China Sweeps All Seven World Titles

Wang Liqin
Men’s Singles, Doubles & Teams

Wang Nan
Women’s Singles, Doubles & Teams

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**STIGA TABLE COMPARISON CHART**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Table Top Color</th>
<th>Playing Surface</th>
<th>Net Sets</th>
<th>Folds for Storage</th>
<th>Playback Feature</th>
<th>Weight (lbs)</th>
<th>Wheel Casters</th>
<th>Leg Construction</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stiga Master</td>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>3/4&quot; wood</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>3&quot; double wheel</td>
<td>1 1/2&quot; square steel</td>
<td>Best Price Guaranteed!</td>
</tr>
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<td>Navy</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>3&quot; ball bearing</td>
<td>2&quot; square steel</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>4&quot; ball bearing</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>4&quot; ball bearing</td>
<td>2 1/2&quot; x 1 1/2&quot; square steel</td>
<td>Best Price Guaranteed!</td>
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</tbody>
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Did you know that Table Tennis is the only Olympic sport that can be conducted in the home, is portable, inexpensive, and is family oriented? Also, did you know that Table Tennis is a lifetime sport that had a monumental impact on diplomacy and computer games? Yes you know that. But are we conveying that information to recreational players? Our sport will grow by encouraging all levels of players to join USATT and help us get the word out to the rest of the USA.

Debbie Doney, our Program Director, has been working on several projects for USA Table Tennis. One of those projects is a National School Program and a National Athlete Development Club program with the Warren Company of New York along with Sportime, a school athletic equipment company. This program is in the final stages of development. Five other Olympic and Pan American Sports will be featured with curriculum and training for Physical Education teachers in the schools. This idea has been endorsed by the state of New York chapter of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). The Warren Company is working on the National Recreation and Parks Association for their endorsement. The concept is to teach lifetime sports to the schools and get the children interested in one of these sports. With the USA leading the way in obese children in the world we need to provide PE teachers with curriculums, equipment, and certifications to teach our sport to children. An after-school program is also being developed. It will be known as the National Athlete Development Clubs (NADC). This will be used to continue the children's interest in the sport. Through schools or recreation programs, the NADC will be the pipeline to continue to develop school-age children in our sport.

It will take 3-5 years to implement this program nationwide. The Warren Company has targeted several large states to begin with. These states will have a leadership role in helping to roll out more programs to the rest of the nation. We're very excited about the possibilities of getting into numerous schools and finding future Olympians and world-class athletes who will medal in the future.

I had the great honor of attending the World Championships and watching some fantastic table tennis matches. While there, I met the International Table Tennis Federation staff and many other key people in table tennis. The impression I got from everyone was that the USA is key to helping grow table tennis. Congratulations to our President Sheri Pittman, who was elected as Vice President of North America within the ITTF. This will help USATT continue to be involved in the international community of Table Tennis.

Currently, we are working on a membership drive proposal for our affiliated clubs and USATT. If you would like to share your membership ideas please e-mail me. I will have more on this idea in the next issue. Until then keep the ball on the table.

USA'S RUTH AARONS NAMED 1937 CO-WORLD CHAMPION

By Tim Boggan

You're surprised? You didn't think we did that well in Osaka?

Uh, how about Baden?...In 1937.

Because of a controversial time-limit rule, the 1937 World Women's Singles final between Defending Champion Ruth Aaronsof the U.S. and 1938 Champion-to-be Trude Pritzi of Austria was stopped, and despite a near-even vote by Jury members the title was declared "Vacant" – quite an historical oddity.

Thanks, however, to USATT Hall of Fame founder Steve Isaacson who requested, via ITTF Council Member Tim Boggan, that both women posthumously be declared co-Champions, President Adham Sharara at the ITTF's Annual General Meeting, with the approval of the delegate body, awarded appropriate plaques and certificates to representatives of the U.S. and Austrian Associations. Accepting for Aaronso was USATT President Sheri Pittman, who was very pleased that a U.S. woman player could again be recognized as one of the greats of her era.

CORRECTIONS

The two photos on page 24 in the May/June issue (Samsonov and Batorfi) were attributed to Canup.net. They should have been attributed to canupnet.com.

Several results for the Arkansas State Championships on page 28 of the May/ June issue were listed incorrectly. The corrected listings:

Open Doubles: 1st Jamey Hall/Wee Hui Kit; 2nd Don Jackson/Andy Bloxom.

Over 50: 1st Glen Davis; 2nd Duke Stogner.

Over 50/60 Consolation: 1st John Smitley; 2nd Mark Liell.
President’s Report
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

USA Table Tennis announced six priorities that would serve as our guiding principles in the November/December 1999 President’s Report. When the USOC representatives worked with us in developing our new Plan, they emphasized to us the importance of “setting priorities, focusing more of our resources on those priorities, and making a commitment to following our Plan.” The Plan was not to exist within the confines of a binder on a bookshelf, but was to be our guiding light.

Under the new Plan, the Board agreed to focus on six priorities. Throughout my presidency I have reported on developments stemming from our Plan. In this month’s “association primer series,” I will highlight recent news pertaining to our association’s accomplishments in USATT priority areas.

- **PRIORITY: FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH USATT-AFFILIATED CLUBS GROW AND PROSPER**

USA Table Tennis continues to move aggressively on this goal. In April, long-time player and headquarter staffer Debbie Doney became USATT’s Director of Programs. For the first time, USATT has a full-time employee directly responsible for programs to assist clubs.

We are also actively promoting clubs to start up Junior Training Programs and Beginning Classes at clubs, and our website now features how-to primers for both. These primers were recently mailed to every USATT affiliate club and every USATT certified coach in the country. (You're not an affiliated club or certified coach? Contact USATT Headquarters and remedy that problem today – contact info is on page 4.) We are also preparing a league primer for the upcoming club league system (with its own club rating system) that will start this fall. (You can read about these programs at the USATT Club Programs page at www.usatt.org/club_programs, and in the last three issues of USATT Magazine.)

USATT is also making our National Coach, Doru Gheorghe, available to clubs as part of our Touring Coaches Program – see page 13 for information on bringing him to YOUR CLUB. Before coming to the U.S., Doru was the National Coach of the Romanian association, and he is now USA’s National Women’s Coach.

- **PRIORITY: IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM**

In Debbie Doney’s capacity as Director of Programs, she has prepared a progress report on the status of our national schools program. Read about this in the Executive Director’s Report, page 9.

- **PRIORITY: CREATE A PROFESSIONAL STRUCTURE FOR DOMESTICALLY-HELD EVENTS**

While the U.S. Open and U.S. Nationals are rapidly becoming nearly turn-key events from a logistics point of view, this year’s U.S. Open will feature several improvements. Our association is blessed to have a plethora of volunteers who have developed expertise in several areas including scheduling, staging, media relations, officiating and ensuring a well-run event. Wayne Johnson, our Tournament Committee Chair, and Margaret Smith, our Director of Operations, function as a dynamic duo in overseeing their responsibilities.

Tournament workers who run our major events have adapted to our tournament software. At this year’s U.S. Open, however, representatives of North American Table Tennis will run a demonstration of software they have developed. NATT has posited that the demonstration will show a vast improvement over software that USA Table Tennis has made available to tournament directors.

Our association has unique opportunities to host upcoming world events, such as the ITTF Pro Tour Finals in conjunction with the 2002 U.S. Nationals and the World Championships as early as 2005 or 2006. The ITTF community is keeping a close eye on the dramatic improvements our association has made recently in staging our events.

- **PRIORITY: INCREASE FUNDING SOURCES**

Hosting world-level events would give us additional marketing opportunities to pursue. Although these events pose some upfront costs to us as we develop competence in running them and strategies for marketing them, we have demonstrated our abilities in this area. Certainly, judging from the repeated requests made from within the international community for U.S.-hosting of future events, I believe that there would be widespread support for us should we decide to bid on these events.

As part of the strategy to increase funding sources, our Acting Executive Director Dwight Johnson, with the assistance of Debbie Doney, recently updated our association’s marketing brochure in his fundraising capacity.

Dwight is also collaborating with both the USOC and the ITTF to secure additional financial support as well as guidance in sponsorship procurement.

- **PRIORITY: DEVELOP OLYMPIC AND WORLD CHAMPION MEDALISTS**

This goal is obviously the most difficult area to show significant short-term progress. Our national coaches, Dan Seemiller and Doru Gheorghe, work within our current financial framework to support and develop our players. Given the resources that other countries and associations can allocate to their national teams, our coaches are doing wonders. I especially want to applaud Doru and our national women’s team for advancing into the first division this year. Danny, too, has proven his effectiveness as a coach. Sixteen-year-old Mark Hazinski, who trains under Danny’s supervision in Indiana, qualified for the team in the number two spot.

As evidenced in the last several Olympics and World Championships, only one association has figured out the formula for consistently producing medalists. And that country, China, has proven itself not only to be successful, but to be the dominating force and unquestionable powerhouse. Since I became president in 1999, I have pursued a collaborative alliance with the Chinese Table Tennis Association. I am pleased that our two associations continue to make progress in our discussions. Yu Bin, their association’s Deputy Secretary General and Marketing Director, will address our Board at the U.S. Open and outline a number of options available to us in which they can provide us with opportunities to rapidly progress in our medal-seeking aspirations.
One of the quickest ways to make an impact in accomplishing this goal is to serve in one of the ITTF’s most key positions. At the ITTF’s Annual General Meeting, I was honored to be named to the ITTF’s Executive Board as the North American Continental Vice President. ITTF President Adham Sharara stated at the AGM that the IOC has announced a funding structure that will factor in compliance with gender guidelines. I am the only woman on the 12-person Executive Board. The AGM approved a measure, effective in 2003, to create an Executive Committee position for a female, which would expand the Executive Committee to 7 and the Executive Board to 13. The under-representation of women isn’t based on systemic discrimination. It isn’t a question of whether women are welcome within the inner circle. People in ITTF positions tend to stay there for long periods, often decades. They have proven themselves to be able decision-makers and workers. No one wants to remove a capable person. I look forward to reporting on ITTF developments as an insider.

One of the points I made at the ITTF’s Council meeting in Osaka was that the ITTF ought to embrace a formal and official position regarding its commitment to the development of table tennis in the United States. USA Table Tennis needs to be able to go to the USOC and to potential sponsors and show them this written commitment. Meanwhile, the ITTF’s actions in this area are clear and unmistakable. ITTF officers and staff continue to provide our association with all requested support and guidance, and, for this, we are grateful. The next step is to formalize a development proposal specifically between USA Table Tennis and the ITTF. As I stated at the ITTF Council meeting, if the ITTF agrees to aid USA Table Tennis, and the sport succeeds in breaking through in the U.S., there will be plenty of exposure and money for future development of our sport worldwide.

USA Table Tennis also made significant inroads toward achieving this goal as was evidenced through the following appointments made during the recent World Championships. We are fortunate to have such capable and well-respected people representing our association in these international capacities.

- **Aly Salam** – Newly appointed Umpires Secretary of the ITTF Umpires & Referees Commission
- **Tim Boggan** – Newly appointed Committee Member of the ITTF Media Committee
- **Dr. Michael Scott** – Committee Member of the ITTF Sports Science Committee and Member of the ITTF’s Research & Development Advisory Board
- **Azmy Ibrahim** – Corresponding Member of the ITTF’s Rules Committee
- **Jimmy McClure** – Chair of the ITTF’s Merit Awards & Hall of Fame and Member of the President’s Advisory Council
- **Rufford Harrison** – Newly appointed Member of the President’s Advisory Council and recipient of an ITTF Honorary Membership
- **Doru Gheorghe** – Member of the ITTF’s World Junior Championships Working Group

---

**Coaching Report**

By Dan Seemiller

**USATT Coaching Development Director**

This year Mark Nordby and I plan on holding three seminars – one at the U.S. Open, another at the Nationals in Las Vegas, and a weekend seminar at Colorado Springs in September. There will also be a mailing to all coaches in August. This mailing will include a 2-hour instructional video, coaching articles, advanced clinic outline, membership brochures and more.

We also hope to offer the 17 known full-time USATT certified coaches USATT logo business cards. There will also be recognition awards for those coaches whose programs send the most participants to the Junior Olympics in Virginia. We will also continue to feature coaches and instructional articles in USATT Magazine.

---

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Dear Editor,

I was quite interested in the recent correspondence stemming from Tajima’s somewhat liberal attitude toward the regulations regarding the service. It was quite timely, since when I read it I had just returned from Osaka, where I witnessed an egregious infraction.

One of the Korean women had a favorite service, used many times in succession in every game that I witnessed. The ball left her hand on every serve, used many times in succession in every game that I witnessed. The ball left her hand on service, used many times in succession in every game that I witnessed. The ball left her hand on service, used many times in succession in every game that I witnessed. The ball left her hand on service, used many times in succession in every game that I witnessed. The ball left her hand on service, used many times in succession in every game that I witnessed. The ball left her hand on service, used many times in succession in every game that I witnessed. The ball left her hand on service, used

The USA does not have a monopoly on weak umpiring. You’ll undoubtedly find it everywhere you care to go. I’m hoping that the ITTF’s new Umpires and Referees Committee will regard this problem as a priority.

Rufford Harrison
Washington, NH

Dear Editor,

The new playing rules are not without a certain measure of merit, however if the bottom line is to attract, keep and enrich our membership with spectator appreciation, and with all due respect for their considerable efforts on behalf of Table Tennis, I believe our fearless leaders within the ITTF and USATT are misguided. The primary emphasis for improving our image as something special other than the basement, recreational, game-room activity of Ping-Pong that the vast populace thinks we are (and these number in the multi-millions) should be about how we stage our product to attract and capture the imagination of the necessary non-player spectators who will eventually enlarge our membership roles in meaningful numbers. It must be about how our beloved sport is presented to the public. It must be staged with imagination and flair sufficient to attract and keep the attention and enthusiasm of the media and spectator. Tinker only with the rules of the game and you risk changing the character of the sports product we are trying to sell. Capture the imagination and enthusiasm of the potential spectators (kids and adults) and everything else will fall into place. Kids and parents will force the schools to bring Table Tennis into our lives in a way that spells meaningful growth for our sport. Gym instructors will be forced to learn how to teach our sport in much the same way football, basketball and baseball players are developed. Once that happens, influential and influential sponsors will spring up as if from nowhere. As it is presented and staged today, there is no flare, no imagination, and minimal, if any, media coverage, and the vast majority of whatever spectators the finals do attract are the players themselves. Face it! There certainly is not the necessary enthusiasm, public relations or staging that propels fan identification with the major sports. We have a tremendous nucleus to draw upon from within the ranks of the basement, recreational Ping-Pong addicts who are completely unaware that a much higher level of athletic skills are available to them as either a player or as a spectator. What we really need in order to emphasize my point is the showmanship and flare of a PT Barnum to get the adrenaline going and stimulate the potential non-playing fans.

Regrettably, it is as staged today, the countless tables at our weekend tournament sites confuse, disorientate and eventually turn off the interested, potential spectator and eventual member. Couple this with the lack of advance scheduling of the finals of each major category so that the potential non-playing spectators can have their undivided attention focused on that one match on that one table. Major players (identifiable with their name embroidered on the back of their shirt), the playing of the National Anthem, and the introduction of the finalists, seem to add to spectator enthusiasm and anticipation in other major sports. Why not ours? Perhaps qualifying rounds should be on or off. I suggest that the USA simply disregard this change and have a reference vote on whether the playing membership to vote if anyone is really in favor of such.

If the effort is designed to get more coverage from the media (TV) all that is required is for some of the major business entities in this game to put up some cash and sponsor world-class competition on some of the networks (like ESPN). Nine-ball pool is a good example where Brunswick (read Butterfly) and a few of the pool cue makers televise various competitions all the time. They plug their products and the game benefits.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas J. Huff
Gerrardstown, WV

Dear Editor,

I note with considerable displeasure that the International body dealing with the rules of Table Tennis are making some new and radical changes. I have played in USATT sanctioned play (off and on) for fifty years and rather like playing a game to 21 points. There are other changes I don’t agree with but this one, in particular, sticks in my craw. I suggest that the USA simply disregard this change and continue as we have for so many years. At a minimum we should evidence a strong disagreement with these changes and force a referendum by the playing membership to see if anyone is really in favor of such.

Sincerely,

Fred Tepper, Director Emeritus
Fairfax, VA

Dr. Thomas J. Huff
Gerrardstown, WV

They Said It...

By Larry Hodges

“Cho! No one holds me under three!” -Alan Williams, to Sean Lonergan, after losing to junior star Han Xiao at 4 and 6. Lonergan fell off his chair laughing.

“What table tennis here?” -Jasna Reed, when asked “How is table tennis different for you here as opposed to in Europe?”

“He practices his serves by bouncing the ball off the refrigerator every morning before breakfast and early evening around dinner time.” -Janice Jackson, mom to U.S. Under 10 Elementary School Champion and #1 Under 10 Player Marcus Jackson, quoted in the April 30, 2001 issue of Jet Magazine. Marcus was featured in the issue.

“Chris Smith, who launched the biggest bomb in tour history, is strong, long, and way into Ping-Pong. ‘As far as Ping-Pong goes, Butterfly paddles is one of my sponsors. I have the little logo on the sleeve of my golf shirts.’” -From Maximum Golf, May 2001, page 28, in article about Pro Tour Golfer Chris Smith, who holds the record for the longest drive in PGA history (427 yards).

“MR. Competitive: Don’t challenge Tennessee shortstop Chris Burke – anything. The Southeastern Conference player of the year is very competitive. Volunteers coach Rod Delmonico remembers a team ping pong tournament during Burke’s freshman year. ‘He had his mom and dad Fed-Ex his pingpong paddle,’ Delmonico said. ‘That’s the kind of guy he is. I don’t care what it is, he’s going to compete.’ -From College Sports, Friday, June 8, 2001.
USATT’s Club Coaching Tour

Want a Coaching Clinic at YOUR CLUB??
USATT Will Provide the Coach!!!

Doru Gheorghe, USA Women’s Team Coach and a USATT National Coach, will be touring the country starting August 20, 2001, running six coaching clinics at USATT Clubs. Clinics will be 5-6 days long, 4-6 hours per day. USATT affiliated clubs that are interested should fill out the application and send to USATT.

Types of Clinics Offered
- Adult Clinics (roughly ages 16 and up)
- Junior Clinics (roughly ages 8-15)
- Coaches Clinics (for certifying and educating coaches, all levels)
- Combinations of the above (to be arranged with Coach Doru)

What USATT Will Do
- Pay Coach Doru’s salary
- Pay Coach Doru’s air fare to your club
- Pay Coach Doru a per diem

What Participating Clubs Must Do
- Sign up at least 10 USATT members, preferably more
- Provide playing facility with minimum of one table for every two participants
- Arrange and pay for local transportation
- Arrange and pay for Doru’s hotel expenses.
- Club may charge fees to players in camp to cover expenses, and keep any profits

Selection Criteria
Selection criteria will be based on number of participants, age & level of players, number of tables, and possibly other items. Preferential treatment will also be given to clubs without easy access to a top-level coach. Only USATT affiliated clubs will be considered, and all participants must be USATT members.

Contact USATT for an Application
USATT, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719-578-4583 (ph), 719-63206071 (fax), usatt2@iex.net

Doru coaching U.S. Women’s Singles Champion Gao Jun
New Rules: 11-Point Games In, Hidden Serves Out
An Official's View By "Dr. Azmy"

The championships took place in Osaka, Japan, the land of giving. It is a culture where every time you meet a person, that person has to give you a gift. Even when they give a card they have to hold it with their ten fingers, and with a slight bow. They always try to show their appreciation to you just for your being there.

Osaka and all the hosts in Japan put on a fantastic show of great hospitality, generosity, friendship and warmth. Punctuality, order and cooperation gave the tournament an air of finesse. Added to all that was a richness in all aspects. Rumors have it that they spent $20 million on the tournament.

The championships were attended by 99 associations. The tournament took place in three different venues, all of which were equally suitable. The tournament was run by a Referee and eight Deputy Referees. The work was almost every day from 8:30 am to 9:30 pm. There were 142 umpires, 70 from Japan and 72 from foreign countries. The officials were treated royally. They occupied one of the most luxurious hotels, which was the closest hotel to the venue. Realizing that they have to be in the arena before anyone else, and that they leave after everyone else, it took less than 15 minutes by bus to arrive at the venue. The buses were always available and promptly on time.

The level of play keeps getting higher and higher. It is impossible to describe the superb performance of the players. The officials, volunteers and the umpires ran the tournament smoothly. However, due to the Japanese traditions, some players got away with faulty serves, and some coaching was not prevented. The polite manners of the Japanese umpires hindered them from giving cards to the players and coaches. Many games went to expedite due to delays between rallies. We have witnessed a new table tennis dance, which some players performed between every point, jumping up and down, right and left for a long time. Others chose to roam the floor of the court several times each time they lost a point.

Racket testing was conducted on 213 rackets, 107 male players and 106 female players. Four cases ended by changing the rackets. One was almost defaulted for cutting the rubber eliminating the name of the manufacturer. I am reporting that part of the tournament to warn our players that racket testing and illegal rackets are not allowed. I am sure that other writers will give full description of the actual play. Therefore, I will go to the important rule changes by the ITTF.

Two main rules were changed and several others were interpreted. The important ones are the change of the serve, the 11-point game, and putting aside the age limits for umpires.

I am proud to announce the change to the service rule. It will take effect on September 1, 2002. It was USATT that 10 years ago asked for a change in the service rule, hoping to make it simpler and easier so players can return serves successfully and start the rally. There will probably be some amendments added before the time of its application. Here is the main addition to the service rule:

2.6.5 When the ball is struck, no part of the body or clothing of the server or his doubles partner shall be within or above the triangular area formed by the net and imaginary lines between the ball and the net posts.

The following 11-point game rules will affect us sooner as they start September 1, 2001. That means we have to make a decision soon about its application at the U.S. Nationals this December.

2.11 A Game

2.11.1 A game shall be won by the player or pair first scoring 11 points unless both players or pairs score 10 points, when the game shall be won by the first player or pair subsequently gaining a lead of 2 points.

2.12 A Match

2.12.1 A match shall consist of the best of any odd number of games.

2.13 The Order of Serving, Receiving and Ends

2.13.3 After each 2 points have been scored the receiving player or pair shall become the serving player or pair and so on until the end of the game, unless both players or pairs score 10 points or the expedite system is in operation, when the sequence of serving and receiving shall be the same but each player shall serve for only 1 point in turn.

2.13.6 The player or pair serving first in a game shall receive first in the next game of the match, and in the last possible game of a double match the pair due to receive next shall change their order of receiving when first one player scores 5 points.

2.13.7 The player or pair starting at one end in a game shall start at the other end in the next game of the match and in the last possible game of a match the players or pairs shall change ends when first one player or pair scores 5 points.

2.15 The Expedite System

2.15.1 Except where both players or pairs have scored at least 9 points, the expedite system shall come into operation if a game is unfinished after 10 minutes play or at any earlier time at the request of both players or pairs.

2.15.3 If the expedite system is introduced, or if a game lasts longer than 10 minutes, all subsequent games of that match shall be played under the expedite system.

3.4.4 Intervals

3.4.4.1 Play shall be continuous throughout a match except that any player is entitled to

3.4.4.1.1 an interval of up to 1 minute between successive games of a match;

3.4.4.1.2 brief intervals for towelering after every 6 points from the start of each game and at the change of ends in the last possible game of a match.

