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CORRECTION

Identical Rackets Not Required

In a previous Officials’ View, it was incorrectly stated that when changing a damaged racket, it has to be replaced with an identical one. This was incorrect; there is no rule that a spare racket must be identical to the damaged one.

22 YEAR AGO....CHENG YINGHUA!

In Awe of this Youngster
By USATT Historian Tim Boggan

As many readers know, multi-time U.S. Champion Cheng Yinghua was inducted into the USATT Hall of Fame at the Hall’s 2000 Awards Banquet in Vegas. But what these readers don’t know is that, 20 years before, Scott Boggan and Mike Bush were playing for the U.S. in the German Open at Russelshiem and, after losing to the Japanese and nursing their wounds (earlier, on a wrong train pulling 15-20 mph out of a wrong station stop, they’d opted to jump to the concrete platform), Mike had written (22 years ago, in the March/April 1980 magazine, then called Topics) of the Team Final:

“...we regained our almost lost enthusiasm as we watched the superb versatile play of youngster Cheng Ying Hua [he was 21] against [the Czech] Dvoracek. Cheng had gotten severe leg cramps just before the match went into the 3rd [and deciding] game. Barely able to walk, he altered his spin-every-ball style into a block-every-ball one. Dvoracek, who usually has no trouble against this style with his fanatically consistent spinning game, had no chance to win or go through Cheng’s brick wall defense. In this game, Dvoracek spun as many as 40 balls a point before he missed....” [Editor’s note – Joseph Dvoracek finished third at the Men’s World Cup in 1980, and was ranked #5 in Europe and #13 in the world that year.]

On the same page, under the Welsh Open, Bush wrote:

“Cheng Ying Hua, a right-handed double-winged spinner, humiliated the Swede Liljegren in a very quick 3-0 victory” ... “In the semis, the matches were very disappointing. First, Cheng had to lose to Shi Zhi [Li Zhenshi]. They played a blatantly obvious exhibition and as neither had any enthusiasm it was a rather bad one.” [Editor’s note – I asked Cheng about this, and he verified that he was ordered to dump not only that match, but numerous matches to fellow Chinese at tournaments all over the world. More on this in a future article.]

OLYMPIC TEAMS?

USOC and ITTF Looking to Replace Doubles Events With Team Events at Olympics Care of ITTF

The International Table Tennis Federation and the Olympic committee met on the sidelines of the ITTF Pro Tour grand finals here Saturday to discuss changes to the sport at the next Games.

Their major concern, starting from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, was that the men’s and women’s doubles events would be replaced by team competitions, ITTF president Adham Sharara said during a press conference in this city in north China.

While practical details still had to be worked out, Sharara had suggested adopting an Olympic team format, which would allow them to keep doubles matches.

He said this change would in no way lead to an increase in the number of competitors taking part – 86 men and an equal number of women – in accordance with International Olympic Committee rules.

While this proposal would be submitted by him next week, Sharara expressed optimism that it would be accepted. “We have already had talks with the Olympic committee, which encouraged us to take this path,” he said. “Approval of this new concept will not be a problem.”

The international federation also decided to inaugurate a general program to develop the junior under 18 category. This would include the creation of a junior international circuit this year comprising four or five competitions. One would be in China in August, with the finals held in Stockholm in December at the same time as the Pro Tour ones.

A continental challenge will also be launched in June 2003 for under 14. Six teams, each representing a continent, will compete in singles and doubles events. The junior world championships will take place in December 2003.
President’s Report
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

USA Table Tennis is pleased to announce many new USOC and ITTF developments in this month’s association primer series. Both the USOC and the ITTF are in dynamic phases. Because of USATT’s level of interaction with our parent bodies, we are gaining more insight into what expectations will be placed on us and ways that we can successfully partner with the USOC and ITTF to accomplish goals that are mutual to all of us.

USOC CEO & “HEAD COACH” LLOYD WARD

Lloyd Ward made his debut as new CEO a week before he formally assumed his new position when he was introduced at the USOC Board meeting the last weekend in October in Salt Lake City. I took the opportunity to introduce myself to him and to invite him to attend our upcoming events. USATT was pleased to welcome him not only to our Board meeting the following weekend, but also to welcome both him and his family to our Nationals. Before we appeared at the tournament, we spent several hours discussing the game plan of the USOC’s new “Head Coach,” as he likes to be called.

Lloyd had arrived in Las Vegas fresh off of a week packed with an intense “top-40” staff retreat and a visit to Pompano Beach, Florida to meet with developers interested in creating an Olympic Training Center for 6 sports, including table tennis. The momentum of the week was an obvious source of inspiration for him and he candidly shared recent developments with us as he began to articulate a new vision for the USOC’s involvement with USATT.

