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Play

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Quality
For Tournament
Play

Elite Roller

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Quality
For Competitive
Play

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>Wheel Casters</th>
<th>Leg Construction</th>
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<td>332</td>
<td>4” ball bearing</td>
<td>2” x 1 1/2” square steel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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STIGA TABLE COMPARISON CHART

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</tr>
</tbody>
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Tibetan Buddhist monks play table tennis at a monastery adjacent to the Dalai Lama’s residence in Dharamsala, India. Wednesday. The monks play for hours at a time during daily game in the courtyard of the monastery.
President’s Report
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

Now that the new year is upon us, we traditionally perform an annual ritual of self-assessment. The USATT campaign last fall was a period of intense introspection for me. I am grateful that you have given me the chance to continue carrying out the vision and path I, as president, had begun establishing for our association. I am also thankful that so many more of you have offered to help USATT.

In past “association primer series” articles, I have described advances we have made on advancing USATT’s six goals. Those goals remain important cornerstones to USATT’s progress. But there are other larger issues that we need to face before we can truly succeed in developing Olympic medalists. increasing revenue, creating a national youth program, improving our international stature, professionalizing our tournaments and fostering membership/club growth.

I have set for myself and USATT these resolutions:

#1 RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNICATION

Relationships are vital to our success. The most important relationship USATT has is with its own membership. To that end, we must continuously improve customer satisfaction. We must not only communicate to you, but also really listen to what you have to say. During the campaign, I didn’t only contact people to seek endorsements; I also sought feedback. And what I heard humbled me. We still have a heavy workload in front of us.

Other relationships need our attention as well. There is an array of potential sponsors and community-based organizations that we can partner with.

Among our parent bodies, we are close to attaining our maximum level of representation allowed within the ITTF; but we currently don’t have even one committee assignment within the USOC. This is a result of attentiveness in one area and nearly total neglect in the other area. Improving our strategic position within both of our parent bodies will continue to be a high priority for USATT. By focusing on objectives that are mutually desirable to our parent bodies and us, we can improve relationships with both of them simultaneously. As you receive this magazine, I will be heading to China for an ITTF Executive Board meeting. I will be meeting extensively with the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) to formalize a proposal that I already made to our Board, which would integrate our six organizational priorities into one marketing and developmental plan through a unique partnership with the CTTA.

#2 COMMUNICATION

USATT continues to be on the verge of kicking off an improved Internet presence. The AmericasTeams contract we signed in mid-2001 has undergone a number of final implementation phases. We are all eager to move forward. Increasing our ability to communicate more extensively through electronic means will not only improve the flow of information, but will also cut postage costs, expand online advertising revenues and provide our members with online membership services. In anticipation of this opportunity, we have been creating additional resources that will be ready for you to download at roughly the same time as our online transmission capacity increases.

The USATT Board of Directors at the Nov. 2-3, 2001 meeting at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. Clockwise from near side: Vice Presidents Dennis Taylor, Barney D. Reed, George Brathwaite and Robert Mayer, Executive Vice President Jiing Wang, Executive Director Dwight Johnson, President Sheri Pittman, Secretary Tim Boggan, Treasurer Tong Lee, Foundation Representative Jimmy McClure, Group B Vice President Hank McCoullum, Olympic Player Rep Li Ai. Missing: Player Reps Todd Sweeris and Tawny Banh. (Motions and votes from this meeting are at www.usatt.org/organization/minutes.)
#3 DELEGATION & TEAMWORK
As USATT expands its focus on customer satisfaction and better communication, so will our need for more people who share a similar vision and dedication. In the past, USATT lacked an effective infrastructure. Over the course of the past 2½ years, I found myself distracted by a constant flow of crises. Anything I was capable of writing, resolving, proposing or doing, I did. While performance of those tasks helped our association get through some tough times, it is not ideal leadership behavior. Since my re-election, I have begun to adopt a new standard: “Do only those things that only you can do.”

This puts teamwork at the forefront. Fortunately, many of you with talent, time and helpful backgrounds have offered to help. These contributions will exponentially strengthen our association’s collective base of human resources. While our arms are open wide, we are looking to recruit people with good attitudes. There is a world of difference between a positive attitude and a negative attitude. One aims to improve our association by offering constructive criticism, solutions to problems and talents to propel us forward. The other seeks to undermine and destabilize USATT through attempts to discredit our leaders, undermine our relationships with the USOC or ITTF, or mislead our members.

#4 GROWTH & GROOMING
As USATT expands its network of human resources, we will need to merge growth with grooming. We will be developing plans to train people as we grow and to anticipate growth as we train. Put simply, to grow, we need to groom people to think with a more expansive vision and to be prepared to reap the fruits of their labor.

#5 RE-EVALUATION & RE-STRUCTURING
As on-going systemic problems get resolved, the Board is devoting more of its time and energy to association governance issues. We are embarking on an internal re-evaluation and organizational assessment. Within the Board, I have set up a series of working groups to focus on three overall areas: association responsibilities, financial management and oversight of headquarters. The working groups consist of governance, planning, programs, communications, financial practices, fund development, marketing & public relations, legal compliance, human resources and information management systems. Each of the working groups will be headed by a different Board member. My goal is to have a master Board manual completed by mid-year. Attention to these details will help our association become more staff-driven and our Board to become more oriented toward the big picture.

#6 COMPLIANCE & CONFIDENCE
One of the best ways to achieve your confidence is to say what we’re going to do, then do what we’ve said. That is also an illustration of what compliance means. We’ve got to do what we’re supposed to do. In the past, our association tended to operate too loosely.

Maybe the incident that occurred in Baltimore happened because the referee tried to “extend a courtesy” instead of applying the rules. In my nearly 30 years of involvement with table tennis, I have never witnessed something so bizarre. Even as I write this, details and interpretations are still emerging. Like so many of you, I was very disappointed by the chain of events that began innocently enough and then deteriorated into complete disorder.

There seems to be a witchhunt mentality. How about if we transform the whole incident into an opportunity to learn and improve? What went wrong and how can we benefit from the wisdom learned from the experience? It seems to me that the primary cause of the problem is our association’s own growing pains. Even before the default that stirred the controversy, there was another minor (in comparison) default that initially sparked the fire. Was this event an international competition? Did ITTF rules apply? If so, then why was a portion of the event run more recreationally and another portion, the elite matches, run more in line with real ITTF rules? During the incident under question, should the referee have complied more rigorously with the ITTF rule that calls for continuity of play or was he right to exercise some discretion in stopping play for paddle repair? All of these questions will be answered in due time.

I hope that as we march forward, we will gain more of your confidence and that more of you will see ways your talents fit in with USATT’s needs.
North American Table Tennis would like to Thank You for making the 2001 STIGA North American Tour a success!

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Mats Bandestiggen, STIGA  
David Sakai, SENODA, INC.  
Sean O'Neill, ABOUT.COM

Top Five Tour Point Finishers:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Han Xiao</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sean Patrick O'Neill</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaleel Asgarali</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Chen</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nazruddin Asgarali</td>
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Top Five Tour Earners:

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<th>Player</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yiyong Fan</td>
<td>$4,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Zhuang</td>
<td>$2,025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atanda Musa</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deszo Racz</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pradeetan Peter-Paul</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you to all the players who attended out events! We hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we enjoyed serving you. Keep your eyes open for the 2002 edition of the North American Table Tennis Tour!

Your North American Table Tennis Crew: Richard Lee, Wendy Troy, Fong Hsu, Alan Williams, and Zachary Sng

To the Local Organizing Committees, Supporters, and Friends, Thank you:

Ronald and Gloria Murad, John Miller and the Austin Texas Table Tennis Club, Greg Dell and the Newark Delaware Table Tennis Club, Krishna Kanuga and the Rutgers Table Tennis Club, Pan Ramsey, Clark Mitchell, Kamran Azimizdeh and the San Diego Table Tennis Association, Dr. Grady Gordon, Terry Bell, Linda Hsing, Dewayne Zint, Rob Kerner, John Jarema, Allen Barth, Margaret Smith, Fran Boardman, Tony Lee, Dennis Taylor, Sheri Pittman, Tim Boggan, Dr. Jing Wang, Robert Mayer, Jerry Wartski and the Manhattan Table Tennis Club, Judy Hoorfrost, Ben Nisbet, Atanda Musa, Marco Borillo and friends, Khoi Than and the Johns Hopkins Table Tennis Club, Rick Mueller, Robert Mayer, Larry Hodges, Our Friends at USA Today, Cheng Yinghua and the Maryland Table Tennis Center, Fan Yi Yong, David Zhuang, Tony Kisenhofer and Canadian Table Tennis Association, Johnny Hess, Terese Terranova, Marty Prager, Atila Malek and Power Pong, Krishmin Rai, Chris Troy, Marc LaPorte, Larry Bavlly, Barry Dattel, Lily Yip and the New Jersey Table Tennis Clubs

Players who attended 3 Tour events:

Andres Scott, John Jarema, Douglas Agard, Malcolm McDonald, Chen Wang, Saibai, Chakraborty, Han Xiao, Vibert Williams, Joseph Wang, Marcia Thompson, Barney J. Reed, Valery Ort, Atanda Ganiyu Musa, Michael Lazarev, Nobuhiko Koyama, Eric Finkelstein, Mark Coleman, Allen Brady, Khaleel Asgarali, Nazruddin Asgarali, David Yong-Xiang Zhuang, Nirav Parekh, Dimitry Lanis, Larry Bruce Hodges, Yi Yong Fan, and Pradeetan Peter-Paul

Players who attended 4 Tour events:

Jack Gelman, Sean Patrick O'Neill
Did you find your team name on the official 2001 Stiga North American Teams Championships t-shirt? If not, you still have time! The t-shirt can be purchased for the price of $15.

Clearance Choi! t-shirts can be purchased for $8.

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Requires only 1 AA battery.

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Interview with USATT Executive Director

Dwight Johnson

Tell us about your professional background.
I am a retired U.S. Air Force officer, serving 21½ years. In the Air Force, I was a Services Squadron Commander. I was responsible for all of the lodging, food operations, sports and fitness centers, social clubs, libraries, youth centers, child development centers, auto skills centers, rod and gun clubs, stables, aero clubs, marinas, golf courses, bowling centers, and mortuaries. My last job was Deputy Director of Services at AF Space Command, and I had seven bases with all of the above and more. With an over $45 million budget of non-taxpayer money, I had to make a profit with the golf courses, bowling centers, social clubs, marinas, stables, rod and gun clubs, and auto skills. We had to break even in the food operations, lodging, youth centers, and child development centers. In the remainder, there was taxpayer money to sustain the operation. Before my military career, I was in city recreation in Aurora, Colorado. I also taught high school for two years.

Tell us about your personal background.
I am married with three children. My daughter is in college and plays soccer for her school. My oldest son is a senior in high school and is a left-handed pitcher who may play in college. The youngest is 9 years old and loves to play soccer, basketball – anything that has a ball involved. I hope that he will take up table tennis.

What are the three most important issues coming up for USATT?
1. Development of recreational players to become serious players and compete in table tennis events. This will have to be done in many different ways: school programs, grassroots camps, sponsorship programs, etc. Another way is to work with AmericaTeams and our website. With this exposure, we may generate interest by recreational players for the game of table tennis.

2. Assisting our elite athletes and coaches devote full-time to table tennis. I am looking for a company that is willing to invest in the future of table tennis to help with this. We have a strategic development plan, and we will have to stick with this plan so that we will be able to medal in future Olympic Games.

3. Use the past of table tennis to help our future. What I mean by this is the sport that opened up China to the world. We now need to cultivate this 30-year-old achievement and use this to help train our athletes of today and the future. “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” is not just a historical fact, but rather an idea that still lives today both for our country and our sport.

If you could change one thing about our sport, what would that be?
More fan involvement at tournaments. We need to have some cheering going on. At the Worlds, I saw the Japanese audience cheer throughout the matches. We need to do the same.

What has been the best experience so far?
Seeing the headquarters staff at their best with the work they do for our membership on membership services, ratings, tournament planning and execution, and many other areas.

And the worst?
I do not have any. I do not look at “worst experiences” but rather what can I learn from an experience so I can improve for the future. Let’s be positive and not negative.

What has been the most “eye-opening” experience?
How the world rallied around USATT after the September 11th attack. That was most gratifying. As a former member of the AF and knowing several people that were involved in the Pentagon attack, my heart grew with each e-mail or letter to USATT from around the world expressing their thoughts and feelings for us.

Any interests outside your obvious #1 interest of table tennis?
Oh yes! My family is #1 in my life along with my faith in God. After that comes volleyball. I have played volleyball for almost 30 years and played for the USA Armed Forces in 1986. I still play volleyball today on an over 45 team. It is great to be young and playing a lifetime sport. Now I have to learn how to play another great lifetime sport – Table Tennis.

Anything else you’d like to add?
Yes Larry, it is up to all of us to help grow the sport and develop corporate sponsors. Remember keep the ball on the table!
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$ 10,000 4-star TT tournament. 40 Butterfly tables, orange Butterfly balls.

VENUE: Athletic Adventures, Dublin, OH (off St.Rt. 33W, .5 Mile W. on Post Rd @ Cosgray, Right)

All matches are RR or SE as indicated, Best of 5. Open, Women, Elite and U 2600 are 4/7 at semis.

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<th>AWARD:</th>
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<td>$ 1,500</td>
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<td>3. HARBDBAT U-1900</td>
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<td>$ 50</td>
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<td>4. OPEN DOUBLES **</td>
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<td>$ 500</td>
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**DID'JA KNOW?**

By Bob Green

Sadly, shortly before we went to press, Hall of Famer Bob Green passed away — his obituary is in this issue. This will be his final "DID'JA KNOW?" column.

Satoh's sensational win of the world's championship in India using a sponge padded racket created a ripple in the table tennis world and everybody wanted to know more about this new type of facing. The International Table Tennis Federation later topped off the sponge with a rubber sheet and limited the overall height of the covering. This created the sandwich sponge bat that we use today. The ripple effect caused by Satoh's special racket was nothing compared to the tidal wave of controversy set off by the use of the inverted sandwich type.

New and young players took to this inverted bat like a duck takes to water. They found they could produce many spins and shots not possible with the pebblefacings. As these new players improved their skills, they started winning over the top pebble players, who in most cases, were unable to cope with the unusual spins. This is what started the turmoil that lasted years.

Pebbled rubber bats had been the standard for over 15 years. World champions used them. Players grew up and built their games around it. Clubs and national organizations were built up and controlled by the older pebble players. They were not about to let the sponge threat move in without a fight.

World champions and many others wrote in their national publications about the evils of sponge and how it was destroying the game. Several countries, led by Germany, banned sponge from internal tournaments. The USTTA banned it for that 1958-59 season as a trial. There were meetings of clubs and affiliates in the United States to vote on the issue. Some clubs folded when they were unable to get sponge banned. Feelings ran high and discussions were very heated. Some court suits were filed by players denied entrance to their club. In several major cities, private anti-sponge groups were formed. One overseas country denied young sponge players from competing in the tryouts for that country's World Team, even though they had wins over them. Several countries, including the U.S., temporarily dropped their membership in the ITTF in protest. There was even an effort to form a new international organization. It was no doubt the greatest crisis the organized game has ever known.

After a few years, when the ITTF could not get enough affiliated votes to ban sponge, most organizations and countries began to see that the sandwich bag was here to stay and ceased their fight. Some top pebble players tried to switch, but mostly without success. Most world-class players just retired from tournament play.

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From Horizon Magazine, Summer, 1966. Contributed by Tyra Parkins and Dr. Michael Scott.
If there were a stat just for spirit, together we’d hold the record.

No matter where we live, or who we are, there’s a part of us that needs to celebrate the success of others. And while many of us are athletes, all of us are fans. And on hardwood, turf, grass and clay, we find our common ground.

BE UNITED

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

United Airlines is proud to support USA Table Tennis.
those of USA TT or its officers.

In the last few months two experiments took place on the International Arena. The first experiment was an expected one, an attempt to try the new service rule. In that experiment the umpires were briefed in advance. They were given a document comparing the new and the old law, and explaining the differences. The document included a diagram illustrating the "Triangle," which had to be kept clear of the server's body. According to the report by Colin Clemett, the Chairman of the ITTF Rules Committee, the experiment was moderately successful.

The second experiment was surprisingly different. It was with longer tables. They used tables that were 0.5 meters longer, with an area of 0.25 meters on each side of the net that was not part of the playing surface. The immediate impression was that the game became more powerful, more physically demanding, and the rallies longer.

Other changes dealt with the size, weight and color of the ball; the height of the net; the design and material of the rackets; the two-color rule of the racket covering; the specifications of the rubber covering; the dress code; multi-color shirts; etc.

Most of those who promoted these changes were hoping that they will attract TV coverage, recruit more players, attract more audiences, and generate more revenues. Historically most of these changes were sought when the game lost its popularity, that is the ratio of the number of players to the world's population. And more important when the game lost its attractiveness to the audience as well as its own players. It is not uncommon these days to see many players pack and leave the arena once they lose their matches. Final games are not watched by many players participating in the tournament. Gone are the days when college matches attracted 3000 spectators, and national tournaments were watched by 15,000 people.

Speculation about the cause of this decline were attributed to various reasons; the shorter rallies, the high speed of the ball, and the difficulty of returning the serve. All of them are related to each other. The high speed of the ball eliminated the chopping defensive game, and with it the longer rallies. The difficulty of the serve aborted rallies before they got started. It is hard to explain to a non-player audience how a world champion cannot return the serve of another player, or return it so awkwardly that it is easily smashed by his opponent.

One cannot understand why page after page in the TT magazines are advertising nothing but more speedy blades, speedy rubber, and speedy glue. Who said that the sport needed more speed?

Scientific analysis published previously in TT Magazines illustrated that the speed of the ball now is traveling faster than the normal reflexes of a normal human being (to react to it). A sport cannot be limited to those who possess extraordinary reflexes. Research also demonstrated that shorter rallies attract the attention of the audience and their interest.

Please do not get offended, the game will never go back to the boring 50 returns a rally as it used to be, although more people were happy to play it and watch it then. All we need is just a little bit slower game, enough to give the defenders as well as the hitters a chance to return the ball, which would lead to longer rallies.

It is very clear that the ITTF is genuinely trying to find ways and means to help the sport. One has to commend the ITTF for its effort, flexibility and willingness to give every possible change a chance.

There are some simple solutions, which have been tried by some Associations. Two of those are a higher net, and no more that 1.0mm sponge.

The U.S. was the Association which lowered the net. Maybe it is time to lead the world again, and try to raise the net 3/4 or 1.0 inch. Let us start some experimental tournaments and put them on videotape for analysis. Let us involve our best players in the country to participate in such experiments. IT MAY MAKE THE DIFFERENCE WHICH EVERYBODY IS LOOKING FOR.

Before I close, I would like to keep you informed about the status of the new service rule. Several years ago the U.S. Association introduced a proposal to change the serve to be played in front of the body. The ITTF Rules Committee proposed a similar proposal. When it was debated at the AGM, it came back with the different concepts of the Triangle" between the ball and the net, and the "Hologram" above it. Several reservations have been raised by players, umpires and associations. The Rules Committee has advised us, especially the U.S., to propose a simpler rule and send it directly to the AGM.

In another indication of the sincerity of the ITTF, President Adham Sharara has written two articles, one in Table Tennis Illustrated and the other in the ITTF Bulletin. He extended an invitation to all Associations and those concerned to send their proposals for possible modifications to the coming AGM.

I am proposing the following rule, "During the serve no part of the body of the server or his partner can be between or above the ball, resting on his flat palm, and his end line." This proposal will guarantee that the opponent and the umpires can see the ball all the time, it is easier for the players to understand and for the umpires to apply without the need to figure out the triangle and its hologram.