The concern of everybody is how many games will constitute a match? This has actually been left to the organizers of any tournament, provided that is clearly stated in the entry form. Any variety of number of games in different events or in the same event is possible. The possible number of games is best of five, seven, nine, etc. A best of five, under the new rule, will theoretically include at least 33 points, compared to the current best of three which includes at least 42 points. The same could be said about a best of seven, which includes at least 44 points, and a best of nine, which includes at least 55 points, in comparison with our existing best of five, which includes at least 63 points. If we want to shorten a match, a best of five in the new system will do it. If we want a longer match, then a best of seven will give at least 44 points, which could replace the existing best of three.

In the case of the existing best of five, both the new best of seven and best of nine will give fewer points.

Discussing this issue with several officials from different associations and with some of the U.S. players, coaches and team officials, there is a tendency to go for the best of seven. Others recommended the best of five in all events, except for the Semis and the Finals and the Men's and Women's Open, which all could be best out of seven.

Best of Luck, pick your pick.

I am afraid that this article is getting too long. So I will add some more interpretations of the rules in the next article. All of these new rules and interpretations will be discussed in the coming seminar at the U.S. Open on Wednesday at 9:00pm. It is required for all umpires, but players, coaches, and anyone else is welcome to attend.
# MAC/Y B O_K C PEN

## TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

**August 18 & 19, 2001**

Greentree Racquet Club, Pittsburgh PA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT #</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>FEE</th>
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<th>2ND</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>5-8</th>
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**Doubles events #22 & #23 start at the same time. Players may enter only one event; either #22 or #23**

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**ENTRY BLANKS MUST BE RECEIVED BY: WEDNESDAY, August 8, 2001 !!!!!!!!**

TOURNAMENT HOTEL: Motel 6
101 Marriott Drive (Next to playing site)
(412) 922-9400
$64/night (mention table tennis tournament)

**SEND ENTRIES TO:**
Dan Seemiller
P.O. Box 608
New Carlisle, IN 46552

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**
MACY BLOCK OPEN

**TOTAL FEES:**

(Signature of Participant; For minors, parents must sign)

I hereby assume all risk and responsibility for my participation in this tournament. I release tournament personnel, Greentree Racquet Club, et al, from any claim for injury or loss suffered due to my participation in this tournament. I will abide by all rules and decisions of the tournament director.
Interview With Jorgen Persson

By Larry Hodges

What are your thoughts on the new service rules, where they will outlaw hidden serves?

Jorgen: I think maybe it's a little too much at the moment. They changed to the new ball in the middle of the season, and now it's maybe too many changes in such a short while. But, of course, if they can make the service rule easier ... but mainly I think they should make it easy for the umpire to see easily if it's an illegal serve or not.

You think it might be a good rule, but maybe too soon?

Jorgen: Yeah, too soon. I think they should take more time to develop it, and maybe try it and test it with umpires to see if it works, to see if it is easier to see if it is a wrong service or not.

What do you think about the new eleven-point game rule?

Jorgen: I think it's an OK idea. A good idea. It can make more interesting points during the match, no dead points, that can be good for all I think. Players, spectators, media, TV.

This is probably the first really big tournament with the 40mm ball where everyone is used to the 40mm ball. What styles do you think, in general, it helps and which it hurts?

Jorgen: In general I don't think there are so many big changes. You don't see longer rallies. We've only played with it half a year, so you can still see a lot of mistakes which players would not do normally. But I think players are getting more used to it. But still, it takes time.

So it's not really a huge difference.

Jorgen: No, not a huge difference.

For you and Waldner, what are your future plans after the Worlds? Are you both planning to continue, retire, or what?

Jorgen: No, I will continue to play, but in what circumstances I don't know yet. I will probably decide after the Worlds. For sure I will continue to play. I will see if I win to continue to play internationally, or if I want to play more in clubs.

Are there any up-and-coming players in Sweden, juniors or youth players, who might someday reach the same level you and Waldner have reached?

Jorgen: Oh yeah, we have some. Two of them are here: Fredrik Hakansson and Magnus Molin, and there is Jens Lundqvist also, and some other good guys. One guy won the European Top Twelve, a junior, Robert Svensson, so we have some coming. Yahh - Svensson - we have a lot of Svenssons in Sweden. [Note - I'd earlier joked with Persson that I'd thought that Asa and Marie Svensson, the top two women in Sweden, were sisters. Persson was joking about this.]
PACIFIC COAST OPEN TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT

SEPTEMBER 22-23, 2001

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE PAVILION • 1900 PICO BLVD, SANTA MONICA, CA 90405

DEADLINE: Entries must be received by Sept 14, 2001

COMMITTEE: SCTTA/JO KIDD

RULES: All USATT rules will apply. The director reserves the right to modify, limit or cancel events.

ELIGIBILITY: All players must be USATT or ITTF members.

Juniors or Seniors must be of age anytime during the year.

FEES: $8 PER EVENT, UNRATED $8 PER 3 EVENTS, JUNIORS $3 PER EVENT.

OPEN RR IS $15 FOR EVERYONE.

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INFORMATION: Call or FAX (818)700-0948, email: ichiro.hashimoto@csun.edu or on the Web @ www.sctta.net

ENTRY FORM

NAME__________________________

ADDRESS__________________________

CITY__________STATE________ZIP_____

USATT NO______EXP______RATING____

ENTER ME IN THE FOLLOWING EVENTS:

CIRCLE BELOW:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

DOUBLES PARTNER OPEN____________3800__________

FEES: EVENT FEES_____________

USATT MEMBERSHIP_______

SCTTA SANCTION______$1.00

STA MONICA ADM_______$3.00

USATT RATING_______$3.00

TOTAL FEES_________

Make all checks payable to Santa Monica Table Tennis Association

Send Entry to: Ichiro Hashimoto

20432 Elkwood St

Winnetka, CA 91306
The first stop on the 2001 STIGA North American Tour was a huge success from every angle. Many participants called it "the best-run tournament they had ever attended."

The Austin TTC loved the shot in the arm it provided to their local promotional efforts when three newspapers and FOX 7 TV, KTBC publicized the tournament. For the dozens of non-playing spectators lured by the pre-tournament publicity, it was a great introduction to the TT playing community in Texas and to top-level competitive play. Great credit should go to John R. Miller, who invited NATT to Texas, located and priced the venue, and was still hard at work on 'pack-up' late Sunday night.

For the players, the Robertson Center of Southwestern University and the brand-new Stiga Expert Rollers combined for an enjoyable playing experience. The state-of-the-art facility drew rave reviews for the perfect flooring, good lighting, efficient layout and sparkling sound system.

For tournament sponsors Table Tennis Pioneers, About.com, Escalade Inc. and Senoda, Inc., it was an opportunity to bring heightened luster to the companies and the sport. For NATT, it was a pleasure to deal with the excellent sportsmanship exhibited by the players.

Tournament Referee Grady Gordon, of Waco, TX, was a model of professionalism and good cheer, and his attitude was contagious. Those traits were reflected in the able assistance of his crew, Scott Ryan, James Rautis, Ken Beauchamp and Jim Story.

On Saturday, the star of the show was clearly Taju Oshodi. The muscular looper defeated Sean O'Neill in the Under 2500 Final, 14,16,18. Always the model of good sportsmanship, O'Neill warmly shook Taju's hand for a "job well done" and looked on smiling as Oshodi's support group celebrated his upset win. Taju also took the Hardbat and Under 2375 Hand for a "job well done" and looked on smiling.

In the Semi-Finals, Taju took on former U.S. Team member Razvan Cretu. When Deszo took the first two games at 17 & 18, it appeared that one contest was decided. But Razvan, aware of the TV cameras and the big prize waiting in the Finals, dug deep and took the third at 16. Determined and working hard, Cretu completed the quarterfinal quartet by beating the "Hope of Austin," Tuan Tran, 18, 12.

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In the Open Singles - Final: Deszo Racz d. Michael Hyatt, 19, 17, 19. Hyatt had a great tournament in Nashville and was on top of his game. Viktorian Subonj of Houston worked past the Californian, Tuan Le, by scores of 11, 13. Razvan Cretu completed the quarterfinal quartet by beating the "Hope of Austin," Tuan Tran, 18, 12.

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The Fort Lauderdale Marina Marriott proudly welcomes the 2001 US Open Table Tennis Championships to Fort Lauderdale.

As the designated headquarter hotel, you will be able to enjoy the many attractions of brand new Fort Lauderdale, many within walking distance. Come and witness the daily parade of million-dollar yachts from a front row seat at our dockside pool or get to know the new Fort Lauderdale with its bustling bistros, boutiques, galleries, music, and museums. Or spend the day on our golden beaches just blocks away.

thinking of you
Tables For Sale!

For Sale at Unbelievable Prices! Used Stiga Expert Rollers from the 2001 Stiga North American Table Tennis Tour for $690! You can get $75 off if you pick it up at any of our events. Each table comes with free net set and shipping!

Contact us for additional prices for your club!
"Playing on time without any hang-ups of any kind was very impressive. My congratulations!"

- Johnny R. Garcia

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</table>

Registration Form - Name of Tour Stop:

Please send completed entry form with payment to:
North American Table Tennis
PO BOX 491
Odenton, MD 21113

Deadline: Postmarked by 10 days prior to the tournament start date.

Email: info@natabletennis.com
For the first time ever, the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) and National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA) Championships were held in conjunction with each other for the first time. Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, was the site.

ACUI

The ACUI championships, which took place on March 30 and 31, is an individual competition, with the field determined through a qualifying tournament in each of the ACUI's 16 regions. At the regionals, the top four finishers in men's and women's singles are eligible to play in the national championships. Because not all of the qualifiers attended, the final field consisted of 35 men and 15 women.

The first day consisted of preliminary round play. Players were placed in final groups based on their preliminary play. Each final group consisted of players of similar levels, and a separate competition was held for each group. In each division, there were two round robin groups, and the top two finishers in each group advanced to a single elimination play-off to determine the final placing.

In the men's singles, the feature player was Kurt Liu, who represented Canada at the 2000 Olympics. Rated 380 points higher than the next highest rated player, Liu was the favorite, and indeed there were no surprises in the results. In the finals, he faced #2 seed Jia Wang, and showed that he had all the shots. Wang had some spectacular plays and kept things close, but never really threatened as Liu prevailed, 12, 17.

That was not the only title for Liu, as he swept all the events he played in, winning men's doubles with Charnchai Tangpong, and the mixed doubles with Rosaline Muigai.

The women's singles final presented quite a contrast from the men's final. With the two finalists, Kyna Fong, and Boglarka “Bogi” Masters, separated by only 32 rating points, there was no clear favorite. Masters won the first game and took a 13-7 lead in the second game. Fong came back, but Masters pulled ahead again and had four championship points at 20-16. Fong, however, responded with some big shots under the pressure situation, and not only saved all four, but won the game, 24-22. In a tight third game, Fong worked her way to three match points at 20-17, but it's not over yet. Masters saved two of them. At 20-19, Fong needed three backhand loops in a row before Masters finally blocks off the table, thus giving Fong the match and the championship.

Fong also repeated her women's doubles title of last year, this time with Helen Huang. Masters finished with three second-place finishes, also in women's doubles (with Danielle Pope) and mixed doubles (with John Mar).

NCTTA

The NCTTA Championships took place on April 1. The field was made up of school teams that won their respective division, arranged geographically, in regular season play that occurred throughout the school year. Since the previous edition, the NCTTA saw an expansion from five divisions to nine, going as far west as Oregon. Some qualifying schools were unable to attend, so six teams made up the field in Baltimore.

After an entire season of meets throughout the nation, the race to decide the national collegiate team champion came down to this. After 14 team matches and 66 individual matches in the 6-team round robin were played, there was one doubles match left, between Bradley University and Cornell University. At this point in time, it was not known who was going to finish in first place. Or second. Or third. Or fourth. Trophies for the top three places, a Newgy robot for the champion, and bragging rights were at stake.

In the match that concluded right before that, the host and defending champion Johns Hopkins University (JHU) used its vocal home court advantage to make a comeback to stun Rutgers, a team that was undefeated that occurred throughout the school year. Since the previous edition, the NCTTA saw an expansion from five divisions to nine, going as far west as Oregon. Some qualifying schools were unable to attend, so six teams made up the field in Baltimore.

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the previous day. One could argue that otherwise
she could have helped Harvard, last year's runner-
up, be another factor in the mix.

Because of space constraints here, please see the championships section of the NCTTA site at
www.nctta.org/champs/2001 for complete write-
up and results.

**Men's Singles**
1. Kurt Liu, Univ. of Michigan Flint
2. Jia Wang, Houston HCC
3. Michael Bartl, Univ. of Wisconsin -
   Milwaukee
4. Wie-Chong Gho, Univ. of Washington

**Men's Doubles**
1. Kurt Liu/Charnchai Tangpong (Univ. of
   Mich. – Flint/Southern Ill. Univ. –
   Carbondale)
2. Jason Zhao/Jia Wang (Univ. of TX – Austin/
   Houston HCC)
3. Steffen Schebesta/Andrew Belafanti-Knight
   (Univ. of FL/Howard)
   Of Tech./Univ. of Wis. – Milwaukee)

**Men's Masters**
1st: Prayeen Kumar (Clemson Univ.);
2nd: Rahul Khare (Penn State)

**Men's Expert**
1st: Masaaki Komatsu (Wash. State
   Univ.);
2nd: Niray Parekh (Drexel Univ.)

**Men's Elite**
1st: Steffen Schebesta (Univ. of FL);
2nd: Peyman Safabash

**Women's Masters**
1st: Tavia Dawson (Howard);
2nd: Ping Zhou (Univ. of Ark. – Little Rock)

**Women's Singles**
1. Kyna Fong, Harvard
2. Boglarka Masters, Augusta College
3. Rebecca West, Pennsylvania State
4. Helen Huang, MIT

**Women's Doubles**
1. Kyna Fong/Helen Huang (Harvard/MIT)
2. Boglarka Masters/Danielle Pope (Augusta
   College/Lee Univ.)
3. Rebecca West/Jennifer Leer (Penn State)
4. Tavia Dawson/Robin Walker (Howard)

**Mixed Doubles**
1. Kurt Liu/Rosaline Muigai (Univ. of Mich. –
   Flint/Cal State – Sacramento)
2. Boglarka Masters/John Mar (Augusta Coll./
   Univ. of GA)
3. Jiri Kabalac/Helen Huang (Univ. of VT/ MIT)
4. Jeff Hsin/Rebecca West (Johns Hopkins/ Penn State)

**NCTTA Finals (College Teams)**
1. Bradley University, 4-1
2. Johns Hopkins University, 4-1
3. Rutgers University, 4-1
4. Cornell University, 2-3
5. Harvard University, 1-4
6. Florida State University, 0-5

Top: NCTTA Champions Bradley University - NCTTA President Helen Huang, Gene
Szeto, Junduo Zhao, William Lee (hidden behind trophy), George Szeto. Middle: Runner-
up Johns Hopkins - Qianfei Wang, Jeff Hsin, Victor Yeung, Lingxiang Ye, Cheekai Chan,
Coach Sean Lonergan. Bottom: Third Place Rutgers - NCTTA President Helen Huang,
Krishna Kanuga, Larry Bavly, Kiley Hsu, Xiao Liu.

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USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • July/August 2001
High School Boys’ and Girls’ High School Champions Aaron Sussman (Wilson) and Olivia Duong (Reynolds).

we have 40 schools with fairly regular play in our metro area. I still say having programs like this at cities throughout the country will lead us to victories at the Worlds and the Olympics. More importantly, it will give thousands of at-risk kids something fun to do after school.

Before we’re done this school year we will play off eight selected middle schools for our perpetual boys’ and girls’ trophies. Gregory Heights Middle School is the current holder for both.

Elementary School Boys – Final: Thomas Nguyen (McKinley) d. John Block (Montclair), 8, 9.

Middle School Boys – Final: Ziling Zhao (Waluga) d. Bo Liu (Lake Oswego), 19, 17.

High School Boys – Final: Aaron Sussman (Wilson) d. Mohamed Woticha (Madison), 13, 15.

Elementary School Girls – Final: Emily Bee (Forest Park) d. Andrea Hahn (Laurel Hurst), 13, 12.

Middle School Girls- Final: Nicole Roberts (West Sylvan) d. Sam Nguyen (Gregory Heights), 7, 12.

High School Girls – Final: Olivia Duong (Reynolds) d. My Ton (Benson Tech), 14, 13.

Adult Men – Final: Xuan Cheng Liu (Lake Oswego) d. Mark Cooley (IN), 15, 11.

Adult Women – Final: Jamie Yeh (Portland Comm. College) d. Tammy West (Gregory Heights), 12, 13.
Join this exciting two-week world-class table tennis training trip. Get to know the real China. Play with China’s professional teams. Each player will have their own professional Chinese practice partner, to maximize the improvement of your table tennis skills. Get to know how China is developing table tennis. Visit the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, Summer Palace shop at stores and traditional markets. You’ll have a most exciting experience in China.

**Itinerary**

**Day 1** Depart from Los Angeles

**Day 2** Arrive in Beijing, meet at the airport by the Tianjin Sports Institute, Travel to Tianjin. President of the Institute hosts welcome banquet.

**Day 3-4** Breakfast daily at 7:30 am, followed by training from 9 am to 11:30 am, lunch at 12:30 followed by rest until the afternoon training session from 2:30 to 5 pm.

**Day 5** Morning Training. Afternoon will travel to see the traditional market streets of Tianjin to purchase souvenirs and enjoy the unique atmosphere and bargaining of the market stalls.

**Day 6** Two-sessions training

**Day 7** Morning session training. Afternoon visit TT equipment factory.

**Day 8-9** Two-sessions/day training

**Day 10** Visit and play matches with Tianjin Province Table Tennis Team.

**Day 11** Intensive training followed by a party in honor of the participants held by The institute with all practice partners and coaches.

**Day 12** Early departure for the Great Wall, Forbidden City, Summer Palace, Peking Duck.

**Day 13** Tiananmen Square, Summer Palace and shopping at the friendship store.

**Day 14** Fly home

**Accommodations:** Each participant will stay at a nice 3 stars sport hotel near the institute. Rooms are double occupancy and requests for roommates will be honored. The single room occupancy is available and subject to single room supplement.

**Coaching:** The coaches will first examine the player’s skills and needs and design a training program. Players can select their own professional Chinese practice partners.

**Training:** Training will use Chinese method. Which includes multi ball training and drill. We will also visit professional players training session.

**Food:** The same chef that was used for previous successful training programs will be used for this group, and all dietary requests can be accommodated.

**Video:** The entire trip will be video recorded. Each participant will receive a copy.

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**Please PRINT Information Below**

Name (Last, Middle, First) ________________________________ Sex ______ Age ______

Address ________________________________________________

Home Phone ______ Business Phone ______ Fax ______

Rating ______ Style ______

What would like to gain most from this trip? Any specific requests?

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<th>Smoking</th>
<th>Share Room</th>
<th>Single Room ($200 extra)</th>
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**Senior Citizens, Differently able players:** All ages and disabilities are welcome, and we will accommodate your special interests and needs. To date our most senior participant was a Special Education Teacher from Tulsa, OK, age 84.

**Foreigner players:** All foreigner players are welcome to join this program. We have successfully brought 10 Northern Ireland players to China in 1998. How every foreigner player should contact us as early as possible.

**Family:** Family members and friends are also welcome to this program. Sightseeing and other activities will be arranged for accompanying members or player who do not wish to participate in the training sessions. Accompany members will receive a reduced fee.

**Deadline Entry:** Deadline for the tour is Sep 1, 2001, late entries postmarked after Sep 1, 2001, require a $30 late fee. Entries postmarked after Sep 15, 2001, will be rejected. There will be $100 rebate for people who sign up before Sep 1, 2001 with a full payment.

**Not Included In Tour Price:** The tour price does not include any individual visa fees, passport fees, additional beverage or food items not specified in the itinerary, excess baggage charge, and items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls.

**Tour Guide:** Our Sport Tours permanent U.S based staff member who is fluent in Chinese and English and also an expert in table tennis will accompany the group throughout the whole time and be available for personal shopping excursions as time and logistics permit.

**Changes of Tour Itinerary:** We reserve the right to make any changes necessary for a successful operation of the tour. In the event of a change; every effort will be made to closely follow the original itinerary.

**Cancellations:**

- 15-29 days before departure - forfeit of deposit $300
- 10-14 days before departure - forfeit of 10% of tour deposit $300
- 5 days before departure or where no cancellation notice is received prior to departure date - the total cost 50% of liable to forfeit + deposit $300

**Cost:** $2800 for table tennis players. Non-table tennis accompanying member $2500. (Includes round trip tickets, hotels, all meals, coach and practice partner fees, drinking water for training, transport and sightseeing tour) There will be $100 discount for people who sign up before Oct 1, 2001 with a full payment.

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Brothers Leo and Ernesto Kawamoto of Huntsville teamed up to win Open Doubles. Ernesto, a student at University of Alabama, also won Open Singles while Leo, an exchange student from Brazil, won Junior Singles.


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• Butterfly-sponsored full-time coach

Coach Jack Huang
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USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • July/August 2001
MARYLAND CIRCUIT

Eldersburg, MD • May 5-6, 2001

Open: 1st Dominick Mantelli; 2nd Thien Dang.
U2100: 1st Steve Hochman; 2nd Thien Dang.
U1900: 1st Robert Hodgson; 2nd Steve Hochman.
U1700: 1st Yvonne Kronlage; 2nd Chris Puls.
U1500: 1st Phil Sarris; 2nd Alan Pruce.
U1300: 1st George Williams; 2nd Phil Sarris.
U1100: 1st Hugh Barton; 2nd Matt Jarrett.
U900: 1st Hugh Barton; 2nd Mike Branch.
U3000 Doubles: Greg & Steve Barboza; 2nd Martin Steahlin/William VanWright.

MARYLAND CIRCUIT

Eldersburg, MD • April 21-22, 2001

Open: 1st Dominick Mantelli; 2nd Steve Hochman.
Over 40: 1st Merr Trumbore; 2nd Yvonne Kronlage.
Under 18: 1st Jeremiah Tsang; 2nd Matt Jarrett.
Open: 1st Dominick Mantelli; 2nd Steve Hochman.
April 21-22, 2001

MARYLAND CIRCUIT

Eldersburg, MD • May 12, 2001


4TH ANNUAL MARYLAND MEDALLION

Frostburg, MD • May 12, 2001


MTTTC APRIL OPEN

Gaithersburg, MD • April 7-8, 2001

Open Singles - Final: Vijay Madhavan d. Han Xiao, 15,16,15,8,20; SF: Madhavan d. Stephane Leveille, 12,14,12; Xiao d. Qasim Aziz, 19,17,19.
U2100 - Final: Khurram Aziz d. Lixin Lang, 11,19.
U1900: Charles Fan d. Vijay Agarwal, 17,14.
U1200: George Williams d. Kevin Ma, 6,16.
U900: Kevin Ma d. Eddie Mead, 16,16.

MTTTC JUNE OPEN

Gaithersburg, MD • June 2-3, 2001

MTTTC June Open Under 900 Finalists

Edward Foxwell and Felix Sun.

Open - Final RR: 1st Han Xiao, 4,0 (d. Lonergan, 18,11,17,14,12; d. Madhavan, 14,18,9; d. Aziz, -16,20,16,20; d. Agarwal, 9,15,14); 2nd Sean Lonergan, 3,1 (d. Madhavan, 16,24,17,16; d. Aziz, 11,15; d. Agarwal, 8,10,7); 3rd Qasim Aziz, 2,1 (d. Madhavan, -18,13,16,13,17; d. Agarwal, 7,14,15); 4th Vijay Madhavan, 1-3 (d. Agarwal, 11,13,15); 5th Vijay Agarwal, 0,4.
U2100 - Final: Lixin Lang d. Torsten Boeker, 11,9.
U1900: Michael Leshinsky d. Paul Kocak, 18,23.
U1800: John Anderson d. Raghru Nadimichetla, 17,17,19.
U1500: Barry Ratner d. Pavel Chechikhin, 18,14.
U1200: George Williams d. Ray Aker, 13,19.

