus reduces the number of long-term participants. This negative effect may not apply to you, the reader, but if you think carefully, I’m certain that you know many to whom it does.

In researching this issue we had the opportunity to discuss the current rating system with licensed psychotherapist Fred Talisman who specializes in sports psychology and has worked with professional and amateur athletes for over 23 years. Put in simple terms, he mentioned well known psychological phenomena which explain the high turnover and lack of growth in tournament participation:

- “The fear of failure stops people from moving forward or even gets them to stop acting.”
- “The motivation to avoid discomfort outweighs the motivation to seek success.”
- “Participation in a sport depends on sustaining positive motivation so the participant has something to look forward to.”

Applied to our problem this means that many players would choose not to compete rather than expose themselves to the additional humiliation contained in losing status/rating points. The loss of a match alone, while unpleasant, has no long-term effect and can quickly be forgotten. It is the additional “punishment” in the form of losing rating points that provides the lasting discomfort.

The feeling of being a failure that can result from a bad tournament under the current system can not only make players lose interest in tournaments but drive them from the sport for good once the disappointment over losing a match becomes secondary to that over losing status.

It is to be expected that one takes interest in how one’s performance is graded by one’s peers. The problem arises when this grading system, due to its scientific-looking appearance, is accepted as an accurate reflection of level. In reality, playing strength is an amorphous concept that cannot be measured very accurately, since it is a combination of many intangibles. For anyone with any experience in our sport it is evident that there is no significant tangible or measurable level difference between a 1625 and a 1570 player. Yet currently in a match between the two of them, one is the favorite and one the underdog. And, in their belief, they feel as such and often unwittingly perform their roles, although they really belong to the same level class.

Players cannot afford to add new techniques to their game without jeopardizing their rating under the current system. They tend to concentrate on short-term gains rather than long-term solidity in order to avoid the discomfort of a point loss. The fact that most players first look at the ratings when they receive a new issue of USA Table Tennis Magazine is a clear indication of their focus. This has an association-wide result of limiting the development of our player’s playing strength.

In our current system, one bad loss can undo what was built in a year of steady performance. It implies that the player suddenly got worse, and one upset win immediately raises the player’s level on paper and can give an illusion of improvement which is bound to result in disappointment when performance returns to its normal level.

Playing strength is not only reflected in the performance in an individual match. Our current system does not reward winning a whole event or winning at a more significant tournament—accomplishments which generally require a higher level than winning a particular match.

Recently, an unsanctioned tournament was held in Pasadena, California. No ratings were at stake. This one-day tourney drew 90 entries, of which close to half regularly play at local clubs, but are not USATT members and never compete in sanctioned tournaments.

We conclude that a useful classification system, while having reasonably high thresholds for advancement into the next class, should only allow descent in extraordinary cases (such as permanent injury, and then only by request of the player and with approval of an appropriate authority) once that advancement has been earned, not as a punitive result for poor performance.

Our goal for this position paper is to bring the discussion into the clubs and try to build a consensus. This is the first step—helping to recognize that a fundamental change is needed. In a second step, at the appropriate time, we will make our recommendation for a replacement system.

We believe a level class system that is more comparable to different belt colors in martial arts should be developed. We are currently studying an alternative system, but have not come to a conclusion or an endorsement yet.

Please know that we have no hidden agenda. We have no intention of questioning the qualifications or motivations of anyone else involved in the ratings discussion. We simply believe that it is time we spoke up to help get rid of this impediment that has been crippling our sport for too long.

The Officers of the Southern California TTA

Muriel Kay, President
Jim Mahoney
Shibiro Hashimoto
Lloyd McQueen
Masaru Hashimoto
Diego Schaaf
Craig Krum

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • July/August 2000
TABLE TENNIS PROGRAMS STRENGTHEN SAN DIEGO TT ASSOCIATION

By Pam Ramsey, SDTTA Board Member

Along with the dawn of the new millennium and our new multimillion dollar facility has come new programs at the San Diego Table Tennis Association. Joining our already famous SDTTA Thursday Night Round Robin, which has been going on for over 20 years, comes:

- Ladie’s Night
- Monday Night Doubles Tourney
- Friday Night Handicap
- A Coaching Program
- An extensive Junior Program
- Membership Bag Tags
- An Exhibition Team
- Our 1st Annual Table Tennis Swap Meet

Ladies Night starts the week off on Mondays where all females, young and old, can play for free. This is to entice players to bring their wives or girlfriends, family and friends or the general public to try table tennis. We have targeted health spas and women’s gyms, and continue to add more women players to the roster of 10-12 regular women members that the SDTTA already has.

Mondays are also the night for the SDTTA’s Doubles Tourney. This weekly event kicked off with Neil Smyth’s “Colossal Doubles Jamboree” which involved four different doubles events on four consecutive Mondays. This included Under 3600 Doubles, Draw Doubles, “Mathematical Doubles” (where players are paired so that the sum of the ratings of all teams will be mathematically as close to one another as possible) and Handicap Doubles.