I will be forwarding the above suggestion for the President and the Board for their approval. Those who have different suggestions, please forward them to the USATT office or to me.

---

By "Dr. Azmy"
MY MENTOR: DAN GREEN
By Scott Preiss, President of Table Tennis The Sport

Scott Preiss & Dan Green

Everyone always asks me the question, how in the world did you ever get involved with the sport of table tennis?

Although there are probably several reasons for me pursuing the sport of table tennis, I reunited with one of the reasons last week in New York, many-times Long Island Champion Dan Green.

It was about 7:00 PM some Tuesday evening in 1972 when my mother and father brought me to Memorial Junior High School in Huntington, NY, the home of the Huntington Table Tennis Club. More than 100 people played at this club and the best were always featured on table number one, an arena if you will for the gladiators.

As I peered through the crowds of people playing on number one, I witnessed a smash of the table tennis ball and then turned to my right and saw a man spinning in mid air without looking and returning a ball traveling at him at some 50 or 60 miles an hour. That feat, which I never imagined possible, made me decide what sport I wanted to excel at, and that man spinning was my friend ever since, Dan Green.

On September 8, just three days prior to the terrorists' attack, I reunited with Dan to perform two table tennis exhibitions for the Sports Authority Sports Store Grand Opening in Wayne, New Jersey. The exhibitions, sponsored by Stiga, allowed many of the local table tennis enthusiasts to challenge Dan and myself.

Dan still plays with the same grace as when I saw him play 30 years ago. Table Tennis is truly a sport for life; I look forward to playing table tennis with Dan Green 30 years from now.

POPE TABLE TENNIS
Tad Szulc, author of Pope John Paul II, says the pope likes to play the game with his childhood friend Jerzy Kluger, the son of a Jewish lawyer from the pope’s hometown in Poland. Kluger, who now lives in Rome, and Rene, his wife, frequently visit the pope for lunch and dinner. The Klugers, in fact, were the first to be received in a private audience by the pope after his election in 1978.

CORRECTIONS
In the last issue, page 69, column 2, second question, Renata Peluchova, one of Barney’s practice partners, had her name misspelled.

Letters...

Dear Editor,

As Deputy Referee for the just-completed Baltimore North American Team Championships, and umpire during the near-riotous semifinal match between the USA Team (David Zhuang, Barney J. Reed, Mark Hazinski and Ashu Jain) and the defending Hungarian Team (Fan Yi Yong, Zoltan Varga, et al.), I will let the pundits and poets describe and debate the correctness of what happened and its ultimate outcome, but I would like to share my personal reaction to this unfortunate – near tragic – incident. I make no claim to being right. This is simply one person’s feeling who loves this sport and who was greatly saddened by this occurrence.

Hockey players, Little League Baseball parents and soccer fans who attack each other, officials and property, disgrace their sport and the spirit of athletic competition. Worse, they are examples of civilization in regression. Although the incident in Baltimore did not quite degenerate to this level, it was an ugly failure in good sportsmanship. Winning should be accomplished as a result of excellence and enthusiasm rather than through a technicality resulting in default. Let me be quick to admit that much of the blame rests with Fan Yi Yong for not immediately producing an approved, spare racket as the rules require. But the obvious willingness of the American player/team to win by any means necessary is probably the cause of the resulting hostility of the fans toward our team when they returned to the court to play the final. It was heartbreaking to witness American fans, at this critical time in our country’s history, booing an American Sports Team.

Sincerely,
Dick Evans, Deputy Referee, 2001 NATT Team Championships
Editor’s note: See Referee Azmy and Fan Yi Yong’s statements, pg. 49.
More Letters...

To the USATT,

The disaster at the NA Teams this year reminded me of the Olympic basketball gold medal game between the U.S. and the Soviet Union about three decades ago. My sense of fair asked the players if they would be willing to umpire on the court inspected Fan's paddle and an empty feeling, wondering what we had done with our sport.

Earlier in the day. I was wishing I had brought my daughter to see the astonishing play of players like Kreanga. By the end, I was relieved that she had stayed home with her mom so that she did not learn how some people "compete." I was sitting courtside and saw the events unfold. I cheered wildly at Barney Reed's dramatic victory over Varga in the first match, including his shouts of "This is my house!" But his slogan took on a dark meaning about an hour later.

The heart of competition is fair play. Fan Yi Yong was doing nothing to gain unfair advantage with his paddle; if anything his play suffered from a bubble under the rubber. The umpire and his opponent had inspected his paddle prior to the match. After Barney Reed pointed out the defect in Fan's paddle, both Reed and Dan Seemiller should have done everything in their power to allow Fan to obtain a replacement paddle that was every bit as good as the one he was playing with at the time, even if it meant bending or violating the rules. And then, Reed should fight as hard as he can to win after continuing. To do anything less, to take advantage of the situation, is unsportsmanlike. To ask for a default, or even consider accepting one, as Seemiller did, is unthinkable and a disgrace to the sport, regardless of the rules. If Reed and Seemiller see that a default has become unavoidable, they should default first, seeing the unfairness of the situation and especially given that Fan was up three games to zero.

I offer my thanks to Alexandar Karakasevic for gracefully injecting a sense of fair play in the finals by insisting that he not get credit for the ball off the side in his match with David Zhuang. When he walked over and reversed the scoring, he was probably violating the rules (the umpire's decision is final), but he was responding to a higher principle. By the way, the retrieve on that net-edge ball was incredible!!!

The rule requiring a player to replace his paddle immediately is designed to prevent unfair or unreasonable delays. One can imagine scenarios where a player breaks a racket either in anger or intentionally to fabricate a delay and change the momentum of a match. In such a case, the umpire can and should demand the player replace his racket immediately. But Fan did not contrive an excuse to change paddles or delay the game. It was Barney Reed who interrupted play, and the time for Fan to repair his paddle was a small fraction of the overall delay. Although I think Reed's request for Fan to change rackets was somewhat inappropriate (especially after the umpire on the court inspected Fan's paddle and asked the players if they would be willing to continue — but Reed and Seemiller both refused),

I do not fault him extremely for that. But when he saw the runaway freight train he had let loose about to annihilate the tournament, he should have done everything he could to allow Fan to continue.

By all accounts of the situation, Fan wanted nothing more than to continue play with a legal racket comparable to the one he was using when the incident started. Defaulting a match is such a serious penalty that it should be reserved for only the most severely unsportsmanlike conduct. Fan was not trying to gain unfair advantage. He should not have been defaulted.

We need leaders with a strong sense of fair play, as demonstrated by gentlemen champions like Karakasevic. USATT should fire Seemiller as coach of the national team and hire somebody with a better sense of judgment to lead our teams, especially the youth teams. Seemiller has the responsibility to defend his players, but to seek an advantage from the situation which occurred shows no sense of fair play, even if it was legal. He should not be allowed to coach our national teams, as the attitude of our leaders is held as the standard by which others are expected to follow.

Azmy Ibrahim made a mistake of such magnitude that he has lost all credibility as the source of wisdom we turn to when we are in a difficult situation on rule interpretation. I admire both Seemiller and Ibrahim's dedication to the game, accomplishments and skill. They have done far more than I have. But nothing should take priority over fair play.

The decision to default Fan was certainly misguided by a micro-reading of the rule book. But one needs to look no further than the ITTF Constitution for the answer:

1.4.1. The objects of the ITTF shall be: ...

The default violated the ITTF Constitution. As an umpire, Ibrahim may have felt tied down by the wording of some obscure rules. The U.S. Team has no such excuse. And they wear our colors.

The USA team should write a letter of apology to Fan, Varga and Turbok, and hand over their prize money. You may not have all been contributors, but unfortunately you are beneficiaries and for that you received our hearty boos. As a spectator, I am grateful that the Hungarian team has come overseas so many times to exhibit their skills and compete at this tournament. As hosts, I feel we treated them like dirt this year and I am embarrassed. Only a dramatic, decisive response by the USATT will have a chance of convincing other teams that they will not suffer the same fate.

Lastly, I offer my deepest sympathies to the tournament directors, especially Richard Lee. They worked so hard to put on a great competition. Every year they bring in new teams so we can watch truly world-class play when we lesser players are finished playing our matches. They were not at fault for the disaster, but they will suffer the consequences if they still have the interest to run this event again next year.

As players or umpires, we must do everything we can to ensure that the game is won at the table with skill, determination, creativity, quickness, speed and power. Fair play is at the heart of civilization, more so than the wording of our laws. Especially at this point in time, our world desperately needs more civilization, not less.

Ken Laughlin, Philadelphia, PA

Editor's note: See Referee Azmy and Fan Yi Yong's statements, pg. 49.

II-Point Games

Dear Editor,

Does ANYBODY like the 11-point rule? I'd like to know that someone does. I play with recreational players, tournament players, old players, young players, good players, and bad players. And you know what? No one who PLAYS likes the eleven-point game. Here's why:

1. An inferior player can luck out and steal a game.
2. It's harder to keep track of serve and score.
3. It trivializes that old match comment, "I took a game off him."
4. The great comeback is gone.
5. The match could be over before you warm up.
6. Too many nerve-wracking deuces.
7. The server's advantage is negated.

Granted all these reasons are subjective and arguable. But it is a fact that so far I have not found one person who likes the rule. Shouldn't it be easy to find supporters of the darn thing? And, if not, how the heck did it happen? Rule changes for playing the game should be made by the players. This has the feel of bureaucrats justifying their existence.

The essential core of Table Tennis is still the same, thank goodness. So far that hasn't suffered. But rumblings are being heard about further tinkering. Raise the net? Lengthen the table? Change the table height? I cannot say the ruling bodies have no right to suggest these things. They do. But they should not be mandates handed down to players. They should be referendums to be voted on by card-carrying members of associations.

Back to the 11-point game. Why was it done? I've heard reasons but they don't make sense to me.

Reason 1 – Make the game shorter and easier to follow on television.

People have a problem counting to 21? I hope not. And what are the most popular televised sports in the world? Probably soccer and U.S. football. Their games last hours not minutes. Perhaps the most similar sport to ours is tennis. A long match is considered the best match, right? Tennis is also popular while putting up with an arcane scoring system. I refute this reason.

Reason 2 – 1 don't know of one.

What makes a sport popular on Television? The grass roots interest of the people who play or the spectacle of athletic grace. In some sport's the element of danger and the drama of courage in the face of it define the appeal. Table tennis will never be played in a Ring of Fire, so we better put our efforts to achieving broad based appeal through junior development and quality places for people to discover the sport.

Repeal the 11-point rule.

Sincerely,

Guy McLean, Pittford, NY
COMPARISON OF 11-POINT AND 21-POINT MATCH FORMATS

By Dr. David Marcus

The change to 11-point games raises the question of which 11-point match formats should replace the 21-point best-of-3 and 21-point best-of-5 match formats that we all familiar with. To answer this, we will consider three different ways of comparing match formats.

POINT COUNTS

One way to compare different formats is to count the number of points you need to score to win the match. A better way is to note that a game to 21 is really a best-of-40-points game. Since 40 is an even number, games can end in a tie, which necessitates the deuce rules to break the tie. Since deuce can theoretically go on forever, let’s ignore this complication for the moment by assuming that none of the games go to deuce. Table 1 gives the number of points needed to win the match and the total number of points in the match (ignoring deuce) for various 11-point and 21-point match formats.

EXPECTED NUMBER OF POINTS

Rather than just counting points, we can consider the expected (or average) number of points in a match. If one player is so much better than the other that he or she wins every point, then this is just the number of points needed to win the match (the values for which are in Table 1). However, as the two players get closer in level, the expected length of a match increases, with the longest matches being expected for two players that are equally matched. Table 2 gives the expected number of games and total points for various match formats for two equally matched players. These values include deuce games (once the game reaches deuce, the expected number of additional points in the match turns out to be four).

PROBABILITY OF UPSET

The final method that we will use to compare different formats is to consider the probability of an upset (i.e. the probability that the better player will lose the match). The longer the match, the smaller the probability of an upset. Note that if the two players are equally matched, then neither player is better and each player is equally likely to win the match, regardless of the match format. Thus we must consider matches between unequal players. Table 3 gives the probability of an upset for various match formats and various values for the probability of the better player winning a point.

CONCLUSIONS

The three methods of comparing formats give similar results. The count of the number of points needed to win a match does differ somewhat from the others, but it is the least reasonable of the three methods. Overall, the 21-point best-of-3 format is halfway between the 11-point formats of best-of-5 and best-of-7. The 21-point best-of-5 format is between the 11-point formats of best-of-9 and best-of-11, but is somewhat closer to the best-of-9 format. Thus either the 11-point best-of-5 format or the 11-point best-of-7 format is a reasonable replacement for the 21-point best-of-3 format. The 11-point best-of-9 format is the best replacement for the 21-point best-of-5 format.

TECHNICALITIES

All the probabilities were calculated using standard (and reasonable for this purpose) modeling assumptions, i.e. the probability of winning a point is constant (thus independent of the score) and is the same for both players. We could allow the probability of winning a point to depend on which player is serving, but doing so does not affect the conclusions.
In Memoriam
Bob Green
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

Calls coming to me from his Sun City, AZ table tennis club friends told me the sad news that Bob Green, inducted just last year into the USATT Hall of Fame, had died. He succumbed, after the sudden onset of a sickness, and then three weeks of suffering, to liver failure at his local Hospice Facility on Friday, Nov. 23. He had no relatives, no service was held, and he was cremated... just two weeks short of his 87th birthday.

Bob of course was a long-time player – once Ohio Open Champion and among the Top 10 in the country, who in the early 1940’s partnered Leah Thall (later World Mixed Doubles Champion Leah Neuberger) to tournament wins around the Midwest. Years later (though he never really left the Sport), he won U.S. and Senior Olympic Over 60’s, 70’s and 80’s Championships.

Hopefully, though, Bob will be remembered not only for his crisp-stroke, in-close-to-the-table defensive play, but even more for the variety of his meaningful contributions to the Sport.

He had a 15-year stint – initially in Indianapolis, then primarily in Columbus, Ohio – as a very successful table tennis club manager who at one point had over 200 men and women participating in his city-wide All-Star, industrial, commercial, and novice leagues.

He was an indefatigable director of local, regional, and national tournaments, including the 1946 Western’s; the famous 1948 National’s where Dick Miles beat Marty Reisman in the final, deuce in the 5th (and where for the Miles-Cartland semi’s Green spun so many new balls for demanding Doug to choose from that years later he said his wrists still twitched from spinning them); and the 1950 blazingly National Team Championships.

For many, he was, above all, a promoter of junior play and a coach for all ages.

In addition to his early-formed love for table tennis, with his years at Muncie, Indiana’s Ball State and his later Electrical Engineering degree, along with his work as a piano-playing union musician that enabled him to pay his way through school, Bob also had a busy life outside the Sport. Yet one that kept him connected with it. He was on the road as an engineer for the Howard Hughes Aircraft Corporation for many years and stationed in many places, and so learned a lot about players, clubs, and table tennis activities in general.

During the fall and into the winter of the ‘41-42 season, Green was President of the Ohio Association, but had to give up that office as it was taking too much of his time, and he certainly didn’t want a recurrence of an old ulcer problem. Though he literally wined and dined the Columbus press – Lou Berliner of the Dispatch, for example – and gave sportswriters Christmas presents in order to get needed publicity for his Club, the fact that it flourished did not afford him a living. So he worked the 3rd shift at Curtiss-Wright – 1:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., on the 2-seater Helldiver bomber – slept during the day, then opened the Club at 5:30 in the afternoon, and on closing it went to work.

During the ‘51-’52 season, Bob briefly took over as Editor of the official USTTA publication, Topics, to which he was a longtime contributor.

In an Oct., 1952 “Sidelines” column, in speaking about the ‘52 Cleveland National’s run by Sanford Gross, Green says, “It wasn’t too well known, but the Cleveland police (Vice Squad) were present at our National’s after repeated warnings by the tournament manager failed to stop gambling. USTTA officials requested their assistance ... and a few well-known characters were apprehended. They were released at the request of these USTTA officials after ‘good behavior’ promises were made. There were some pretty scared characters, I tell you.”

Right up to the end of his life, Bob regularly contributed his “Did You Know?” columns to Topics. These consisted of historic tidbits, which I often found entertaining. Here’s a 1996 example: “...Some enterprising [U.S. World Team] players supplemented their resources by smuggling. There were many shortages in Europe after the war and a fifty-cent pair of nylons bought in New York would sell for a pound in London. Foreign custom officials, when checking the team, generally looked the other way at minor smuggling. This was not so with U.S. Customs. On returning from one of the tours, Douglas Cartland, the U.S. #3 player, was arrested for trying to smuggle in over 300 very expensive watches concealed in his clothing. They didn’t buy his explanation that he was only bringing in a few for his friends.”

Historic material that gave meaning to her life, and that both her sister Tybie and Bob wisely wanted to preserve. But what to do with all this material, and why?

Fortunately, they decided to send it on to the new Historian, me – which is what Bob personally undertook to do, carefully sorting out this and that (working 3 hours a day for three months), then packing up, binding, and shipping to me a select treasure trove of 22 cartons, 627 pounds, of irreplaceable records and memorabilia. This selfless effort on Bob’s part became a catalyst for me to persevere with my own collecting so as to write, and then see published, the first volume of my projected multi-volume History of U.S. Table Tennis – something that Leah herself occasionally talked about writing but was always too busy collecting and recording to try to do.

Bob is thus a Hall of Fame inductee I’m personally indebted to, and so I, like his friends who remember him wherever the sun comes up and sets, am the more saddened by his death.

In Memoriam
Harry Lund (1919?–2001)
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

It was 1939, and Mrs. U.S. (Helen) Grant, General Manager of the new Minneapolis Club at Lake and Hennepin, and her brother, Harry Lund, the Club’s resident “Instructor” who’d been taught to play by the pioneering Minnesota Champion Ed Sirmai, were participating in a Minneapolis May Day clean-up-and-paint-campaign parade. They and other Club members decorated a trailer-float with crepe paper, mounted and anchored a table tennis table on it, and using 1,000 cracked balls played their way through the downtown district. The lettering on their float read, “CLEAN UP, PAINT UP, BACK YARD & BASEMENT. MAKE ROOM FOR TABLE TENNIS TABLES.” The float not only created a lot of interest and presumably later some serious-minded visitors to the Grant/Lund Club, it won a scroll for being the "nicest looking" in the whole parade.

No surprise that Harry, who’d already
become a Top 40 player in the U.S. before the start of World War II, and afterwards improved to U.S. #17, loved to show off his table tennis expertise. His favorite partner? Wife Shirley, a very good player in her own right (U.S. Top 10 in 1954) whom he met at the Minneapolis Club and remained married to for his long lifetime. That the couple had put on some great U.SO exhibitions might be inferred from their serious play at, say, the 1951 U.S. Open, where Shirley, paired with 1938 U.S. World Team member Delores Kuenz in the Women’s Doubles, reached the semi’s before losing to the winners, Hall of Famers Leah Neuberger and Mildred Shahian; and where in the Mixed Harry and Shirley went 5 with multi-time U.S. Champions Dick Miles and Sally Green Proudy.

After taking the U.S. Open Consolation title in 1942, Harry lost to Dick twice in later U.S. Opens—once in 1945 in the eighth’s while he was a Lieutenant on leave, and again in the quarter’s of the ‘47 National’s. Dick remembers 6’4” Harry and his go-for-broke powerful forehands— and with good reason, for against a lesser opponent he could be quite intimidating. Partnered by Les Lowry (the fellow who infamously lost the 1944 U.S. Open final leading Johnny Somaal 20-14 in the 5th), Harry in that 1945 U.S. Open reached the quarter’s of the Men’s Doubles before being beaten by the winners Eddie Pinner and Cy Sussman.