CHARLOTTE SPRING OPEN

Charlotte, NC • March 24, 2001

Open: 1st Nigel Christopher; 2nd Sven Mestechen; 3rd Alexandre Taji.
U2000: 1st Dwain Dick; 2nd Chih Huang; 3rd Tony Banjoko.
U1600: 1st Vivek Jaiswal; 2nd Edson Pierre.
U1200: 1st Joe Rigdon; 2nd Andy Claytor.
U3200 Doubles: 1st Corey Schreuders/Ray Filz; 2nd Roger Jeanice/William Collier.

POLISH YOUTH OPEN

Cetniewo, Poland
June 1-3, 2001

USA Results (singles events only)

Mark Hazinski (Junior Boys' Singles)
Preliminaries: 4th, 1-3: defeated Pawel Lemanski (POL), 12,17; lost to Daniel Gorak (POL), -21,12,15; lost to Aron Andersson (SWE), 16,12; lost to Grigori Vlassov (RUS), -19,12,12.
Consolation Event: Round One: Bye; Round Two: lost to Jacekzyk (POL), 17,15.
Final Position: 33-48

Mikhail Kazantzsev (Cadet Boys' Singles)
Preliminaries: 5th, 1-4: defeated Patryk Chojnowski (POL), 9,18; lost to Krisztian Molnar (HUN), 4,5; lost to Andreas Thuresson (SWE), 13,14; lost to Waldemar Dzwonkowski (POL), 19,11; lost to Lubos Ziga (CZE), 16,17,15.
Consolation Event: Round One: defeated Daviditch (BLR), 14,14,21; Round Two: lost to Kleprlik (CZE), 8,15.
Final Position: 33-45

Jackie Lee (Junior Girls' Singles)
Preliminaries: 4th, 1-3: defeated Agata Kocela (POL), 19,16; lost to Cornelia Vaida (CRO), 11,13; lost to Frida Johansson (SWE), 16,-18,12; lost to Pawel Chmiel (POL), 15,14; lost to Michael Krzyzanowski (POL), 18,19; lost to Daniel Habesohn (AUT), 17,17.
Consolation Event: Round One: lost to Rogowski (POL), 13,7.
Final Position: 33-45

Whitney Ping (Cadet Girls' Singles)
Preliminaries: 3rd, 1-2: defeated Diana Rumyszka (POL), 11,11; lost to Renata Gumula (POL), -19,18,19; lost to Joanna Parker (ENG), 22,18.
Consolation Event: Round One: Bye; Round Two: defeated Dudzinska (POL), 12,16; Round Three: lost to Penkavova (CZE), n.s.
Final Position: 25-32
**WORLD MEN'S CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Macau, China • May 31 – June 3, 2001**

**FINAL:**
Royal Charleroi Sporting Villetee (Belgium) d. Shandong Luneng Club (China), 3-1
- Vladimir Samsonov (RCSV) d. Zhang Young (SLC), 15,17,18.
- Jean-Michel Saive (RCSV) d. Guo Keli (SLC), 15,19,14.
- Vladimir Samsonov (RCSV) d. Liu Guozheng (SLC), walkover (leg injury).

**SEMIFINALS:**
Royal Charleroi Sporting Villetee d. Heilongjiang Sanjing Star Club (China), 3-1
- Vladimir Samsonov (RCSV) d. Zhang Peng (SLC), 14,10,8.
- Kong Linghui (HSSC) d. Zoran Primorac (RCSV), 9,13,11.
- Jean-Michel Saive (RCSV) d. Wang Fei (HSSC), 11,11,15.
- Vladimir Samsonov (RCSV) d. Kong Linghui (HSSC), 12,18,13.

Shandong Luneng Club d. TTF Liebherr Ochsenhausen (Germany), 3-1
- Liu Guozheng (SLC) d. Adrian Crisan (TTFLO), 14,19,12.
- Zhang Young (SLC) d. Chuang Chi-Yuan (TTFLO), 18,20,9.
- Peter Franz (TTFLO) d. Guo Keli (SLC), 14,19.
- Liu Guozheng (SLC) d. Chuang Chi-Yuan (TTFLO), 17,12,14.

**THIRD:**
Heilongjiang Sanjing Star Club d. TTF Liebherr Ochsenhausen, 3-1
- Chuang Chi-Yuan (TTFLO) d. Tan Ruivu (HSSC), 17,12.
- Kong Linghui (HSSC) d. Adrian Crisan (TTFLO), 16,13.
- Zhang Peng (HSSC) d. Peter Franz (TTFLO), default due to injury.
- Kong Linghui (HSSC) d. Chuang Chi-Yuan (TTFLO), 19,18.

**QUARTERFINALS:**
Royal Charleroi Sporting Villetee d. Jeju Provincial Club (Korea), 3-1
- Vladimir Samsonov (RCSV) d. Kim Jong Hoon (JPC), 8,19.
- Kim Bong Chul (JPC) d. Zoran Primorac (RCSV), 16,20.
- Jean-Michel Saive (RCSV) d. Choi Hyun Jin (JPC), 24,12.
- Vladimir Samsonov (RCSV) d. Kim Bong Chul (JPC), 14,14.

Shandong Luneng Club d. Silver Ball Club (Hong Kong), 3-2
- Liu Guozheng (SLC) d. Cheung Yuk (SBC), 18,14,18.
- Leung Chu Yan (SBC) d. Zhang Young (SLC), 15,15,19.
- Ko Lai Chak (SBC) d. Guo Keli (SLC), 19,12.
- Zhang Young (SLC) d. Cheung Yuk (SBC), 15,19.

Heilongjiang Sanjing Star Club d. SVS Niederosterreich (Austria), 3-0
- Zhang Peng (HSSC) d. Werner Schlager (SVSN), 19,22,17.
- Kong Linghui (HSSC) d. Konstadin Lengerov (SVSN), 19,18,10.
- Wang Fei (HSSC) d. Qian Qianli (SVSN), 18,11.

TTF Liebherr Ochsenhausen d. TTC Zugbrugge Grenzau (German), 3-2
- Chuang Chi-Yuan (TTFLO) d. Ma Wenge (TTTGGZ), 10,17.
- Chen Zhibin (TTTGGZ) d. Adrian Crisan (TTFLO), 14,20,17.
- Peter Franz (TTFLO) d. Andrzej Grubba (TTTGGZ), 16,9.
- Ma Wenge (TTTGGZ) d. Adrian Crisan (TTFLO), 18,20.
- Chuang Chi-Yuan (TTFLO) d. Chen Zhibin (TTTGGZ), 15,13,17.
The Worlds: USA Arrives  By Larry Hodges

THURSDAY-FRIDAY, APRIL 19-20
Most of the U.S. traveling group met in San Francisco on Thursday for the 12-hour flight to Osaka, including Team Leader Bob Fox, Coaches Dan Seemiller and Doru Gheorghe, myself, and players Mark Hazinski, Eric Owens, Barney J. Reed, Ashu Jain, Jasna Reed, Tawny Banh and Simone Yang. Missing were David Zhuang and Chang Gao Jun, who flew earlier, and Virginia Sung, who would come two days later due to job commitments.

Other than turbulence that left some a bit nauseous, the flight was uneventful. The pilot announced over the loudspeaker system that the U.S. Table Tennis Team was aboard and on its way to the World Championships, and the passengers gave us a round of applause.

We were met at the airport by David and Gao, and five World Championships workers, holding signs and wearing orange jackets. Several spoke English, and we were guided to the bus that would take us to Osaka, one hour away. Everything was extremely efficient. "The Japanese are the most efficient people in the world," Dan said. He should know - he’d been to Japan about 20 times.

There were complications regarding the box with our team uniforms. Team Leader Bob Fox stayed behind while the rest of us left. We didn’t see him again that night.

We stopped off at the hotel for registration, and received credentials and meal tickets, and after dropping off our bags, we went to dinner. For the duration of our stay, we would be eating buffet-style; however, for this first meal, we were eating at an authentic Japanese restaurant, with various courses served, rather than choosing them. While most of us ate hungrily, others metaphorically turned green when the first dish served was squid. However, soon more American-looking food was served (steak, french fries, rice and salad), and vegetarian dishes were served to our vegetarians (Eric, Gao and Ashu). Thanks to the chocolate soon found in our bags, all appetites were soon satisfied and most of us quickly retired to bed.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21
Bob Fox arrived late the night before with the uniforms, so we headed down to breakfast and took the bus to the playing hall for the first of two practice sessions. Players commented about the slowness of the conditions, probably caused by the flooring and the tables. They said that if you drop shot, the ball just stopped. "Danny, you’d be king here!" Barney J. Reed told Coach Seemiller, known for his change-up dead blocks with antispin.

Many of the Japanese seemed to know Dan. No wonder - he won the Western Japan Open five times, and was in the final four other times!

This was when there was no Japan Open. so the Western Japan Open was five times, and was in the final four other times! Yet knowing who the women would play.

USA Men were ranked #36 and seeded second in their group. World-ranked players (at these Worlds) are David Zhuang (109), Eric Owens (254) and Barney J. Reed (394). Mark Hazinski and Ashu Jain, second and fifth in the trials, are unranked.

Our first team match will be Tuesday against the second seed, Indonesia, world #27. Here we have a break - their best player, Anton Suseno, a chopper ranked 138 in the world, is not here. Playing instead are Deddy Da Costa (242), Ismu Harinto (300), and M. Azinuddin and Yon Mardiono, both unranked. Although ranked lower than Da Costa, Harinto, a controlling two-winged looper and counterdriver, is probably their best.

If USA men should win our group, they will play either South Korea, Hong Kong or Poland in the playoff for the first division. We don’t yet know who the women would play.

WOMEN
USA Women, currently ranked world #33, are seeded first in their group. All five have world rankings: Chang Gao Jun (35), Jasna Reed (125), Tawny Banh (144), Virginia Sung (191) and Simone Yang (203).

Our first match will be against Macao, China, on Monday. Macao, world #50, is seeded third in the group. Their players are Lok Sim Wong (346), Choi Chi Wong (351), Lai Wa Lim (364) and Sut Fei Tam (unranked).

The second match will be on Tuesday against the second seed, Israel, world #35. Israel only has three women here - Marina Kravchenku (75), Sarit Hosses (224) and Jurdy Daftar (291). The key is Kravchenku, a close to the table shakehand block/hitter with pips on the backhand. For Israel to win, they likely would need Kravchenku to win two.
We'll start with some early round results:

**MEN'S TEAMS ROUND OF 32**

- **Byes:** Sweden, Taipei, Belgium, Japan, France, South Korea, Germany and China
- **Greece d. Hong Kong 3-1.** Kalinikos Kreanga wins two to lead Greece to victory.
- **Austria d. North Korea 3-2.** Things didn't look good for Austria when their ace, Werner Schlager, lost to Kim Song Hui, but Kostadin Lengerov pulled out the fifth.
- **Belarus d. Slovak 3-2.** As usual, Samsonov won this two, and Chchteinin pulled out the fifth.
- **Netherlands d. Croatia 3-2.** Trinko Keen (world #37) upsets Primorac (world #7), deuce in the third!
- **Yugoslavia d. Norway 3-1
- **Italy d. Spain 3-0
- **Czech Republic d. England 3-1
- **Poland d. Hungary 3-0

**MEN'S TEAMS ROUND OF 16**

- **South Korea d. Czech Republic 3-2.** When the Czech ace, Korbel, defeated the Korean ace, Kim Taek Soo, it forced the match into the fifth. Klasiek won the first, and was up game, match and team match point 20-19 – and served into the net. He lost that game at deuce, and the match deuce in the third.
- **Kim Taek Soo (KOR) d. Marek Klasiek (CZE), 14,7
- **Pet Korbel (CZE) d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), 15,14,14
- **Ryu Seung Min (KOR) d. Martin Olejnik (CZE), 19,17
- **Pet Korbel (CZE) d. Kim Taek Soo (KOR), -18,12,11
- **Oh Sang Eun (KOR) d. Marek Klasiek (CZE), -15,20,22

**Germany d. Poland 3-2.** Germany pulls it out despite Blaszczyk's upset win over Roskopf forces a fifth.
- **Jorg Rosskopf (GER) d. Tomasz Krzeszewski (POL), 16,-15,14
- **Lacjan Blaszczyk (POL) d. Timo Boll (GER), 14,-21,13
- **Peter Franz (GER) d. Bartosz Such (POL), 11,11
- **Lacjan Blaszczyk (POL) d. Jorg Rosskopf (GER), 15,13
- **Tomio Boll (GER) d. Tomasz Krzeszewski (POL), 11,-17,7

**Italy d. Japan 3-0.** The upset of the day, as (in order) world #22 d. world #22; #101 d. #23; and #98 d. #20. All in front of the disappointed hometown fans! The only really big upset so far in the team.
- **Yang Min (ITA) d. Toshio Tatsaki (JPN), 17,-18,18
- **Massimiliano Monello (ITA) d. Koji Matsushita (JPN), 10,16
- **Valentino Placimini (ITA) d. Iseki Seiko (JPN), 17,-12,13

**France d. Belarus 3-2.** Samsonov wins his two (including a great match with Gatten), Belarus can't win another. Damien Eliot lights up the playing site with his new blond look. At 20-20 in second with Gatten, Samsonov twice goes to Gatten's side forehand, each time catching Gatten already stepping around the other way.
- **Patrick Chila (FRA) d. Evgeni Chchteinine (BLR), 9,17
- **Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) d. Jean-Philippe Gatten (FRA), 14,20
- **Damien Eliot (FRA) d. Dmitry Chchteinine (BLR), 9,13
- **Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) d. Patrick Chila (FRA), 9,19
- **Jean-Philippe Gatten (FRA) d. Evgeni Chchteinine (BLR), -16,14,14

**Belgium d. Yugoslavia 3-0.** The Saive brothers lead Belgium to the Final Eight.
- **Jean-Michel Saive (BEL) d. Aleksandar Karakasevic (YUG), 14,17
- **Philippe Saive (BEL) d. Ilija Lupulesku (YUG), -23,11,13
- **Martin Bratanov (BEL) d. Slobodan Grujic (YUG), 18,12

**Sweden d. Greece 3-1.**
- **Kalinikos Kreanga (GRE) d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), -18,11,11
- **Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE) d. Ntaniel Tsiokas (GRE), 11,9,18
- **Fredrik Hakansson (SWE) d. Panagiotis Gionis (GRE), 18,9
- **Jorgen Persson (SWE) d. Ntaniel Tsiokas (GRE), 18,13

**Austria d. Chinese Taipei 3-2.**
- **Chuan Chih-Yuan (TPE) d. Chen Weixing (AUT), 17,17,11
- **Werner Schlager (AUT) d. Chang Peng-Lung (TPE), 12,-12,7
- **Kostadin Lengerov (AUT) d. Chang Yan-Shu (TPE), -19,9,18
- **Chiang Peng-Lung (TPE) d. Chen Weixing (AUT), 12,-19,17
- **Werner Schlager (AUT) d. Chuan Chih-Yuan (TPE), 18,22

**China d. Germany 3-1.**
- **Kong Linghui (CHN) d. Joerg Rosskopf (GER), 19,11
- **Timo Boll (GER) d. Wang Liqin (CHN), 19,20
- **Liu Guozheng (CHN) d. Peter Franz (GER), 12,13
- **Kong Linghui (CHN) d. Timo Boll (GER), 19,16

It was somewhat surprising that Austria played Qian Qianzi in the third position instead of Kostadin Lengerov. They are ranked about the same – Lengerov is world #71, one spot ahead of Qian – but Lengerov has had good results recently. However, Qian did win the middle game against Hakansson at 10 before losing the third at 14. The fact that Sweden is playing Hakansson now is an indication that they might be using him instead of Peter Karlsson against China should they reach the final.

As to Waldner and Persson – Waldner looked definitely bored and lethargic in his match with Chen, and seemed to put out just enough effort to win. He seems to stand up almost straight during most points. One problem Waldner has is that he likes to sidespin loop to choppers' wide forehand – but Chen keeps counterlooping that one for a winner, often hooking it for an ace to Waldner's forehand. But Waldner is Waldner, and he will always play down to weaker players ... and come alive in the big matches when he needs to.

Persson, on the other hand, was all over the court in his battle with Schlager. Persson is a "big match" player who peaks for tournaments such as the Worlds. From up 18-13, Persson wins the first 21-19. (Up 16-12, Persson pulled off all over-the-shoulder, back-to-the-table backhand counter-smash – but Schlager blocked it back for a winner.) In the second game, Persson again has a big lead, this time 17-8 – but loses nine in a row! Persson pulls it out 22-20. How often does a player win at 19 & 20 after leading 18-13 and 17-8? Perhaps Persson was also getting bored.

**China's Liu Guozheng, undefeated in the teams and the hero of the China-South Korea Semifinals.**

**MEN'S TEAMS QUARTERFINALS**

- **Sweden d. Austria 3-0.**
  - Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE) d. Chen Weixing (AUT), -18,16,14
  - Jorgen Persson (SWE) d. Werner Schlager (AUT), 19,20
  - Fredrik Hakansson (SWE) d. Qian Qianzi (CHN), 17,-10,14

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**China d. Germany 3-1.**
- **Kong Linghui (CHN) d. Joerg Rosskopf (GER), 19,11
- **Timo Boll (GER) d. Wang Liqin (CHN), 19,20
- **Liu Guozheng (CHN) d. Peter Franz (GER), 12,13
- **Kong Linghui (CHN) d. Timo Boll (GER), 19,16

Jörg Rosskopf gave Kong a good first-game battle with an exhibition of shot-making and power-looping from both sides. But Kong's all-around game and sheer speed made the difference. Similarly, Kong's placement and varied tactics kept Timo Boll off balance in the fourth match. But what were they doing playing a fourth match? Unless one of the Chinese lost?

Lefty Timo Boll, pictured as a promising junior in the new ITTF Legends book (a history of the first 75 years of the ITTF) showed his promise by pulling out two straight close ones against Wang Liqin. But the second wasn't exactly close at first – Boll led 17-7, 19-12, and 20-16, mostly on the strength of his attack (which seemed to freeze Wang). Wang's inability to return serves (he kept pushing Boll's serve into the net) and Wang's own erratic attack. Wang then mounted an incredible comeback – helped by back-to-back net and edge...
winners at 19-14 to get to 19-16, but mostly earned through great shot-making and ball control. With the Germans and Chinese equally in disbelief, Boll barely pulled it out, 22-20. At first thought, this result might make the Chinese a bit worried about playing Wang Liqin in the team final (the possibility that they might not make it hadn’t been thought of yet except by South Korea, their semifinal opponents, and by Waldner, who told the press, “Don’t count South Korea out.”). However, the way he played and fought and almost came back might be an indication of what he’d do from the start against a “stronger” (or at least higher world-ranked) player.

Liu Guozheng has been playing in the third post for China, and hasn’t yet lost a game. Here he defeated Peter Franz, another lefty, at 12& 13.

Belgium d. Italy 3-1
- Yang Min (ITA) d. Andras Podpinka (BEL), 18.-15,19
- Jean-Michel Saive (BEL) d. Massimiliano Mondello (ITA), -16,10,14
- Martin Bratanov (BEL) d. Valentino Placentini (ITA), -19,19,19
- Jean-Michel Saive (BEL) d. Yang Min (ITA), -19,13,11

Podpinka had defeated Yang Min 2-0 the last time they’d played (in the European League in January, 2001), and so they decided to play Podpinka (world #67) instead of Philippe Saive (world #47). If almost worked, but Min managed to win against Podpinka, 19 in the third. Even more surprising was Belgium’s playing world #105 Martin Bratanov in the third position, again passing over Philippe Saive. Philippe had lost the last time out against both Yang and Placentini – but so had Bratanov. The strategy worked, with Bratanov winning an amazing 19.-19,19 match over Placentini. So the two countries had split 19-in-the-thirds.

But this team match was all about Saive – Jean-Michelle, not Philippe. Jean-Michelle, ranked #12 in the world (but once #1) won both his matches. Did someone suggest to him before the match that he should lob some? Lob he did, over and over and over – and to great effect. It almost seemed like he took a game to adjust his lobbying to his opponent, as he lost the first game both times, then won easily the rest of the way. The rest of the time he was relentlessly looping forehands – he likes to play an almost one-winged forehand looping game when he can, and he’s fast enough to do so. Due to this foot speed, even when lobbing he doesn’t just lob – he almost always find a chance to suddenly counter-attack with his forehand. More than anything else in his matches, Saive showcased his ability to move from point A to point B at foot speeds that were not thought possible (except possibly for a few Korean penholders and others like that).

Belgium would upset Sweden in the semifinals. L-R: Martin Bratanov, Jean-Michelle Saive, Philippe Saive.

South Korea d. France 3-2
- Oh Sang Eun (KOR) d. Jean-Philippe Gatien (FRA), 21,19
- Christophe Legout (FRA) d. Kim Taek Soo (KOR), 19.-19,16
- Ryu Seung Min (KOR) d. Damien Elio (FRA), 7,18
- Jean-Philippe Gatien (FRA) d. Kim Taek Soo (KOR), 20,23
- Oh Sang Eun (KOR) d. Christophe Legout (FRA), 11,-16,16

This was one of the most topsy-turvy matches possible. If you accept that Gatien (the French ace and 1993 world champion) is probably better than his recent ranking (down to #28), then all five matches were “upsets.” In the first match, Gatien lost a nail-bitingly close one, 21 & 19, to Oh Sang Eun, world #26. (Gatien was seemingly behind the entire match, and always seeming to come back.) From there on, the lower ranked player won all four.

Who would have believed that the Korean ace, Kim Taek Soo, world #9, would lose both his matches (to Legout and Gatien, world #16 and 28), and that

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**Belgium d. Italy 3-1**

- Jean-Michel Saive (BEL) d. Massimiliano Mondello (ITA), 18,-15,19
- Martin Bratanov (BEL) d. Valentino Placentini (ITA), -19,19,19
- Jean-Michel Saive (BEL) d. Yang Min (ITA), -19,13,11

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Korea would win despite this? Since the teams alternated wins and losses, and every match was an "upset," the tide turned every match. The most spectacular match was Kim vs. Gatien. Both are extremely fast and powerful, with Kim having the edge in power. Gatien in looping quickly had the match. Three of the four sights harder to believe than seeing Gatien counterlooping Kim’s incredibly powerful loop right off the bounce. He pulled off just enough of these to win at 5-23. Gatien was helped by an edge in the first game when he was down 1-20. However, up 6-20 in the first and at 22 in the third, Kim forehand killed looped from his backhand court crosscourt, and both times Gatien pulled off a down-the-line “smack” block for clean winners.

With all the discussion of Kim, it’s almost forgotten that with one star down, another rose. Oh Sang Eun won both his matches in leading Korea to victory here, while Ryu Seung Min easily took down Damien Elion in the third position. In the fifth, Legout pulled out to a 6-1 lead — and was then up 8-7, down 8-13 (lost six in a row) and ended up losing 21-16 despite that early lead. For the second time in a row, South Korea has barely survived a five-game match — as if it were their destiny that they would have that incredible upcoming match with China.

**MEN’S TEAMS SEMIFINALS**

A billion Chinese quaked in their slippers, 100 million Koreans leaped to their feet seven times. Several dozen Americans knew what was going on. If you are reading this and didn’t see it, you missed two of the greatest and most memorable team matches in history.

Who would think that the Belgium upset of Sweden would become an afterthought after what happened in the China-South Korea match?

The inevitable China versus Sweden Men’s Team Final is not going to happen. By all the rules of probability, it should be a South Korea — Belgium final. Instead, it will be a China — Belgium final.