Fridays finds our players in heated Handicap Tournaments. This tournament is run by Fred Borges, former doubles partner of Dick Miles (10-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion). It’s fun to watch the lesser-skilled players fight to beat the higher-rated players with their point advantages.

The Junior Program on Saturdays is coordinated by Pam Ramsey and Clark Mitchell who have acquired a “pool” of coaches, headed by USATT Certified Club Coach Mike Dempsey. Other coaches include some of the SDTTA’s top players: Wen Tsay, Don Kim, Sai Kwok & Ron Spencer, assisted by Behnam Kazemi and other SDTTA Members. Ten of our newest juniors are under nine years old. Our older juniors are more advanced and show great potential.

RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE

By Haig Raky

League play at the RITTC on Monday nights is equitable as well as competitive. Players are initially appointed to groups assigned to their rating. Using an arbitrary figure of 18 players, we would have three groups of six. (Groups always have at least five players.) All matches are best two out of three. All scores are recorded in case of equal won and lost records in each group.

Each week we have an exchange of players up and down from each group. The person with the worse record in Group I moves down to Group II the following week, and the person with the best record in Group II moves up to Group I, etc. Our system allows a player the chance to move to a group much stronger than his normal rating if he has an exceptional night of play.

Club fees are $5 on league nights, $3 on non-league nights.

Our club has six tables, of which five are generally used for league play. When a match is over, players put their names on the sign-up sheet, winner’s name first, to await their name coming up for their next match.

This system works very well for us and is the fairest one we know of.

TABLE TENNIS PROGRAMS STRENGTHEN SAN DIEGO TT ASSOCIATION

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This program is sponsored in part by Newgy, Paddle Palace and Scott Preiss of “Table Tennis The Sport.” Pam is also looking for outside sponsors to obtain prizes for weekly Junior Round Robins, such as Blockbuster gift certificates, Music CD’s, video games, etc… things the kids would be interested in winning that will draw them in to play!!!!! Kid’s Day T-Shirts are also on the agenda for the juniors who participate.

Our Coaching Program is directed toward beginning adults, and intermediate & advanced players of all ages. We have initiated an idea that seems to work better than other coaching programs in the past. We acquire one coach for four consecutive weekends, take one month off, then have a different coach come in. This system gives all participants a variety of coaches and coaching techniques without the burn-out of having continuous paid coaching, which seems to fizzle out in time. So far we have been lucky to have nationally renowned coach Christian Lillieroos and other top players, such as Loc Ngo and Attila Malek. Coaching varies from private coaching to coaching clinics.

Since the SDTTA has so many members (up to 200), we have initiated the use of Membership Bag Tags to better our system of determining who is a member and who is not. Each paid member receives a free plastic card holder and tie with their membership card. Bag Tags are required to be placed on the outside strap of each member’s table tennis bag. This also helps to identify each person’s bag since there are so many that look alike. The Bag Tags have become a success and everyone appreciates the feeling of “being official.”

SDTTA Vice President Clark Mitchell is in charge of putting together a SDTTA Exhibition Team, which will be performing at halftime at basketball games and other exhibitions at our San Diego Sports Arena, shopping malls and schools. We have also been in contact with U.S. table tennis showman Scott Preiss, who is willing to come to San Diego to help put on an exhibition in the near future.

The SDTTA held its 1st Annual Table Tennis Swap Meet on Saturday, April 22nd. Players got to dust off their robots and bring out their old rackets, bags and other used (or new) table tennis items. A “donation” box was set aside for leftover items to be donated to under-privileged children.

Don’t forget to visit our Award-Winning web site at www.sdatta.com!
Table Tennis is so mainstream that you can go to the mall to buy equipment... or play? right back! Sound farfetched? Do you often daydream about the day

Homer Brown is a real dynamo, a go-getter and fire-eater who won't see his business fail from lack of effort. Perhaps this is the model for the future of our sport. "Franchises will be for sale soon!" he smiles. "I've done exhibitions for the Birmingham Bulls, Disneyworld, in malls, at private parties, at schools, whatever it takes. I give lessons and sell equipment. I arrange parties and leagues and run Table Tennis videos here full-time. This is a great sport! But until people have the opportunity to actually learn about it in a highly visible, first-class location, we will continue to be America's biggest mystery."

One thing is no mystery. Homer Brown is a full-time advocate and promoter for Table Tennis in America. BumperNets in Birmingham, Alabama is simply the latest manifestation of his love of Table Tennis.

Thanks to the efforts of Homer Brown, the dream is now a reality. Homer owns and operates "BumperNets," retail Table Tennis Emporium and playing space in the Brookwood Village Mall in Birmingham, Alabama.