I played doubles with Harry in the 1954 U.S. Open and, alas, we lost a tough one (19-18, 23-13) to Abbott Nelson and the legendary Bill Price, then long past his prime. Afterwards, we were part of a rauccous poker game on someone’s big bed in the tournament hotel, and so I can echo the emphasis on Harry being the unpredictable gamer that reporter Jim Scheeler said he was, for that night Harry played his cards with the same abandon that won him many Minnesota and Colorado State Championships.

Former USATT President Charlie Disney, who ran the Minneapolis Magoo Club for many years, tells of a legendary 5-gamer the right-handed Lund won against Sirmal when out of position he switched the racket to his left hand and smashed in a flambouyant winner to finish the match. That Scheeler’s lengthy article, “A Master of Gamesmanship,” accompanied by photos of the Lunds, could appear in the Denver Post six weeks after Harry’s Aug. 4 death is a tribute to the esteem his friends and neighbors had for him—this rural-route mail carrier whose letters sped (as a great writer once said letters do) “on errands of love.”

On hearing of the death of this Champion who brought so much soul to the Sport—he eventually succumbed to a severe form of dementia—I’m sure all of us in the table tennis world, even those who never got to see see the deceptively easygoing Harry’s fierce competitiveness and spirited exhibition play, extend their sympathy to his wife Shirley and family loved ones.

2002 ACUI Regional Collegiate Championships

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U.S. Team's Trip to Japan

Spring, 1940

By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

Ed.'s Note: The following account is an excerpt from Chapter Three of Tim Boggan's History of U.S. Table Tennis, Vol. II: 1940-1952 (a Work in Progress).

Out of the blue, the Japan TTA surprised the Americans. General Secretary Numa issued a letter of invitation — a friendly challenge — to the USTTA to send a U.S. Team of five players for "a stay of 21 days in Japan" with "all hotel charges and travel expenses defrayed by the Japan TTA" (TTT, March, 1940, 3).

Great! So who would represent what Topics called our "Expeditionary Force" to Japan? Not U.S. #1 Lou Pagliaro or U.S. #2 Sol Schiff, or some others unable to give up their commitments, but two Chicago players, U.S. #5 Bob Anderson and U.S. #7 Billy Holzrichter (who in 1943 would be our U.S. Open Champion). Of our women, teenagers Sally Green, U.S. #1, and Betty Henry, U.S. #3, declined, but N.Y.'s Ruthe Brewer, U.S. #2, and Chicago's Mildred Wilkinson Shipman, U.S. #4, accepted. USTTA Vice-President and current U.S. Open Veterans' (35 and over) winner, Bill Gunn of Mamaroneck, N.Y., would Captain the Team, and his wife, Mae, would accompany him.

Off they all went then that late spring of 1940 to San Francisco to sail across the Pacific on the Tatsutamaru — the only serious complication being that the married Shipman found out on her way to the West Coast she was pregnant and decided to stay home. Mayo Rae Rolph, now about to turn 21, was U.S. #12 but last-minute geographically available, and, as she'd just reached the final of the U.S. Open Mixed Doubles with Anderson, and had been eligible for but unable to go to the 1937 World's, she was a natural choice to take Mildred's place. So Rolph left independently from Seattle on the Heian Maru, and, after suffering some ill effects from a shipboard vaccination, joined the others in Osaka.

Years later, in describing her teammates to me, Mayo pointed out that because the name "Holzrichter" was of German origin — Japan was more and more about to use conquered Manchuria as a vast arsenal (the Heian Maru had been loaded down with scrap iron) — his passport wouldn't allow them to go on a side trip to Shanghai. Mayo thought Billy "outgoing, with a big smile, friendly and sensitive." Anderson, "who had diabetes, didn't take care of himself, and so would die early," she deemed "pleasant, handsome, quietly retiring." But Brewer, whom Mayo had lost to in our April U.S. Open, was, at least with her, "distant and aloof" — though by September Ruthe was married to a fellow she'd met aboard ship coming back.

Our Team, and a weaker Australian one (composed of Arthur Bowe and Kenneth Adamson) was welcomed, Gunn said, with "extra courteous consideration" as we played matches in various cities, including Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Hiroshima.

Accommodations were often luxurious — Mayo particularly remembers the famous Imperial Hotel that Frank Lloyd Wright built to withstand earthquakes.

Gunn, in his Captain's Report (TTT, Oct., 1940, 3: 14-15) speaks of the "astounding" interest in table tennis shown by the Japanese:

"...Everywhere we played there was never less than 1500 spectators present, and in many cases it jumped to four or five thousand. The only two IT parlors we saw in Japan were superior to any we have seen in the U.S. At one industrial plant in Nagoya there were at least 500 tables used during the day as working tables, but filled to capacity with table tennis players at lunch time or after working hours.

"...[We] could not help but feel that many of...[the Japanese Association's] more important t.t. activities were handled so much better than ours back home."

This, after our USTTA had shaped an Expedite Rule, Lowered the Net, and Banned Fingerspins, and our U.S. Team members had...
Gunn (echoing what the Hungarian world-class players, Szabados and Kelen, had said of their 1938 matches in Japan), made it clear that the Japanese had very fine players:

"...They invariably use cork surfaced bats [two years before, Kelen had written, they used just plain wood] which they grip in penholder style. All of them are fine forehand hitters although they do not drive except on a sure kill chance. Their main weakness, we discovered, was their disregard or lack of a chop defense. Effective strategy, we learned, was to feed them a chop and then counter drive their return. Holzrichter applied this technique ... and it was cold-blooded murder. The rest of us, however, could not seem to put the theory into practice, mostly because of the peculiar bounce the balls took on those soft-top tables."

Brewer confirmed Gunn's view of their Japanese opponents - T. Kon, S. Suyama, J. Hayashi, K. Yasuhara, and K. Osada. "These Japanese are really good," she wrote in a June 26 postcard to friends back home. "They take the attack all the time. No defense just steady killing. A chop means nothing to them."

Holzrichter told me that the tables the U.S. practiced on were slick (the ball would slide), but that the tables the International Matches were played on were vastly different: they had a chalky, rough surface, and though you put heavy chop on the ball it would pop straight up and be hit away. On one such table Billy remembers losing a match, 23-21 in the 5th, to one of Japan's best players, Takashi Kon (who'd also beaten Kelen in their initial encounter).

If the Japanese had a motive other than "Friendship Matches" in hosting this U.S. Team, it certainly wasn't clear to our players. Gunn said that the Team received so many gifts that "shipping them home became quite a problem." Rolph said that "Our Japanese hosts were exceedingly kind to us." She particularly liked "a box of oriental make-up cream and a pair of exquisitely carved wooden shoes" she was given. Mayo told Topics (Nov., 1940, 10) that in general the Japanese women "have a charming poise. They are always sweet, charming and natural. They smile a great deal and laugh softly. As in many foreign countries, the women's place is strictly in the home. The men are considered socially superior to the women."

In this unequal-partner connection, Gunn reported that "In many Japanese cities it is against the law to play mixed doubles."

Holzrichter, who'd be rescued from his downed B-24 in the War, said years later, "As long as I wasn't a prisoner of war, the Japanese couldn't have been nicer." In retrospect, however, a remark made by a Japanese liaison to the Team proved startling. Billy had happened to say, "We'll be going home in a week or so," and Machita San had replied, "You may be our guest longer than you think."

Still, the July 2 letter JTTA President Usagawa sent our USTTA President Clouther seemed straightforward enough:

"[W]e have to mention that good-will between U.S.A. and Japan, promoted by means of the table tennis matches, is a most valuable result of the scheme. With this aim in view, let us hope for the continuation of the Pan Pacific table tennis matches and also the exchange of players for the sheer purpose of developing amity between the two nations" (JTT, Oct., 1940, 16).

Amity aside, there would be no continuation of this kind of USA-Japan exchange.

Americans, Australians (clicking glasses) and Japanese. Americans in front row: Captain Bill Gunn (far left), Mae Gunn (5th from left), Mayo Rae Rolph (6th), Bill Holzrichter (7th), Bob Anderson & Ruthe Brewer (9th & 10th, hugging).

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2002
The Four-Star Stiga Pacific Rim Open took place in Portland for the thirteenth year on November 3-4. It came off through the collective effort of Portland Table Tennis Club members, friends, and sponsors. Thanks go to Escalade Sports for adding tables to those it gave in the past couple of years, with a mandate to get them into school programs. A long-time player and patron gave funds generously with a tribute to Jim Scott, promoter and organizer of so much table tennis in the Northwest. During Jim’s absence, Sam Ignazzitto — 1998 director of the Nike World Master Games — ably took charge to run a smooth, on-time tournament. Fine sportsmanship ruled among the 162 players. The usual contingent from Canada was lacking, perhaps because of the slow border crossings since September 11.

Again we appreciate Portland Community College for providing its large gymnasium for the event. Sixteen events were played on 20 Stiga tables in round robin games to 21 points. $5,800 in cash prizes plus trophies were awarded.

OPEN QUARTERFINALS

The premier Open event featured three women and five men in the quarterfinals. Newcomer to the U.S. Renata Paluchova, a hard-hitting lefty, engaged Jim Butler in some spectacular counterlooping, but succumbed in the second game, 24-26, when she had trouble with Butler’s serves.

Chris Xu, a long-pips chopper on the Canadian Women’s Team, faced Atanda Musa, who flew in with Paluchova from the Big Apple. The match featured fine chopping and great retrievals, but Musa’s patient looping with an occasional, sudden smash and Xu’s missing of several of her own smashes against lobs were decisive, 21-19, 21-15.

In the other quarterfinal matches, Simone Yang lost twice at 14 to Khoa Nguyen, and Kevin Au got 15 and 13 from Fan Yi Yong.

OPEN SEMIFINALS

Fan Yi Yong vs. Jim Butler

In the first game, Fan kept a two- to four-point lead most of the game. They counterlooped and hit backhand winners in their respective styles: the ricochet loop and the bullet punch. Fan’s surprise placements gave him the controlling advantage, 21-16. The second game was the closest of the semis. Butler took an early lead, using surprise placement with power. He is still leading at 18-17.

In the second game, Fan starts off with a lead that Musa can never close, but both play with yet more power. The most sensational point of the match was a counterlooping point that went to both wide angles and at the body; Fan wins it to lead 8-5. Mid-game, they display quick-off-the-bounce looping with some backhand winners down the line. Fan takes the game, 21-16, and the first prize of $1,500. Runner-up Musa wins $750.

Women’s Singles

In the Women’s Open, the top four played in a crossover to place themselves in the finals: Xu defeated Yang 21-16 and 21-15, and Paluchova beat Whitney Ping 21-15 and 21-12.

In the first game of the Women’s Final, Paluchova smashes too early in the rally, usually hitting long, as Xu sometimes slips sides on her racket: 21-9 for Xu. Between games, Paluchova confers with Musa.

In game two, she takes a 3-1 lead, but Xu pulls ahead 5-3, her biggest lead of the game. Paluchova regains the lead with patient looping while looking for opportunities to kill. Xu evens the score for the last time at 10, catching the edge with a chop of a wide-fading hit. Paluchova then gets seven straight points, two from Xu’s missing smashes. There are many nice rallies, but Paluchova, with a 20-14 lead, wins comfortably at 17.

The change of sides in game three comes at 4-10, Paluchova down as she reverts to the hasty attacking that lost her the first game. But she ties it up at 11-all, as Paluchova varies her play more and Xu makes some errors: chopping long, pushing too short, and passing up a chance to smash. Xu regains the lead, 14-12. Then Paluchova rolls off nine straight points, hitting her stride with an overpowering attack, even counter-smashing a winner. Paluchova wins the game 21-14, and the prize of $500.

UNDER 2500

The Under 2500 final was an interesting rematch as Yang revenged her loss to Paluchova in the Women’s Final. Paluchova had the harder attack and the serve advantage, but in nip-and-tuck play, Yang won at 19 and 19. Paluchova missed some hits, while Yang blocked ably off both wings, using medium pips out on the backhand. She mixed in some counterhits and some slow, spinny loops. Near the end, Paluchova backhand smashed a couple of these long.

Women’s Singles – Final: Simone Yang, 14, 14.

Chris Xu. 19, 15; Nguyen d. Peluchova, 15, 24; Musa d. Khoa Nguyen.

Over 40: Atanda Musa d. Sung Yang, 13, 11.

Over 50: Phieu Tran d. Richard Friedland, 17, 19, 11.

Under 16: Oliver Lei d. Lani Lei, 16, 15.

Under 1250: Roel Aguanta d. Donald Svetich, 19, 17.

Under 1100: Eric Chen d. Ben Li, 14, 17.

Under 900: Ben Li d. David LeDoux, 15, 17.


Under 1900: John Ochsner d. Lani Lei, 19, 14.

Under 1550: Rosco Lock d. Terry Drake, -17, 14, 20.

Under 1500: Eric Chen d. Ben Li, 14, 17.

Pac Rim Open Champion Fan Yi Yong serves to Atanda Musa in the Open Final.
Part VI: 2-Step Footwork
By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach

Two-step footwork to the left.

Two-step footwork to the right.

There are several styles of footwork for various types of moves, but the most popular and versatile is called two-step footwork. It can be used for nearly all moves, especially side to side, and is used by most of the best players in the world as the easiest and most efficient.

Before we get into the nitty-gritty about two-step footwork, a few general principles for all footwork should be noted. First, weight should be on the balls of the feet. This keeps the player ready to move in all directions. Second, stay in a slight crouch, knees slightly bent. This enables a player to spring in any direction very quickly.

TWO-STEP FOOTWORK

Two-step footwork is ideal for moving side to side to get to the ball. It can be used to cover the wide forehand corner with the forehand, to cover the wide backhand corner with the backhand, and to cover the wide backhand corner with the forehand. (Note that when covering the wide backhand with the backhand, a single step with the near foot will usually do.)

Two-step footwork is pretty much identical whether you are going to the left or to the right. Here we will explain how a player moves to his left. To move to the right, just reverse left and right.

Start by taking a short step, about six inches or so, with the left foot. This puts your legs farther apart and gets your momentum going.

Now pull with the left leg, letting your weight transfer onto your left leg. Move both feet together to the left, remembering to pull with the left leg instead of pushing with the right. (Of course, since most of your weight is on the left leg, you can’t push with the right leg without putting weight on it.) Use the momentum from the short step to pull your body to the left.

Both feet should move together, coming closer together in the middle of the motion but ending up with your feet at the same distance apart as at the start of the motion. Your right foot should end up about where the left foot was after the short step.

The whole movement might also be called a “step-jump,” since if you are doing it correctly the second part of the movement is essentially a jump. With practice, it should feel natural.

Tip of the Month:
AIM ONE WAY, GO THE OTHER
By Larry Hodges

Many players develop strong rally shots. However, they are often very, very predictable. An opponent can anticipate where each ball is going early in your stroke, and so always has lots of time to get to the ball.

Instead, try faking one way, and going the other. For example, aim your backhand to go crosscourt, and at the last second, push your wrist forward and go down the line. Or turn your shoulders way, way back when looping, making it appear you are looping down the line. and then turn the shoulders nearly 180 degrees and loop crosscourt. (You’ll also get great power this way!) Or, against a short serve to the forehand, aim crosscourt, where 90% of these balls are returned, and at the last instant, tilt the wrist back and return down the line.

By doing this, you get a double-whammy. Not only do you stop your opponent from anticipating and having lots of time, but he’ll be going the wrong way as well.
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Stepping Around the Backhand Corner

By Wei Wang, USATT Certified National Coach

In an earlier article, we discussed the "turning" shot – running around the backhand corner to take a forehand – in context with receiving serves. This technique of course also has great value in later portions of the rally, none more so than when attacking the third ball (when your opponent returns the serve to you). Since it is the source of many uncertainties, I thought it warranted revisiting in this context.

There are distinct differences between the way European players handle that issue and the way Asian players do, but one thing they have in common: They almost always turn only if the opponent pushes. Most other modes of receiving are just too fast to allow it.

The first and most notable difference is that Europeans use it much more rarely. Most of them keep their left foot forward after they serve and observe the opponent before moving. When they do step back, they can use the momentum to start the backswing for a backhand – an option they’re always reluctant to ignore. This gives them the advantage of being able to depend equally on both wings. In both European examples we used, the receive did not come at an extreme angle. If it had, they both would have opted for a backhand shot.

The Asian players recover to a neutral stance much earlier. This allows them to "cheat" by taking a preliminary step outwards to prepare a turn. Then – depending on the return’s flight path – they take another, wider step outwards, or they can reach even a wide ball to their forehand with a strong cross-step.

The first sequence shows how J.O. Waldner (SWE) does it. Total economy of motion: He stays low as his serve bounces on the other side and only pulls his left leg back for a wide stance as Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) receives. As soon as he recognizes the trajectory, he steps out wide with his left leg and swings his racket arm back far behind his body. Then he torques his upper body into the ball.

Like Waldner, Werner Schlager (AUT) leaves his left foot in front after his serve. Only when Allan Benson (DEN) receives, does he move his foot backwards. After the ball crosses the net, he skips with both legs wide to his left and then pushes off his right leg for a strong forward swing.

Chiang Peng-Lung (TPE) – a penholder – is already fully recovered by the time his serve bounces on the other side of the table. Right after Slobodan Grujic (CRO) touches the ball, his body starts shifting to the left. As the ball bounces on his side of the table he has already assumed an extremely wide stance, which allows him to make a very powerful shot.

In the second sequence Liu starts the same way: As soon as he identifies the push he throws his body to the left and takes the intermediate step to the left, but now he recognizes that the push is going to his wide forehand. Because all of his movements occurred so early he has time to push off strongly with his left foot and throw his body into the ball for a strong cross-step forehand loop.

For most non-professional players, the European timing will be more suitable, because with the enhanced option of using the backhand there is not such a heavy emphasis on quick footwork. But for maximum pressure on the third ball, there is no substitute for speed.

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Speed: 9.2, Spin: 9.4, Sponge thickness: 2.4, 2.6

Item: RMAK

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Innova: Sponge: 1.8, 2.0, 2.3; Speed: 9.1, Spin: 9.1, Item RSINL

Innova Light: Sponge: 1.8, 2.0, 2.3; Speed: 9.3, Spin: 9.1, Item RSINL

$33.95
Thanks to the efforts of the International Relations Department of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), and Clark Mitchell & Barney Reed Sr. of the CV Olympic Table Tennis Development Committee, arrangements were made to bring the El Salvador National Table Tennis Team to train in the U.S., specifically at the San Diego Table Tennis Association (SDTTA). Nine players and two coaches made up the visiting team. Dennis Taylor of the USATT contacted a few top USA players who were available to train with the visiting team. American players included Barney Reed Jr., Tahl Leibovitz and Samson Dubina. Trainers for the USA included Barney Reed Sr., Hank McCollum and Clark Mitchell. A great help throughout the 3-week training camp was SDTTA member Art Pintado, who acted as translator and assisted with transportation. U.S. Paralympian Andre Scott who resides at the Olympic Training Center, participated for a few days of the camp.

Closed training took place during the day hours at the SDTTTA where the two countries competed in intense matches, practice sessions, and physical training. The teams returned nightly to train against each other and with top players from the San Diego club. The SDTTA gave the team members a variety of players & styles.

Clark Mitchell extended an invitation to USAIT Grassroots Juniors Committee Chair and full-time coach Attila Malek, who in turn brought some elite young players from his POWER PONG club to compete against the El Salvador team. These players included Alina Khasanova, Peter Randell, Josh Kuhn and Mike Amren. Kamal Farah and Angie Tyan also made the trip down from LA. Alina eventually joined the Olympic program for the final week of training. Dr. Jiing Wang made the drive down to visit his old friend, the El Salvadorian coach, Coach Shan Wu Wang.