So what happened? Let’s start with what happened to the Swedes on their way to not making the final for only the second time since 1981. Why turn such a great team match into an anticlimactic afterthought simply because it was followed by the purest gem of a match ever seen?

**SEMIFINAL #1: Belgium d. Sweden, 3-1**

- Philippe Saive (BEL) d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), -17,17,19
- Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE) d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), -11,13,17
- Martin Bratanov (BEL) d. Fredrick Hakansson (SWE), -12,10,15
- Jean-Michel Saive (BEL) d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), -12,18

**Jorgen Persson (SWE) vs. Philippe Saive (BEL)**

Philippe — and we call him that so as not to get him confused with his brother and teammate Jean-Michel — has beaten every major European player — except Persson. However, he did go five with Persson the last time out, losing 3-2 in the round of 32 at the Croatian Open in March, 2001. At 17-all, Person won four in a row by going after Philippe’s backhand to win the first game. Throughout the game, Persson went back and forth between two serves — the common forehand pendulum serve from the backhand corner (he usually, does it inside out), and a backhand serve from just over the middle line on his forehand side of the table. He pulls the backhand serve out especially when it is close.

At 9-7 in the second, Philippe scoops up a ball that went off the side of the table by the net and lob it up — but he’s moving so fast he just continues to Persson’s side, and takes a leisurely jog around the table. The lob just missed. 10-7 Persson. Philippe called a one-minute timeout here but it didn’t help — Persson extended his lead to 13-8. Philippe pulls to 13-12 — then Persson’s up 15-12. Then it’s 16-11, and then Philippe’s up 19-16, and wins 21-17.

In the third, Philippe goes up 16-13. Persson scores the next two, and then switches to his backhand serve — and immediately serves three straight let balls! He then switches back to his forehand serve, and gets to it. But a backhand into the net, and two points later a backhand off the end, and Jean-Michel has won, 12 & 18 — and Sweden has lost! Immediately after winning, Jean-Michel runs screaming from the court, arms raised, and is mobbed by his teammates. Belgium has won, 3-1.

"End of an era," someone said. “Waldner and Persson will retire, and nobody will be able to challenge the Chinese for a decade.” Actually, it would only take an hour.

**SEMIFINALS #2: China d. South Korea, 3-2**

- Liu Guozheng (CHN) d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), 12,18
- Kim Tae Soo (KOR) d. Kong Linghui (CHN), 16,17
- Ma Lin (CHN) d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 12,19
- Oh Sang Eun (KOR) d. Kong Linghui (CHN), 12,18
- Liu Guozheng (CHN) d. Kim Tae Soo (KOR), -16,22,23

To start with, you know China’s good when they have the #1 ranked player in the world (Wang Liqin) and the current World and Olympic Champion (Liu Guoliong), and choose to play neither. They go with world #2 Kong Linghui and world #5 Liu Guozheng (who hasn’t lost a game this tournament) in the top two positions; and world #3 Ma Lin in the third position. Up against them would be Kim Tae Soo, Oh Sang Eun and Ryu Seung Min, ranked #9, 26 and 27 in the world. Rumors are flying about that Ryu is injured, either his arm or leg, but no one seems to know for sure.

**Liu Guozheng (CHN) vs. Oh Sang Eun (KOR)**

Many are surprised that Liu is playing instead of Wang Lixin, the #1 ranked player in the world. However, Liu hasn’t lost a game yet, and is playing so well (in contrast to Wang, who lost to Timo Boll the day before) that they went with him. The match is quite a contrast, the very tall Oh vs. the very short Liu, but Liu is an extremely fast shotmaker, and he basically made all his shots in
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South Korea’s hard-luck Kim Taek Soo

winning at 12 & 18. The two had played once before in the past two years, at the Japan Open in June, 2000, and Liu had won that one 3-0. Meanwhile, the same Korean contingent that had been chanting for the Koreans for days is still in action, chanting, playing drums and wearing the same white shirts with a picture of a unified Korea on it as a call for unification. Are they doing laundry every night?

Kong Linghui (CHN) vs. Oh Sang Eun (KOR)

This was a match-up of the shakehand looper and all-round player Kong vs. the power-looping - but also good topspin defender - Kim. They had played twice over the past two years, and Kong had won them both, 3-0 at the Japan Open, and 2-0 at the World Club Championships, both in June of 2000. Kong has a long history of beating the Koreans, so China is strongly favored this match.

Kim wins at 16 & 17. It’s all tied up! (The secret? Many counter-looping rallies, and Kim dominated them.)

Ma Lin (CHN) vs. Ryu Seung Min (KOR)

Ma Lin probably has the best penhold backhand loop in the world (he uses the back of his penhold blade, not the regular penhold hitting surface) and Ryu also has this shot, although it’s not as good or used as often as Ma’s. But whether it’s forehands or backhands, Ma runs right through Ryu in game one, 21-12.

In the second, Ryu almost runs away with it, going up 18-13. Ma now serves, Ryu pushes it back, and Ma loop kills a winner, 14-18. The exact sequence happens again, 15-18. Then again, 16-18! Finally, Ryu attacks the serve with a slow loop, but same result - Ma loop kills it, 17-18. At 18-19, a net ball pops the ball up, and Ma loop kills it. Then Ryu serve and pushes, and Ma loop kills again, 20-19. (Is there a pattern here?) Ma wins a counterlooping point, and Ryu slams his racket on the ground in disgust. Match to Ma, 12 & 19.

Kong Linghui (CHN) vs. Oh Sang Eun (KOR)

Let’s jump right to near the end of the first, 19-all. Oh serves and loops, and gets the 20-19 ad, but Kong loops on the edge to deuce it. Kong goes up 21-20 - and the Chinese coach (Cai Zhenhua) calls a time-out! Usually you do that when you are behind. It doesn’t help as Oh ties it, and then gets an edge to go up 22-21. Then he gets a net ball - but this pops the ball up, and Kong loops winner, 22-21. Kong goes up 23-22; Oh goes up 24-23 and 25-24. This time he holds it when Kong loops off. In game two, Oh goes up 17-14, then Kong ties it 17-all. It doesn’t help as Oh ties it, and then gets an edge to go up 22-21. Then he gets a net ball - but it goes wide. Finally, Oh serves and attacks, and the Chinese bench is yellow carded for coaching! It doesn’t help, match to Oh, 24 & 18.

It’s all tied up for the fifth and final match. Tighten your seat belt.

Liu Guozheng (CHN) vs. Kim Taek Soo (KOR)

Before he goes to the table, each member of the Korean team shakes Kim’s hand. He then proceeds to take Li apart, playing unbelievable, and leads 9-3. But Liu rises to the occasion, and we soon have two of the hottest - and most evenly matched - players ever to be on the same table together. But Kim already has the lead, and while the countering is incredible - both have great power, yet fantastic consistency in this match - he holds the lead to the end as the two trade power shots back and forth, over and over, in the same rally. Kim wins the first, 21-16. It’s not that big a surprise - the two have played once in the past two years, at the World Club Championships in June of 2000, and Kim had won that one 2-1.

Near the start of the second game, the Korean coach is kicked out of the arena for coaching during a game.

Kim actually raises the level of his game, which did not seem possible, and goes up 9-3. There is nothing Liu can counterloop at full power, but Kim is even more powerful, and is playing a level not often seen before. So... Liu raises his level to match him! Liu is known as a hot/cold player, but when he’s on, he may be the best player in the world. From here on out, it’s a toss-up.

There is no point in describing many of the points. It comes down to pure power-looping back and forth. Even if one pops the ball up, and loops it at the widest possible angle at maximum power, the other runs it down and loops it back just as hard. After falling behind 9-3, Liu pulls to 9-6. He’s now winning points by literally taking Kim’s most powerful loops and looping them back so fast and hard that Kim cannot recover from the previous loop. In fact, it becomes obvious that if Kim’s opening put-away loop is to the forehand side, Liu will counterloop a wide-angle winner. Kim needs to open the backhand.

Liu finally ties it at 11-all with counterlooping rally that went on forever - like many of them. At 12-all, Liu pops the ball up - and Kim misses! Suddenly Liu gets sloppy, misses a few, and after being up 9-3, he’s now down 17-13 (losing the last point when Liu loop kills on the edge). He then ties it up 17-17. It goes to 19-all.

Finally, to the delight of the Korean fans and teammates, Kim rings a loop winner to Liu’s backhand, and he is one point away from eliminating China and putting Korea in the final.

But Liu serves and rips a winner. The opportunity is lost.

Kim gets another chance when Liu misses a backhand counterloop, 20-21, and again Korea is one point away from the final. But again, Liu serves and rips - and Kim just misses the counterloop, 21-all.

Kim serves and rips a loop to Liu’s forehand, and for once Liu doesn’t counterloop a winner - he gets aced, perhaps looking for it to come to his backhand. For the third time, Korea is one point away from the final. But Kim backhand kills Liu’s serve off, and it’s 22-22.

Now Kim serves and does a sudden sidespin push to Liu’s backhand - but it goes wide. Finally, Liu serves and attacks, Kim is off the table just topspinning balls back with his backhand. Liu rips it to the forehand, and Kim cannot run it down. Three opportunities, but Liu has fought them off all and - a billion Chinese sigh with relief even as 100 million Koreans sigh in disgust. They go into the third game.

The same rallies happen throughout the third, a non-stop power-looping festival. Up 16-15, Kim rips two winners, and then backhand punch-blocks a winner off Liu’s "winner" - and Kim is now serving for the game, match, and Korea, up 19-16.

Kim serves and whiffs a loop against Liu’s push, 19-17.


Liu loops the serve, and Kim blocks off. It’s almost an anticlimactic 19-all with three sloppy points in a row.

From here on out, the memory will be pure agony for Kim and Koreans, as if the previous game’s match points weren’t enough. He’s already had three match points in game two; he served up from 19-16 in the...
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third. He will now serve for the match at 20-19, 21-20, 22-21 and 23-22. He will have opportunities, but nothing quite goes in. He serves long three times when serving for the match, allowing Liu the first loop in several counterloop rallies Liu would win. Finally, at 23-all, Kim misses a counterloop, and then a regular loop — and Liu has fought off seven match and tie points to win, 16-22, 23-21. In a team match that will be remembered for decades to come, perhaps even by the men and women from China, the game took place in the third place, but certainly by all who were there, China wins, 3-2, deuce in the third in the fifth.

The depressed Kim was given a standing ovation on the way out, and finally, just before leaving, he raised his hand and waved to the crowd. He played one of the most memorable matches in modern history — a fact that will likely not console him for some time.

**MEN’S TEAM FINAL**

**China d. Belgium 3-0**

- Ma Lin (CHN) d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 17-15
- Liu Guozheng (CHN) d. Philippe Saive (BEL), 18-17
- Kong Linghui (CHN) d. Martin Bratanov (BEL), 18-19

After his two losses against South Korea in the semifinals, some thought that Kong Linghui might sit out the final, especially since Wang Liqin, ranked #1 in the world, hadn’t played the semifinals. Instead, China moved Kong to the third position, where he would only play one match, and moved Ma Lin from the third to the second position, where he would play matches one and five (if it went that far). Liu Guozheng, the hero of the semifinals for China filled out the roster, in the #1 slot, playing matches two and four. The three Chinese, Kong Linghui, Ma Lin and Liu Guozheng, are ranked #2, 3 and 5 in the world. On the bench for them would be Wang Liqin (#1) and Liu Guoliang (co-#5). That’s luxury, having the world #1 and the World & Olympic Men’s Singles Champion (Liu Guoliang) on the bench!

For the final, Belgium is playing the same three in the same order as the day before — Jean-Michel Saive, his brother Philippe Saive, and Martin Bratanov. The three Belgians are ranked #12, 47 and 105 in the world (with Andreas Podlipnko and Marc Closet, world #67 and 223, on the bench). If these numbers were accurate, they wouldn’t be in the final.

**Ma Lin (CHN) vs. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL)**

Since the 1997 Worlds, these two have played five times, with Ma winning four times. Generally, Saive is an all-out forehand looper and lobber/fisher. If he’s not looping forehands, he’s usually back at the barriers defending. Ma Lin would be a classic penhold looper except he also has an exceptional backhand penhold backhand loop.

In the first game, they battle 16-all — and then Saive took over. He serve and ripped two identical forehand loops to Ma’s wide forehand for winners, and then won a longer point where Ma was forced off the table, topspin defending ("fishing") until Saive ripped a winner.

The second was all Ma Lin, ripping at will, 21-7.

In the third, at 13-all, Saive scores two in a row to lead 15-13. Ma calls a one-minute time-out to talk to his coach. What did the coach say? We may never know, but whatever it was, Ma came back to the table — and scored eight straight points to win the game and match, 17-7, 15. Saive may never know as well, but he’ll be thinking about the four opening loops against push he missed (three of them backhand loops), in those last eight points (along with one unlucky net ball).

**Liu Guozheng (CHN) vs. Philippe Saive (BEL)**

Both of these players are known for being hot/cold players. Liu, however, is such a strong player that even when he’s not hot, he’s very strong. To have a chance, Saive will have to be hot. They have played once more — with Liu winning in five at the 2000 Olympics.

Saive jumps out to a 7-3 and 10-5 lead but Liu ties it up at 14-all. From there on, Liu gradually pulls away, 16-14, 20-16, 21-18. (At 20-17, Liu tries to rip a counterloop, but so grazes the ball that it basically drops to the floor, spinning.)

In the second, Saive again jumps to a 7-3 lead but Liu catches him quickly, 9-9. Then it’s 10-all, 11-all, 12-all, 13-all, 14-all. This is where Liu pulled away the previous game, and that’s what he does here — the "14-all jinx." Down 14-17, Saive calls a time-out. When he returns, he serves long, and Liu loop kills a winner, 14-18. Saive serves long again, and Liu misses a loop kill, 15-18. Saive serves long again and Liu again loop kills it, 15-19. Saive finally serves short, and with a flip kill, 16-19. But it’s too late — Liu wins a counterlooping exchange to go up 20-16. When Liu, who’s been winning all the points and is obviously hot, misses a loop next rally (20-17), the Chinese coach surprisingly calls a timeout. Perhaps he wants to tell him what serves to use? Liu serves long, Saive loops, Liu blocks, and Saive misses a loop. (Was it choreographed by the Chinese coach?). Match to Liu, 18-17, and China leads 2-0.

**Kong Linghui (CHN) vs. Martin Bratanov (BEL)**

Yesterday morning, most players would have looked at this and said, "Martin who?" By last night, Bratanov had won his match in the semifinals, while Kong had lost both of his. Now they were meeting in the final of the World Teams, the #2 in the World Men’s Singles Champion player in the world versus the #105 player in the world.

A mismatch? It started that way, with Kong going up 5-0. But in the seesaw way that every match versus the #105 player in the world, Kong wins the next five, and soon leads 20-16. Bratanov serve and loops a winner, 20-17. Kong backhand hits a serve off, 20-18. Bratanov then serves and rips a "winner" to Kong’s forehand — but Kong quick hits a winner to Bratanov’s open forehand court, 21-18.

Kong starts game two fast, leading 4-1 on Bratanov’s serve. Bratanov, with his big free-swinging loops, stays close, and ties it at 14-all — only to lose the next two (that 14-all jinx). Bratanov scores the next three, and leads 17-16. Then (seesawing again) Kong scores three in a row to lead 19-16. When Bratanov backhand killed Kong’s loop the next point (19-18), Chinese coach Cai Zhenhua called a timeout. (Cai really seemed to have a different theory about timeouts — while others called them after losing a few points near the end of an important game, he often called them near the end of a game when his player had scored a number in a row, and then lost just one.) Kong then went up 20-18, but Bratanov kill loops Kong’s next serve, 20-19. When Kong again serves long, Bratanov loops again — off! Kong and China have won, 18 & 19.

Going into these Worlds, China was the dominant men’s power, with the #1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 men in the world. Going out, they are still the dominant power and the world champions. But nobody who was here will ever again think that even the most dominant country is a sure thing.

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Women's Teams
By Tim Boggan

The World Women's Team event was won, as expected, by China over North Korea, 3-0. In posting their 13th Corbillon Cup victory in the last 14 Championships, China continues its modern-day record of having given up their perennial title only once — to a combined North and South Korean team in Chiba, Japan ten years ago. This 1991 “unification” was unique, for though the same pooling of talent had been talked about for these 2001 Osaka Championships, it didn’t happen. Perhaps the North Koreans felt they could do better on their own? Many would say they were right to think so — for they eliminated the South Koreans in a best-behavior, relations-improving, 5-match tie in the semis.

Although in their last Cup quest, these same North Korean players lost to Romania 3-2, and so finished in a tie for 9th, here in Osaka it was the spectators’ and the ITTF’s marketing hope that they could provide at least some competition for the near invincible Chinese.

“Elegant, Efficient and Extremely Effective” was the title of Italian journalist Gennaro Bozza’s recent “Table Tennis Illustrated” article describing the present World and Olympic Champion Wang Nan. And in the first match of this tie — against the DPR World #68 Kim Hying Mi — the 22-year-old Chinese lived up to the alliterative superlatives.

Kim did score the opening point — but there would not be many more squeals of delight in her losing 15-10 match. However, the Korean drums continued to beat, the theatrical gongs and clangs continued to sound. Three kinds of Korean flags – North, South, and the serene blue-on-white of the Korean peninsula agreed on by both countries — were repeatedly raised in a large Korean-spectator section (large because it’s said that 300,000 Koreans live in the Osaka area). No rainbow-colors as in Kuala Lumpur in this rabid partisan group though, rather white shirts matching the small white flag that indicated the peninsula agreed on by both countries — were repeatedly raised in a large Korean-spectator section (large because it’s said that 300,000 Koreans live in the Osaka area). No rainbow-colors as in Kuala Lumpur in this rabid partisan group though, rather white shirts matching the small white flag that fluttered furiously whenever the occasion demanded.

When Wang, angling to topspin winners from both sides, had won the 1st game and was up 10-3 in the 2nd, only a few isolated cries of encouragement and/or advice could be heard. Still, down 18-7, Kim, jogging to retrieve a wayward ball, then coming back to serve, was as intently focused as if the score were 8-7 in the 3rd. But dedication and determination are not always enough. China 1 – North Korea 0.

Next up: the latest pro Tour Champion, World #3, Zhang Yining vs. Kim Hyon Hui, formerly World #40, now World #19. In the last Corbillon Cup Championships, Zhang played close games, won or lost them, against at least 1 - China 1 - North Korea 0.

First match-up: the latest pro Tour Champion, World #3, Zhang Yining vs. Kim Hyon Hui, formerly World #40, now World #19. In the last Corbillon Cup Championships, Zhang played close games, won or lost them, against at least 1 - China 1 - North Korea 0.

In the 1st match, with the U.S.’s Tom Miller as Umpire, pits Li Ju, World #2 and World Doubles Champion with Wang Nan, against Tu Jong Sil, World #76 and winner of the ’99 Pyongyang International tournament that in the quarter’s featured 1 Chinese and 7 North Koreans. Unlike her compatriots, this lefty attacker favors a high-toss serve (which once she threw up so high backward it almost got away from her). Backhand to backhand exchanges sometimes seemed to force Li defensively back, and also she的增长and some of her forehand long. First game to the Korean. But can she win the game?

In the 2nd, Li starts strong, has a 4-0 lead, but Tu quickly catches her, and the game is 12-12 close. Then the Chinese errs, Tu moves ahead to 16-13, and Li calls Time. A barrage of long loops and short snaps brings Li close, but a Korean forehand whirs in, and Tu is 18-16 up. Li hurtles in a backhand, then hits it up by swatting Tu’s serve her. At 18-all Li places a perfect return of serve to Tu’s far forehand, only to see the Korean stretch-return it, then aggressively gain control and go up 19-18. Tu, with the advantage of serve at 19-all, gets match-point. Then, a quick of Fate, Tu has the game-winning hungry — but misses the clincher. Li wins 21-21, and the match is even.

Twice in the 3rd game — from down 5-2 to 6-all, from down 12-8 to 13-11 – Tu fights back. But Li is too strong. One shot, repeated — a snap backhand down Tu’s forehand line — is repeatedly dramatic. A killer point — Li’s brutal targeting-in of Tu’s high-toss — turns the match to the Chinese. Now, without any wasted motion, Li runs the score to 19-13...and 21-14 out. China 3 – North Korea 0.

So again there’s no doubt: China will lose this Championship only if she wants to.

Photography
USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • July/August 2001

Photo by Larry Hodges ©2001

Japanese children cheering for USA. Different classes were assigned different countries so most countries had at least one cheering section. That’s USATT President Sheri Pittman in the background, watching the cheers.

Photo by Diego Saldan ©2001

China’s Zhang Yining eyes the ball. It’s 11-9 Kim when Zhang might be said to take a cue from this World’s Opening Ceremony theme song — from the line, “My Life is the ball! (A Whiff).” (At first the line is puzzling to me. Had it the meaning of a haiku — a poetic expression of the brevity of human life, of one’s life? But when the chorus sings the line, and then each singer gently blows, as a player might on the ball, ah, there’s the whiff.) The line as it were Zhang took was, remarkably, to whiff three balls and so drop to 16-12. From 19-15 down she tried to rally. Her backhand had been failing her, so forget that — with her somewhat unorthodox stretched-out forehand she socked in two winners. But that wasn’t enough, not even when Kim gave her a last-minute chance at 20-17 by serving into the net.

In the 2nd game, Zhang has more control of her backhand and can better contain the quick-thrashing in-over-the-table play of the intense Korean. Although many of the topspin exchanges are thrilling to the eye, Kim, after assuming her serve position, invariably takes a very long time to get the ball off. Why? It’s more her natural rhythm than any attempt to stall, to hope that her very experienced 19-year-old opponent, World runner-up at Eindhoven, could be intimidated. From 13-all in the 2nd, Zhang pulls away, for often Kim can’t stop the Chinese’s winning serve and followhand forehand. So, 18 games are traded off.

In the 3rd, Zhang’s backhands are going in. In backhand lifting the ball to open the point, she herself gives the impression of hopping forward. But her perfectly anticipated, angular counter-kills are fast-moving smooth. Up 13-7 she has no need to show what her coach Li Jun has praised her for — her extreme calm, the fact that she doesn’t panic (as if any Chinese in this Championship position would). China 2 – North Korea 0.
**Men's Singles** By Larry Hodges

**TUESDAY, MAY 1**

**ROUND ONE HIGHLIGHTS**

Nearly all the top seeds advanced from the first round of the 2001 World Table Tennis Championships, but not all. Here’s a short list of some of the more major upsets, with country and world ranking in parenthesis.

**MEN'S SINGLES**

- Zhan Jian (CHN, #167) d. Peter Karlsson (SWE, #17), 20-6,19,17
- Li Ching (HKG, #145) d. Fredrik Hakansson (SWE, #36), 11,17,16
- Thiago Montiero (BRA, #287) d. Christophe Legout (FRA, #16), 15,20,15,19,15

**NEAR UPSETS**

- Johnny Huang (CAN, #37) d. Chen Weixing (AUT, #41), 9-18,18,16
- Zoran Primorac (CRO, #7) d. Gareth Herbert (ENG, #230), 19,23,13,19
- Thiago Montiero (BRA, #287) d. Christophe Legout (FRA, #16), 15,20,15,19,15

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 2**

**ROUND OF 64 HIGHLIGHTS**

Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE) d. Robo Tateo (CRO), 12,18,22,16

This was your typical Waldner match. He won the first two by throwing in all sorts of shots - loops, lobs, slices, topspins, short serves. Then he got bored, fell behind and lost the third game. In the fourth, Waldner isn’t really doing anything until 16-all. Then, suddenly alive, he scores five in a row to end it.