BumperNets has six courts, two full-sized and four smaller ones, with Butterfly Europas in 5200 square feet of mall space. A Newgy robot is in action in the front window. Homer Brown is living the dream. In the words of the company slogan, "From the beginner to the pro, BumperNets is a fun place to go!"

This is only the latest venture for Homer, a well-known figure in the sport for 34 years. In 1966 he began selling Butterfly equipment and is Butterfly's longest running dealer in the U.S. Homer is also the record-holder for consecutive appearances at the U.S. Open (31! in a row!) and a non-stop innovator and promoter for our game.

"It started with an exhibition booth for two months here at the Brookwood Mall," Homer explains. "The exhibition booth was such a success, a real showstopper, that the mall approached me about opening a retail location here."

Homer has a lot of marketing and business experience, previously holding executive positions with BP Oil and Vulcan Oil. Now he is one of the few people in America making a living full-time in the sport. His enthusiasm and willingness to take risks are his biggest assets in his effort.

"I have a lot of experience with teaching and demonstrating the sport," the whirlwind promoter continued. "I've worked with Middle Schools, Elementary Schools, High School P.E. instructors, the Topspin program and Escalade and Newgy for decades. Once someone begins playing this game correctly, it's addictive! All we have to do is spread the word and put the sport in a visible position."

BumperNets allows 'walk-in' play, with $3 an hour for youngsters and $5 play-all-night fees. "Sure, parents use me as a babysitter while they shop, at least to start with, but listen to this. I sold a birthday party for a 13-year-old girl and she and all her friends played here at BumperNets. Within a week, her parents were back to buy a table for their home. It's infectious!"

Homer isn't relying strictly on Table Tennis in his business plan. Foosball table play and sales also contribute to the bottom line. Using his extensive business experience and 24/7 approach to promotion, Homer is making a go of the often discussed and frequently abandoned idea of Table Tennis clubs as full-time self-supporting businesses. And of course he's on the World Wide Web at www.bumpernets.com.

Waltham TT Club

Waltham, Massachusetts • By Bill Murray

On February 25th of this year the Waltham Table Tennis Club opened at its new playing site at the Fernald Center in Waltham, Massachusetts. The Club takes its name from the club previously operated by the late Benny Hull. Hull's club, a fixture in Massachusetts table tennis for over 40 years, closed in 1998. Started by Club President Mozart Francois, the new Club extends the tradition of Waltham Table Tennis by providing the best playing opportunities in the area. The Club plays every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, and has four new Butterfly Europa tables. According to Francois, the new tables and the wood floors make for fast playing conditions, and players love it. Plans are already underway to add more tables and operate sanctioned tournaments at the site. The elevated seating at the gym makes a great venue to watch the best in New England compete. Despite taking up the traditions of old, Francois' club represents a new direction for table tennis in the area. The Club is non-profit and operates in the best facilities seen by New England players in a long time. Hull's club had an energetic atmosphere, but physical conditions left a few things to be desired - like heat in cold New England winters. Francois says his goal is to take the energy and camaraderie from that experience and put them in a place where everyone can enjoy the sport. Francois added, "With the help of the great people at the Fernald Center, we have an amazing facility. Add in our members and you have an unbeatable combination for table tennis. We can make a positive contribution at the Fernald Center and grow our sport at the same time."

The Club plays in the Greene Gym at the Fernald Center, located at 200 Trapelo Road in Waltham. For directions or more information on the Club, call Mozart Francois at 978-466-1354 or email the club at WalthamTTCl@hotmail.com.
Name: Chang Gao Jun, Gaithersburg, MD
Cereal: Frosted Wheat
Story: Gao Jun and Ruth Aarons, the 1936 World Women’s Singles Champion from the U.S., are like colossal bookends on USA Women’s Table Tennis. Aarons, the 1934-37 U.S. Open Women’s Champion, and Gao are arguably the greatest USA women players in history. That’s assuming you count Gao as U.S., since she won most of her international titles playing for China. However, like many other top athletes from overseas, when they are introduced to the U.S. standard of living, they are hooked. Gao came to the U.S. in 1994, and has dominated USA table tennis ever since. However, she only plays part-time. Like many other top U.S. players, she works for a living. Gao is a legal assistant at the law offices of Sharon Shu.

Name: Jasna Reed, Davison, MI
Rank: U.S. #2 Woman, 1988 Olympic Women’s Doubles Bronze Medalist, four-time Yugoslavian Women Singles Champion, numerous other Yugoslavian & European titles
Cereal: Fruit Loops
Story: A long-time top international player from Yugoslavia, with a bronze medal for women’s doubles from the 1988 Olympics at the age of 18, Jasna was making good money playing in Japan in 1995-96 and still had a promising international career ahead of her. However, she said it just wasn’t fulfilling. Something was missing. So in 1996, she decided to come to the U.S. and go to college. She began classes at University of Michigan at Flint in 1996, and transferred to Oakland University in 1998. She switched majors several times, but will be graduating in August of 2000 with a degree in political science. She’s always dreamed of joining other graduates in throwing her hat into the air at the graduation ceremonies – but she will miss it, since graduation ceremonies are on Sept. 10, during the Olympics. Jasna is known for her ferocious backhand attack.