Members of both countries stayed at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, where they enjoyed the all-you-can-eat buffet style dinner hall, Olympic track, had access to sports medicine and played basketball, pool and table tennis (what else) in their off time. During these three weeks, the El Salvador team got the chance to spend one day at Sea World with the U.S. camp members, spent a day at Disneyland, were invited to a pizza party with other table tennis players, went shopping every chance they could, and socialized with their many new friends.
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Design Your Training Program

By Larry Thoman

A robot's usefulness varies not only with the general playing ability of a player, but also with the type of training required during a particular phase of training. Most high level players have a fairly regimented training season. They first pick out a specific goal that they want to achieve at the end of the season (e.g., win the world championships). Then with their coach, they develop a training program that will lead them to their best chance for attaining that goal.

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for the T.T. Talents’ 5-3 upset of the Canadian Laval Letendre team that
threatened; the forbidden appealed....

Boo’s Brothers in yachting caps or shirts that spoke of corporate ennui
(“Sometimes you just gotta say ‘Fax It’”) seemed subdued. A blandness
than in the past; the Hammer of Thor, thrown, did not return; and even the
evolve from a U.S. World Team Trials for a special few into a “fun’ event
Thanksgiving weekend for 50
years - and so have seen it

Alas, too, in their 5-team round robin, this Iljia
Lupulesku-coached Killer team - with Kalinikos Kreanga, Greece’s World
#18, and two World Top 60 Yugoslavs, Slobodan Grujic and Aleksander
Karakasevic - had no trouble knocking off the 5-0,5-0,5-0 heretofore vic-
torious Eastern Stars...5-0. Grujic proved vulnerable, though, for he, 11-9
in the 5th, barely beat Shao Yu of the NYTTCC. And Sasa Drinic, the Killerspin
5th, struggled with Shao’s teammate Nison Aronov, whose playing/training regi-
men in the former Soviet Union seemed still to carry over as he beat J-F Roussy
12-10 in the 5th. (“Seven days a week I used to play, 24 hours a day,” Nison said with a smile - “now I’ve a wife, kids, a job, a mortgage. Do you think I’m upset if I lose a match? Why is anybody upset? We’re all here to have fun, right?”)

In Division 1B, the Def-

ing Laszlo Varga-

coached Seattle Juic team -
Zoltan Varga, Fan Yi Yong,
and Attila Turbok - blanked
the opposition. But Team
Senoda (Todd Sweeris, Eric
Boggan, Ricky Seemiller, Lee
McCool, and David Sakai) went
down to the advancing
MI III team. 5-2. The 38-year-
old Boggan, who’d been
down 2-0 in his opening match with Mark Nordby
(Mark’s at his best against
antispin’?), and who, having
serve-return problems, lost to Canada’s promising Quebec Junior, 14-year-
old Pierre-Luc Hinse, seemed incapable of coming out of retirement to play
simply for fun. Hadn’t he always, in achieving his place as U.S. #1, always
been too intense for that? On losing close matches to Paul David and Tahl
Leibovitz, and, worse, repeatedly playing badly in the clutch (“I’m 6 points
better in practice!”), he looked to take out his frustration not only on himself
but on the umpire. Perhaps Eric didn’t know the rules - that after a game he
couldn’t carry the racket with him to his corner, or that he could only tow-
off at certain times - but he was certainly out of line insulting (“Get a life”)
Above: USA’s Barney J. Reed defeats Zoltan Varga, 11-8 in the seventh. Below: USA’s David Zhuang also defeats Zoltan Varga, 4-0. These two wins force the climactic fifth and final match between Reed and Fan Yi Yong.

and harassing this duty-minded umpire who he thought was giving him a hard time.

Eric’s teammate Ricky, also coming out of retirement — and looking the part with, as one wit put it, his “Retro Outfit (1982 shirt, 1973 shoes) — had recovered from a ruptured bicep, the effects of which make it sometimes difficult for him to keep his hand flat on serve, and did well to beat Leibovitz. Earlier, Tahl’s spectacular shots (he’s of which make it sometimes difficult for him to keep his hand flat on serve, and did well to beat Leibovitz. Earlier, Tahl’s spectacular shots (he’s surely the most dexterity switch-hands point-getter in the U.S.) had sent the spectators all abuzz by going five with Fan. Everybody was talking about Tahl’s backhand receive of serve — what an unfauling sure touch he had. But of course despite, or because of, a litany of physical disabilities he has to endure — I’ll mention only a congenital spine disorder, herniated disks, pinched nerves — he’s a formidable opponent, as his medals at the Paralympics, the World Championships for the Disabled, and the Maccabiah Games will attest to. He’s also sure to sooner or later draw a card, or a chuckle, as when, down 7-0 in the 5th to Fan, he yelled, “Damn it, I got a bad start!”

The Quebec Juniors played two spectator appealing, though winless ties. First, M11 3-3 got the better of them: Paul David took two and almost three, losing to young Hinse 11-13 in the 5th (“He’s got such short, heavy pushes I couldn’t get under them”); Poland’s gift to the N.Y. Champions Club, Jan Klendendorf and his long pips, added another two, and Sharad Pandit came through, after being down 6-1, with an 11-9 5th game win over the precocious Pierre-Luc. The Mr. Saigon team also bested these Juniors, 5-4, when Tuan Le survived his 11-9 in the 5th, edge-of-the-cliff battle with Ignacio Cabrera.

In Division C, there were two ties of interest in addition to the evening’s scheduled last-round meeting between the two undefeated teams — Jerry Wartsik’s Manhattan Club and the Canadian Men who hadn’t lost a match (though Sean O’Neill had forced 2677-rated Peter-Paul Pracekban to 5, as had Under 16 U.S. Junior Champ Han Xiao the Canadian International Xavier Therrien).

The two ties to follow involved, first, Manhattan, then the U.S. Juniors. In its 5-3 afternoon win, Manhattan had been pressed by O’Neill’s

Misha reminds me of Eloi [France’s on-court-very-demonstrative World Team member].” Sean had said watching the boy play Coste. Now out there at the table it’s almost as if Sean were facing Eloi. He’s behind 2-1 in games, and Misha seems to be yelling him down, sapping his strength. “Sean’s playing low-energy points,” says a friend. In the 4th game, the kid is making quite a noise as simultaneously he serves. Sean stops, protests, gets an umpire. I don’t blame him. I remember how the German International Jochen Bessard didn’t like all of Coach Seemiller’s screams, or I’m sure mine, in years gone by — though of course we didn’t yell as we made contact with the ball. Misha is quite compliant — he wants everyone’s respect. Sean is 8-5 up, and as I’m thinking this interruption is going to break Misha’s

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concentration, Sean returns Misha’s hard-hit balls with a variety of lobs, then unexpectedly chops a low return which Misha swings at as he has the others – and misses. That’s a breaker, I think – and, sure enough, Sean’s soon up 10-7.  

But what poise this 13-year-old has. He unhesitatingly, aggressively ties it up at 10-all. But Sean too has poise, and wins it 12-10.

In the 5th, though, O’Neill pulls away and, Sean is 10-3 match-point up, and Misha, having got an edge and mumbling to himself, “I’m not gonna say I’m sorry, I’m gonna kick ass,” mounts an incredibly fearless attack, which Sean, though he isn’t for a moment careless, can’t physically or psychically combat. Literally sprawled on the floor after a follow-through that brings him to 10-9, Misha gets up, and to the continued cheers of his teammates – “O, my god! Unbelievable!” – runs out the game.

Stunned Sean has to be...About/ Ping-Pong...What about it? What in this instance can you say about the Sport other than something ecstatic?

But the O’Neill team rights itself. Coste beats Xiao, and Wang, down 2-0, pulls a stunning reversal of his own against Misha. O’Neill is again forced to five – this time by Hugh who, as his father Barry Dattel says, is banging in backhands “that he doesn’t take at the [Westfield, N.J.] Club.” Adam, however, is off to a fatal start in the 5th, is down 6-0, and, after he can get no closer than 10-6, his racket goes spiraling ceilingward.

A pity, though, that much of the crowd was only peripherally into this 5-4 tie, for tonight it was Manhattan’s expatriate Wang Chen, a member of China’s 1997 World-winning Women’s Team, that the spectators most wanted to see – Wang, and her colorful teammates: the scimitar-scarred Musa, the Pakistanis-based Nigerian Oyebode, the Czech Peluchova, even their captivating Captain, Wartski. But, though Wang was allowed to enter the recent U.S. Open, could she play in this tournament? Hadn’t China, the U.S. (via ITTF regulations) suspended her until July 31, 2002 from all International competition for...well, in effect, wanting to come to America?

But apparently no one in authority had told Wang or the Tournament Committee she couldn’t play – though at least one International Umpire, Chris Lehman, had read in the ITTF’s October, 2001 Bulletin #276 that this Baltimore Team tournament was listed on the ITTF Calendar, and that Wang had been suspended from “all international competitions.” (Apparently, only because such an announcement had not been published previously had she been allowed to play in the Open at Fort Lauderdale.) But even as Chris had unsuccessfully sought guidance beforehand as to Wang’s eligibility at these Team’s, her entry had been accepted, and she and her teammates had traveled to Baltimore on the assumption, or at least on the hope, that she could play. So, yes, o.k....No, no, wait her; she can’t continue to play – this is an International Open (perhaps every U.S. tournament is these days?)....But then, though stopped, she did play, one more tie – for Manhattan...in the tradi-

Chinese 1997 World-winning Women’s Team. that the spectators most wanted to advance to the quarters. as even with their default loss to the Canadians they could (though in an unfavorable position in the draw).

But apparently no one in authority had told Wang or the Tournament and Dejan Papic didn’t think it necessary to make sure their players knew how did it happen that, for a couple of hours, formalities were more suspended than Wang was?...

Fan identification that’s often so noticeably missing in a reserved-seat tournament like the World Championships permitted the North American spectators to enjoy following, among other teams, the fighting spirit of the Canadian Men. Their names too suggested quite a worldly mix – Peter-Paul, Csaba, Therrien, Kassam. The second night of the tournament, a climactic pretend tie, worth the winning, was arranged that was as real as any actually recorded here in Baltimore – a Saturday night final as it were...agreed to by the Canadian Internationals, the very team, I’d heard, that, in being scheduled to play Manhattan in the last and deciding tie in Group 1-C this evening, had objected to Wang’s earlier participation in the event. It was this protest that had precipitated Wang’s belated expulsion by the Referee and Manhattan’s reactively refusal to advance to the quarters, as even with their default loss to the Canadians they could (though in an unfavorable position in the draw).

All of which was such a disappointment to players and spectators that it precipitated, in the interests of good sportsmanship, a pretend tie to take the place of the scheduled one – this unofficial tie having been sanctioned by, or, oh, alright, wisely permitted by Tournament Director Richard Lee...with nary an umpire. Someone told me that Canadian Coaches Christian Foisy and Dejan Papic didn’t think it necessary to make sure their players knew the tie wouldn’t count – better for the spectators, better for the players that they tried as hard as they could. Result: Canada 5-Manhattan 3.

Wang – “Why does China want to control me? They didn’t care about me before. But, alright, I fight on the table, I don’t want to fight off” – opened by losing to youthful, Hungarian-trained Bence Csaba. But then

Team: David Zhuang, Barney J. Reed, Mark Hazinski and Ashu Jain. (The USA Women’s Team was not available for this tournament.)

The USA Cadet (Under 14) Teams, sponsored by USATT and Stiga. Boys’ Team: Yao Xu, Jimmy Viet and John Leach. Girls’ Team: Laura Xiao, Atta Fong and Judy Hugh. Also sponsored by USATT and Stiga were the USA Junior (Under 18) Boys’ Team: Han Xiao, Adam Hugh and Misha Kazentsev; USA Junior Girls’ Team: Whitney Ping, Katherine Wu and Elaine Kwok; and the USA Men’s Team: David Zhuang, Barney J. Reed, Mark Hazinski and Ashu Jain. (The USA Women’s Team was not available for this tournament.)
digital cameras at the ready, are they?—she scored in a photo-finish over Pradeeban Peter-Paul. Wang's teammate the 29-year-old Oyebode who started playing 17 years ago in Ibadan, Nigeria and now represents the Sardinian CUS Cagliari Club, after losing to Therrien and Csaba, put forth a valiant, crowd-spurred effort against Peter-Paul, but fell 11-9 in the 5th. And Musa, though he had good wins over "Pradee" and Therrien, couldn't sweep—was stopped by Csaba in the 8th and final match.

This Canadian-Manhattan tie, seen in the mirror of the audience, was perfectly legal...or perfectly illegal—did it matter? Until Sunday afternoon, it was the most watched tie of the tournament. People yelled, applauded—felt they were part of a sporting event. "Shut up!" someone caught up in the action yelled to Alan Williams as he persisted in announcing over the mike the drawn positions for Sunday's quarterfinals.

The U.S. Men won Division D, but dropped matches to (1) the Christian Lilleroos-coached runner-up TX Wesleyan University team, winter of the Best Dressed Award. Christian was telling me an article's worth of information about how Dr. Hal Jeffcoat, President of the University, wants the school to have an international flavor and so has recruited Christian and is sponsoring players to bring higher education to China and table tennis to the U.S. Under 18 Junior Champion Mark Hazinski got 11-8 in the 4th to Wesleyan's Raman Cretu, who lost 15-13 in the 5th to Ashu Jain, who lost 11-9 in the 4th to Jasna Reed—"Razvan's a very dangerous player," said Ashu (who was down 9-6 in the 5th): "If I can't keep him from attacking, I've had it—but that's O.K., I need to be under pressure to focus well.

The U.S. also dropped matches to (2) the Canadian Torapotapome team. (Question: "What kind of name is that?" Answer: "The translation is, 'You Won't Have Your Apple.'" Questioner's first thought: You won't have what you want—the apple of your eye—won't beat this team? Questioner's second thought, just the reverse, "You'll beat this team—won't get the apple—won't choke?...Question: "Has the name any symbolic or extra-terrestrial significance?" Answer: "No, we just thought it would be difficult for the Americans to pronounce"). And (3) to the Matrix team, which avoided coming last in the round robin by downing Puerto Rico, 5-4.

The Victor Fimental-coached Puerto Ricans, runner-up in the 2001 Caribbean Team Championships and a strong threat to win the next one since they'll be held in Puerto Rico, were at the center of the action. First, in the Preliminaries when Barry Dattel and his wife, Thursday's Handbat Champion Lily Yip, of the New Jersey team could only bring in a win apiece against them, Then, in this round-robin when, for two reasons, Matrix got by them 5-4. One, because Virginia Sung knocked off their whole team—18-year-old Abner Colon, 2554-rated Juan Revelles (who'd been down 10-9 in the 5th to Lily and was saved by a net), and, climactically, in the 9th match, after being behind two games to none and at 10-all in the 4th, Luis Ruiz. And, two, because Sung's teammate, former Puerto Rican International David Fernandez, who earlier had beaten both Mark Hazinski and Ashu Jain of the U.S. Team, stopped Colon in 4 and Ruiz 11-9 in the 5th—"Out of retirement—the David of old!" he proclaimed with at least a touch of irony.)

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The Semifinal Fan Yi Yong Default...

USA's Barney Reed Jr. puts on his jacket...

Umpire Dick Evans & Referee Azmy Ibrahim examine Fan's racket...

Barney & USA Coach Dan Seemiller discuss the situation ...

and Dan's got the rulebook!...

Azmy and Dan discuss the situation...

Barney and Zoltan Varga discuss the situation...

Seattle Juic Coach Lazslo Varga and Azmy discuss the situation ... but Lazslo's not going to win this argument.
Puerto Rico was also somewhat unlucky to lose to Tarpotapomme (David Ramdeen, Anson Bispham, and Guillaume Boutilier) — but maybe they did get the "apple" because, in a furious fight, the Puerto Ricans let slip away a 4-2 lead. Puerto Rico did get the "apple" because, in a furious fight, the U.S. #1 (28-29-rated) Fan (yeah, sure, it was ok with Fan), and this of course brought Saturday's 20-team still-in-contention-for-the-title round robins. This was a convenient phantom advance, for the two top finishing teams in the Group 6 Preliminaries had balked at taking their unfortunate place in the Championship Division. One wanted to play for prize money in a lesser Division, and the other felt it wouldn't be at all enjoyable to be so overmatched in the remaining two days of play. (So now who wanted the hassle of trying to pick fairly another team.)

Also, with Tournament Co-Director Alan Williams offering Mozart Sunday morning over the loudspeaker, Manhattan was in such good spirits that they decided not to withdraw and to play their quarter's tie — without Wang, and without any chance for prize money. Crossing out Musa en route, shooing the umpire away, they substituted the affable (1149-rated) Wartski to play against the U.S. #1 (28-29-rated) Fan (yeah, sure, it was ok with Fan), and this of course brought tables, far as the eye could see, on which men competed mostly against men, but also against women. Over 700 entries fought it out in Divisions that harbored the entire range of players - from beginners to professionals. Only the Championship Division was, in a manner of speaking, given the red carpet treatment and differentiated from the many rows of clustered, unbarred tables by a section of barriered-off courts.

Questions had been raised not only by me but by a number of players as to whether this gigantic hybrid tournament should really be considered an International event and so subject to strict ITTF rules. There were, after all, accommodations some thought whimsically made, or not made, to players. Although the Mexican Fortune players, headed by recent Caribbean Champion Guillermo Munoz, didn't show for Friday's Preliminary Group 6 play, and in fact didn't come to the tournament at all, they were advanced into
North American Teams Results

Division 1 Final
Chicago Killerspin d. USATT Men 3-0
Kreanga d. Hazinski (6,6,7,1)
Karakevic d. Zhuang (5,11,10,7)
Grujic d. Reed (6,6,9,8)

Semifinals
Chicago Killerspin d. Canadian Men 3-0
Kreanga d. Peter-Paul (6,6,2,2)
Grujic d. Csaba (9,9,4,5)
Karakevic d. Kassam (7,3,1,6)

USATT Men d. Seattle Juic 3-2
Reed d. Varga (-5,6,-3,17,9,-6,8)
Fan d. Zhuang (6,2,6,11)
Turbok d. Hazinski (-9,12,8,1,-9,9)
Zhuang d. Varga (10,7,8,7)
Reed d. Fan (-4,-2,-10, default)

Quarterfinals
Seattle Juic vs. Manhattan 5-0
Turbok d. Peluchova (7,3,2)
Varga d. Oyebode (10,2,11)
Fan d. Wartski (2,4,3)
Turbok d. Oyebode (-8,9,9,-8,7)
Fan d. Peluchova (7,5,6)

USATT Men d. Eastern Stars 5-1
Ekun d. Hazinski (5,7,7)
Zhuang d. Lonergan (6,7,5)
Reed d. Pace (7,10,-7,7)
Zhuang d. Ekun (9,3,6)
Real d. Pace (7,11,4)
Reed d. Lonergan (9,-1,-10,7,9)

Chicago Killerspin d.
TX Wesleyan University 5-0
Kreanga d. Levi (2,8,7)
Grujic d. Cretu (6,10,6)
Karakevic d. Reed (8,9,5)
Kreanga d. Cretu (7,4,2)
Karakevic d. Levi (5,2,6)

Canadian Men d. MI III 5-0
Therrien d. Leibovitz (8,11,4)
Csaba d. pandit (9,8,8)
Peter-Paul d. David (10,7,11)
Csaba d. Leibovitz (8,9,2)
Therrien d. David (7,10,2)

Division 2: The Big Apple d. NJ I
Division 3: Mid-America d. Miami Pirates
Division 4: New York TTC #3 d. K.H.T.
Division 5: Calgary Hot Wings d. The Cosmos
Division 6: Here to Serve d. Windy City
Division 7: Akwarium d. Stylish Whiff
Division 8: The Richmond Guys d. Howard University
Division 9: NJ II d. Deuce Forever
Division 10: N.P. Veterans d. Newark One

forth a spirited exchange – fun for the supportive, bantering spectators (“I got butterflies,” says Jerry coming off court. “Don’t be upset,” says a bystander – “it’s not a bad loss.”)