**THURSDAY, MAY 3**

**ROUND OF 32 HIGHLIGHTS**

Wang Liqin (CHN) d. Lucian Balaszyck (POL), 13,18,16,12,10

World #1 Wang continued to have difficulties, going five games here. So far, he hasn’t played nearly as well as he did for most of the past year. Balaszyck plays a spectacular two-winged looping game, much like his countryman Grubba.

Liu Guoliang (CHN) d. Kamilios Kreaanga (GRE), 17,12,16,15

Kreaanga can actually play at Li’s pace - meaning there were some rallies that didn’t seem humanly possible.

Jörg Rosskopf (GER) d. Damien Eloi (FRA), 19,19,16,22,10

This was a great match, but like Eloi’s match with Liu Guoliang at the Olympics (where he was up 2-0 and at deuce in the third game), he wasn’t able to finish. Eloi was up 20-18 match point in the fourth, and had another match point at 22-21, but couldn’t ‘pull them off. At 20-18, Eloi missed two backhand hits in a row; at 22-21, Rosskopf pulled off a spectacular (i.e. typical Rosskopf) backhand counterloop that Eloi couldn’t touch.

Werner Schlager (AUT) d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), 15,25,14,15

Oh said, “I did not use the chances I got and then I lost my concentration. Schlager was reading my game too well.”

Kong Linghui (CHN) d. Michael Maze (DEN), 15,14,17,13,16

Because Kong hasn’t been playing well, and because many think of Maze as the next European star, there was a lot of interest in this match, and a number of people pointed at this one as a potential upset. And a battle it was, lasting long after all the other matches this round were done. The left-handed Maze can pull off nearly any shot, and is a vicious counterloop - some of his shots were, well, amazing. He also liked to step to his forehand side to receive short serves with his backhand, either hitting them or dropping them short.

After winning the first, Maze went up 4-0 in the second, but Kong quickly came back and won that game easily. In the third, it went to 15-all, but a few careless mistakes by Maze and Kong won. Maze blew Kong away in the fourth game at 15.

In the fifth, Kong goes up 4-0 and leads 18-12. That’s when Maze finally made his move, scoring four in a row, 18-16. Since he’d be serving at the end, Kong was in dire trouble. Kong pushed, and Maze got caught slightly out of position. Instead of his usual powerful backhand loop, he basically lofted a soft topspin ball to the middle of the table, and Kong creamed it, 19-16. If Maze had made a stronger shot and won the point, he’s serving at 17-18, and anything can happen. It didn’t. Maze serve & looped, and missed the follow-up loop, 16-20. Then he served and ripped - and a now-loose Kong blocked a clean winner to Maze’s forehand.

**FRIDAY, MAY 4**

The draws for the 8ths came out rather interesting; seven of the eight matches were Asia vs Europe match-ups, with the lone exception the Waldner-Samsonov match. Since Asia was favored in most of these (and would win all seven of
Wang Liqin d. Jorgen Persson, -20,17,16,16

Thus ended the “Whoever beats Gatien wins Men’s Singles” theory. (Since 1993, when Jean-Philippe Gatien won men’s singles at the Worlds, whoever beat him went on to win – and Persson had beaten him the round before, 19 in the fifth!) But Persson put up quite a battle, coming back to win the first from down 17-20, and battling to near the end each game. It was basically a battle of Wang’s more powerful game versus the Swede’s experience and all-round skills.

The scores don’t show how close it really was as each game was marked by strings of points won in a row by the winner, with the winner of the first three games winning the last five points in a row each time, and the last game being even more wacky! For illustration (with Wang’s scores on the left):

| Game one .......... | 20-17 ...... 20-22 ........... | Five in row at end by Persson
| Game two .......... | 16-17 ...... 21-17 ........... | Five in row at end by Wang
| Game three ......... | 16-16 ...... 21-16 ........... | Seven in row by Persson

However, a little investigation shows that these streaks were somewhat related to who was serving. In the streaks, the server scored 27 times, the receiver 9.

Persson said, “With my experience I should have the advantage when the game is close – but instead I did not take the opportunities I had. After winning the second and third games he could play more freely and then he is a difficult opponent. Will I play in the Worlds in 2003? After a tournament like this I don’t feel like stopping. The individual events in Paris could still be a possibility.”

Kim Taek Soo (KOR) d. Zoran Primorac (CRO), 16,17,16

No matter what Primorac did, Kim seemed to do it better. Kim had more power, more mobility, and even fished and lobbed better. Primorac had a better backhand, but it was mostly matched up against Kim’s constant forehands from all over. Primorac kept the games in reach all three games, and so the games were competitive to the end – but Primorac was always struggling just to stay in range, and that was all he could do.

As this match came to an end, someone came by giving out fancy and colorful glossy brochures for the 2004 World Team Championships in Qatar. (The decision was made just days ago – and the brochures are already out!) In it was a picture of Primorac defeating Kim in the 2001 Qatar Open Final.

Liu Guoliang (CHN) d. Adrian Crisan (ROM), 12,10,11

Liu hasn’t played well since the introduction of the 40mm ball, and his chances here were discounted by many. HOWEVER ... after watching this match, it’s a whole new ball game, and Liu figures big in it. Liu went up 6-0 in the first, and never looked back. It’s likely Crisan (world #48) isn’t experienced against pips-out penhold play like Liu’s, but Liu was basically killing anything at will. The match took under 25 minutes to play – the other seven eighth matches in the men’s all took over 45 minutes each.

Chiang Peng-Lung d. Timo Boll (GER), 18,16,18

For two games, the much faster penhold looper Ma Lin rolled all over Rosskopf and his great lefty two-wingedshakehands shot-making abilities. But Rosskopf got hot in the third, counterlooping winners off anything, often right off the bounce. Rosskopf led 20-13 – and you guessed it – Ma Lin, serving at the end, won seven in a row to deuce it! Then it’s 21-all. Ma serve and loops into the net, then Rosskopf blocks back a powerful Ma loop for a clean winner – and we’ve got a real match on our hands!

Ma Lin (CHN) d. Jörg Rosskopf (GER), 14,10,21,18

For two games, the much faster penhold looper Ma Lin rolled all over Rosskopf and his great lefty two-winged shakehands shot-making abilities. But Rosskopf got hot in the third, counterlooping winners off anything, often right off the bounce. Rosskopf led 20-13 – and you guessed it – Ma Lin, serving at the end, won seven in a row to deuce it! Then it’s 21-all. Ma serve and loops into the net, then Rosskopf blocks back a powerful Ma loop for a clean winner – and we’ve got a real match on our hands!

Ma takes early 4-1, 11-6, 16-11 leads in the fourth. But Rosskopf scores four in a row to get to 16-15. Then Ma scores four in a row to get to 20-15 match point, with Rosskopf serving. Rosskopf serves and rips a winner, 20-16. Two more rips, 20-18! But Rosskopf seems to let his next serve get away – it goes long, and Rosskopf seems to freeze as Ma loops it. Rosskopf makes a futile behind-the-back attempt to counter it, but the match is over. (I was told he made a behind-the-back return in an earlier match.)

Liu Guozheng (CHN) d. Werner Schlager (AUT), 20,20,17,10

This is a shot-making extravaganza, as both can rip loops from both sides at any time. Both used down-the-line backhand loops quite a bit to catch the other off guard.

Schlager led 20-18 in the first two games – but Liu deuced both games,

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and won the first. So instead of being up 2-0, it's all tied up. In the third, Liu goes up 15-10 — but Schlager scores all five on his serve, 15-All. Then Schlager leads 15-16. But Liu gets the next four in a row, and wins 21-17. The fourth game is all Liu, with Schlager looking disgusted at blowing so many leads. Down 10-20, Schlager served under his leg. (Liu looped a winner off it to end the match.)

**Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) d. Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE), 8,14,18**

This was the only match that wasn't Asia vs. Europe. Most predictions were that Waldner wasn't playing well anymore, and that it was Samsonov's time. Waldner had won the last time they'd played, in the quarterfinals of the Olympics. However, this time Samsonov came out fast, and Waldner couldn't seem to do anything the first two games. In the third, Samsonov again runs away with it, going up 17-11. Waldner gets two (17-13), but then it's 18-13. With anyone else, the match would probably be over — yet, with Waldner there, many of us suspected that it wasn't over. It wasn't. Waldner scores the next two, 18-15, but loses two, and serves at 20-15. He starts off with typical Waldner magic — a down-the-line ace that Samsonov can only wave at, 20-16. Then Waldner serves and loops, and several shots later Samsonov misses, 20-17. Then Samsonov loops Waldner's serve off (a net-ticker) and it's 20-18. Now everyone's watching! But there's only so much magic in Waldner... he serve and loops off a net-ticker. (If the ball had crossed the net a quarter inch higher, we're probably at 20-19.)

Is it the end of an era?

Waldner said, "It is simple. Vladi was playing excellent and I made a lot of mistakes. Is this my last Worlds? Honestly, I am a little fed up with that question. I don't know, nobody knows."

**SATURDAY, MAY 5 QUARTERFINALS**

**Wang Liqin (CHN) d. Kim Taeck Soo (KOR), 15,14,15,13**

The hard-luck saga of Kim Taeck Soo continued. It was just a few days ago seems an eternity here at day 13 of the worlds, but actually only six days ago that Kim had seven match and team tie points on Liu Guozheng in the semifinals of the Teams, but couldn't score that last point. Now, once again the Gods didn't smile on him. Wang and Kim had played a phenomenal match to 15-all in the third of this best of five. Kim had done everything in the first game — looping winners from everywhere, blocking and fishing back anything Wang gave him and winning, 21-15. In the second, Wang had done it right back, winning 21-14. Whether it be the big ball, playing conditions, or just two great players, the rallies were spectacular — as good as the somewhat "historic" match Kim had had with Liu Guozheng six days ago.

In the third, both had really turned it on, and the score was 15-all. Wang stepped way, way around on his backhand corner and loop killed down the line. The ball hit the table — but where? Wang raised his fist and yelled triumphantly — and the umpire called edge. Kim strongly disagreed. The fans in the stands booted strenuously — nearly all thought it had been a side. Then the replay came on the big screen and it showed pretty clearly it was a side, and the point should have been Kim's. But the umpire's call stood, and the score was 16-15 Wang.

Did this bother Kim? He didn't score another point that game, losing the next three in a row. Should I have affected him like this? He shouldn't have let it, but it apparently did, and the match seemed to turn on this. Halfway through the fourth, Kim, realizing his chances were slipping away, began to go for — and make — incredible shots. But Wang, rising to the occasion, pulled away near the end with a series of fantastic defensive points, mixing in blocking and sudden counterloop winners. Kim, rushed by Wang's blocks, began to make mistakes. At the end, Wang was playing near perfect table tennis, scoring the last five in a row.

**Chiang Peng-Lung (TPE) d. Liu Guoliang (CHN), 12,17,6,19**

Perhaps someone should tell Chiang that he was 0-7 lifetime against Liu coming into this match? That Liu was simply too quick for him? Or perhaps someone should tell Liu that the match was over, that a 2-0 game and 15-3 point lead was insurmountable? (Well... it was.)

Liu won the first easily, 12-3, 21-12. Chiang goes up 8-4, 12-8 in the second, and while Liu keeps coming back (15-14 at its closest), Chiang's penhold inverted forhand loops and jabbing backhands are a match for Liu's penhold pips-out forhand smashers and jabbing backhand.

Game three leaves spectator's jaws dropping. Is Chiang playing that well, or Liu that bad? Such two-winged penholder play — he's putting balls away on both wings! Chiang goes up 15-2 (China calls time out at 10-1, to no avail), and wins 21-6. We all expect Chiang to loop kill with his forehand, but over and over Liu would jab-block to his backhand, and Chiang would backhand kill a winner.

Game three seemed a fluke... until Chiang does it again in game four, continuing his two-winged rampage. In the fourth, he goes up 11-1, 13-11. Liu throws his hands up in despair, but then he picks up the pace, and Chiang begins to make mistakes. Liu scores four in a row, 7-13. Chiang gets one, 7-14. Then... Liu scores ten in a row! He's suddenly up 17-14, on a 14-1 run! Why, oh why, hasn't the Taiwan coach — or Chiang — called a timeout? (Ok, as Mitch Rothfels later said, "The best timeout never called.") Liu is smashing everything, and — let's face it — Chiang is playing horribly.

Liu comes all the way back and is serving at the end. He serves & loops a winner. Now Chiang's back is to the wall, with Liu, probably the best server in the world, serving with a 19-17 lead. Liu serve and quick pushes, Chiang loop kills, 19-18. Chiang backhand hits the serve down the line, clearing aching Liu, 19-19. Then they have the most memorable point of the match — Liu, the pips-out penholder, is forced off the table, and flips his racket (as he often does) to the inverted side — and the two inverted penholders counterloop it out! Can Liu counterloop with Chiang, one of the greatest loopers (if not the greatest) in the world? Liu loops and fishes Chiang's loops back and over, and you suddenly realize this guy can play with inverted! But this is Chiang's game — and Liu finally misses, to a huge ovation. But Chiang's back from the depths, and it's championship point, 20-19 for Chiang.

Liu serves fast and deep, Chiang backhand counters, and Liu jab-blocks off — as quick as that, it's over. One of the greatest comebacks ever to not happen didn't happen.

**Ma Lin (CHN) d. Liu Guozheng (CHN), 19,13,-10,-14,19**

In this all-Chinese match (five of the eight quarterfinalists are Chinese, so two have to play), there were no coaches and little crowd interest. Neither played with the outward emotion shown in other matches, and while the play was excellent (especially toward the end), the crowd wasn't into it. Lintil near the end. With anyone else, the match went on, and things didn't go his way, you could see the frustration in Liu Guozheng. The two play similarly, even thought Ma is a penholder to Liu's shakehands grip. Both loop from both sides, with Ma having the best penhold backhand loop in the world — a nearly unknown shot just a few years ago.

The first four game are pretty uneventful as the two trade blistering topspins back and forth. Ma wins the first two. Liu the next two. In the fifth, it's dead even at 11-all. Then Ma gets three in a row, 16-13. Then Liu gets three in a row, 16-13. Ma gets three in a row. 16-16. Then, darned if it isn't so, Liu gets three in a row, 19-16.

Liu loops Ma's next serve, Ma blocks it to his wide forehand, and Liu moves over to loop and — misses! He yells in disgust — at this level, it was an easy shot. Ma serves again, and Liu drops it short. Ma drops it short right back, and Liu flips. Ma loops, Liu loops — and Liu's loop catches the net, and pops up — an easy hanger for Ma, who backhand kills it. A look of absolute disgust passes over Liu's face.

**Kong Linghui (CHN) d. Vladimir Samsonov (BLR), 15,10,-11,20**

...
Men's Quarterfinalist Vladimir Samsonov of Belarus

Samsonov had won 3-0 the last time they had played, in the semifinals of the Brazil Open in July 2000. Lifetime, Kong was up 6-5 head-to-head, but that dates back to 1996. Kong had won the two previous times before the Brazil Open, but Samsonov had won the previous three times.

For the first two games, Samsonov wasn’t there. He was sluggish and sloppy, and barely seemed to want to play. I don’t mean this figuratively – he was barely moving, simply not into the match. While he was going through the motions, Kong won the first two games at 15 & 10.

Then, as Samsonov approached the table to start the third game, he began hopping up and down – almost the most activity he’d done so far! The crowd actually gave him an ovation! He was alive! And now the match that should have started two games ago really started. Ripping winners from both wings, the tall Belarusian (who dwarfed Kong and most of his other opponents) won the third 21-11 – and from the looks of it, Kong didn’t have a chance any more.

Kong went up 4-1 in the fourth, but it was only temporary – Samsonov came roaring back like an uncaged tiger, tied it at 9-9, and went up 15-10, 17-13.

But Kong is not to be trifled with – he is the 2000 Olympic Men’s Singles Gold Medalist – and he scores four in a row on his serve mostly by all-out forehand attacking. Samsonovloops in his next serve to go up 18-17. Then it’s 18-all … 19-all. Samsonov serves, begins to step around to loop his forehand from the backhand – but Kong flipped to his forehand, a winner! 19-20 match point. But Kong backhand hit the next serve in the net. 20-all. They then trade flips – but Samsonov flips Kong’s serve into the net, while Kong mimics the 19-all point, flipping a winner to Samsonov’s forehand to end the match.

This match was a major disappointment – the last of the Europeans was out, and we were left to wonder what might have been if Samsonov hadn’t given away the first two games.

MEN’S SINGLES SEMIFINALS
Wang Liqin (CHN) d. Chiang Peng-Lung (TPE), 13,22,14

This was a match-up of two of the most powerful loopers in the world. These two, along with Kim Taek Soo, lead the world’s top players in power production. In this case, the two played dead even most of the match. The difference? In all three games, world #1 Wang won on streaks near the end where he’d score nearly every point on his serve. In the first game, leading 15-13, Wang scores six in a row (the last four while serving) to win. In the second game, Chiang is about to tie the match up, leading 20-15 – and Kong scores five in a row on his serve! Wang gets a sixth point in a row to go up game point 21-20, and ends up winning 24-22. If Chiang had won this game, the outcome might have been very different. In the third game, Wang led 16-14 – and scored the next five in a row on his serve.

In this match, Wang showed the form that made him the #1 ranked player in the world running into these Worlds. He’d been playing shaky before, but that’s over with.

Kong Linghui (CHN) d. Ma Lin (CHN), 14,17,13,15

These two have probably played a zillion times, and spent an eternity practicing together. Kong, ranked #2 in the world, is the “old pro,” who won the 1995 Worlds as an up-and-coming star, and the 2000 Olympics as a veteran. Ma, ranked #3 in the world, lost to Liu Guoliang deuce in the fifth in the final of the last worlds (1999).

Ma runs away with the first game, 21-14, using his signature penhold backhand loop and excellent receive. In the second, Kong gradually pulled away in winning 21-17. In the third, it’s 13-all – and Kong runs off eight in a row (four serving, four receiving). In the fourth, down 8-5, Ma calls a timeout. Down 8-12, Ma scores three in a row, and Kong calls a timeout. Ma ties it up 12-all. Then Kong pulls away and wins: 15-14, 18-14, 18-15, 21-15.

It’s going to be an all-Chinese Men’s Final … again.

SUNDAY, MAY 6
MEN’S SINGLES FINAL

It was another all-Chinese final, but somehow it generated more interest than the other all-Chinese finals – perhaps because of the expectation of such high-level play? Viewers weren’t disappointed in this match between the recent world #1 Wang Liqin, and 2000 Olympic and 1995 World Men’s Singles Champion Kong Linghui, #2 in the world.

After a week of singles play, it’s all come down to the top two seeds meeting in the final. Kong is up 5-3 in their lifetime series, but Wang has won the last two times, both times 3-0 – at the May, 2000 China Open Semifinals, and at the November 1999 Swedish Open Final. The two practice regularly with the rest of the Chinese team, but haven’t played an international match against each other in a year.

Since they were teammates, they played without coaches. In the first two games, Kong was King Kong, and Wang was playing ping-pong. Kong won both games 21-11, consistently winning 3 of 5 both on his serve and on Wang’s. After losing the first two at 11, what chance would Wang have?

In neutral rallies, Kong was dominating with his over-the-table backhand loop. There were few flat shots this match – every shot was spun, usually with heavy topspin, usually quick off the bounce. This probably wasn’t apparent to observers, who probably saw these backhand-to-backhand rallies as just that – the same backhand-backhand rallies we see in the U.S. at all levels. However, both were basically looping and counterlooping most shots from right over the table, using a wrist snap to generate spin. Kong is especially good at this. For Wang to win, he needed to get the initiative quickly each rally. Otherwise, Kong would force him into mistakes, or Wang would end up off the table, fishing back Kong’s attack.

In the first two games, Wang had been serving a lot of backspin, and Kong was dropping them short, stopping Wang’s powerful attack. Kong’s receive control and controlling backhand dominated. In game three, Wang began to serve more and more no-spin, and Kong continued to try to drop them – but now he was popping up too many, and Wang began to tee off more and more. It would have been interesting to see how this match would have played if he had had a coach to point this out to him between games.

In game three, Kong went up 3-0, but Wang quickly came back (scoring the next four), and gradually pulled away, 4-3, 6-4, 9-4, 12-8, 15-10, 17-13, 21-16.

In the fourth game, down 7-8, Wang scored six in a row, and again he pulled away with his devastating attack: 13-8, 14-12, 19-12 (five in a row), 21-13. Kong continued to pop up serves, and seemed to get more and more aggressive, which turned the match into a power vs. power contest – and Kong can’t match Wang in a power contest.

In game five, Kong took the early lead, and held it to 8-6. He seemed to be going back and forth from all-out forehand attack and the steady over-the-table backhand loop attack he’d used earlier. However, his backhand seemed more erratic, and he began to make mistakes from both wings. In contrast to the first two games, Kong was the aggressor, while Wang was playing steady – except for on his serve, where he’d jump on Kong’s receive. In the fifth, down 8-6, Wang won four in a row, with Kong calling a timeout. Kong’s attack from both sides became more aggressive, but Wang either would out-steady him, or unleash his own more powerful (and right now, more consistent) attack. Wang pulled away and completed one of the greatest comebacks in Men’s Singles history here, winning the match –11, 11, 16, 13, 13. This gave Wang a sweep of the men’s events – Men’s Singles, Doubles and Teams.

Afterwards, in contrast to European players – who often whoop it up when they win – Wang buried his head in his towel, crying. He had come into the Worlds ranked #1, based on his many victories at ITTF Pro Tour events, but he had never won a Worlds or Olympics, considered the two biggest prizes in table tennis. Now he joins Kong and Liu Guoliang as members of the current Chinese Men’s Team who have done so.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • July/August 2001 • 51
Women's Singles

By Tim Boggan

The 2001 Osaka World Women's Singles final was won, 19 in the 4th, by China's 22-year-old Defending (and current Olympic) Champion Wang Nan over China's 24-year-old, 2000 Asian Champion Lin Ling.

After the finalists had split their first two tensionless games, play picked up - as did the noisy accompaniment of a pocket of perhaps 100 white-shirted Chinese sporadically erupting into drum-beating cheers, chants, claps, and congenial laughter.

And - winning every event as the Chinese are - why shouldn't they laugh? (Though I saw in a Japanese paper a photo of winner Wang in the strangest pose - the better to show her medal, she's holding it up in her fingers and in so doing has yanked up the ribboned noose as if she were trying to strangle herself. I know - sure as I write this, someone will find symbolism here.)

I was told by a person in the know that the China supporters who'd obviously banded together to have fun, to cheer on their own, and in the process try to liven up the minimal spectator interest, were sometimes roaring out a directive to the two players on court. One that might be literally translated as “Chinese players, add fuel!” Meaning “Something's burning - add more!”

Which, my source told me, is equivalent to saying more than the idiosyncratic “Get fired up!” - for the figurative fire is presumably already burning. Hence: “Chinese daughters, intensify your efforts!”

And intensify their now de rigueur topspin play they did - with Wang favoring forehand putaways and Lin backhand counter-attacks.

The Champion, whose stature is approaching that of her famous superstar predecessor Deng Yaping, was helped midway in the 4th by a seeming lapse of concentration on her opponent's part. From 7-all, Lin very unstrategically pushed a serve up the middle for Wang to wallop, then served into the net, then whiffed a ball, then misserved again. By 12-7 time there's been a mass movement of the courtside cameramen to position themselves for frontal shots of Wang as she'd go on, though not without a struggle, to victory.

In addition to the professional photographers crowding the court, there were a number of enthusiasts with digital cameras who from the beginning of the tournament could be seen focusing on players, coaches, officials, and members of this or that team's entourage. Naturally, being part of the Osaka World's was an memorable experience. So it wasn't only the late-round Chinese, whom we'll come back to shortly, who deserved one's attention, but, however short their moments of glory, winners from other countries as well.