Meet the USA Olympians

Women’s Coach: Doru Gheorghe
Men’s Coach: Dan Seemiller
Team Leader: Bob Fox

Name: Tawny Banh, Alhambra, CA
Rank: U.S. #3 Woman; Seven-Time National Team Member, ’99 Pan Am Team Gold Medalist, 1998-99 U.S. National Women’s Singles & Doubles Finalist
Cereal: Kellogg’s Special K Plus
Story: Tawny started playing table tennis at the age of 13 on her dining room table with a wooden racket and a cardboard net. In her first tournament, still 13 years old, she won the Unrated event (competing, she said, mostly against 50-year-olds with anti and long pips), and got a rating of 1209 – the only rating she says she will always remember. When she was 16, she played a friendship game with Gao Jun in Los Angeles and remembered asking herself, “When am I going to get half as good as her?” Little did she know that years later, she’d be competing against Gao and that they’d become teammates on the National, World, Pan Am & Olympic Teams! The two clubs which have been supportive of her are Jerry Young’s Los Angeles TTC and Dr. Jing Wang’s San Gabriel Valley TTC. Her practice partners include Ramin Samari, Yao Xi Huang, Marek Szpakiew, & June Valencia.

Name: Michelle Do, Milpitas, CA
Cereal: Fruity Pebbles
Story: Michelle is the driven type, with school and table tennis her main preoccupations. You have to press her to find her other interests – going out with friends, shopping, seeing movies, reading and playing piano. But these are mere sideshows when not studying or practicing. She has had numerous breakthroughs in table tennis, but the biggest one is when the U.S. #1 woman, Gao Jun, took an interest in her. Gao was the volunteer USA girls’ coach at a youth tournament in Taiwan, with Michelle one of her players. Impressed with her attitude and talent, Gao asked her to play women’s doubles with her at the 1999 Nationals, and the two won the event. It was then only natural that the two played together at the Olympic Doubles Trials, and the two came in first again. At 16, Michelle still finds it hard to believe that she’s going to the Olympics this year – her previous goal, as reported in the Jan/Feb 2000 USA Table Tennis Magazine, had been to make the team in 2004. She’s way, way, way ahead of schedule.
**By Larry Hodges**

**Women's Singles:**
- Gao Jun, Jasna Reed, Tawny Banh

**Women's Doubles:**
- Gao Jun/Michelle Do, Jasna Reed/Tawny Banh

**Men's Singles:**
- Cheng Yinghua, David Zhuang

**Men's Doubles:**
- Cheng Yinghua/Khoa Nguyen, David Zhuang/Todd Sweeris

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**Name:** Khoa Nguyen, San Jose, CA

**Rank:** U.S. #3 player, 2000


**Cereal:** Wheaties

**Story:** Khoa was the table tennis hard luck Olympic story of the 1990s but with the turn of the century, Khoa's luck finally changed. Khoa was first alternate at both the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Trials, missing by one match each time. Khoa finished first at the 2000 U.S. Olympic Qualifier, but was knocked out of the North American Olympic Trials in the preliminaries and didn't make the final eight. It looked like his Olympic woes would continue until he came in first at the 2000 Olympic Doubles Trials. However, as important as the Olympics are to Khoa, he has numerous other priorities - both as the West Coast Representative on the USA Table Tennis Board of Directors, and job-related ones. Khoa's been working for various computer companies since 1989, including stints with Sun Microsystems, Silicon Graphics and Netscape. He is now a project leader for the Internet start-up company neoforma.com.

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**Name:** Todd Sweeris, Bethesda, MD

**Rank:** U.S. #4 player, 1999


**Cereal:** Mult-Grain Cheerios

**Story:** Todd comes from a family of table tennis players - and CPA's. Todd's parents, Dell & Connie Sweeris, are both members of the USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame, with many national titles between them. Dell is a CPA, and Todd has followed in his footsteps. When Todd took the CPA exam in 1998, he expected it would take several times to pass all four parts of the exam - only about 5-10% pass them all on the first try. Todd passed all four on the first try. He was hired in 1998 by Deloite & Touche, and has balanced work and table tennis since. Todd is grateful to Deloite & Touche, which has given him very flexible hours and time off when he needed to train or travel to tournaments. He also plays third and shortstop on the company softball team, and golf whenever he can. The classic changing of the guard came when Todd ceased being "Dell & Connie's son" and they became "Todd's parents."
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