As for the conditions at this International Open – what one fellow continued to insist was “a non-existent event for the ITTF” – weren’t they suspect? Consider the concrete floor, the questionable lighting, the fact that only some Championship Division tables were umpired, and that the world-class players’ matches on them didn’t count toward rankings. Consider, too, the occasional mid-competition change in team rosters (Michael Henry moved from the Guyana North team to join the eventual Big Apple B Division winners, Steve Berger and Cameron Scott, who’d been limping along, thus trying to fend off the opposition when three of those supposed teammates didn’t show). These were all arguments mustered for a free-spirited throwaway of ITTF restrictions

The Sunday stage, then, had been set. A drum! A drum!

Well, maybe no drumbeats for the quarters. Wartski and his team didn’t win of course – but Oyebode forced the Hungarian Turbok into five.

The U.S. advanced to meet the Hungarians in the semi’s, but not without challenges from the Eastern Stars. If Hazinski, who’d dyed his hair blond and had been razed by his South Bend mates into shaving off the beginning of what might have been a mature-looking goatee, perhaps he might also have been chided here by some U.S. supporters, if U.S. supporters ever did chide their own, at his 5, 7, 7 start-up loss to Bass Ekun. But against Zhuang, Lonergan (6, 7, 5) might as well have been playing against the World #18 again (“Karakevic had trouble with some of my serves for a while, but...”). Tie: 1-1.

For the Danny Seemiller-coached U.S. team it’s Barney Reed, David Zhuang, and Mark Hazinski (in that playing order) and for the Laszlo Varga-coached Defending Seattle Juic team it’s Zoltan Varga, Fan Yi Yong, and Attila Turbok (in that order). The U.S., being assured of $1,200 for none.

Now it’s the semi’s – prepare for the change. Tie matches are best 3 out of 5, each match best 4 out of 7 games. A makeshift arena has been formed of two adjacent courts – one for the Killerspins-Canadian tie, one for the U.S.-Seattle Juic tie. Spectators crowd around – some packed into the two small bleachers provided, others having brought up chairs near the court, or standing, shifting their weight and perhaps their preference for one player over another as well.

Better go with the Killers first – that won’t take long: 6, 6, 2, 2, 9, 4, 5, 7, 3, 1, 6. Not much of interest there – outside of awe for low, tracer-like catapulting shots that carom off this or that pin-pointed section of the table-top. Indeed, the final will turn out, won’t be any better contested – again, the Killerspins won’t give up a single game, they’re just too good. So in retrospect one’s hope for something more dramatic has to take place on the remaining semi’s stage – what, given the Canadians’ quick exit, will soon become the sole court of play.

For the Danny Seemiller-coached U.S. team it’s Barney Reed, David Zhuang, and Mark Hazinski (in that playing order) and for the Laszlo Varga-coached Defending Seattle Juic team it’s Zoltan Varga, Fan Yi Yong, and Attila Turbok (in that order). The U.S., being assured of $1,200 for none.
encouraging start for the U.S. was highlighted both by Barney's 19-17 4th-game victory to even the match, and his hands-up triumphant thrust to the heavens at 11-9 in the 5th to...uh, Barney, your semi's match is best 4 out of 7. In this 5th game, Barney's 9-4, 10-7 lead had almost gone for naught after a sensational backhand by Varga but had then been preserved with the help of a judicial Time Out from Coach Seemiller. The final 11-8 7th game Barney also earned — and, aw shucks, earned a kiss from his mother as well. I myself have never seen Barney, bless him, play a better match. His “mind,” as one fellow put it, “was really into the game,” and Barney himself felt he’d sharpened his focus by recent practice with Atanda Musa and Eric Bogdan.

Against Fan, however, David just couldn’t get oriented — he’d either laugh and shake his head to try and avoid embarrassment at his uncharacteristically poor showing, or look bemused or puzzled by some of his and Fan’s shots. When in the 4th and final game he did challenge, he served into the net both at 8-6 and at 11-all and his opportunity to rally — rally his psyche — was lost.

Hazinski had his chances against Turbok. He won the 1st 11-9, then was at deuce in the 2nd, but couldn’t maintain the impetus. By the time Turbok, on his way to victory in the 6th, had built up a 3-1 lead, Seemiller had repeatedly protested the Hungarian’s throw-back serves to the umpires, but in vain. After Hazinski had taken the 5th game and was batting in the 6th, Danny was still iritated that the umpires weren’t stopping what he called the “cyber-momentum” of Turbok’s serves (Attila wasn’t contacting the ball as it came straight down, but, taking the racket back, was swinging around into the ball). “We could win this match — could win this tie,” Danny had said, his voice breaking, “if the umpires would just warn the players about their serves. Every year it’s the same problem — how hard can it be to warn them? But it never happens. Do it just once, and they’d stop.”

Zhuang and Varga both needed to recover from their earlier losses, but after David won the 12-10 1st game, both father/coach and son/player began to feel victimized. “David no fair play” said the father after a questionable point, and young Varga finished the 4-0 match by deliberately smacking his serve against the board. “He’s got a bubble on his racket.” And, so saying, he went off to a hard to explain, Danny says.

“Do you want to get him lynched?” replies Alan.

So members of the U.S. Group are in accord that Fan, having left the court, trying to re-gue the same racket he’s been playing with, is technically “toast.”

The 2001-2002 version of the Rule does give one pause though. It’s not been immediately clear to the umpires, who were trying to put a finger on the problem, that the racket has been “damaged so badly” that it’s unplayable. Perhaps other umpires would not have ruled so (and perhaps even these umpires, had they known the brouhaha that was to follow, would have thought that, considering there was the possibility of only a minute or two’s play left in the tie, the racket might be deemed at least momentarily playabe).

Rule “2.4.7: Slight deviations from continuity of surface or uniformity of color due to accidental damage or wear may be allowed provided that they do not significantly change the characteristics of the surface.”

One tries to recreate what’s just happened there on court. Did the Referee ask, as he says he did — what, with his years of experience, one would think would be the first question out of his mouth — if Fan had a substitute racket? It’s hard to believe that Fan, if this question were asked, didn’t understand it, or, with his years of experience, didn’t even anticipate it — though he was upset. His answer, as both he and Azmy agree, was No, he didn’t have a substitute racket. (Perhaps Fan was under the misleading impression that a player had to have an identical racket — a thought that was being bandied about by people who might have been misinformed by an erroneous passage in a past article or two by Ibrahim in the USATT magazine.)

No had to be the answer, for if Fan’s answer to this question was “Yes, I do have a back-up racket,” the Referee surely wouldn’t have made the mistake of taking him out of the court.

Later, not someone named Henry James but an anonymous “Golden Bowl” writer, addressing an e-mail message to the USATT in general entitled “U guys suck,” had right when he (she) said that the officials should have made sure Fan understood his options. As it was, Alan Williams at the mike was initially told that an official Time Out had been called for Fan to repair his equipment.

Was taking Fan out in itself illegal? Rule 3.3.1.2.7 says that the Referee shall be responsible for “deciding whether players may leave the playing area during a match” [which by inference suggests that a player can’t leave the playing area without permission of the Referee]. But of course in this case the Referee can’t say, “Well, I accompanied this player to make sure he got another racket for all agree Fan didn’t get another racket.

Actually the Referee would later say, quite shockingly, to the effect that it was customary in international tournaments to give players a chance to correct a problem — that he’d “extended a courtesy to him [Fan] to change that sheet of rubber ONLY” — which, from some people’s point of view, may have been o.k. But from one of the professionals on the Killerspin team it obviously wasn’t o.k., for he said that even if he were told by an official that he could leave the court, he wouldn’t. Clearly it was against the Rules.
When Fan came back and intended to play with a freshly glued racket, well, understandably, that wasn’t gonna be the least bit o.k. with his U.S. opponents. Some or all of them may have felt a little guilty about it, but they wanted a default – and got it. The message conveyed by the umpire to Alan Williams at the mike was that Fan was defaulted for “improper procedure in repairing his equipment.” Of course this reason, this wording, was ill-chosen, for there was no proper procedure for repairing his racket – he had to have another one. And if ignorance of the law is no excuse, one would have to censure both Fan and Azmy.

This, however, was surely only part of the reason for the default, for on being told he could not begin to play with that re-covered racket Fan went to his bag that had remained in the court from the beginning and, with the Referee and Dattel standing there asking, What gives?, the younger Varga hurled a can of soda into another court, said o.k., he’d play with this racket from his bag, one that had earlier been given him by his teammate Varga and that he didn’t really want to play with. Perhaps he could thus say, in defense of what Azmy considered an outright lie, “He didn’t have an extra racket – that one in the bag wasn’t technically his. But with Seemiller standing there asking, What gives?, the Referee, perhaps somewhat confused and intimidated, and not knowing what else to do but that he had to act (when consultation might have been helpful) took a hard-line position.

He would later explain he was disgusted with Fan: “[He] deliberately delayed the game for no reason, because he has another racket all this time, he was not concerned about the feeling of his opponent, the umpires, the audience, the tournament, or the sport. He did not leave me any other alternative but to disqualify him.”

Really?

Because-oh, wow! – it was clear from the audience reaction that ITTF or no ITTF tournament, formal Rules or no formal Rules, an alternative should have been found. The letter of the law might have been served, but, boy, the spirit of the law sure wasn’t – not from the deafening roar that went up. For – I’ve never seen anything like it – on hearing of Fan’s disqualification and the U.S.-urged win, there was a spontaneous eruption of “BOOOOO! BOOOOO! CHEATERS!”

“I used to have fun playing ping-pong. I didn’t think it was this intense.”

CHEATERS! BOOOO! BOOOO! BOOOO!”

A U.S. audience was railing against the U.S. Team and its supporters – something unheard of, an historical oddity, one that swept not honor but a wave of shame over the “winners.”

The younger Varga hurled a can of soda blowerswards, and the chunky Hungarian Turbok picked up a barrier and threw it into another court, then stalked off, giving the finger to the U.S. bench. “BOOOOO! BOOOO! BOOOO!”

You thought it would never stop. Fan, opportunistically, grabbed the mike from Williams, swore he’d be silenced and stated, “I never, never come here again.” The crowd applauded his independence, his heroism.

Danny Seemiller tried to address the crowd, tried to say how unfortunate the situation was – but...BOOOO! BOOOO! LOSER! LOSER! LOSER! LOSER! BOO! BOO! BOO!... they wouldn’t let him speak.

“You have to get the Referee up here to explain,” Danny says. “You want to get him lynched?” replies Alan. The Referee, however, knows what’s good for him – he’s already left the building. President Pittman – who’ll later write a letter of apology to the Hungarian Association – takes some of the brunt. Alan tries to restore calm, “Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not Jerry Springer... but gives it up – plays music from the movie “The Natural.”

There’s a happy ending to light up the final scoreboard?

Player-spectators, contrary to what some have predicted, do not leave as the final comes on. Perhaps some stay only to BOOOO! BOOOO! BOOOO! the badly beaten U.S. Team – though Karakasevic did add some levity when, hands down there at the table he exaggeratedly pressed his weight onto his newly glued racket. That drew bubbling laughter.

It’s been necessary (Cheer up, Richard, your tournament’s still every bit worth enjoying) for the dejected Tournament President to call in Special Police...just in case the spectators might get wildly out of hand – maybe it’s the soda can thrown like a baseball that convinced him.

Says the uniformed Security Guard still on the alert next to me, “I used to have fun playing ping-pong. I didn’t think it was this intense.”
It Is Not Over Until It Is Over
By Dr. Azmy

Many individuals watch the control desk and see some umpires and a Referee sitting there. In some tournaments their job is overwhelming. However, it is not noticeable, especially when the number of umpires is not sufficient enough.

In Baltimore it was a demanding job, which caused many times a running squad from table #1 to table #122. Other umpires functioned as a walking patrol to cover the whole arena all the time. They performed on demand, which made their job rather difficult. An umpire will arrive at a table where there is a problem. The problem actually happened before he/she arrived, and now he has to apply the wisdom of Solomon to solve it.

Added to that is the constant criticism by some individuals, who may not be informed of the rules, or others who notice only the mistakes of the players of the opposing team but close their eyes to the faults which their own team players are doing.

And then, the Referee and/or the Deputy Referee is sitting there in control of the whole tournament. He is the only one who has a final say for applying the rules and its interpretations with some discretion. He is continuously absorbed by the ability to keep the tournament running, while applying the rules, assigning the umpires, defaulting the matches, disqualifying players, maintaining the harmony, objectivity, and doing what seems to be in the best interest of the players, the umpires, the tournament and the sport.

One can say that the NA Team Tournament ran very successfully, with the exception of a few glitches. It was a well-organized tournament in a large venue with a sufficient number of tables. The credits have to go to a team of young dedicated experts, under the leadership of Richard Lee and Fong Hsu, and the rest of their crew.

Our first difficulty erupted two weeks before the tournament. The ITTF Bulletin published the suspension of a Chinese player who resides now in the USA. The suspension stated that she cannot play in International tournaments till July 2002. Defining what constitutes an International tournament became an issue. The rule states that a tournament with players from another association is considered an international tournament. Margaret Smith, Operation Director, contacted Colin Cemmott, Chairman ITTF Rules Committee, asking him what to do. He confirmed the rule and advised to adhere to the suspension. However, he suggested that we could contact China, and try to get a release from them.

Sheri Pittman, President of USATT, took upon herself to pursue the contact with China, which she had done previously at the U.S. Open. Unfortunately, her commendable effort was not successful this time. When Sheri arrived at the tournament she gave us the news and informed the player’s team. Surprisingly, the team decided to go ahead with the match of the suspended player. As a Referee, I had to go to the table and stop the match. The team decided to withdraw, but asked for permission to continue to play a friendly match. Their request was granted and a beautiful exhibition match was played, to the delight of the audience till the end of the night.

Our second problem occurred when a returning prominent player was playing his match.

An umpire was requested. A well-qualified, experienced, efficient, gentle-mannered, sensitive and objective umpire took over. When the umpire performed her duties to apply the new rules, i.e. leaving the racket at the table between games, and toweling once every six points, etc., the player became livid and insulted the umpire. Luckily he left the venue and went home.

The third problem, which by now is known to many people, happened in the fourth game of the semifinals. A player’s racket developed a bubble, which made it inappropriate for play. I asked him to replace it with another racket. He stated that he had no other racket. Some individuals were screaming for him to be disqualified. Customarily, in international tournaments, even the world tournament, when such incident takes place, the player will be given a chance to correct the problem. Players were allowed to go and buy a new sheet of the rubber and put it on, buy a new shirt, and even new shorts, etc. I extended that courtesy to the player, for the sake of the tournament, and accompanied him personally so he could replace that bubbled sheet of the rubber ONLY. During our walk, and during his replacement of the rubber, I kept asking him again and again if he had another racket. I explained to him that he had to have two rackets by the side of the table. He kept repeating time after time that he had no other racket. When we came back several people were shouting that he cannot reglue his racket during the match. Before I had a chance to explain to them what I allowed him to do, replacement of one sheet only, and the reason why I allowed it; the player opened his bag, with another racket in it, and told them that he will play with the other racket which he did not glue. At that time it was very clear that the player had been giving us false information all the time, he deliberately delayed the game for no reason, because he had another racket all this time, he did not consider the impact of his act on his opponent, the audience, the umpires, the tournament, or the sport. He did not leave me any alternative but to disqualify him. Many arguments have been raised about issues of identical racket, and regluing, which have nothing to do with the situation.

As referees and umpires we bend backward for the sake of the players, the tournament, and the sport. But we have to perform objectively and firmly when we have to, regardless of the player’s name or character.

Fan Yi Yong’s Statement Regarding His Default
Care of Erik Butterworth
I played Barney Reed in the final deciding match between my team and the U.S. national team. There were two umpires for the match. One of them inspected and approved my paddle before the match. I won the first three games in a best-of-seven tie. At 8-8 in the fourth game, Barney complained about a ½-inch bubble in my paddle rubber that had been caused by the force of several strong strokes during the match. The bubble was really not significant, and even if it was, it would give no disadvantage to Barney, only to me because the ball might sail away if it hit the bubble. I told Barney he should work on improving his game and not worry about these sorts of things. However, Barney insisted and the paddle was examined by the two umpires. Azmy, the head referee, was eventually called and declared the paddle illegal due to the bubble.

I asked Azmy what I could do to continue the match. Could I fix the rubber or use another paddle? I didn’t have a second paddle in my bag, but I could perhaps borrow one. Azmy asked me several times if I had a second paddle, and I said no each time. Azmy then said I could fix the paddle, and I did. I took out the bubble, and the paddle was approved. I then played the last few points, and the match ended.

Azmy and I walked back to the court. Danny Seemiller (the U.S. team coach) and Sheri Pittman (the USATT president) were talking at courtside and Sheri was holding an official rule book. Danny loudly complained to me and to Azmy that I could not reglue during a match and must use another paddle. I went back to the table to resume the match. Danny continued talking loudly and agitatedly to Azmy for several minutes.

After this Azmy came to me and again asked me several times if I had a second paddle. I asked him why he was asking me this, since I had just reglued the paddle at his direction and was ready to play. He said he could not use my reglued paddle. I suspected Danny had cowed me into changing his ruling, and I felt Azmy should stand by his original ruling. Azmy again asked if I had a second paddle. I again said no. My teammate Varga, who was nearby watching this whole affair, came to the table and, in full view of Azmy, offered me his paddle as a replacement. Varga’s paddle was a Stiga blade with Bryce rubber, both of which were very different from the Juic products I use. I informed Azmy of this and put the paddle in my bag. Azmy then said that I lost the match. He later claimed that I lied about having a second paddle. It is difficult for me to see how he could honestly claim this because he was there when Varga offered me his paddle and saw how different it was.

This was quite distressing to me personally because of the unfairness of the result and the loss of prize money and ratings points. I was also distressed to see a U.S. team member and a U.S. coach spending so much effort talking themselves into an unfair win and to see a referee who was evidently buckling under their pressure. The audience certainly knew unfairness when they saw it, and let the U.S. team know.

I’d also like to apologize to my teammates throwing a barrier and a soda can. They were understandably upset, but that is no excuse for throwing things.
Democratic process in a non-school setting

By Jerry Mintz

Teaching table tennis has always been intertwined with my educational philosophy. Because I knew the sport so well, and because it is perceived by students to be 'non-academic,' I love to demonstrate to them that they can be such good learners in something that doesn't set off their phobias and traumas, inflicted by traditional education.

I've been playing table tennis since I was a kid and I love the sport. Along the way I had a couple of big breaks in learning the game. One was when the New York State junior champion was a student at Goddard College when I was there. I got to play and practice with him. At first he killed me. I'd get only a few points. One day I finally beat him. The next day he withdrew from the college. I always wondered if it was a coincidence.

Another break was when I was running my school in Vermont. Lim Ming Chui, former number one player in Hong Kong decided to move to Vermont, because it was between Montreal, Boston and New York, where he played in tournaments. He decided to have a big tournament to see who the best players were in Vermont, with a $500 first prize. Hundreds of people came out of the woodwork, paying a $10 entry fee. Of course Lim won the tournament, but he used the money to start a league at his house, so a few others and I got to play there regularly. I consider him to be the best teacher in the country. Among other things, his son became a member of the Pan Am team and his daughter became the NCAA champion. Because I learned with Lim it has subsequently helped me in teaching the sport. While I was in Vermont I taught three different students who became Vermont junior champions.

I've taught table tennis at educational workshops all around the country and around the world (England, Russia, France, Ukraine, Canada, Japan, Israel, Denmark, Japan). Here, close to where I live on Long Island, in New York, I discovered a Boys and Girls Club. I liked the club because it had a good cross-section of children from different cultures. It is near Glen Cove, in Locust Valley, called the Grenville Baker Boys and Girls Club. It just celebrated its 50th anniversary.