Surely it had to be satisfying - to be fun - for many to watch even just one Preliminary Singles match at the World's. After all, here in the Women's, 66 players didn't. And, like Greece's Katerini Noulaki, Australia's May Cho, Malaysia's Ng Sock Khim, and Bosnia-Herzegovina's Dragana Iveljic, if you grittily came through to take your opener deuce in the 3rd, you wouldn't feel too distraught about not advancing further, right? Nor downright forlorn if, like Moldova's Irina Mititel and Austria's Andrea Mayrhofer, you'd persevered to win a successful 19 in the 3rd match in the 2nd Preliminary round, but then were stopped short? Valiant players, take solace - your name's in print here.

Moreover, as expected, none of the 17 3rd round Qualifying winners, 16 of whom were put up against the top seeds in the 128 -entry 1st round were able to advance. Though Russia's Irina Kotikhina and Nigeria's Funke Oshonaike sure gave it a good try.

The unranked Kotikhina, who has a gorgeous backhand chop, won the 2nd and 3rd games 23-21 to go 2-1 up on Croatia's World #7 Tamara Boros. Maybe a huge 1st-round upset in the making here? Among those drawn to this match were a small, eccentric group, outfitted in white dusters and colorful Mad Hatter hats, waving not flags but multi-colored rattles. Though the Russian can snap the ball hard from both sides, it was really her first easy topspin pick that was difficult for Boros to return well - the Croatian, concentrating on her own attack, never seemed ready for it. But in both the 4th and 5th games, early in the 4th that led to her being down 13-7, and, disasterously, from 16-15 up in the 5th, when she unaccountably made four defensive errors in a row, Kotikhina just didn't have the psychic strength to prevail.

As for the nimble Oshonaike (how smashingly she can catapult herself over a lob!), she off-the-bounce, hers and the ball's, unrelentingly attacked Hungary's World #17 Krizstina Toth. Surely this explosive Nigerian, '99 Africa Games Champion, is underrated at World #233? For, though she finally had to succumb, she extended Toth 27-25 in the 4th.

Other 1st-round matches - 5-gamers all - that deserve mention for being so entertainingly competitive are: Thailand's World #189 Muangsuk Anisara's upset over Russia's World #58 Galina Melnik (the 24-year-old Thai thus becoming a hoped-for home-force in the 2003 Asian Championships in Bangkok); Australia's Miao Miao's 19-in-the-4th and 18-in-the-5th rally over Croatia's Andrea Bakula, who because of a knee injury had been able to play only a few Cup matches; Romania's now 31-year-old Otilia Badescu, who because of a knee injury had been able to play only a few Cup matches; Romania's now 31-year-old Otilia Badescu (after being up 2-0) over Hong Kong's Kwok Fong Fong; Poland's Kinga Stefanska (after being down 2-0, but up 5-0 in the 3rd and thereafter able to read her opponent's changing spin) over the U.S.'s perhaps soon-to-be law-school-bound Virginia Sung.

Also going 5 were 1994 European Champion and Swedish Sports Woman of the Year Marie Svensson over North Korea's World #10 Kim Mi Yong; Belarus's Veronika Pavlovich over Luxembourg's Peggy Reggenwetter; Romania's Ana Gogorita, 19 in the 5th, over Hungary's Zita Molnar (more reason why next season the 23-year-old Gogorita will leave the Romanian
league for more fulfilling play elsewhere), North Korea's World #68 Kim Hyang Mi over Bulgaria's World #148 Katalina Gatiniska (a spread of 80 ranking positions seems a lot—but is it?), Belarus's Victoria Pavlovich, 22-20 in the 5th, over Israeli National Champion Marina Kravchenko; and New Zealand's Li Chunli (who, though she plays for a kinomo company in Japan, might have been wearing one of those t-shirts that said, "We love our team and anybody else who beats Australia") over Thailand's Kornwong Nanthana.

Further, in trying to report on at least some of these waves of Women's matches being played in three venues simultaneously, I give credit here to others engaged in what had to be constantly watchable 1st-round encounters. Belarus's Tatiana Loguzkaya over England's Helen Lower, 23-21 in the 4th; Czechoslovakia's World #141 Alena Vachovcova over Italy's World #54 Alessia Arisi, 19 in the 4th; Vietnam's World #198 Ngo Thu Thuy over Singapore's World #66 Tan Faey, 23-21 in the 4th; Yugoslavia's Silvija Erdelj over Hungary's Vivian Ello, 25-23 in the 3rd and 21-19 in the 4th; Hong Kong's Lau Sai Fei over Russia's Svetlana Ganina, 19 in the 4th; South Korea's Kim Kyung Ha over Slovakia's Valentina Popova, 19 in the 4th (after the aging 1980 European Champion had stubbornly 22-20 resisted defeat in the 3rd).

And, of course, the U.S.'s Tawny Banh over Chinese Taipei's Pan Li-Chun, 18 in the 4th. This after Tawny was up 1-0 but down 20-15 in the 2nd and won 7 straight; and after she was up 14-15 in the 4th and lost 4 straight before looping in a down-the-line winner. "It's fun when you win," said Tawny, who's finishing up a degree in Human Resource Management. "But also fun when you lose if you play well." Which is what she did in the 2nd round when, to her World #144 ranking, she added some human resources of her own ("I feel mentally strong this tournament") and at least took the 24-22 1st game from Germany's World #26 Jie Schopp. "I was pumped up and Schopp was scared," said Tawny. "She was talking to herself in both German and Mandarin." U.S. Men's Coach Danny Smeineiller observed that "Tawny focuses well and LINH in Chinese expatriates, fJie Schopp. '1 was pumped up and Schopp was scared." said Tawny.

As is often the case in World Championships, the round of 32 provided some intense play, Chinese lefty attacker Li Nan, unseeded semifinalist at Eindhoven, who serves with a vicious body turn into the ball, got the better of Badeso, despite dropping the first two games. Luxembourg's Ni Xia Lian, '98 European and 3-time Top 12 Champion, constantly varying her long and short sits, sometimes hit against, but having to go down, didn't just roll over, pick-hitter defender Wong Ching, Singapore's Jing Hun Hong, finishing 21-6, 21-12, won in the 5th over (a tired?) chopper Schopp who once said if she hadn't been a table tennis player, she'd have been a student. (At 33, can she still be what she hasn't been?) And here's Toth, again struggling but, making some spectacular lobs, again winning, 18 in the 5th, over one of Japan's Chinese expatriates, Yoshie Takeda, English Open winner in Feb., and runner-up in last year's Swedish Open. As Toth falls to her knees in relief, the spectators sporting applaud both players.

Two North Korean players advanced to the 8th's. Unseeded Kim Yun Mi, known only for her Women's Under 21 win at that pre-World's English Open, -18, 18, 21, 17 startled almost everyone by outplaying China's World #2 Li Ju. And Kim Hyun Hui, finalist in that English Open, 19 in the 4th got by Japan's An Konishi, whose repertoire of serves offers a toss-up whether the ball will try to bullet by you or not.

There's no doubt that Boros favors a toss serve. She wins the palm when it comes to having the highest but certainly the straightest one all the way up. While the ball's airborne she videos her racket, if passing a plate under her upraised arm, then brings it back again to serve the dropping ball. An emotional player, she's apt to talk to herself, slap her thigh in frustration, and repeatedly grunt as she strokes the ball. Here in the 16th's, China's Niu Jiandong, 15, 20, 18, 19 ousted Boros, when the White World's Hope seemed intimidated by and so overly wary of Niu's end-game use of a slide-serve especially serve that one American watching said brought to mind former U.S. International Ricky Smeineiller: "Did anyone still remember him or his serves?"

There was a strange moment in the 16th's when Canada's 38-year-old Li Geng Pintea, once China's World Mixed and Women's Doubles Champion and Singles runner-up, now World #30, quit in tears as she was being badly beaten by Romania's World #71 Mihaiela Steff. Apparently some official, both yesterday and then again as she was playing this match with Steff, persisted in questioning the legality of her racket, which was indeed o.k. as she'd been using it without incident at past World and Olympic Championships—and this, and perhaps something else disturbing, really got her until, distraught, she left the court.

The 8th's saw five Chinese, including Defending Champion Wang Nan, and the South Korean Kim Yun Mi win their matches without dropping a game. Think at least some of these results might be embarrassing? South Korean Ryu Ji Hye, on losing 10, 8, 14 to Li Nan, had to come up to the reserved-seat section overlooking her court and pay her respects to a group of VIP Koreans. Penhold flipper Ni Xia Lian who, at 37, had lost the Feb. European Top 12, desme in the deciding 3rd to 4-time Olympian Boros, and who was 12-0 in the Team's here, averaged only 13 points a game against Niu. Chen Jing, Chinese Taipei's 1999 Pro Tour Grand Final winner and

"No Smoking, No Gluing"

By Tim Bogdan

That first day of competition here at the Osaka World Championships I'd no sooner taken my seat on the bus to the playing hall when I saw the upfront warning—the first ever on a bus for health-conscious me—"No Smoking...No Gluing.

My, I thought, how increasingly popular gluing has become. So much so, as I recently discovered, that Lobest, the well-known Belgian gluemaking company, is hopefully preparing for the market a NEW kind of glue. Which, though it hasn't been officially tested yet, has exciting possibilities.

This new glue would last not momentarily as it were, but for 48 hours! Further, it would be non-toxic, non-flammable—"transported like water," someone said. "It is the high of the highest and the straightest one all the way up."

The glue is applied both to the blade and the rubber, and then, before the racket is used, the solvent must be allowed to dry for several minutes as is the case now, but for six hours!

Since the present speed glues will sooner or later ruin the rubber, it remains to be seen—for both the amateur and the professional—just how long this new glue will be continually usable.

As to the cost of it, the new glue may be twice as expensive as the old, yet because of the need over time to use much less of it, it will still be cost-effective to the player.

If this new glue proves to be popular, you'll no longer see on any bus to the playing hall the sign "No Gluing"—for the ITTF will ban ALL gluing not only at the playing site but anywhere near it. Won't they?
China's '88 Olympic Champion, went down to China's Lin Ling by the ridiculous scores of 15, 9, 10.

After Austria's expatriate Chinese Liu Jia, the Junior Girls winner at the '98 and '99 European Youth Championships, had advanced 3-1 over Singapore's Jing, all eyes were on Steff's deuce-in-the-5th victory over South Korea's World #17 Kim Moo Kyo. Behind 16-12 in the final game, the Romanian scored five in a row, then, down 15-17, caught a break when Kim missed the ball. Their mini-marathon finally ended when Steff finished with a 23-21 angled-off backhand ace through an also valiant Kim, who earlier had deuced it from two match-points down. Later, Steff said that since Kim was so good at returning her forehand serves, she "had to try something," and so "started serving with my backhand, though I haven't done that for years." Steff is a player I much admire. There is absolutely no standing, no nonsense from her. She's ready to play every point, and ready to off-the-bounce attack almost every ball from either forehand or backhand. Key to her climactic chance to win was her third-game rally where, fist up with every winning point, she recovered from 13-5 down.

In that quarter's final, however, against Kim Yun Mi, Steff's one-game challenge falls short, 22-20 in the 1st, and so we'll have no European World Champion this year. Nor will Steff be coming to our July U.S. Open. She needs a summer break—she's required to attend her University only twice a year, briefly, to take tests.

Two of the other three quarter's matches quickly end in 3-0 victories for the Chinese. Wang Nan isn't winning any more games 5-7/4-8, but she isn't losing any either—Li Nan gets 40 points. Liu Jia does better—almost wins a game when Lin Ling, up 19-16 in the 3rd, serves and misses her follow, then whiffs it once, then serves and follows through with a losing push. But Lin dies 19-17.

The remaining quarter's—between 2000 Pro Tour Grand Final winner Zhang Yingying and World #25 Nina Jianfeng—won 5, but the match wasn't gripping, for not a single game was tensely contested, least of all the 21-12 last one, won as expected by Zhang.

The first of the semi's matches, won by Wang in 4 over the just 19-year-old Zhang, whom she'd beaten in the final of the Eindhoven World's, generated little audience enthusiasm. The 1st game was key. Wang played very badly, but was given a reprieve when Zhang, up 16-12, pushed three balls into the net, two off Wang's serve, and then, from 19-11, passively left open, first, her forehand, then her backhand, which the Champion quickly took 21-19 pummelled-in-advantage of. Though Zhang, scoring with smooth-stroke, off-the-bounce backhands, did win the 3rd game, by the end of the match she appeared, well, listless.

The most dramatic and most crowd-pleasing of the final matches was the one between China's World #14 Lin, who had yet to lose a game, and North Korea's vastly underrated World #59 Kim Yun Mi. This semi's matched up players from different countries who had markedly different styles—which of course is what spectators want to see. One wonders if the very strong Curbillon Cup runner-up North Korean team deliberately kept this Kim out of the Quarter's Draw...and, were it possible, might he be considered to again the by now so familial

Women's Doubles

By Tim Boggan

(space permits only an excerpt. For Tim's full article see the USATT website: www.usatt.org.)

...The Mixed Doubles at these Osaka 46th World Championships was won by—who else?—China of the 11th time in the last 12 attempts.

Of particular interest were the early match-ups between the two Koreas who, for whatever reasons, last-minute decided not to field a "unified" team. However, mutually supportive fans proudly waving non-partisan flags (the Korean peninsula in blue on a white background) gave considerably more than lip service to cheering all the Korean players.

As for the struggling Europeans, only two of their teams could advance to the last 16, and only the Czech team of Richard Vyborny/Renata Strubikova could join the Asians in the quarter's.

China of course dominated the late rounds. They had all four places in the top half of the quarter's Draw...and, were it possible, might be considered to have had five, for Yan Sen/Li Jue seemed 21, 20-14, -15 much of the way there before succumbing to the eventual winners Qin Zhijian/Yang Ying. Qin had no world ranking, but I later found out that he'd been one of Ma Lin's winning doubles partners, and, having been in a table tennis movie, was considered by one in the know as a "handsome, big brother" type. Ma and Zhang Yingying, the Defending Champions, were ousted with youthful ease by semifinalists Zhou Jian/Bai Yang. The 2001 Singles Champions to be, Wang Liuqin and Wang Nan, were 3rd-round dumped by a Hong Kong pair who then fell to the South Korean finalists Oh Sang Eun/Kim Moo Kyo.

For the final, Chinese and South Korean supporters tried to drum up some noisy drama in an otherwise dead Hall. But there was little necessity for the relatively small band of enthusiastic white-shirted watchers to shout and again the by now so familiar cry of "CHIN-A!...CHIN-A!" Not was there any need for the progressively faster drumbeats and furious flag-waving (from the answering Korean contingent. Granted they served to signify a sense of urgency, cries that something had to be done—but what?

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From 12-all in the 1st, the Chinese team went on a 23-8 rampage that left no doubt who would be victorious. Not that Oh and Kim ever embarrassingly gave up. Kim, who had this habit of kicking up her heels, as if these extremities of hers had gone to “sleep,” occasionally pierced her readiness-to-play concentration with one-syllable shouts of self-encouragement. But to counterpoint former World Women’s Doubles winner Yang’s superb backhand blocks of hard-hit balls and Qin’s at times startling forehand winners, Kim needed not only a barrage of words but shots to back them up.

**Men’s Doubles**

**MEN’S DOUBLES, QUARTERFINALS**
Kim Taek Soo/Oh Sang Eun (KOR) d. Jean-Philippe Gatien/Patrick Chila (FRA), 9,18,14,15,18

This was a doozy of a match, highlighted by the near-French comeback. France lost the first two, won the next two, but was down 13-7 and 15-10 in the 5th. They pulled to 19-17, and actually had some shots that might have won. At 20-18, Chila missed a backhand loop that probably would have been a winner.

Wang Liqin/Yan Sen (CHN) d. Lee Chul Seung/Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 12,9,19,20;
Chiang Peng-Lung/Chang Yun-Shu (TPE) d. Ma Lin/Liu Guozheng (CHN), 15,24,14

These two matches were played side-by-side, and were a demonstration in counterlooping — some of the best points of the tournament were played here. In particular, at 17-15 in the fourth, the China-Korea match above had an incredible counterlooping point. Almost the instant it finished, the Taipei-China match, with the score 23-22, had an almost identical rally.

Kong Linghui/Liu Guoliang d. Li Ching/Ko Lai Chak (HKG), 18,14,15

While the other teams are batting, the most decorated doubles team in the last five years was coasting along.

**MEN’S DOUBLES SEMIFINALS**
Wang Liqin/Yan Sen (CHN) d. Chiang Peng-Lung/Chang Yuan-Su (TPE), 19,10,-15,16,19

In some ways, Yan Sen is reminiscent of Lu Lin, the all-out looping penholder who teamed with Wang Tao and became probably the best doubles team in history. When Yan and Wang play, Yan’s job is pretty simple, at least on the surface: he loops everything that goes long. This keeps the points opened up so Wang Liqin, world #1 in singles, can use his powerful shots — just as Lu Lin’s loops gave Wang Tao the chance to blast his shots. Both teams were lefty-righty combinations so both can play their forehands over much of the table and not get in each other’s way. Like Wang Tao/Lu Lin, the Wang/Yan team is an Olympic gold medallist, winning gold at the 2000 Olympics.

Their opponents from Taipei are the 2000 Asian Championships Men’s Doubles Winners, and they’ve won five ITTF Pro Tour events. (Wang/Yan have won seven.) While both are right-handed, they are extremely fast penhold loopers...

In the first game, Taiwan is leading 15-10 — and lose all five on their own serve! China goes up 16-15, and soon leads 20-18, and wins 21-19. In the second game, it’s all China, 11-4, 14-6, 21-10.

The tables turn in the third, as Taiwan finally got their game together, and begin pounding out winners. It would have been 4-1, 13-7, 17-13, 21-15. In the fourth, it’s more of the same. Also, China seems to have more trouble with the Taiwanese serves than vice versa. At the end of the fourth, China battled from down 6-10 to get to 14-15. But Wang made several weak returns of Chiang’s serve (and missed two), and Taiwan wins, 21-16.

In the fifth, Taiwan leads 8-5, but China ties it 12-12. Then...19-12 China! Seven in a row! Only...Taiwan, with the serve, scores four in a row to 19-16. China goes up 20-16 when Wang counter-hits a winner. Then it’s 20-17 ... 20-18 ... 20-19! But the next serves go just a bit too long, just off the end of the table — and that’s all Wang needs to absolutely rip the ball apart for a winner.

Kong Linghui/Liu Guoliang (CHN) d. Kim Taek Soo/Oh Sang Eun (KOR), 18,11,16

While Kim/Oh are a very strong doubles team, they are “dogged” by one thing: they’ve never won anything internationally. In ITTF Pro Tour events, they’ve been in the quarters nine times, the semis six times, and the finals three times ... but they’ve never won. They are both powerful loopers, Kim a penholder, Oh a shakehand. They would like nothing better than to break out here. There

It was no disgrace of course to lose to the Chinese, and, not to knock the Koreans — Oh, after all, is World #35 and Kim #18, and obviously they, too, can execute marvelous shots — but the Chinese really were just too good.

So, after Eindhoven, we have a change of titleholders...but otherwise no change. Following the Team events, the Mixed was the third of the completed Championships here in Osaka, and already I wasn’t the only one who was wondering whether such awesome prowess as we’d seen was really so good for table tennis...or for China.
USA Men & Women
Singles & Doubles
By Larry Hodges
SUNDAY, APRIL 29
WOMEN’S SINGLES
Four of the five women on the U.S. team pre-qualified by world ranking and so did not have to play in the qualifier, Simone Yang was the only U.S. player to play singles on Sunday. To make it to the main draw and join the others she would have to win three matches in the single elimination qualifier.

Simone Yang (USA) d. Fanja Rakotonindrainy (MAD), 21-6, 21-0
It was an excellent performance - a perfect one in fact - against someone who obviously wasn’t quite all there. Simone received a walkover. (But the scoresheet did say 21-0, 21-0.)

Suitix Rattanaprayoon (THA) d. Simone Yang (USA), 13,12
The two had played earlier in the Teams, with Rattanaprayoon winning at 13 & 18. Simone’s problem is that her loop against backspin is too soft, so when she does loop, her opponents attack. So she often mostly pushes and blocks, which gave Rattanaprayoon enough time to say her name three times between each shot before moving into position to loop. Simone is out of singles, but she’ll remember the experience of playing in this, her second Worlds, even if she doesn’t remember the names of her two opponents of today.

MEN’S DOUBLES
To make it to the main draw, players would have to go through two rounds of men’s doubles. Because USA had five men, and players can only team up with players from the same country, Ashu Jain was not able to play in this event.

David Zhuang/Eric Owens (USA) d. Sandro Caenaro/Traini Cioci (LUX), 17,16
David Zhuang and Eric Owens, the USA #1 men’s doubles team, started off well, avenging USA’s loss to Luxembourg in the team event. They seem a good combination – pips-out penholder David Zhuang is a very good control player who can set up Eric’s powerful forehand loop over and over while smashing in any loose balls.

Aleks Sevignov/Sergei Andrianov (RUS) d. David Zhuang/Eric Owens (USA), 9,10
At first glance, it would seem that perhaps David and Eric aren’t such a good doubles team after all, since they lost pretty badly. But this was one of those matches where the opponents got so hot there wasn’t much you could do. So USA’s #1 team was out...

Mark Hazinski/Barney J. Reed (USA) d. Giorgos Geroutis/Andreas Tziampos (CYP), 18,16
...but sometimes you have to rely on the other players, and here the U.S. #2 team took up the slack. Lefty Barney gives them the lefty/righty advantage (they are mostly out of each other’s way when attacking with their forehands). Both are strong two-winged loopers playing similar shots and similar strategies, so they are comfortable together.

Mark Hazinski/Barney J. Reed (USA) d. Joselito Almazan/Joseph Cruz (PHL), 12,16
The USA looping onslaught continued against the Philippines - and USA is now out of the qualifier and into the main draw! Perhaps it’s out of the pot and into the fire, but based on these two matches, it is USA that is on fire.

MIXED DOUBLES
To make it to the main draw, players would have to go through two rounds of men’s doubles. David Zhuang/Chung Gao Jun and Eric Owens/Janis Reed pre-qualified and so didn’t play today.

Vallot Vainula/Tatjana Tshitjakova (EST) d. Ashu Jain/Simone Yang (USA), 18,19
It was pretty close, but since these two play such different games – Ashu the full-court shot-maker, Simone the close-to-the-table blocker, they probably would need to practice together a lot to get comfortable - not easy, since they live on nearly opposite sides of the country.

“TONE-YI...TONE-YI!” By Tim Boggan
Japanese middle-school children – all perched above the U.S. vs. Germany women’s team match on the court below.

Pretty soon there came a chorus of “TONE-YI...TONE-YI!”
“Tony”? They were rooting for a man? But there were no men playing.

Uh, sorry – Time Out ....Very patient correction.

“TAWN-YI...TAWN-YI!”
It took the U.S. player below – Tawny Bahn, a Vietnamese emigrant - about 1-2-3-4-5 points to “get” it. To connect the syncopated claps and calls to HER.

“That was so emotional,” she said later.

“Were they really clapping for me?”

Well,....

Despite the support, Tawny lost her match two straight, and the U.S. team lost to Germany three straight. Said Michael, “The kids enjoyed cheering more than they did watching the game.”
Sandor Csernok/Benedicto Mecier (LUX) d. Mark Hazinski/Tawny Banh (USA), 19,11,16

This was disappointing since these two looked like they might have gone a few more rounds. Both play looping games, although Tawny plays a one-winged looping game with pips on her aggressive hitting backhand. They started out well, but couldn’t hold it. With more experience together, they may do well, but they live over half a country apart.