He showed the flip side of the expression he had uttered in Salt Lake City, “You’ve got to believe it to see it,” by beginning to reveal his vision. He’s clearly a strategist and it’s a relief to know that the USOC will now be teaming with us with more of a stakeholder disposition. Although the Winter Olympics will take up the first part of 2002, beginning in the second quarter, he’ll start to work his plan with each national governing body (NGB).

In essence, as the head coach of each NGB, he will meet with each of us for a 2-day period to begin transforming each NGB’s strategic plan by following a 5-step process: 1) target setting, 2) fact finding, 3) brainstorming, 4) solution finding and 5) action planning.

The USOC has five targets: 1) winning medals, 2) developing coaches, 3) enhancing community involvement in the Olympic Movement, 4) adhering to “best practices,” and 5) increasing revenues. He noted that those five goals parallel very closely the six goals USAIT shared recent developments with us as he began to articulate a new vision for the USOC’s involvement with USATT.

As Lloyd pointed out, in the past certain NGBs that were not perceived as potential medal winners were sometimes given what amounted to “lip-service” by the USOC. Complementing us on our international relations progress, especially with China, and the fact that our sport is a truly lifetime and family-oriented activity, he said that our NGB had other attributes that command his personal attention. After the Nationals, he sent out letters to the ITTF, the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) and command his personal attention. After the Nationals, he sent out letters to the ITTF, the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) and

The ITTF selected the U.S. Open to serve as one of the four legs of a newly-established Junior Pro Tour circuit, which will feature eight male and female participants in the ITTF Pro Tour Finals in 2002. ITTF President Adham Sharara who, but for icy weather conditions along his itinerary, would have also joined us in Las Vegas at our Nationals, indicated that the ITTF continues to be interested in USATT as a host of the Pro Tour Finals in 2003 or 2004 in conjunction with our Nationals. The ITTF also announced that it would supplement prize money by $20,000 for the U.S. Open, the Brazil Open and the Egypt Open in 2002, raising the total prize money to $110,000. Internal USAIT tournament strategists are also working on a plan to attract international players to our U.S. Open at all playing levels.

PAN-AMERICAN YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

In Tianjin, Miguel Delgado, the Continental Vice President from Latin America, and I continued our discussions about running the first-ever Pan American Youth Championships just prior to this year’s U.S. Open. Doru Gheorghe and Miguel had already worked out most of the technical logistics related to the competitive format. Tentatively, the four age groups will be U-13, U-15, U-18 and U-22. It is now primarily up to our headquarters to secure the final details as relates to economical per diem costs.

ITTF DEVELOPMENTS

In China, I met extensively with the ITTF’s Development Officer Glenn Tepper. He was instrumental in helping to formulate the first-ever North American Continental Agreement. North America is the only ITTF-recognized continent without a formal organizational structure. As a result, North America has not received development support enjoyed by the other continents until now. The plan for 2002 will cover five components: 1) a junior/cadet training camp and selection tournament in Canada for the ITTF Continental Cadet Challenge, 2) a junior training camp prior to the Pan American Youth Championships/U.S. Open, 3) a cadet training camp for qualified players of the World Cadet Challenge in Hungary, 4) a junior training camp prior to the North American Team Championships, and 5) development visits to Bermuda and Greenland. The agreement also stipulates that the four countries (USA, Canada, Bermuda & Greenland) work together to form a continental federation within the time frame of the 2002-2003 agreement.

I attended the formal ITTF Executive Board and Olympic Commission meetings that were scheduled there as well as met with most other meeting attendees and many of the players to discuss USAIT matters. It’s wonderful to hear that so many of the world’s best players look forward to attending this year’s U.S. Open.

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MEETINGS WITH THE CHINESE TTA

At the conclusion of the ITTF Pro Tour Finals, USATT’s delegation was excited to start the second phase of our trip in Beijing.

Aly Salam, who had taken part in an excellent presentation to the ITTF Executive Board regarding a strategic plan to boost the standard and numbers of umpires and referees, was again co-presenting a seminar to Chinese umpires and administering an examination to them.

Christian and Rong Li Lilleroos and I met with CTTA Vice President Yu Bin to discuss a proposed USATT-CTTA association-toassociation plan to promote collegiate programs in the U.S. based on the Texas Wesleyan University soccer that Christian is developing. Christian is also chairman of the International Table Tennis Committee for the Disabled, so he also met with Chinese Paralympic Table Tennis representatives to begin discussing the 2008 Paralympic Games, which will be held just after the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. They were equally impressed with Rong, who has been a Paralympic coach for our team for 10 years. They requested that she serve as their honorary coach and advisor.

Meanwhile Pam Gerig and Sheila Walker met with several other Chinese NGBs to begin a familiarization process. Those sports included baseball, field hockey, canoe/kayaking and other water sports as well as roller sports.

In the week I met extensively with Yu Bin to discuss other proposed USATT-CTTA activities, including CTTA's training of selected youth athletes. Over the past year, our coaches began to identify elite youth players interested in intensive training in China. We agreed on details to go forward with that plan. Aly Salam and Sheila Walker, who had also participated in the December meetings with Lloyd Ward, joined the meeting for a discussion of a USATT/CTTA tour concept. Sheila, who as an 18-year veteran with the USOC had also planned all of the USOC's Sports Festivals, brought a professional structure to the joint marketing proposal.