I started volunteering at the club about ten years ago. Most of the kids there only know me as "Jerry, the ping pong guy." I never had any set hours through those years. I just came in when I found that I had an extra hour or two to volunteer. When I came in the boys and girls would come over and ask me to teach them. Through that time I was mostly working with teenagers. Some of them became fairly good but usually after a few years they drifted away from the club. Occasionally I would hear from them years later. For example, earlier this year a young man stopped me in the parking lot of the Farmers Market where I like to shop for organic food, just down the road from the club. He asked me if I remembered that I had not only taught him ping-pong, but had taught him the Morse code. He then went on to get his amateur radio license and is now working in a complex field of physics and electronics at Stonybrook University.

Recently, when I was shopping at the Farmer's Market a young stock worker came over and said, "Aren't you Jerry? Do you remember me?" I thought I did remember him, and when he told me his name that was confirmed. The last time I had seen him, a few years ago, he was a very disturbed boy who came from a very abusive family and was going to a special school. He was often thrown out of the Boys and Girls Club, and may have been thrown out for good at some point. He told me he had been in and out of trouble since that time, and had eventually wound up at the youth detention center. He told me with some pride that he discovered to his shock that he was the best table tennis player at the detention center. It seems to have been a pivotal event for him. He subsequently found that he was the best at another school he attended. He said he is now at an alternative school, which he likes. He is a senior and hopes to graduate this year. He wanted to know which days I would be volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club so he could in and show me how much he's improved. This boy gave me (and everyone else) a very hard time when I had worked with him at the Club. Little did I expect that my teaching him table tennis could help turn his life around. I didn't think anything got through to him.

I also helped a boy of twelve whose family had just emigrated from Venezuela. This boy had a lot of problems, including a stutter, and very low self-confidence. Within a year after I began teaching him he became the best player at the Club. He then became good at other sports and a good student in school. The confidence he got at table tennis carried over to the rest of his life.

The last three years saw two youth directors come and go. I didn't get much support or respect from them and I thought about not volunteering any more. But this year a dynamic young woman, Jenny Wright, arrived from Colorado as the new youth director. At first she couldn't understand why the children at this club played better table tennis than any other club they'd seen, and she wanted to find out why. When I first came in this spring and told her I taught table tennis, she started to introduce me to a boy who she thought was the best player. As soon as the boy saw me he said, "Why, that's Jerry! He taught me to play!"

From that time on she has given me tremendous support. In a departure from previous years, there was a lot of interest from the younger students at the club, so I started working with them on a regular basis. They generally range from seven years old to 11, with many of them about ten.

Suddenly the whole thing just mushroomed and I found I needed to make a schedule, going in twice a week, to accommodate all the interest. Earlier in the year I had encouraged a staff member there to start a table tennis ladder, but it had been trashed within a week. Every time I went in I was besieged by at least a dozen children, each wanting to be given an individual lesson— which I would try to do in a total of two or three hours.

I decided to try a different approach by establishing a new ping pong club, which would be run democratically. The first one was scheduled on a Wednesday at 5 PM and we now meet every week at that time. The first meeting was quite chaotic. The children acted like they were in an out-of-control public classroom. But we managed to go through the proposed rules of the ladder, deciding which ones we wanted, and we elected a Supervisor of the ladder, a ten-year-old, with a seven-year-old assistant.

These were the first ladder rules passed by the meeting:

1. Only the elected Ladder Supervisor can change and update the ladder, and if not available, Club staff members. If they are not available, the Assistant Ladder Supervisor can change the ladder. If anyone changes the order who is not allowed to do so, they lose their place on the ladder.

2. All challenge games are to 21.

3. Someone not on the list may challenge anyone on the list. If they win, they move into that place and the loser goes just below. If they lose they go to the bottom.

4. Anyone on the list must accept one challenge a day if they are at the Club. To stay on the ladder each person must accept at least one challenge a week.

5. When you are on the list you may officially challenge only people up to three places higher on the list, however someone may accept a challenge from a player ranked lower if they wish.

6. A player may request the Supervisor or volunteer to referee the game.
At subsequent meetings the students became more and more serious as they came to realize that they were, indeed, making the decisions for the group. They amended the ladder rules, gave the supervisor a vote of confidence, agreed to have a match against another Boys Club in New Jersey which had challenged us, and decided on the design of club t-shirts which Jenny then ordered. All questions are now seriously discussed, with enthusiastic votes. They even voted down my proposal that older students in the teen room upstairs able be able to challenge on their ladder. They said they might reconsider it in the future, but for now suggested that the teens set up their own ladder, and furthermore, they challenged the teens to a match.

The challenge ladder grew like crazy and now has 55 students on it. The top half dozen are fairly equal and the places keep changing. They are all improving very rapidly. This is very much an “in the zone” situation, for those familiar with that concept, not too easy and not too difficult, but the perfect situation to keep rising to the challenge. The three months into the process the director introduced me to a consultant who had been brought in to do a leadership training session with the staff. He came down from Schenectady, where he supervises four clubs. He was startled by the challenge ladder, not simply because of the number of children on it. What amazed him was that this bunch of fragile pieces of paper was being totally respected by the students. He said, “If this were at any of my clubs it would have to be under Plexiglas or something.”

I explained to him that what was protecting that board was the democratic process. The students had voted on every aspect of what the challenge procedure was going to be and had even voted on what the consequence would be if someone moved the names around without the authorization of the manager who they had elected. One student had done that — once. He was taken off the list and had to challenge from scratch. That was it.

I knew what the consultant was talking about, because that had happened here earlier in the year, absent the democratic process. But I hadn’t seen it in such stark terms until he mentioned the Plexiglas. You could almost see and feel the physical results of the democratic process with these kids. They probably hadn’t had anything else in their previous lives in which they had such control and respect.

After only five months of coaching this group there was a nationally sanctioned table tennis tournament at the Spintech Club in Plainview. At my suggestion, some of the parents brought their children to the tournament. A group from a club in Newark, New Jersey brought a group there also. One of my students, a ten-year-old boy whose family had emigrated from Peru, won the 12-and-under event. But there are many others at the club with about equal ability. A ten-year-old Jewish boy came in third in the competition, but currently heads the ladder. One thing I love is how all of the kids are willing to help anyone out by teaching them what they know, even their younger siblings! I like to think that is partly because I teach in such a way that the students understand the concepts behind the instructions. (For example, after being away from Summerhill for a few years I was surprised to find two very good players there whom I had never met, but who played with my style. It turned out they were taught by students I had coached on my visit several years earlier!)

We generally have our meetings on Wednesdays. One week a seven-year-old reminded me that we needed to have a meeting. After having had many of these meetings, the students came to realize that at least in this one area of their lives, they were really making the decisions. Their attitude about the meetings has changed dramatically from that first one.

But one Wednesday meeting really floored me. The members had decided that three months was long enough for the term of Supervisor, and that they should have another election. The previously elected Supervisor chaired that meeting, and they subsequently elected a new one, another 10-year-old, with the former Supervisor becoming the assistant. But a week later the issue had arisen that the new Supervisor had allowed his cousin to beat him, in order to help him move up the ladder, and then had beaten him to regain first place. They questioned whether this was ethical. There was an intense discussion about this, starting in a separate room. When we had to vacate that room the meeting was forced to go in the main recreation area, with so much noise around us we had to shout to be heard. BUT NOBODY WOULD LEAVE THAT MEETING UNTIL THE ISSUE WAS DECIDED. I can’t remember being in a meeting under such difficult circumstances, again I was impressed by the intensity of their involvement in the democratic process. They decided that it would not be fair to make a decision that was retroactive, but they passed a rule that from then on the participants in such manipulation would be removed from the ladder if it were proved to be the case.

The Spinners Club, an adult table tennis club to which I belong, recently decided to institute a table tennis ladder after they heard about the success of ours. They asked for and used the decisions made by the six- to ten-year-olds in the Boys and Girls Club as the basis for their ladder, and asked me to introduce the concept. After a brief attempt by the owner to impose his ideas about the rules, everyone realized that the democratic approach was best, and that’s how we have continued. About 20 are on the ladder so far (with 58 now on the Boys and Girls Club ladder).

In June we had our first match, against a club in New Jersey (we won, 5 matches to 4). We had a practice in which teams of our own players were evenly created based on their position in the ladder. The victories tied, the final match came down to two lower-level players fighting it out with everyone else watching with seriousness, a nice lesson on the importance of every player. Then, in the doubles tournament, the top-ranked player was matched with the lowest, again for balance. The final went to three games and extra points and involved two middle-level partners playing the top player, ten years old, and his 7-year-old partner, who was just thrilled.

We had a meeting to decide how to select our team. A few kids thought I, as coach, should choose the team. Others thought there should be challenges. But the thought was presented that the 10-year-old supervisors knew more than I did about the relative standing of the players. Without much fanfare it was passed that the two supervisors would choose the team and put them in proper order, after which people could challenge for positions. This was overwhelmingly passed, after which there was very spirited challenging for the next two hours.

This is a democratic system that depends entirely on the students, all of whom are under 11! I’m only there a few hours a week. They are there six days a week, and the system is running smoothly. In April the Boys’ and Girls’ Club staff member in charge of the downstairs was gone for a month for back surgery, but the system continued to work without a hitch with the substitute staff. There are adult Boys and Girls’ Club staff members, but they had no involvement with the ping pong club. In a meeting this week more proposals and refinements were proposed and passed. One student questioned the authority of 10-year-old supervisors to resolve disputes.

The two 10-year-olds elected supervisors seemed hurt, and others in the meeting said they thought they were doing a fine job, and the questioner seemed satisfied. To me, the significance of this project lies in the fact that this has happened in a non-democratic school situation, run by students under 11 who have had no previous experience with democratic processes before this year.

Two of our Boys and Girls Club students, both ten, are now listed among the top 15 in the country for under 12 years old. Their names appeared in the most recent Table Tennis Magazine, much to their own shock and that of the other members of the club. By next year I wouldn’t be surprised if half of these kids had national rankings for their age level. In any event, I think it is giving them a lot of confidence in their lives. If nothing else, maybe some of them will catch up to me one of these days in the Farmers Market parking lot with some good life stories to tell.
MARYLAND CIRCUIT
Eldersburg, MD • October 13-14, 2001
Open: 1st John Wetzler; 2nd Jack Jacobs.
U1000: 1st Steve Hochman; 2nd Nick Wetzler.
U1100: 1st Tom Huff; 2nd Robert Carmack.
U1300: 1st Tom Huff; 2nd Mark Cohen.
U900/Novice: 1st Sudhanshu Luthra; 2nd Ayush Barra.
Over 40: 1st Dave DeMay; 2nd Peter Zambori.
Under 18: 1st Jesse Wasserman; 2nd Bradley Kelleen; 3rd Nathan Hall.
U3000 Doubles: 1st Steve Hochman/Gary McCone; 2nd Yvonne Konklage/Sujoy Deb.

ARKANSAS OPEN
Little Rock, Arkansas • October 6, 2001
Open: 1st Chian Lim; 2nd Samuel Smith.
Open Doubles: 1st Chian Lim/Allison Ellis; 2nd Donny Flowers/Andy Bloxom.
Women: 1st Allyson Ellis; 2nd Jen Lin.
Over 50: 1st Duke Stagner; 2nd David Collins.
Over 60: 1st Henry Compton; 2nd Earl Speights.
Under 18 Boys: 1st Shelby Lane; 2nd Calvin Zhou.
Under 18 Girls: 1st Mary Case; 2nd Tiffany Thompson.
Hardbat: 1st Duke Stagner; 2nd Hugh Lax.
Class A: 1st Bob Love; 2nd John Miller.
Class B: 1st Sheilley Lane; 2nd William Lewis.
Class C: 1st Earl Speights; 2nd Tommy Reed.
Class D: 1st John Falco; 2nd Norm Shirley.
U2150: 1st James Duan; 2nd Hung (Mike) Ho.
U1250: 1st Sri Ramaswamy; 2nd Jonathan Kittner.
U1500: 1st Steve Hochman; 2nd Sam Smith.

DAVISON SEPTEMBER OPEN
Davison, Michigan • September 29, 2001
Open: 1st Mike Veilette; 2nd Scott Exdord; 3rd Grantley Charles.
U2200: 1st Grantley Charles; 2nd Tesh Ilo.
U2000: 1st Ivan Popov; 2nd Sid Stewart.
U1900: 1st Clement Chan; 2nd Tom Shu.
U1850: 1st Nazim Nizari; 2nd Tom Shu.
U1750: 1st Nazim Nizari; 2nd Bob Bowlander.
U1650: 1st Nazim Nizari; 2nd Roman Zilberman.
U1550: 1st Gary Travis; 2nd Bob Bowlander.
U1450: 1st Joseph Helfand; 2nd Roman Zilberman.
U1350: 1st Mike Monahan; 2nd Jeff Tomsha.
U1250: 1st Mike Monahan; 2nd Chimang Almoule.
U1150: 1st Chimang Almoule; 2nd Mike Fecher.
U1000: 1st Chimang Almoule; 2nd Robert Koeheir.

POLOMOC OPEN • Potomac, Maryland • November 17-18, 2001
Under 2400 Champion Han Xiao loops to his coach, Cheng Yinghua, in the Open Semifinals. Cheng won, 4-2, and won the final over Sean Lonergan. Cheng also battled with Napoleon “Rocky” Reyes in the quarters, winning 4-3.
Open Singles – Final: Cheng Yinghua d. Sean Lonergan, 8,8,5,7; SF: Cheng d. Han Xiao, 5,-7,8,8,7; Lonergan d. Sean O’Neill, 4,7,4,5; QF: Cheng d. Napoleon Reyes, 6,-10,10,-10,8,7; Xiao d. Hiep Tran, 5,3,6,4; Lonergan d. Vijay Madhavan, 6,12,8,7,8; O’Neill d. Nazruddin Asgarali, 2,3,8,1.
U2400 – Final: Han Xiao d. Napoleon Reyes, 10,9,9,9; SF: Xiao d. Nazruddin Asgarali, 4,9,10; Reyes d. Rich Burnside, 8,8,9,6.

PENNSACOLA HOLIDAY OPEN
Pensacola, Florida • December 1, 2001
Open: 1st Brian Pace; 2nd Hyoung Gu.
Division A: 1st Jorge Zavala; 2nd Pat Listkečewicz; 3rd Tae Won Kim.
Division B: 1st Rafael Veluz; 2nd Hung (Mike) Ho.
Division C: 1st Al Leparulo; 2nd Jose Bocanegra.
Division D: 1st Herb Bennett; 2nd Mark Plyler.

WALT STEPHENS MEMORIAL OPEN
Austin, Texas • October 20, 2001
Open: 1st Mark Nordby; 2nd Spenser Lam; 3rd Abdon Angeles; 4th Thor Truelson.
Open Doubles: 1st Spenser Lam/Mark Nordby; 2nd Jason Miller/Thor Truelson; 3rd Tony Gutierrez/Ajmed Hejri; 4th Abdon Angeles/Jorge Vanegas.
U2250: 1st Thor Truelson; 2nd Spenser Lam; 3rd Jason Miller; 4th Joseph Yoon.
U1750: 1st Carlos Cheon; 2nd Drizza Abbasii.
U1500: 1st Kevin Lau; 2nd Jonathan Kittner.
U1250: 1st Art Woodward; 2nd Jonathan Kittner.

MARYLAND CIRCUIT
Eldersburg, MD • December 1-2, 2001
U1700: 1st Lee Sunner; 2nd Rick Martin.
U1500: 1st Chet Lord; 2nd Tom Huff.
U1300: 1st Tom Huff; 2nd Robert Carmack.
U1100: 1st Tom Huff; 2nd Mark Cohen.
U900/Novice: 1st Sudhanshu Luthra; 2nd Ayush Barra.
Over 40: 1st Mark Davis; 2nd Lee Sunner.
Under 18: 1st Jeremiah Tsang; 2nd Jesse Wasserman.
U3000 Doubles: 1st Yvonne Konklage/Sujoy Deb; 2nd Chet Lord/Henry Kostkowski.

FOX VALLEY OPEN
Aurora, Illinois • October 20, 2001
Open: 1st Mark Nordby; 2nd Sportenna Lam; 3rd Abdon Angeles; 4th Thor Truelson.
Open Doubles: 1st Spenser Lam/Mark Nordby; 2nd Jason Miller/Thor Truelson; 3rd Tony Gutierrez/Ajmed Hejri; 4th Abdon Angeles/Jorge Vanegas.
U2250: 1st Thor Truelson; 2nd Spenser Lam; 3rd Jason Miller; 4th Joseph Yoon.
U1750: 1st Carlos Cheon; 2nd Drizza Abbasii.
U1500: 1st Kevin Lau; 2nd Jonathan Kittner.
U1250: 1st Art Woodward; 2nd Jonathan Kittner.

AUSTIN OPEN
Austin, Texas • October 20, 2001
Division A: 1st Sam Smith; 2nd Tuan Tran; 3rd Howard Lamb.
Division B: 1st Cheng Hao; 2nd Yu Lei; 3rd John Muhich.
Division C: 1st James Wang; 2nd Jim Shope; 3rd Lisa Modlich.
Division D: 1st Greg Gordon; 2nd James Smith IV; 3rd Chad Naeger.
Division E: 1st Jimmy Batts; 2nd Winston Lin; 3rd Matt Darnell.
Division F: 1st Omar Rivera; 2nd Tere Carranza; 3rd Paul Robbins.

New York
Division A: 1st James Smith IV; 2nd John P. Smith; 3rd Joel Hellman.
Division B: 1st Chuck Glazer; 2nd Nabil Mourad; 3rd Ronald Smith.
Division C: 1st James Smith IV; 2nd Joel Hellman; 3rd Nabil Mourad.
Division D: 1st Chuck Glazer; 2nd Nabil Mourad; 3rd Ronald Smith.
Division E: 1st Jimmy Batts; 2nd Winston Lin; 3rd Matt Darnell.
Division F: 1st Omar Rivera; 2nd Tere Carranza; 3rd Paul Robbins.
COLORADO SPRINGS 16TH ANNUAL OPEN

The 17th Annual Colorado Springs Open was held the 20th and 21st of October at the Hillside Community Center in Colorado Springs. Francisco Mendez (2329) defended his Open Singles title against a stronger than expected field. The field included Samson Dubina (2224), who was visiting from Ohio in order to spend some time training with Laura and John Leach. Also visiting from outside the region was Parviz Mojarvian (2292), who was a key speaker at a Pharmaceutical conference in Denver.

Mendez and Dubina teamed up to win Open Doubles, but not before they were pushed to the fifth by Colorado Springs locals Derek Stanley and Tulio Wolford, who’d upset both the 2nd and 3rd seeded teams on their path to the final. Stanley’s chopping and Wolford’s well-placed blocks and attacks kept the favorites off-balance, until the top seeds gained control to win the 5th game 11-6.

While the top three Open Singles seeds waltzed their way to the semis, the fourth semifinalist was in doubt from the start. When the smoke cleared, 20th seeded Jiri Mracek (1746) had joined Mendez, Mojarvian and Dubina. Mracek defeated Kevin Young (1915), Carlos Barrientos (1794), and Akem Seriki (1863) on his way to the party. Dubina and Mendez faced off first (Dubina was in the top half based on a coin flip), with Mendez winning in straight games. Mojarvian dropped one game to Mracek, setting up the final. Mendez started out a bit shaky, but had clearly gained control by the 5th game, where his overpowering spin helped him take control. Mendez won, 7,8,8,11,7,7.

Big winners elsewhere in the tourney were Laura Leach, winner of the Women’s Singles and the U-1950 Singles. Carlos Barrientos, winner of the Over 40 Singles and the C Singles event, and Brian Taylor, winner of the D Singles and the Junior Regional Boy’s Singles. Congratulations also go to Rick Massoth of Albuquerque, the recipient of the Paul Cracraft Memorial Sportsmanship Award.