Barney J. Reed/Virginia Sung (USA) d. Vaseceslav Cravenceco/Irina Mittel (MDA), 17,11

The previous two mixed doubles matches were at 9:30 and 10:00 AM, and USA had lost both. Now it was 10:30; would it be three strikes and we’re out of the qualifier? No — perhaps having a lefty/right combo helped, but USA won this one soundly. Virginia’s a chopper, and usually choppers and loopers don’t play well together, but this time around USA was able to flaunt its superpower status against Moldova.

Phakporn Sanguansin/Nanthana Komwong (THA) d. Barney J. Reed/Virginia Sung (USA), 7,19,17

In the teams, Komwong had defeated USA’s Jasna Reed, but lost to Chang Gao Jun (Thailand won the match, 3-2). After USA got off to a great start, they barely lost the second after leading nearly the entire time. In the third, USA was up 8-4 and 10-9 at the switch.

Monday, April 30

Today was not a good day for the U.S. In fact, it was a pretty rotten day. Heck, let’s be honest. It was downright horrible. Don’t make me pin it down any more than that!

Four men in the Men’s Qualifier. None made it out, and only one won a match. Two teams in Mixed Doubles. (Three teams had lost the day before.) Both lost. Two teams in Women’s Doubles. Both lost. Two men in Men’s Doubles. Both lost. All the USA doubles teams — all nine of them — are out of the tournament.

For the day, our match record was 2-9, and our game record 6-19. Mark Hazinski won his first qualifier match in three, but lost the second; Chang Gao Jun/Jasna Reed won their first round Women’s Doubles match, but then lost in the third the next round.

So what’s left for Mighty USA? Fortunately for us, the main draw for Women’s Singles doesn’t start until tomorrow, so the four women seeded out of the qualifier (Chang Gao Jun, Jasna Reed, Tawny Banh and Virginia Sung) don’t start play until tomorrow. The same goes for David Zhuang, the only U.S. player seeded out of the qualifier.

On the bright side, young Mark Hazinski’s 16, -12; 17 win over Portugal’s world #79 Ricardo Roberto give the South Bend phenom his first win over a world-ranked player. USA also had a good win in mixed doubles, with David Zhuang/Chang Gao Jun defeating Belgium (Andras Podpinky/Karen Opdencamp, ranked 67 and 318 in the world) at 15-11. They then won the first against South Korea’s Oh Sang Eun (world #26) and Kim Mo Kyo (#17), and battled for much of the second (making it to 11-11) before losing, 11-13,12.

Tuesday, May 1

Women’s Singles Round of 128

Chen Tong Fei-Ming (TPE) d. Jasna Reed (USA), 6,13,17

This was one that got away. Up 2-0 in games by commanding scores of 17 & 11, Virginia (world #91) looked like the winner over Stefaniska (world #185) in this best of five. She was both chopping and attacking well. However, Stefaniska’s attack became stronger, and Virginia seemed to attack less as the match continued. “Virginia attacked well the first two games,” said USA Coach Dan Seemiller (who normally coaches the men, but was coaching Virginia while Coach Duron coached Jasna Reed in her match). “In the last three games, she didn’t attack as well and was too defensive in the third. Virginia fell behind 0-6, and wasn’t able to come back. In the fourth, at 15-11, she lost five in a row. In the fifth, she quickly was behind 8-3. She did a mini- comeback at the end, getting five in a row from down 12-20, but the match was lost.

Tawny Banh (USA) d. Pan Li-Chun (TPE), 17,20,10,18

This was another excellent match-up between world #144 (Tawny) and #162 (Pan). Both played similar styles — looping forehands and pips-out hitting backhands. Tawny won the first at 17, and was insurmountably behind 15-20 in the second. On to the third — but not until seven points later, all won by Tawny! Game two to Tawny, 22-20! This would become even more important when she lost game three, 21-10. But Tawny took control again in the fourth, going up 14-6 and 16-9. Pan mounted a comeback, getting three straight to 16-12. Tawny called a timeout, and it seemed to work, as she pulled to 20-14 afterwards. But Pan mounted another comeback — 20-15... 20-16... 20-17... 20-18! This was getting serious — after Tawny’s comeback in game one, could Pan turn the tables? No she could not, as Tawny’s serve and loop ended the game at 18. On to the round of 64!

Women’s Singles Round of 64

Chang Jun Gao (USA) d. Lu Yun-Feng (TPE), 17,11

It’s true that Gao is ranked #35 in the world just four years ago. But this match should have been somewhat competitive. Instead, all I could write in my notes was “This is too easy!” Gao, as usual, didn’t seem to be doing anything — she’s ain ost Waldneresque in this. Also as usual, her opponent was twisted into a pretzel, and (as we all know) pretzels don’t play good table tennis. On to the round of 32!

There was one scare. On the last point of game one, Lu wildly swung at a ball, and creamed it directly into Gao’s face. It didn’t look intentional, and Gao recovered.

Women’s Singles Round of 16

Jie Schoepp (GER) d. Tawny Banh (USA), 22,17,10,14

Can the 144th ranked player in the world (Banh) challenge the 26th? (Check out the Teams results if you aren’t sure about this!) Actually, for a while, the question was whether chooser/pick-hitter Schoepp would challenge Tawny! Tawny went up 18-13 in the first with an all-out looping and smashing onslaught — no tentativeness here! However, it was here that Schoepp mounted her own challenge — and challenge she did, going up 20-19, mostly with a series of pick-hits. Then at 31-32! Deuce, with the USA crowd (all eight
of us) praying for this miracle to take place. Part one of the miracle happened – Tawny pulled out game one, 24-22.

Tawny’s onslaught continued, as she took an 8-3 lead in the second, then 9-5, 11-9, 13-12. But the lead was becoming narrower and narrower, and Schoepp now took the lead, 15-13, 17-14. Tawny go the next two, 17-16, 18-17. But Schoepp won the next two, 19-17, 4-2, and when Tawny served into the net to fall behind 19-16, Schoepp went on to win the game, 21-17. Over the next two games, Schoepp’s defense became better and better, and Tawny gradually fell behind each game.

MEN’S SINGLES
He Zhi Wen (ESP) d. David Zhuang (USA), 14,10,16,22
It started out a rout, and finished looking like both a great comeback and great upset. Wen, ranked #34 in the world, pretty much hit-David (world #109) right off the table the first two games, at 14 & 10. The two are both pips-out penholders, but while David is more a blocker than hitter, the left handed Wen is more of a hitter. In the third, David’s steady side-to-side blocking, with pick-hits from both sides mixed in, wore down David. Wen did almost the entire way, but could never pull away, but then won the last five in a row to win 21-16. In the fourth, they played dead even to 13-all. Then David pulled away, going up 18-14. Wentied at 18-all, but David went up 20-18 game point with the serve. He served and deuced, and then served and smashed off – deuce! David got the ad against at 21-20. but Wen pulled away to 14-16. Yet, despite those mistakes (mistakes there’s not much to write about; Kim attacked like Gao didn’t have a chance. However, except for a few key careless mistakes, she could have won the third. Everyone makes mistakes, but players of Gao’s caliber rarely miss such easy pop-ups as she did at 5-9 and 17-18. She also served off at 14-16. Yet, despite those mistakes (mistakes she probably would not have made were still in any type of serious training), she came back from down 8-13 to tie it up at 17-17. From there on she missed two smashes (including the easy one mentioned above), while Kim made a spectacular counterpoint winner and a flip kill to end it. USA is out of the tournament.

USA Women’s Team
By Teodor (Doru) Gheorghe, USA Women’s Coach
After a nearly 12-hour flight our delegation arrived in Osaka on April 20, 2001. We had two days to practice and warm-up before the big Torn store. The USA women’s team was placed, according to the 2000 World Team Championships ranking, in the 2nd Division – Group O, along with Israel and Macao-China. The first match was against Macao-China. We played Gao Jun, Jasna Rees and Tawny Bahn, and we won easily, 3-0.

In the second match we played Israel, who had also defeated Macao-China. This is a very important match as the winner will have a chance to make the first division. Jasna started off against Marina Kravchenko (world #75). In the first game Jasna led well, leading all the way till 18-15. Then Kravchenko took the lead 20-19. Jasna served and made a forehand loop cross-court and Kravchenko missed. At 20-20 Kravchenko served, Jasna made a high return and Kravchenko killed the ball, 21-20 for Kravchenko. In the next three points Jasna didn’t make any mistakes, looping both forehands and backhands, and she won 23-21. In the second game Kravchenko changed strategy and began playing wide-angle shots, forcing Jasna to move more. In the beginning Jasna did very well, and she went up 4-2. Then Kravchenko gained the lead and Kravchenko pulled closer. At 13-9 for Jasna I called time out to give Jasna a minute to rest. But it wasn’t enough. Kravchenko kept playing wide angles and Jasna couldn’t keep up. Jasna was up 18-16 but she lost 5 points in the row to lose the game. In the third game Kravchenko continued playing wide angles and Jasna couldn’t reach the balls comfortably. She lost 21-10.

In the second match Gao Jun played against Iulia Dagiria. Gao won easy, 21-10, 21-17, using the match as a warm-up for next (more difficult) match. Next Tawny played Sarit Hosse. She played very offensively and won the first game 21-17. In the second game Sarit took the lead from the beginning by being more aggressive and Tawny was down 7-13. But Tawny never gives up, and she played more aggressive with her backhand cross-court and tied it at 17-17. At 19-19 she missed a backhand serve return but she wins the next point using same shot. At 20-20 Tawny serves and opens with a forehand long one which she hit out. But Tawny stopped and she lost 21-17. The third game they played wide angles and Tawny couldn’t reach the balls and lost 21-17.

At 2-0 for USA, Jasna played against the very experienced Popova (world #98). Jasna played very right from the beginning, opening up with forehand and backhand loops followed by counter drives and forehand smashes. She led the entire first game, 6-4, 10-5, 14-6, 20-10, 21-13. In the second Popova still played very well but in the third and fourth Tawny dominated and won 21-13, 21-17.

Next USA played Germany in a knockout match for the top 16. In the first match Gao played Elke Schall (world #57). Schall fell very comfortable against Gao’s pips, making very strong angled shots, and won the first, 21-15. In the second Gao took the lead early and won 21-13. In the third Gao started with a 4-0 lead, and then she missed two high balls with her forehand. At 6-4 for Gao, Schall won four in the row, attacking Gao’s wide forehand. Gao missed another high ball with her forehand. At 9-6 for Schall I called time out to try to stop Schall, who looked like she wasn’t miss Anything. But Schall kept hitting hard and wide. Gao is down 6-12 and then 9-13. Gao missed a serve return and several high balls, and she is down 9-17. She makes two good points in the row with forehand smash and Germany calls time-out at 11-17. Gao tried to catch up with Schall but the German player won the game and match, 21-15.

Jasna next played Nicole Struse (world #45). Struse won the first 9-2, the second one was very hard and angled backhand and forehand loops. In the second Jasna started well (6-3) but then lost eight in a row. At 6-11 I called time-out. She then pulled to 10-12 Germany calls a time-out. Jasna kept fighting but Struse then pulled away to 14-19 and 15-20. Jasna serves and wins three in the row. At 18-20 Schall forehand loops a winner down the line and wins 21-18.

In the third match Tawny played chopper Jie Dagiria. Tawny started well and leads 12-10, but Schoepp is a very experienced player and she changed the game by smashing a few balls and soon Tawny is down 17-13 and wins 21-17. Second game Schoepp went up 8-2 and Tawny missed a few easy balls and she lost 21-11.

Losing to Germany meant that USA would play off for positions 17-24 against Belgium. Tawny would play the first match against Hubert Martine (world #116). Tawny played very well and came from behind 20-18 to win first game 22-20. In the second Tawny played well but Hubert got a couple of edges and Tawny lost 21-18. In the third the score was close till 7-7, when Hubert began to pull away, 10-8. I called timeout as Tawny kept her serve up but she lost 15-20. In the fourth Tawny started very well and was up 14-8. Virginia fought back and pulled to 14-16 but she lost 21-14. USA is down 2-1.

In the next match Gao plays Hubert. Gao won the first easily, 21-11. In the second, at 12-12, Gao missed a high ball and after that she started missing point after point, and lost 21-13. In the third Gao didn’t give Hubert any chance, winning 21-9.

It was Tawny’s turn to play Ozer in the fifth match. In the first Tawny tried to get the fell of Ozer’s pips, and the score was close throughout the game. Tawny was down 18-19 but she served very well and finished most points aggressively, and won 21-19. In the second Tawny started well and led 7-3, 17-13. At 20-15 for Tawny, Ozer served and won...
three in the row (20-18), but Tawny opens with her backhand and Ozer misses. Tawny wins 21-18, and USA has defeated Belgium 3-2.

By defeating Belgium, USA will now play off for positions 17-20 against Thailand. Gao started off against Muangsuk and won 21-12, 21-11. In the second match Jasna played Komwong and she lost 15-21, 12-21. In third match Simone Yang played Rattanaprayoon. She played well but Rattanaprayoon was better and she lost 13-21, 18-21. In the fourth match Gao defeated Komwong 21-15, 21-14. Jasna played Muangsuk in the fifth and deciding match. She played well and it was close until 11-12, but Muangsuk started to play wide angles and Jasna lost, 21-14. In the second game Jasna started well, leading 5-2, and then she was down 5-8. I called time out. Afterwards, Jasna pulled to 10-10. At 18-18 Jasna missed a high ball with her forehand. Jasna was down 18-20, but she won three points in a row. But Muangsuk won the next three points to win 23-21. USA has lost to Thailand, 3-2.

For positions 19-20, USA played Luxembourg. Virginia started off against Meyer and won 21-13, 16-21, 21-16. In the next match Tawny played Ni Xia Lian (world #15). She fought hard but she lost 21-12, 21-16. In the third match Simone played Reugenwetter. She lost the first game badly, 8-21, but in the second game she started well, leading 4-1 and 11-6. But Reugenwetter pulled to 15-15 and then took the lead, 19-16, 20-18. Simone deuced it, 20-20, with some nice forehand shots.

The USA Team at the Worlds: L-R: Virginia Sung, Ashu Jain, Barney J. Reed (in back), Simone Yang, Mark Hazinski, Women’s Coach Doru Gheorghe, David Zhuang, Tawny Banh. Team Leader Bob Fox, Jasna Reed, Men’s Coach Dan Seemiller, Chang Jun Gao, Eric Owens.

Swaythling Club Members Rally With Japanese TTF Disabled Players

Ex-World Champions On Display • By Tim Boggan

Thanks to the combined efforts of the World Championship Organizing Committee, Norihiko Oka of the Japan Table Tennis Federation for the Disabled, and Diane Scholer, President of the Swaythling Club International, former stars of our Sport – World Champions and National Team members – along with some lesser Club luminaries, volunteered to play friendly afternoon games with disabled players.

This competition, billed as a “Friendship Rally,” was held on 10 tables in the spacious Main Hall before hundreds of spectators, many of whom were amused by both the hand-waving parade and the play of the aging Internationalists who came not only from Japan (among whom were Nobuhiko Hasegawa, Mitsuru Kohno, Kiymio Matsuzaki, Fujie Eguchi, Nobuya Hoshino, Koji Kimura, and Kazuko Ito) but from other countries as well (among whom were Hungary’s Eva Koczian, Scotland’s Helen Elliot Hamilton, Germany’s Ebbi and Di Scholer and Jochen Leiss, Slovakia’s Stefan Kollarovits, and the Czech Republic’s Milan Orlowski).

Reportedly there are 3,000 disabled enthusiasts in Japan – all having eager hopes of Olympics-candidate Osaka being awarded Paralympic play in 2008. On this particularly memorable day, as part of the afternoon’s unique exchange program, photos were taken of smiling, we-played-together participants. Later, a commemorative gift of a Citizen watch was presented to each player. Also, a reproduction of that earlier taken photo of the individuated Swaythling Club member in tandem with his/her specific disabled opponent. This was a very special momento, and a clever move, which I’m sure many a player will look at time and time again.

USA Men’s Team

By Dan Seemiller, USA Men’s Coach

Our Men’s team drew Indonesia and Nigeria in their preliminary group in Osaka. Nigeria had just won the Commonwealth games the week before and we knew they would be tough.

After a couple of days of practice we were ready to go. Nigeria was the opponent. I selected David Zhuang, Eric Owens and Mark Hazinski. Eric started and faced Segun Toriola, their #1 and ranked about 90 in the world. Eric played well and led 19-18 with the serve in game one. He couldn’t hold on and the match quickly went away as Toriola found his range in game two. In the second match, David won the 1st against Monday Merotohum but fell behind 15-6 in game two. David, fighting hard, came back to deuce and finally won, 26-24. So we are tied 1-1. In the 3rd match, Mark Hazinski makes his world’s debut against Sao Ayemokujo. Mark plays well and leads 20-18 in this important opening game. Eric just can’t finish the game and loses 22-20. Like Eric, Mark falls behind early in game two and can’t recover. In the 4th match, David plays Toriola and can’t stop the Nigerian’s impressive loop attack and loses both games. In this make or break system this 3-1 loss to Nigeria relegates us to play for positions 25-48 – we can’t finish higher.

Our 2nd tie was against Indonesia, which we won 3-1. We followed that by defeating Finland 3-1. In both these matches David won two and Eric won one. Our 4th tie was against Canada. If we win we play for positions 25-32 if we lose 33-40. Canada, with the highly ranked Johnny Huang winning two defeats us 3-1. The critical match was the 3rd on that pitied Barney Reed against Kurt Liu. Barney won the first at 15 but lost the next two.

Our next tie was against Vietnam, who earlier had upset Brazil. Mark, Barney and Ashu played and we lost 3-0. Ashu won a game and played tough against their #3. Mark played a strong first game but couldn’t win against their #1, and Barney lost 2-0. Next up was Luxembourg and Eric won the only match as Mark lost two and Ashu one. The unusual aspect of these two ties was that both teams featured three left-handed players on their squad.

Our last tie was against our Pan Am rival Brazil. We lost 3-2 as David (1-1) and Ashu each won a match, with Ashu winning from down 19-16 in the third. David almost beat Hoyama, leading well into the third game. Barney lost both to Hoyama and Montiero 2-0. By the end of the tournament, our team had finished in 40th place. The second category at the World’s has undoubtedly become stronger with a higher level of play than ever before.

Our young players Barney, Mark and Ashu tried their best and gained needed experience at this level for the future. David Zhuang with a 7-3 record and Eric Owens at 3-2 both played well.
ITTF Annual General Meeting Highlights

By Tim Boggan
Member ITTF Media Committee

The annual General Meeting held in Osaka, Japan last month had several highlights.

A key point was the change in the scoring system to the new 11-point system in the World Championships beginning next year. The change is considered to be a significant improvement, with a focus on maintaining a constant speed of play.

Rubber on your racket – that’s still o.k.? Glue’s not got you sick? By now you’re used to the 40mm ball?

Never mind yes or no, what’s ITTF next move?

Ready, players? Enough procrastination, enough time out with this.

One hand off – 2/3 majority required:

“The purpose of the proposed change is to prevent the service being hidden from the receiver by requiring (1) the ball to be above the playing surface from the time at which it is projected until it is struck, and (2) no part [head included] of the server’s body or clothing to be within the triangular area formed by the net and imaginary lines between the ball and ends of the net when the ball is struck.”

Possible, by the look and feel of things, it was – on principle. But some headway still has to be made on the exact wording. Meanwhile – and there is a meanwhile – this new rule goes into effect Sept. 1, 2002.

What else is new – and what’s the hurry?

The 11 Point Scoring System, that’s what – and this will be implemented not after the 2004 Olympic Games; as I heard one fellow at the AGM suggest, but on Sept. 1, 2001.

Yes, no more 21-point games – too slow, too boring. It’s a fast world we live in, chance to throw our dice in. Eleven’s a winner...unless it’s 10-all, deuce. How many games make a match? Whatever the odd number’s decided on. Switch of table ends and service and receive as before...with of course the necessary modifications. Serve changes every 2 points, except at 10 or Adie when the serve alternates. In the last possible game of a singles or doubles match, players switch ends when one player or pair gets 5 points, and then of course doubles players also change the order of serve and receive.

The Expedite system comes into play any time both players or pairs want it in, or if a game is unfinished after 10 minutes play – except if a player or pair has at least 9 points. Once one game’s in Expedite, all others are too. Tired already? Take a minute out if you want between games. At least towel off after every 6 points, and if you’ve just changed ends in the last possible game start counting your towel points from there.

A little confused by what you’ve just read? Wait until you begin gluing come September (no, no, they haven’t banned “speed” glue), then go over it all again. And don’t get discouraged – it may be the ITTF Rules Committee is mulling it over that you can’t give up a game without giving up the match – so at the very least pretend to try, and, in keeping with the times, finish that lost game fast, whisk vigorously. Also, while I’m sober enough to think of it, if, as at a sporting event, you’re in the stadium restaurant or bar, drink in hand, thinking strategically of your next match, and you happen to see your umpire, greet him/her with a friendly smile, for it may be he/she has jurisdiction over players not only on court but in refreshment areas – the matter, they say, requires study.

A nearby French bistro, an aperitif...oh, alright, after the match – how’s that sound? Apparently quite good to the 75 delegates who voted for Paris (Rio de Janeiro 45) for the 2003 Individual World’s. Just the Individuals? Yes, that’s right – a time-change from the long, long beautifully-run, artfully-accommodating tournament in Osaka (the drumplay at the Opening Ceremony, with each drummer part of a group of drummers mimicking the back and forth changing pace, even a bob, in a table tennis match was sensational).

And the next World Team event, where will that be? In 2004 in Doha, Qatar, where, you get tired of the table tennis competition, you can always go out to the race track – watch the camels. Doha, with its inter-continental Sheraton and Ramada hotels, does present itself as “a global, ultramodern, maritime city,” and with sports-minded sophistication, as seen in the Asian Championships successfully held there last year, accepts women players in the usual playing attire.

Which reminds me: the International Olympic Committee is urging that the Executive Committee of every Sport have a woman in its body. By 2003 the ITTF will have one, USAATT President Sheri Pittman, Vice-President for North America, is presently the only woman on the ITTF Executive Board.

Current USAITT ITTF Committee members are: Dr. Michael Scott, Research & Development Advisory Board/Sport Science Committee; Tim Boggan, Media Committee; Azmy Ibrahim, Rules Committee, and Aly Salam, Umpires and Referees Committee.

To conclude this question of whether preventively adopt uppers will continue to be allowed, at 60 years of age or more, to umpire World title events was never brought to the AGM floor. However, I did point out to the ITTF Council that when so many PLAYERS in their 60’s, 70’s, even 80’s are looking quite good in World Veterans Championships, their peers sure ought to be able to UMPIRE. England’s Alan Ransome publicly echoed this thought – as if to say, “Old boy, I’ll drink to that.”

Random Notes from the 43rd Worlds

By Michael J. Scott, M.D.
Member ITTF Sports Science Committee

Highly technical research scientists from several different countries working independently were unanimous in their conclusions regarding the effect on speed and spin encountered with a 40mm ball compared to a 38mm ball.

They presented their findings during the ITTF Sports Science Conference held prior to the World Championships. Contrary to what was expected, and to what many players presently assume, there was only a relatively modest decrease in both speed (1 to 2%) and spin (3 to 5%). It seemed logical that a larger ball, creating more air resistance because of increased size, would be slower and less subject to spin despite its slight increase in weight. This misconception psychologically influenced many players to erroneously conclude it is considerably slower and less spinny than the 38mm ball. Scientific research proves otherwise, no drastic change resulted, thereby negating the key intention for adopting the 40mm ball.

Psychological misconceptions influence other opinions prevalent in our sport. For instance, as Rufford Harrison has persistently maintained to the dismay and disbelief of many players, the bounce of the ball does not vary whether the table is situated on wood, cement, linoleum or whatever floor surface is utilized. The reason being that the mass of a table tennis ball is practically insignificant when compared to the mass of the table. The floor surface does not significantly influence the bounce of the ball on the table. The type of flooring is of infinitesimal importance in this equation. Yet, psychologically, most players believe otherwise.

At the ball selection site, where coaches and players determine what balls to use in their upcoming matches, it took an extraordinary period of time. The Swedish coach informed me that the new 40mm ball is not uniformly standardized and that he seldom selected a suitable ball before having to reject at least eight prior ones.

Tawny Banh, competing with a German opponent on center court, was completely taken by surprise when over 300 uniformed mid-school Japanese students located high in the stands above began loudly cheering in unison for her. Their chant of “TAWNY” immediately followed by three rapid synchronized clapping of their hands reverberated throughout the entire huge auditorium. They enthusiastically repeated this cheer during her entire match despite the fact that seven other matches were in progress simultaneously. Tawny was the only player with her private cheering section.

I have to single out Team Manager Bob Fox and Coach Teodor “Donu” Gecorghe in regards to their firmness, yet fairness, in handling the obvious initial disharmony on the USA’s Women’s Team. This is in contrast with what World Ranked #1 player Wang Liqin stated about the Chinese team: “our system is to live together, eat together, it’s very unified.” With perseverance the USA eventually jelled into a united team. Dan Seemiller fulfilled his coaching duties as skillfully as usual for the USA male contingent. He has been at over 15 World Championships either as a player, a coach, or as USTTA President.

Many foreign officials complimented the USA delegates and officials superbly performed their various duties which reflected favorably on the USAATT organization. President Sheri Pittman met the majority, if not all, of the ITTF officials. It was regretted that Rufford Harrison resigned his long held chairmanship of the ITTF Equipment Committee. American officials and athletes were impressed with the performance and incredible endurance of Editor Larry Hodges while journalistically covering so many time consuming matches. Similarly our Media Representative Tim Boggan was prolific with his press releases.

Perhaps it’s a reflection of the dominance of the Chinese athletes but the luster on our sport is diminishing even in Asia. The newspaper in Osaka daily devoted at least four times more coverage to USA Basketball, Baseball and even Hockey than the World Table Tennis Championship being held in their own city. The empty seats in the auditorium were painfully plentiful due in part to lack of competition against the Chinese.
The Beginner’s Series:  
Part III: The Forehand Loop

By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach
Edited by Dan Seemiller & Mark Nordby
Photo sequence of
5-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion Dan Seemiller

This is the third in a series of articles for beginning players. More advanced players can learn as well – even advanced players need to periodically review their basic techniques.

The loop is a shot with excessive topspin. The spin is produced by grazing the ball in an upward direction. A good loop is difficult for a beginner to return without going off the end or at least popping up. It is easier to learn to loop against backspin than against topspin. It is primarily a set-up shot, but it can also be used as a putaway shot. It is best done on the forehand side, but many players develop good backhand loops as well. The description below is for the forehand loop against backspin. (Description is for a right-hander, although sequence is of left-hander. This allows you to use photo sequence as a mirror image.)

Backswing

With your right foot slightly back, bend your knees, rotate your hips, waist and shoulders backward, and bring your racket and arm down and back by dropping your right shoulder. Straighten your arm so elbow is nearly straight, with your wrist cocked down slightly.

Forward Swing

Start the forward swing by pushing off your back leg and rotating your hips and waist forward. Rotate your shoulders, pulling with your left.

Contact

Just before contact, snap your forearm and wrist into the ball smoothly but vigorously. (Beginners shouldn’t consciously use wrist at first.) Contact the ball as it drops for maximum spin and control, at the top of the bounce for faster, more aggressive loops. Contact is made in front and to the right of your body, immediately after the shoulder and hip rotation. Contact is a lifting, grazing motion against the back of the ball.

Follow-Through

Arm should continue up and forward, finishing with the racket somewhere around the forehead or higher. Transfer your weight to your left foot.

Notes

Against topspin or a ball without backspin, the stroke is the same except you don’t lift the ball. Backswing is more backwards, not down. Forward swing is mostly forward, and contact is more on top of the ball instead of the back of the ball.
**USATT National Rankings**

**TOP MEN**
1. WA 2810 Fan, Yi Yong
2. NJ 2774 Zhuang, David
3. MD 2762 Cheng, Yinghua
4. IL 2724 Lupulesku, Ilija
5. TX 2659 Owens, Eric
6. IN 2638 Hazinski, Mark
7. MD 2596 Sweeris, Todd
8. NY 2558 Musa, Atanda Ganiyu
9. GA 2554 Reed, Barney J.
10. GA 2537 Hyatt, Michael

**TOP WOMEN**
1. MD 2613 Chang, Jun Gao
2. NJ 2490 Wang, Chen
3. CA 2477 Tong, Jia
4. CA 2468 Reed, Jinna
5. NY 2399 Pelucova, Renata
6. NJ 2315 Yip, Lily
7. OR 2309 Yang, Simone
8. NY 2304 Sung, Virginia Wei-Ni
9. CA 2246 Lee, Jiajuqueline
10. CA 2245 Do, Michelle

**TOURNAMENTS PROCESSED** - This list was compiled on 6/11/01 and includes all tournaments played through 4/15/02. Due to space limitations, only current members who have played in a tournament since 12/17/00 are included. This document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis.

**The Paddle Palace Presents**

**The USATT National Ratings List**

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e-mail: tt@paddlepalace.com

All ratings-related questions should be directed to Tami Walker, 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 usatt3@iex.net.
USA Tennis Rating Chart

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Table Tennis evolved in England from Lawn Tennis as a miniature form of the game that was first played indoors on the floor, and then on a table. The floor games began in the 1880’s, the first known table game by 1890, in England. There is some evidence, however, of earlier table play. 1881 was given as the year Arnold Parker (an early English Champion) said was the earliest he had heard of the game. He said that there was a rumor that someone that year started to play with cigar box lids for bats, champagne corks for balls, and a row of books for the net.

The earliest known usage of the name “Table Tennis” is 1884, but this was only on a dice board game with a Lawn Tennis theme, (made by J.H. Singer, USA).

The earliest catalog record known of a miniature indoor tennis game appears to be 1886, by Ayres, an English maker. Ayres catalog of 1886 advertises “Parlour Lawn Tennis, the popular game of lawn tennis adopted for use in the drawing room.” This game was played with miniature tennis like rackets on a green baize court laid out on the floor.

The first advertisement for the game being played on a table appears to be in 1887. In that year George S. Parker & Co, USA (later known as Parker Brothers) of Salem, Mass., advertised their “Table Tennis.” The description was: “This game is laid out like a lawn tennis court, played and counted just the same, all the rules being observed.” There was no picture or any more detailed information given. This evidence was discovered about 12 years ago in the Parker Brothers archives by Chuck Hoey, a renowned historian/collector of the game. This implies the first table tennis game may have been made in the U.S., but it could have been imported from England under license. Also, it is possible it doesn’t refer to an actual game at all, but to some type of board game. No boxed set has yet been discovered, but because it was advertised it would seem that it must have been produced. There was no similar advertisement found in the years immediately after this 1887 ad, so whatever this game was, it must have been discontinued very quickly.

One of the earliest miniature parlor tennis games in which at least a couple of examples are known to have survived is “Peerless Parlor and Lawn Tennis,” USA, 1889, (made by Couglin Blotter Co., of Lowell, MA). It included a pair of 15” wire strung rackets with metal heads and wood handles. A boxed set that included the rule booklet was recently discovered, and it proves this game was not for table usage. Nevertheless, it is an important game to be mentioned as it was very miniature in size. The net was only 4 feet long, less than a foot high, and could be played in the parlor. (The “parlor” was a word more commonly used then for a room in the home reserved for guests and/or recreation.)

The earliest known game resembling table tennis that was definitely set up on a table was Foster’s “Parlour Lawn Tennis,” patented by David Foster of England in 1890. One set was discovered a number of years ago in England. Although for table usage, it had a surrounding fence and netting, and was only one of three games that could be set up. (Versions of Table Cricket and even football were also included.)

The rackets used were again strung, and looked like miniature lawn tennis rackets.

Other early 1890’s patents of note included:
1. A table lawn tennis game by Emma Barker (patented Aug. 12, 1890).
2. “Table Lawn Tennis,” by C.A. Witchell, which had a surrounding fence like the Foster set.
3. A game by Charles Barter, who did away with the fence.

No examples of these three games are known to have survived however, and it’s possible they weren’t even put into production. Another possible early 1890 era game may have been made by Slazenger, another English maker. They made a claim inside the box cover of their 1901 patented “Whiff-Waff or Table Tennis” game that this was a revival of a game introduced by them about 10 years ago. No such earlier game has ever been found however, nor was there any patent by them. Thus, this is considered very suspect, but it does seem like they must have been referring to some game.

In 1891 John Jaques, the English sports manufacturer, registered their “Gossima.” It used long vellum battledores for rackets, a 10’ high net, and was definitely for table usage. This was the closest game yet to the modern game of table tennis. Only in the last 10 years or so have a couple of boxed sets been discovered, proving we are still finding new evidence on the early history of the game. This game used a web covered cork ball that did not give a satisfactory bounce.

The “Gossima” game of 1891 seems to be a milestone in the development of table tennis, but it is interesting to note that it was unsuccessful, owing to the poor bouncing ball. Despite all this evolution and inventiveness, the game was still virtually unknown as late as 1898. About that time, the Jaques Co. began making Gossima games again, but this time under the title “Gossima or Ping Pong,” but it still had a poor bouncing ball. The turning point came around 1900, with the introduction of the celluloid ball. A Mr. James Gibb is rumored to have persuaded the Jaques Co. to use them in their ping pong sets. He had brought them back from the U.S. on a trip, where they were being used as a toy children’s ball. Now you had a ball that could bounce, yet was light – perfect for table tennis. When Jaques used the new balls, the game took off quickly and for the first time became successful. It was the turn of the century, and people craved a novelty – something new. This “new game” became the...
ping pong "craze" or "fad" that swept not only England, but Europe and the United States as well. The game reached phenomenal popularity as a society game and peaked in the Spring of 1902. Many manufacturers began making their own games, including Parker Bros., the first American maker, who got the rights to the Ping Pong name.

Perhaps never before has a game of any kind come from such obscurity to worldwide prominence in such a short time. Almost as astonishing was the decline and fall of the game the following two years. By 1904, the "fad" had run its course, and the game would not make a comeback again until the early 1920's. It never has reached the fad status it had in 1901-02.

Clockwise from top left: Peerless Parlor and Lawn Tennis set, 1889; a bamboo racket, circa 1902; Parlour Tennis, 1902; Horsman Set, 1902; "The New Game of Whiff-Whaff or Table Tennis," and another set, circa 1901-02.

Looking for a friendly club with lots of action and great coaching? Then the City Limits Table Tennis Club is just right for you! On my first visit, I was impressed with the membership. Although competitiveness abounds, everyone is more than happy to give you a match and offer advice regardless of the rating difference. Carl Hardin (a National Level Coach) has helped many players in Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia and even Florida with his innovative coaching and support. Carl's more notable students include Samson Dubina (current Ohio State Champion), Bob Powell (six-time Ohio State Champion) and club members Thomas Yost, Paul Yost and John Kizer. The following is an email received from Samson:

"I started playing table tennis when I was twelve years old. My strokes were horrible. When I was fourteen years old and rated 1100, I received an invitation from the Ohio Table Tennis Association to be trained by Mr. Hardin for a few days. My game improved a little bit after the first session."

"Several months later, when I was rated 1200, I again had the opportunity to attend the camp. During my time there I was anxious to try out my new skills. I returned to our table tennis club and the same day began playing 1800 level players! My dad would periodically drive me 220 miles down to Mr. Hardin's club to be trained for several days. After a total of two years, my rating rose from 1100 to 2100. Now I am seventeen years old and rated 2260, thanks primarily to Mr. Hardin's coaching."

Carl Hardin ran the C&D Table Tennis Club until the building inspector failed the electrical system. The club was in a school, which was converted into apartments. The building manager informed Carl that he could not afford to rewire the basement and the club was forced to close. Carl, club members and friends searched for a solution. Berndz Malin (Columbus, Ohio - Hard Bat Evangelist) had played in several of Carl's tournaments. He contacted Carl and suggested looking at multi-sport facilities. Dorothy Hardin (Carl's wife) then suggested contacting the City Limits Family Fun Center.

Carl approached Rick Noel (manager of the City Limits Family Fun Center) in nearby New Boston and the "City Limits Table Tennis Club" was born. Rick Noel was very enthusiastic about having the club in his facility, and is training with Carl. Play is on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from 4-11 PM. The tables are set up on the indoor soccer field, which offers air-conditioned comfort, excellent lighting and surprisingly good traction and support on the Astro turf. In addition to the four high quality tables (SpinTech, Donic, Stiga and Butterfly) from the old club, two new blue Butterfly Centerfold Rollaway tables were added. A Newgy RoboPong 2000 (with 40mm upgrade) and a catch net/bucket system for service and multi-ball practice are available.

Open House was February 24. The club ran a very successful youth and beginner clinic on April 7 and hosted its first tournament May 12-13. The reviews from the players were very positive. A 9-person giant round robin format is used, so players play eight matches! With approval of dates from the Ohio Table Tennis Association, the club would like to hold 3-4 tournaments each year.

While visiting West Virginia, Andrew Gooding (West Virginia Division of Don Igram Labs penhold tester) invited me over to the club to play. Andrew makes the trek several times a week to play and train. I was so impressed that I now make 4-5 trips per year from Florida! Also, after a few days working with Carl Hardin my level immediately jumped and I now have a better understanding of the game's intricacies.

So if you live in or near southwestern Ohio (or are traveling by), stop by and join the fun, get some coaching or purchase some equipment. Membership is $25/month or $4/day. Check the club web page http://pages.about.com/cjhardin/ or call Rick Noel (740-456-2489) or Carl Hardin (740-574-1353; email: carl@runbox.com). There are players rated from 800 and 2000 at the club.
Liu Guozheng: Shooting From the Hip

World #5 • 2000 Swedish & Polish Open Singles & Doubles Champion

By Wei Wang, USATT Certified National Coach
Liu Guozheng is one of the more recent additions to the top levels of the sport. The 20-year-old, 5'6" power player, a Hubei, China native, really started finding his stride after the switch to the 40mm ball, winning two consecutive Pro Tour events and making the final of a third. As you probably read somewhere else, many might consider him the MVP of this year’s World Championships, the star in one of the most memorable matches in modern table tennis history, when he succeeded in fighting off seven match points against Kim Taek Soo in the fifth match of the Teams’ semifinal against Korea. With his win he secured China’s spot in the final. His performance elevated him to the status of National Hero because it virtually assured his team the Championship, the consensus among experts being that whoever won this semifinal would be heavily favored against Belgium.

Liu is extremely powerful and agile. His athletic style of play is not only entertaining, but very effective. He considers no ball out of his reach and — often to his opponent’s dismay — keeps proving that not many are. The “Tasmanian Devil” of the Chinese Team not only runs down balls others would consider “gone,” but his athletic condition also allows him to be extremely quick in his backhand/forehand decision making.

And this brings us to our topic: Unlike in earlier years, when many players were very vulnerable in the middle, the current class of top players have developed that area strongly — both defensively and offensively. “Middle” in this context is not referring to the table, but to the player. It’s a shot towards the hip on his playing hand’s side. The shot down the middle is a very useful and often overlooked area in your game. Its use has increased dramatically in recent years as many players were very vulnerable in the middle, and offensive players have been scoring many points against their players using that placement. So they changed their tactics, but the players counteracted with better footwork and placement.

The elbow needs to be raised far above the contact point — as when the ball crosses the net (row 1 frame 2) — but his quickness still allows him to do the step and lean his upper body over enough to create some space to play an authoritative forehand. It is crucial to be able to quickly and precisely change the racket angle. This can be practiced by having your partner play alternating balls about two feet apart towards you. That way, you initially don’t get jammed and you can practice the racket angle switching. Once you start dealing with the actual shot to your hip, you will learn to make less of a backswing than on a regular forehand.

Instead, the power is generated from a strong rotation of your upper body and by raising your forearm during the follow through. The elbow needs to be raised far above the contact point to assure enough topspin. Your physical condition will be tested, because you have to be able to lean strongly sideways and maintain your balance with your legs during the stroke. This will allow you to be ready if your shot is returned. Note how Liu is comfortably balanced even before the ball has reached his opponent. Unless you’re in similarly outstanding condition as Liu, though, you can’t hope to generate as much from this shot as he does in this instance. Content yourself initially with just making the shot, and as you grow familiar with it, build up the power. If you put it into your regular practice plan, eventually you’ll enjoy the freedom which comes from being able to choose to deal with a ball to the middle with a “Waldneresque” backhand punch or this more physical, but very satisfying power shot.

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e-mail questions to info@alphatabletennis.com
How did you get started in table tennis? How old were you?

I was eight years old when my Mom and Dad decided that I should play some sport. My sister already played table tennis and my uncle was a coach, so it was not a really difficult choice for them to send me to the same place. At first, I did not really like table tennis. As soon as my parents would leave the training hall, I would leave too, and usually sneak next door where there was Karate and Gymnast training. Everything changed after my first tournament for kids under 10, which I won. I really liked the feeling of winning and that kept me in this sport for such a long time.

What type of training did you undergo during your up-and-coming years?

For the first eight years I practiced only once a day, because I had to attend school every day. In high school it was different because there was a special program for athletes, where we would go to school between practices, so we were able to play twice a day. In those years we had a group of men for sparring partners (girls from “Mladost” team), but we would also sometimes play each other. Usually on Mondays, after tournaments and league matches, we would have physical training. During the week we would do some running and exercising, but not too much, because we wanted to stay fresh for the tournaments on the weekend. I don’t think I ever had a weekend off in those years. There was constantly some kind of match or tournament (Yugoslavian league and tournaments, International Opens, European League, European Championship Cup, Europeans, Worlds, Olympics, Balkan Championship, Mediterranean Games, Invitational tournaments, 15-day national training camps, etc.).

When and for which country did you first make the National Team?

The Yugoslavian team was the only team I ever represented before I came to the U.S. My first Worlds was in 1987 (New Delhi), but I became a member of the team in 1984.
Why did you leave Yugoslavia for Croatia?
I think that many people are misinformed on this matter, because I never represented Croatia. I lived most of my life in Croatia (my family still does), but when war started I continued to represent Yugoslavia, because my ex-husband is from that area, which is why I moved there. Of course that made many people angry at me, but I think that at that time I had to make the choice that I made, even though I am not saying that it was the right one.

Why did you come to the U.S.?
After my divorce with Lupi (Ilija Lupulesku), I did not have a reason to stay in Yugoslavia, and at that time there were still Croatians who saw me as a traitor, because I represented Yugoslavia, so I first decided to play for a club in Japan. The year there was enough for me. Since Bob Allshouse invited me the year before to live at the training center in Michigan, where I could go to the University at the same time, I decided to try that. Also, many people do not know that my ex-husband Lupi and I had had American green cards since 1994, which is why I was able to become a citizen in 1999. He can do the same as soon as he takes the citizenship test.

You were married to Ilija Lupulesku for a time. Anything you’d like to say about that?
Lupi is a great person. Maybe we were not right for each other as a couple, but we are very good friends. Lupi, Zuza (his wife) and their baby live in Chicago too. Of course, we all have a very good relationship and hopefully it will last. I think that table tennis in the U.S. is richer now, because they now have one of the greatest and most gifted players in the World.

How did you change your last name to Reed?
I moved to the U.S. in 1996, and I still had my married name (Lupulesku). I needed to change to my maiden name (Fazlic), but I did not really want to have my old name again, so I decided to take an American name. At that time I was living in the training center (Bob’s Spa) in Michigan. One day at lunch we were all trying to find some family name for me. There were all kinds of ideas, but at the end Barney (we were dating then) said why don’t I change my name to Reed, because I was looking for a short American name. I told him that: everybody will think that we are married, because people did not have a clue that I already had a green card (for two years), so they would think that I married him for papers. Barney said who cares what they think, let them think whatever they want. So, I went to court, filed the application to change the name and in the one month it was approved, after which I had to go in front of a judge and got my certificate of name change. If anybody doesn’t believe me, I am more than happy to release the certificate which shows that I did not change my name by marrying someone. I know that this was not one of my smartest moves, but I did it and of course, I can change my name again to whatever I want. Maybe, we can let all Table Tennis Magazine readers make up some names and vote for them. The only important name for me is my first name – Jasna – which I would never change. Being a girl you end up sooner or later changing your maiden name, so why not play with names and confuse nosy people!

"...without full-time practice you cannot do anything in the World, and you cannot practice full time if you are not paid enough money at least to survive."

How is table tennis different for you here as opposed to in Europe?
What table tennis here? There are no real professional clubs, no leagues, no full-time players and no money for this sport in the U.S. Let’s face it, without full-time practice you cannot do anything in the World, and you cannot practice full time if you are not paid enough money at least to survive. So, 98% of the top players here are working full or part time, which is far from what Europeans and Asians do. Table tennis is their life, they are paid for doing that, and trust me, it is not just on a survival level, they are actually living very well from their contracts.

Another problem is that we are playing in only two International tournaments a year, and they are competing every weekend. The difference is obvious, and it is really hard to copy all those necessary things from the European model, so we will finally be able to compete with them.

It has been reported that you are the only player to have played in three Olympics with three countries. Tell us about that.
I played at three Olympics, but for only two countries. In 1988 and 1992 I represented Yugoslavia. In 2000 I represented USA. When I competed for each I did my best at that moment, I really have strong feelings for my new homeland. I will always do my best when I am chosen to play for the USA team.

What do you like to do outside table tennis? Hobbies, sports, etc.
I am definitely a TV person. I know people usually don’t want to admit how much time they spend and how they love being in front of a TV. Usually their answers are like: Music, Books, Golf, Tennis – and that is usually to impress others. Well, I do like to listen to music, but there are times that I don’t want to hear anything for days. My favorite music would be Alternative and Rock. I could listen to almost anything, except for Country music. Books – I prefer to read in the Croatian language, because it is three times faster for me than reading in English. Golf – I would love to learn to play, but I am not patient enough for that, so maybe not in this lifetime. Tennis – there is too much running around on the court, and Table Tennis is much more interesting, more explosive and a more advanced game, so why even bother learning it. Actually, maybe because they have sexier outfits and higher hills shoes, so the body can look better. I guess that is the only plus of Tennis over TT. I do like to see good plays, operas, concerts and movies, but sometimes my financial resources cannot let me enjoy it.

What are your non-table tennis goals?
To continue with school and receive a Master’s Degree, probably in Education, because I could see myself teaching and maybe having a positive effect on some troubled kid’s life. It would be good if one day I can find and create a happy family, but I am not stressing that too much right now. I guess, if it comes that’s fine, if not than it might be fine or I will have to pretend that is everything just the way I wanted. My first and most important goal is to go visit my father and sister, because I have not seen them for 2.5 years.

What’s your school and work situation?
I graduated eight months ago with a degree in Political Science. I now work for Computer Consulting Company in Chicago. I do technical support for their software products.

How do you prepare for the Worlds?
It’s impossible to work and really get ready for the Worlds. You need to be a full-time player. I’m able to qualify without practicing too much, but in most countries I would never make the team without training full time. This is true of all of us on the team, because we can’t make a living at table tennis.

How often do you change rubber?
I put new rubber on every day during important tournaments. If there are no tournaments coming up, then every 5-7 days.
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