NEW ENGLAND OPEN

Windsor, Vermont • Oct. 13, 2001 • By Doug Haynes

Ernest Virgo defeated fifteen-year-old Wang Yin in an exciting seven-game final at the New England Championships in Windsor, Vermont, on Oct. 13. About forty fans, divided between supporters of Yin and of Virgo, applauded and cheered every point until the end, then gave Virgo a big hand as he accepted the winner’s trophy.

Yin was the defending champion but this year he faced an opponent rated 150 points higher. He has long been the top junior in New England, but he now clearly raised both his consistency and power, and was looping strongly from both backhand and forehand. However, Virgo made a number of sensational blocks, and was able to raise his level even higher in the last game to beat Yin 11-6. Despite his defeat, it was clear that Yin had now joined the ranks of the top players in New England and that it would not be long before he would be winning matches regularly against players of Virgo’s caliber.

Each year the tournament is marked by a couple of ‘sleepers’ who surprise the field. This year Sandeep Shetty, a former junior champion in the state of Maharashtra in India, joined the tournament on the last day for entries. Shetty had not played in several years, and was not even aware of the shift to the 40mm ball and to 11-point games when he arrived in the morning. Still, he won his round robin group in the Open and won two games off Virgo in the semifinals. Tim Aikey from Vermont was perhaps the top surprise among the juniors. He swept the under 1400 event and defeated an opponent rated 300 points higher than himself in the under 1600.

This was the first tournament in New England using the eleven-point game rule. Most players liked the new rule, though some commented it left little room for error. Others said that matches were too short in a best-of-five format and suggested best-of-seven instead.

Congratulations go to tournament director Dana Adams for an event well run. This year’s tournament attracted a near-capacity 63 players, a number of whom played three different round robin events during the day. Ben Alvord and David Haugh probably broke the tournament record by playing 13 matches in their events, a testimony both to their success and their endurance.

Open – Final: Ernest Virgo d. Wang Yin, 8,9,-9,7,8,6; SF: Virgo d. Sandeep Shetty, 8,7,5,-14,8,7; Wang d. Heng-Chuan Kan, 8,7,9,6; QF: Virgo d. Stefan Lammers, 10,-10,7,6,8; Shetty d. Thomas Haynes, 7,6,8,9; Wang d. Zhen Chao Liu, 8,-7,-7,9,8,10; Kan d. Dzenan Karabegovic, 5,11,4,3.


U1800: David Haugh d. Jing Wan 11,8,9.

U1600: Jim Baird d. Ken Cameron 9,-9,8,9,8.


U1200: Paul Ferriero d. Dennis Conley 8,7,8,10.

U1000: Brad Mongeon d. Diana Riley 5,3,8,8.

U850: 1st Ben Alvord, 2-0 (d. Tomas, 4,7,8; d. Devine, 3,7,5); 2nd Al Devine, 1-1 (d. Tomas, 10,9,-3,6,12); 3rd Joe Tomas, 0,2.

Photo by Mal Anderson

Finalist Wang Yin

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2002
**NCTTC MID-ATLANTIC DIVISION COLLEGIATE COMPETITION**

October 20, 2001 • Gaithersburg, MD

**Final Standings**
1. Johns Hopkins University I (5-0)
2. Penn State University (3-2)
3. University of Maryland at College Park (3-2)
4. Howard University I (2-3)
5. Johns Hopkins University II (1-4)
6. Howard University I (1-4)

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**MEN'S SINGLES - FINAL**
Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) d. Werner Schlager

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**NCTTC MID-ATLANTIC DIVISION COLLEGIATE COMPETITION**

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4. Howard University I (2-3)
5. Johns Hopkins University II (1-4)
6. Howard University I (1-4)

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**1ST JALISCO OPEN**
Jalisco, Mexico
Oct. 19-21, 2001

Men's Singles – Final: Jim Butler (USA) d. Jude Oko (NIG), 10-7,8,6; SF: Butler d. Omar Flores (GUA), 6-8,10-9,9,7; Oko d. Luis Valdes (DF), 3,8,5,8; QF: Butler d. Alejandro Oviedo (GUA), 9-9,8,7-8,4; Flores d. Guillermo Munoz (IFN), 8-9,9,7; Oko d. Robert Roberts (BAR), -13,-7,5,5,10,6; Valdes d. Jose Miguel Ramirez (GUA), 8,-6,5,12,-9,3; 16ths: Butler d. Ulises Avena (BCS), 5,7,10,9; Owens d. Carlos Torres (DF), 3,8,8,1.

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**$81,000 GERMAN ITTF PRO TOUR**
Bayreuth, Germany • Oct. 18-21, 2001

Men's Singles – Final: Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) d. Werner Schlager (AUT), 6-8,10-4; SF: Samsonov d. Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE), 7,6,4; Schlager d. Patrick Chila (FRA), 6,-6,6,-5,7; Preliminary: Samsonov d. Maksim Shmyrev (RUS), 9,6,5,9,5; Oh d. Alexei Smirnov (RUS), 7,-5,7,-6,6,4; Boll d. Petr Korbel (CZE), 6-5,8,-6,-5,4; Waldner d. Timo Boll (GER), 9,-7,7,-9,7; Chila d. Ma Wenge (CHN), 8,-5,4,11,9; Kreanga d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), 6,-5,9,4,-5,9,4; Waldner d. Chuan Chih-Yuan (TPE), 6,-5,9,7,-10,4; Negrisou d. Galina Melnik (RUS), 9,7,-6,5,-15,11; Schopp d. Liu Jia (AUT), 4,9,6,1; Pavlovich d. Krisztina Toth (HUN), -5,5,-9,-8,12,3; Rosskopf/Hielscher d. Lee Chul Seung/Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 7,-12,9,-8,3; Blaszczyk d. Torben Wosik (GER), 6,-7,5,-6,-10,6; Chila d. Ma Wenge (CHN), 8,-5,4,11,9; Kreanga d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), 9,-8,10,11; Boll/Fejer-Konnerth d. Patrick Chila/Damien Eloi (FRA), 7,6,-3,10,6.

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**SOUTH BEND GIANT ROUND ROBIN**
SOUTH BEND, INDIANA, OCTOBER 6, 2001

In Class B, Ivan Popov went 7-2 to win, with Jim Lynch finishing second, also at 7-2 but losing to Ivan in the head-to-head tie-breaker. Gordy Cochran, 13, and Joe Cochran, 12, had several upsets in the group to improve their ratings to around 1700.

In the U-1650 groups we had 2 groups of 11; now that’s a giant round robin! Everyone survived only because we played 3 out of 5 instead of the usual 4 out of 7 matches. The C group was won by Kevin Lau, 8-2, and there was a 3-way tie for second for Ron Arco. Carlos Cheon and Alan Wilson, with Carlos winning the tiebreaker to finish second. Group D was won by Gary Shelton, 9-1, over Ed Molenda, 9-1, as Gary beat Ed to win the tiebreaker.

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**$81,000 DUTCH ITTF PRO TOUR**
Rotterdam, Netherlands • Oct. 25-28, 2001

Women's Doubles – Final: Bai Yang/Niu Jianfeng (CHN) d. Kim Moo Kyong/Seo Hyun Ah (KOR), 7,9,9,6, Ryu d. Li Nan/Zhang Yining (CHN), 9,-7,9,5; Bai/Niu d. Galina Melnik (RUS), -10,2,7,-7,4; Sths: Samsonov d. Trinko Kene (NED), -6,7,7,5; Krzeszewski d. Michael Matez (DEN), 9,7,11,2; Zhang d. Joo Se Hyuk (KOR), -9,7,12,8,6,9; Heister d. Jorg Rosskopf (GER), -9,9,-7,3,10,9,9; Eloi d. Ali Saleh Ahmed (EGY), 4,9,3,5,9; Samsonov d. Maksim Shmyrev (RUS), -8,-12,11,9,-8,6,10; Boll d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), 10,7,9,8; Saiwe d. Marek Klasek (CZE), 7,5,9,-4,-2,7.

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**Women's Singles – Final**
Jitu Jie Hye (KOR) d. Ji Schopp (GER), -6,7,1,4; SF: Ryu d. Tamara Boros (CRO), -6,9,8,-8,7,9; Schopp d. Viktorija Pavlovich (BLR), 7,8,6,10; QF: Ryu d. Kim Moo Kyo (KOR), -6,8,11,6,-8,16; Pavlovich d. Kim Kyung Ah (KOR), 9,-10,9,8,17; Schopp d. Laura Negri SUS (ITA), 7,-8,6,5; Bos d. Lee Eun Sil (KOR), -9,11,-10,9,7,8; QF: Kim d. Petra Lovas (HUN), 4,9,1,6; Pavlovich d. Kristina Toth (HUN), -5,9,5,7,-8,6; Negrius d. Galina Melnik (RUS), 9,7,-6,15,11; Schopp d. Liu Jia (AUT), 6,10,-5,8,5,9; Ryu d. Nicole Struse (GER), 7,4,8,11; Kim Moo Kyo d. Tatyana Kostromina (BLR), 3,6,6,4; Lee d. Othilia Badasco (ROM), 5,9,7,9; Batorsi d. Vivien Ello (HUN), 7,3,10,6.

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**Women's Doubles – Final**
Bok San Ko/Jeong Kyung Ah (KOR) d. Tamara Boros/Mihaela Steff (CRO/ROM), 10,10,-5,8,6; SF: Kim/Jeong Kyung Ah d. Csilla Batorsi/Kristina Toth (HUN), 3,7,-8,12,1,12; Bors/Steiff d. Kim Moo Kyo/Ryu Ji Hye (KOR), -9,7,12,7,9; QF: Kim/Jeong Kyung Ah d. Judit Herceg/Liu Jia (AUT), 10,8,5; Batorsi/Toth d. Tatyana Kostromina/Viktorija Pavlovich (BLR), 7,7,10,4; Bors/Steiff d. Olga Nemes/Jie Schopp (GER), 3,8,8,14; Kim/Ryu d. Elke Schall/Nicole Struse (GER), 3,10,9.

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**USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2002**
Men's World Cup Final: Vladimir Samsonov d. Wang Liqin

$135,000 MEN’S WORLD CUP
Courmayeur, Italy
Nov. 8-11, 2001

$81,000 SWEDISH ITTF PRO TOUR
Skovde, Sweden • Nov. 22-25, 2001
Men’s Singles – Final: Wang Liqin (CHN) d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 4-8, 11, 6, 8; SF: Ma d. Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE), 4-11, 9, 11, 11, 11; Ma d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 11, 11, 11, 11, 9; Ma d. Peter Karlsson (SWE), 11, 11, 11, 11, 11.

Women’s Singles – Final: Guo Yan (CHN) d. Li Jia (CHN), 8, 11, 2, 11, 11, 10; SF: Wang d. Liu Shiwen (CHN), 11, 11, 11, 11, 8; Wang d. Li Jia (CHN), 8, 11, 2, 11, 11; Liu d. Guo Yan (CHN), 11, 11, 11, 11, 11.


$81,000 DANISH ITTF PRO TOUR
Farum, Denmark • Nov. 29 – Dec 2, 2001

Women’s Singles – Final: Li Jia (CHN) d. Aya Umemura (JPN), 11, 11, 11, 11, 11; SF: Li d. Ma Lin (CHN), 4-11, 11, 11, 11, 11; Li d. Li Jia (CHN), 11, 11, 11, 11, 11.

TOURNAMENTS PROCESSED

This list was compiled on 12/10/01 and includes all tournaments played through 11/25/01. Due to space limitations, only current members who have played in a tournament since 8/20/01 are included. This document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2002.

Top Men

1. WA 2807 Fan, Yi Yong
2. MD 2770 Cheng, Yinghua
3. NY 2747 Reed, Barney J.
4. IL 2713 Lupulesku, Ilija
5. NJ 2670 Zhuang, David
6. CA 2649 Nguyen, Khoa Dinh
7. NY 2615 Musa, Atanda
8. MD 2596 Sweeris, Todd
9. TX 2593 Butler, Jim
10. IL 2545 Drinic, Sasa
11. GA 2500 Oyen, Brian
12. NY 2493 Perez, Alexis
13. IN 2496 Liu, Hui Yuan
14. FL 2484 Tey, Tai Long
15. CA 2468 Sweetser, Mike
16. NY 2456 Zhuang, David
17. MD 2449 Xin, Lu
18. CA 2449 Kwan, Poon
19. MD 2445 Roth, Ethan
20. TX 2430 Leibovitz, Tahl
21. MD 2424 Livshin, Bella
22. CA 2411 Xiao, Han
23. CA 2404 Wu, Wei Yang
24. CA 2404 Nguyen, Khoa Dinh
25. NY 2399 Shao, Yu
26. CA 2399 Malek, Attila
27. NY 2396 Wang, Jiachen David
28. CA 2396 Zhuang, David
29. TX 2383 Tey, Tai Long
30. NY 2386 Liu, Hui Yuan
31. CA 2385 Tyan, Anzhelika
32. NY 2386 Liu, Hui Yuan
33. CA 2385 Tyan, Anzhelika
34. TX 2383 Tey, Tai Long
35. PR 2380 Azres, Thomas
36. CA 2378 Le, Tuan Dai
37. CA 2376 Ngo, Loc Bao
38. PA 2371 Pudis, Brian
39. NY 2369 Henry, Michael
40. TX 2367 Wang, Jiachen David

Top Women

1. MD 2611 Chang, Jun Gao
2. TX 2477 Reed, Jasna
3. CA 2465 Banh, Tawny
4. NY 2451 Sung, Virginia Wei-Ni
5. NY 2376 Paluchova, Renata
6. NJ 2374 Yi, Lily
7. OR 2355 Yang, Simone
8. CA 2288 Moseley, Kidbi Ione
9. MO 2276 Boskic, Mimi
10. CA 2267 Do, Michelle
11. CA 2182 Tyn, Anzhelika
12. OR 2159 Ping, Whitney
13. IL 2140 Kretschmer, Maria
14. CT 2103 Li, Yongmei
15. MD 2099 Wu, Katherine
16. FL 2062 Wronska, Beata
17. IL 1998 Baskry, Maia
18. NY 1993 Yi, Sophia Dan Dan
19. MD 1985 Liu, Charlene Xiao Yang
20. OR 1985 Ping, Emily
21. MD 1983 Kyakobye, June
22. VA 1980 Kwok, Elaine
23. CA 1972 Zhang, Ran
24. CA 1973 Lin, Berenice
25. CA 1974 Lin, Berenice
26. CA 1975 Lin, Berenice
27. NY 1976 Chu, Felicia
28. VA 1902 Wang, Chao
29. OK 1906 Wang, Heather Hua
30. KS 1906 Wang, H. Hang
31. CA 1897 Khoo, Ly
32. CA 1898 Lee, Grace
33. CA 1899 Lee, Grace
34. CA 1899 Lee, Grace
35. CA 1899 Lee, Grace
36. CA 1899 Lee, Grace
37. CA 1899 Lee, Grace
38. CA 1899 Lee, Grace
39. MT 1813 Conlan, Lena Maria
40. MI 1795 Badea, Susana

TOURNAMENTS INCLUDED IN RATINGS

Daveison September Open
Sacramento Fall Fun for All Open
Stiga Open on the 2001 Stiga NA Tour
Arkansas Open
South Bend Open
MDTTC October Open
Huntsman World Senior Games
Hutchinson Fall 2001 Open
New England Open Championship
16th Annual Bernard Hock Open
Maryland October Circuit
NJTTC October Open
Austin Open
Best of the West
Daveison October Open

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All ratings-related questions should be directed to Fran Boardman, USATT Headquarters, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

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Players' favorite source for table tennis supplies.
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Note: This is a simplified representation of the table from the image. The actual data contains more rows and columns with additional details such as handicap, years of experience, and other metrics that are not shown here.
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Players' favorite source was USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE 'January/February 2002'.
United States Anti-Doping Agency

The independent testing agency for Olympic sport in the United States

Created in the fall of 2000, the United States Anti-Doping Agency is responsible for managing the testing and adjudication process for U.S. Olympic, Pan American and Paralympic athletes. USADA is equally dedicated to preserving the integrity of sport through research initiatives and educational programs.

Call the USADA Drug Reference Line at 800-233-0393

For additional information, please visit the USADA web site at www.usantidoping.org
Interview with Tahl Leibovitz

By Larry Hodges

Age: 26 years old.
Club: Champion Table Tennis Club.
Rating: 2424
Height/Weight: 5'4", 115 pounds

How old were you when you first started to play and how did you start?
I started playing Table Tennis when I was 15 years old at the South Queens Boys Club. The club was a place to keep young kids out of trouble. I saw a few people playing Table Tennis. I thought I could play okay. They had wood rackets. At first I loved to play with wood. I played with wood at least my first two years at the Boys’ club. The best player was about 1400. They finally made me play with sponge and I hated it. I had a lot more fun with wood. Sponge was so boring but, I had some new friends there and I played with sponge so after a while I started to like it. The people I started playing with were Santo Vasquez, Glenn Brown and David Fernandez. David was the most serious of us.

Who were your coaches when you started out?
Who are your coaches now, if any?
When I first started out my coach was Glenn Brown. He was rated probably 1200, but that was far better than me. We went to junior high school together. One day Glenn decided to give me a report card in Table Tennis. I failed almost every area at the time especially the wide backhand. About three years later I found this place called Lost Battalion hall. The players there were like nothing I had ever seen. They were rated about 2000 and there were probably 30 of them. I was totally amazed at the level of play. That’s when I met Erol Young. He changed what Table tennis meant to me forever. He showed me many things about the game. I was unable to get a Gold Medal in individual competition and a Bronze Medal in the team event. The Czech Open was a good tournament for me because I was able to win my class and help the team to 3rd place. They gave us some really nice Czech Bohemia Crystal. I do play well in the 1997 Macabiah World Games, at least in the mixed doubles and the teams. We got a Bronze Medal in the teams. I was down 19-14 in the third game against a player from Ukraine and came back to win it. Actually now that I think about it I was down 20-14 against a player from Spain in the disabled world championships and I won that also. That’s pretty lucky. I still think my best overall play was in mixed doubles where a girl from Slovakia and I were able to get a Bronze medal, upsetting some very strong teams from France and Holland.

What major Paralympic and/or Disabled Teams have you been on, what major events have you competed in, and what were your best titles or finishes?
I was on the U.S. Paralympic Team for the Atlanta Games in 1996. I also played on the U.S. team in the Czech Open, the 1998 World Championships, and I have played on the U.S. Macabiah World Team with Randy Cohen and Dickie Fleisher. I had about 3 or 4 very good tournaments where I was able to play very well. I think my best tournament was the 1998 Disabled World Championships where I got a Bronze Medal. I also played well in the 1998 Paralympic’s to get a Gold Medal in individual competition and a Bronze Medal in the team event. The Czech Open was a good tournament for me because I was able to win my class and help the team to 3rd place. They gave us some really nice Czech Bohemia Crystal. I did play well in the 1997 Macabiah World Games, at least in the mixed doubles and the teams. We got a Bronze Medal in the teams. I was down 19-14 in the third game against a player from Ukraine and came back to win it. Actually now that I think about it I was down 20-14 against a player from Spain in the disabled world championships and I won that also. That’s pretty lucky. I still think my best overall play was in mixed doubles where a girl from Slovakia and I were able to get a Bronze medal, upsetting some very strong teams from France and Holland.

How did you come to making the U.S. Team last year?
I think I was one match away from making the Team. I had a really good chance against Mark Hazinski. I was leading 13-7 in the second and I had won the first. I think my main problem was that when I serve I sometimes drop my hand, it’s a bad habit that I have been trying to fix for years. I don’t play many competitions and when the umpire started calling my serves I couldn’t adjust and had to serve with my backhand. I am not used to playing like that. When I was leading 13-7, I served three balls in the net, trying to make my service legal. I had also been playing with long pips for three months before the trials. I changed back for the trials and was unable to play my backhand smash consistently. With the 38mm ball I was sometimes able to raise my level very high. I think with the 40mm ball the maximum level I can play is 2500. I still feel I am playing solid 2400 at times when I push myself. I think the main reason I didn’t make the team is because I am too inconsistent and I don’t get to play good players very often. If I would have played with better players perhaps I could have played at a 2450 level and that might have been enough to make the team.

Who is your main rival in table tennis or the player you have the hardest time against?
I’d have to say Paul David. I have had some of the best matches with Paul. He is an incredible player with so much control. I have a lot of respect for his game and I feel if he would play more he could easily be a 2550 player. The only thing he lacks is some confidence in his game. I hope his recent win over David Zhuang will change that.

Whose Table tennis game in this county do you most admire? And why?
This might seem like a tough question for some people but my answer is pretty easy for this one. I have seen a lot of players in this country and I feel I have somewhat of an understanding of his game. I think with my understanding of the game the obvious choice would be Barry Dattel. I think he is one of the most amazing players I have ever seen in this country because of the limitations he has and the things he does with the ball. Some of his play could be considered brilliant. I’m not too sure about his personality, that’s kind of like talking to a lamp, but as a player he is really great to watch.

Who do you practice with and how often?
I would like to say that I train six days a week five hours a day, but the truth is that I hardly play. Not because I don’t want to but because there aren’t many people to play. In our table tennis club a lot of times the club is empty. I try and play at least two times a week. I think I have played in the last three months I have played at least that. I stopped playing for about six months and I think that took my game down a bit. I haven’t really practiced with a passion for the game in about four years because of my spinal problem. I try to play a match with Paul David whenever I can. I mostly practice with Jerry Vasquez. He is the best practice I can get. If I play with him once a week I can maintain my level.

Have you ever trained overseas?
I have not trained overseas. I would have liked to. I think that would help my game a lot. I have never really trained. I don’t mind training but I have so many problems doing drills. They just become frustrating and I don’t have fun doing them. I have more fun playing with my left hand or chopping.

Who are your sponsors/supporters?
Michael LaVani from Spintech, my sponsor, has been very helpful to me. I am very happy to be sponsored by such a great company. Michael is an extremely giving individual and I have never had a problem in regard to lack of equipment. I served three balls in the net, trying to make my service legal. I had also been playing with long pips for three months before the trials. I changed back for the trials and was unable to play my backhand smash consistently. With the 38mm ball I was sometimes able to raise my level very high. I think with the 40mm ball the maximum level I can play is 2500. I still feel I am playing solid 2400 at times when I push myself. I think the main reason I didn’t make the team is because I am too inconsistent and I don’t get to play good players very often. If I would have played with better players perhaps I could have played at a 2450 level and that might have been enough to make the team.
used to use samba rubber and then Michael came out with Spin Power. I liked it so much that I asked him to sponsor me. As far as supporters, I support myself, but I would not have been so successful without the help of two individuals. The first is my beautiful wife-to-be, Christina Tonyes. She has been very helpful to me and loves watching the game. The second person is my twin sister Maja Leibovitz, who has been very supportive as well. Maja also made the 2001 World Maccabiah Games last year in table tennis.

You have a reputation as being one of the “Bad Boys” of table tennis. Why is that?
Maybe at times I am not so good. Who’s to say what’s good or bad. I think people perceive me as a bad person at times because of the things I do in table tennis. I have done a lot of crazy things when I was younger but that was just youth, I guess. I think table tennis sometimes needs things to pump it up. To make the game more exciting. I think certain conflicts help entice the game. I do feel, however, that I am a good person. I don’t do things to upset people, I think I do them more to create conflict and have a bit of fun.

Who is your favorite Player and why?
I used to love to watch Applegren play on tapes. He used to be my all-time favorite. Then, like everyone else, I started liking Waldner for a few years, but that was until I met him. We didn’t get along too well, but that’s another story. I really like the way Kreanga plays from the off table. He is really incredible. So many players to choose from ... I guess I will have to stick with Waldner because I like following the bandwagon, and he is able to adjust in adverse conditions so to speak. So yeah, Waldner is still my favorite player even though he is a conceited S!#%!

Outside of table tennis, what do you like to do? Hobbies, sports, etc.
I really like reading. I enjoy running. I also like museums, good depressing poetry and some detailed art. There are some other things I like also. The one thing I do a lot is read. Music can be OK at times. I think that’s about it.

Are you a full-time table tennis player? Student? Have a job? Or something else?
I wouldn’t consider myself a full-time table tennis player. I know where my job is right now. The only problem is someone else is doing it because I don’t work there anymore. That’s what seems to happen with most of my jobs. I don’t work well with authority. I have tons of useless degrees. I have my series 7 & 63 (state & city) real estate licenses, and just recently MCSE: for computers. I have problems holding jobs. I make money now through the Internet. We live in a very materialistic world so I go and buy stuff and then sell it on Ebay and other places.

Who is your favorite Coach and why?
I would also like win a Nobel prize. I’m not sure how I would do that but, it would be cool and I’m sure the chicks would like it. Maybe I could get one for writing. Of course I would probably have to move up to a junior high school reading level. Finally my last goal is to write some table tennis books and perhaps do a video also.

I heard you are writing a book. What’s the status of that?
Actually I am in the process of writing two books right now. One of them is about my life story and table tennis. The other is about teaching table tennis. I am about halfway through both. I am not sure when they will be completed. I think I will put out the one about teaching table tennis first. The other book will require a lot more work to finish. I am hoping to get the first book done within the next six months.

Any advice for new players who would like to someday make the USA Olympic Team?
The game of table tennis is 95 percent mental. I would recommend you always try and have confidence in yourself and feel you can beat anyone. Never get down on yourself in a match. Always feel you’re the best and you’ll play the best you can play. Play as though there are no limitations in table tennis in regard to your game.

Anything else you’d like to say?
Just wanted to thank all the people that have helped me in Table Tennis. Especially Christina Tonyes, Santo Vasquez, Barney Reed Jr., and my coach Erol Young. I will continue to try and play up to my potential. I would also like to say thank you to Dennis Taylor for all his help, as well as one of the best coaches ever, Clark Mitchell. Clark is an incredible coach and an amazing motivator. Clark has showed me how to step around and take it down the line. I would also like to thank Larry Hodges for this interview and the incredible things he has done for table tennis, which are endless. The last thing I want to say is for all the kids who are practicing table tennis in the Glen Cove Boys’ and Girls’ club. Keep training hard and I know someday you will all be champions. Also I think Sheri is the best president and the best looking.

U.S. #1 Fan Yi Yong serving to Tahl at the recent 2001 North American Teams.
Fan won in five, 11-4, 5-11, 11-8, 6-11, 11-4.


What are your table tennis goals? Both short-, intermediate- and long-term?
My short-term goal is to make the U.S. Paralympic Team this year. My intermediate goal is to win a silver medal at the Greece Paralympic’s (because I have a gold and a bronze). My long-term goal is to make the USATT Hall of Fame. Maybe I should call Tim Boggan now and see if he can get me in.

How about your non-table Tennis goals?
I would like to marry my cute girlfriend some day. Maybe when she quits smoking and learns how not to carp.
Manhattan Table Tennis Club • New York City • November 10, 2001 • By Tim Boggan

Enjoying the Festivities - Top: Player Lily Yip, Northeast League Director George Brathwaite, Player Renata Peluchova. Bottom: USATT President Sheri Pittman and George.

...Ah, again, Table Tennis on Broadway!

There’s Jerry Wartski’s Manhattan Club...been open little more than a year now, between 99th and 100th Streets...and up the steps we go, past the second floor theater group, to some matinee drama of our own. Entrance fee: $5. Surely we go, past the second floor theater and 100th Streets...and up the steps usual dapper self looking ever-at-the-court ready. Underneath the photo are the words, “Sport For Life, Sport For Health, Sport For Fun” – an appropriate caption since Enjoying the Festivities - Top: Player Lily Yip, Northeast League Director George Brathwaite, Player Renata Peluchova. Bottom: USATT President Sheri Pittman and George.

The nine exhibition matches that would soon get underway on the one Lily Yip-Sports-barriered table between “New York” and “New Jersey” featured players well-known to aficionados. For New York: Nigeria’s Atanda Musa, 6-time World Cup Qualifier and now Manager of the Wartski Club; Barney Reed, U.S. World Team member and former North American and U.S. National Doubles Champion; and two world-ranked women players, Wang Chen (“Cindy”), an International from China (“superb” – that was a new word, learned at the Club this evening, that she’d repeatedly spoken into her hand-held Chinese/English audio dictionary), and the Czech Renata Peluchova, a sought-after Coach here at Wartski’s.

For New Jersey: 4-time and current U.S. Men’s Champion David Zhuang, as well as another David, Paul David, who in the recent Stiga Open in Delaware defeated Zhuang, and teammates Shao Yu, a former Shanghai Province Team member, Lily Yip, two-time Pan-American Champion, and her son Adam, ranked #1 among U.S. Boys’ Under 14. All playing under the watchful eyes of Referee Chris Lehman and experienced Umpires Zhaoming Yang and Dan Wang, Westfield Club President Barry Dattel was telling me he remembered reading about a New York vs. New Jersey Match back in the 1930’s. But, as one wit here noted, “Not one of these players was born in New York or New Jersey.”

But what did it matter? This was a kick-off event designed to promote the League, bring it to everyone’s notice, so today attention centered as much on who supported these matches by their attendance as to who would win them – though a bantering crowd in the back of the room standing on chairs in place of risers often gave voice, sometimes ironically, to their favorites. One very good local player comes in, drinking from a wrapped bottle, and says, “Who’s playing?”...Comes the answer, “Everybody but you.” A lively tone that brought to my friend Floyd Glinet (Cynthia’s a relative of Anita Ekberg who’d been featured in Federico Fellini’s famous film “La Dolce Vita”).

Indeed, many a spectator who’d come to enjoy the Matches was of interest to those who follow the Sport – though here I’ll mention only two: Melvin James Bukiet, the author of the 1996 Holocaust novel After, which has a marvelously fantasized table tennis scene with 3-time U.S. Champion Bernard Bukiet (no relation to the author); and local player Bob Sturz, 1940 University of Wisconsin Champ who recalled an Exhibition Match of his own he won against Jessie “Jay” Purves, back in the days after she’d been a member of that 1937 U.S. Corbillon Cup Team that had won the World Championship.

It was interesting of course to watch at least some of the singles and doubles play, though I had to miss the last few matches because of a dinner engagement. But I did see Wang Chen upset David Zhuang, who then much improved his attack to score a win over Atanda Musa. And Renata Peluchova’s backhand play against Lily was home-court strong and steady. Also, I hope young Adam has fun watching his doubles play as caught by player and professional photographer Robert Chen.

In closing, I’ll note that Robert filmed the audience standing respectfully before the American flag as we listened to a stirring rendition of God Bless America – an opening that preceded the Matches and that I like to think promised the spirit of togetherness that George will need if his ambitious Program is to succeed as we all hope it will.

Northeast League Results

New York d. New Jersey, 7-1
• Atanda Musa (NY) d. Shao Yu (NJ), 3-0
• Wang Chen (NY) d. David Zhuang (NJ), 3-1
• Barney Reed (NY) d. Paul David (NJ), 3-0
• Renata Peluchova (NY) d. Lily Yip (NJ), 3-1
• Reed/Peluchova (NY) d. Shao/Adam Hugh (NJ), 3-1
• David Zhuang (NJ) d. Atanda Musa (NY), 3-0
• Wang Chen (NY) d. Shao Yu (NJ), 3-0 (including a comeback from 0-7 in the 3rd game)
• Barney Reed (NY) d. Adam Hugh (NJ), 3-1
The table tennis club here in South Bend is open six days per week. The Center sports 11 barriered tables with an excellent wood floor. We recently moved to this new facility, which is conveniently located on a busy corridor and provides the club with an excellent chance to grow.

Our junior program is the main focus of the club. Mark Hazinski, Jared Lynch, the Cochran brothers, Jeff Smith and Eli Kahn are just some of the ranked junior players who practice regularly at the facility. Dan Seemiller is the head coach and is assisted by Barry Chan, Paul George and Mark Nordby. We just recently concluded a junior class that had 33 participants.

Other activities at the club feature a Thursday night and Sunday afternoon round robin league. The Thursday evening league averages around 35 participants and Sunday about 20. The club hosts six tournaments per year with the St. Joseph Valley Open held at the University of Notre Dame is our main event. This year’s tourney features 50 Butterfly tables and $20,000 in prize money. It is scheduled for May 25 & 26, 2002. The main sponsors of this event are NEWMAR Corp. and Virgil & Sarah Miller. You can help support our junior program by planning to attend this great 4-star event.

The club officers are Phil Schmucker (President), Jim Lynch and Jerry Goeller. Jim and Jerry help with the maintenance of the building and tournaments, and Phil runs the leagues, ratings and meetings. The 8000 square foot facility is sponsored by Electronics, Inc. Our club would like to thank our sponsors and the many private donors who believe in our junior program.

Please stop by if your travels bring you to South Bend, IN. You can access more information about the center at www.sbttc.org.

Youth of the Month:

Jared Lynch

Jared is 17 years old and has a 2252 rating. Jared’s style of play is an aggressive topspin attack with exceptionally deceptive serves. Jared, his brother Jordan, and their father, Jim, are a family that plays table tennis.

In the past year, Jared has attended many of the major tournaments. He participated in the U.S. Team Trials, North American Teams and Western Open in San Diego, and now has the experience necessary to make a push up to the 2400 level. Jared is a hard worker and excellent runner and benefits from regular practice with national team member and South Bend Junior Mark Hazinski. Jared is home-schooled, likes to play basketball and enjoys the travel associated with competing in major tournaments. His goals are to break the 2400 rating barrier and to compete for a spot on the U.S. Team some day.

Jared’s titles include National Under18 Boys’ Doubles and Teams at the Junior Olympics. Jared has had excellent wins over Han Xiao and Idan Levi this past year and is currently sponsored by Paddle Palace and Tibhar equipment. He also spends time and practices willingly with our other junior players and helps the beginners by serving them multi-ball practice.
Misha had more trips to learn from in 2001. First, with some other U.S. players, he went to Vladislavovo, Poland, where he met his father, and played in a Junior Open in a Hall next to “a grim reminder of World War II – a submarine factory.” In one of his Cadet Boys matches he had an encouraging 23-21 in the 3rd win over a Belarus player, a little would-be Samsonov. Then he immediately went to France for two weeks, where of course the food was much better than in Poland (though he did like the Polish sausages), and where he interspersed his training with a Junior Open at Cherbourg.

Misha being coached by USA Men’s Coach Dan Seemiller at the North American Teams. Misha’s normal coach is Masaaki Tajima.

Later, for three weeks in Sept-Oct., Misha was in Japan gaining being drilled to death at the Butterfly Dohjo (Butterfly’s his sponsor). One thing, he says, “if you move back and forth for eight hours a day, it’s bound to improve your footwork.” He had to make some other adjustments too. “I love sushi, but some of those other dishes....”Also, he says, “You have to be very polite, because the Japanese are. They kept asking me things like, ‘How’s your room? Temperature alright? Bed comfortable?’”

The learning of course continued back in the States, in Baltimore, where the USAATT wanting to further “test” their most promising juniors, formed a U.S. Junior team with Han Xiao, Adam, and Misha. Their mentor there, Danny Seemiller, praised Misha for his natural touch, power, good court sense, and fighting spirit. “His serves are much improved, too,” said Danny, “and I like it that if someone challenges him, he challenges right back.” This was never more apparent than in Misha’s much talked about match with Sean O’Neill, in which, down 10-3 in the 5th, he miraculously won 9 points in a row.

Ironically, Misha no sooner accepted congratulations for his great win against Sean than, leading Sean’s teammate Iachien “David” Wang two games to none, Misha surprised everyone, including himself, by losing the next three. “Against Wang,” Misha said later, “I let up a little and then he started playing awesome and I couldn’t do anything about it. Also, when I was going good, I got caught up in the heat of the moment, and then he started playing awesome and I couldn’t do anything about it. Also, when I was going good, I got caught up in the heat of the moment, and didn’t play smart.”

Misha says he enjoys being interviewed because “it gets my emotions up” (as if he needed such a catalyst) and because “it makes me aware of things that I never paid attention to before” – like, say, players who loudly grunt as they strike the ball, or footstamp as they serve? Misha’s Mishima-martial-arts equivalent was a combative yell as he made contact on his service – a tactic that disturbed O’Neill enough that he rightly called for an umpire to have it stopped. Though the just-turned-teenager didn’t mean to take unfair advantage, he now realizes not only that he has the potential to beat good players but that, as one bystander watching said, and, as all “class” players agree, “You gotta play the Game with respect.”
Interview with Greece's
Kalinikos Kreanga
World #18 • #1 Player on Chicago Killerspin, 2001 North American Teams Champions
By Dr. Marius Wechsler • November 25, 2001

At this year's NATT Team Championships, I was able to spend a few minutes with Kalininikos Kreanga, the top player of the winning Chicago Killerspin team, and one of the top players in Europe, ranked #18 on the Nov. ITTF world list. Mr. Kreanga has been a member of the Greek national team for 14 years, representing Greece at the last three Olympic Games, as well as many World Championships. He had a fourth-place finish at the World Cup in 1992, was the European Doubles Champion in 1994, and finished third in Mixed Doubles at one World Championships. Note - a few days after the Team Championships, Kreanga would make the semifinals of the Danish ITTF Pro Tour, wins over Liu Guoliang and Jean-Michel Saive.

This was your first NATT Teams Tournament. How did you come to join your team and how did you like the tournament?
I enjoyed the tournament and might very well return in the future. I was invited by Ilija Lupulesku, with whom I had won the European Doubles title in the past. Ilija is a member of the Chicago table tennis club that sponsored the team. It also gave me an opportunity to visit my sister, now living in Portland, Oregon.

Congratulations on your team's win. Unfortunately, the final stages of the tournament were marked by controversy (see Tim Bogdan's coverage of the NATT Teams). Were you uncomfortable at all with the officiating?
If an umpire or referee had told me I could leave the court in the middle of a match, I would have personally refused. Something similar happened to me three years ago at the European Masters. In the middle of a match, my rubber surface got scratched against the table during a shot. I did not have another racket and was defaulted when I removed my rubber surface on the playing court. [Mr. Kreanga did not display any sign of resentment when relaying this event, something I found rather remarkable.]

How did you get started in table tennis?
I come from a family of sports fans. I was born in the Romanian part of Moldavia and started playing at the age of seven. I left Romania when I was 17, partially in order to be able to participate freely in European competitions and have a chance to improve my game. Many other Romanian-born table tennis players like George Bohm, Olga Nemes, Nataaniel Tsiokas, Paul Haldan, and Horatio Pintea have done the same. I escaped with my father while at a tournament in Luxembourg (athletes usually asked for political asylum while at a tournament in a foreign country). My mother joined us years later (the old communist regimes would not allow whole families to go abroad for fear of such defections).

How do you like your training arrangements in Greece?
I like the arrangements there. We have six full-time training centers throughout Greece. Current team members and potential team members selected from school clubs train at these locations. There is not a lot of international level competition, but the training is good and the centers are in full use.

What do you think of the ability of the Chinese players to consistently dominate the rest of the world in this sport? Is it due to innovations in playing technique like Ma Lin's or Liu Guoliang's reverse backhand loops?
No, the innovations largely come from Europe, but they perfect it and do it better than anyone else. Backhand looping in general is exactly such an example. However, it is not surprising that they are able to achieve such domination. After all, they have about a million professional players. As for the reverse backhand penhold loop, they don't really use that against us in serious match situations.
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