Yu Bin stated that the plan had the full backing of the CTTA and suggested that we move forward quickly to consolidate the next level of details.

The comprehensive plan calls for an estimated eight-city tour of the U.S. The CTTA will contact former world champions to assist with special exhibitions and coaching seminars. Current Chinese and American athletes will play matches. The CTTA will invite business and government officials to participate. CTTA will also contact Chinese broadcasters; air time in China would be a major marketing opportunity for U.S. sponsors. Finally, organizers of the 2008 Olympic Games would also be invited to give a preview of the plans for Beijing.

Now that USATT and CTTA have worked out the preliminary details, Sheila Walker is amending the proposal to reflect CTTA's input and is working with USATT to move us into the implementation phase. The next phases involve attracting sponsors and determining which cities to visit.

USATT's motives in this joint marketing plan are to secure more sponsorship money and media attention. Additionally, the tour will enable USATT to focus on developing legacy programs in the participating communities. Depending on the level of current table tennis activity in the communities, the promotional activities could focus on school programs, coaching development or league and tournament initiatives. Our featured athletes will benefit from participating in the tour through expanded training and competitive opportunities.

CTTA's issues and priorities in assisting USATT are to maintain the popularity of table tennis in China, to promote table tennis through friendship and to share revenues realized through joint ventures.

CTTA and USATT agreed to share other “best practices” methodologies. Interestingly, a topic that came up both at the ITTF Executive Board meeting and in the CTTA meetings was the issue of English language training opportunities in the U.S. Since the ITTF has taken a strong stance on using English as the sport’s designated language.

I want to thank the CTTA for the special care, including complimentary hospitality in Beijing, that they took of Aly Salam and me and for the outstanding hosts that they are. The CTTA is truly a world-class national association and we are privileged to work so closely with them.

USATT COMMITTEE NEWS

I have recommended and the Board has approved some changes of our committee chairs. Congratulations to incoming chairs David Roberts (Elite Athletes), Bob Kaminsky (Grassroots/Seniors) and Allen Watson (Tournaments).
The question asked: "What do you think of the 11-point rule?"

In starting this questionnaire I had no preconceived idea as to what anyone would say or how they would vote. In other words I didn’t seek anyone out who I thought might be for or against it. I interviewed some of the “Who’s who in Table Tennis” just as I encountered them randomly at the U.S. Closed playing site in Las Vegas in December, 2001.

- Cheng Yinghua: “Fun!!”
- Simone Yang: “11 points are okay, but would rather have 5 point change of serve.”
- Bohdan J. Dawidowicz: “Terrible!!”
- Brian Pace: “Yes, I like it. ‘Exciting.’ ‘No more down time.’”
- Sean Lonergan: “Doesn’t matter. Indifferent to it.”
- Danny Seemiller: “I love it!!”
- Allison Seibel: “I like it!”
- Eric Owens: “I love it! And it is what the game needs to be more exciting!” (Before winning Nationals)
- David Zhuang: “You must get used to it.”
- Sean O’Neill: “I think it’s great.”
- Nick Mintsiveris: “It’s okay, I’m getting used to it.”
- Jasna Reed: “It is very intense. There is much more pressure. Anyway basically can win. It’s tougher! Better for spectators, but harder for good players.”
- Howard Grossman: “Yes, I like it. Absolutely. It’s good for my game. I like the two serves. It makes me stay focused.”
- Andre Scott: “No, I don’t really like it. Higher-ranked players have a lot more pressure on them now. We have to come out gunning to stay on top.”
- Sharlene Krizman-Wilson: “If I get ahead it’s great. If not, I don’t like it.”
- Tim Boggan: “It really doesn’t matter to me. All I know is I play a lot more ‘Deuce’ games”
- Scott Preiss: “I don’t think there is any advantage for the better player. But I don’t know if my opinion counts as I’ve been playing with the 21 points system for 31 years!”
- Steve Isaacson: “I feel if I get ahead the game goes quickly. If the game is going badly you can get it over quickly then and get on to the next one.”
- Sol Schiff: “Totally disapprove.”
- Barney Reed, Sr.: “An exciting idea. Too early to tell.”
- Allen Barth (referee): “Adjustments not only for players, but umpires as well.”
- George Brathwaite: “It’s better from spectators view; lower-rated players have a better chance going into a game. Alternating of two serves each also makes it easier and better to approach a match in a better frame of mind.”
- Arthur B. Chase: “It certainly determines the winner faster.”
- Marty Reisman: “Ridiculous.”
- Scott Gordon: “Personally I like it, because it’s less stressful. But, 21 points is better for hardbat.”
- Steve Berger: “It stinks!!”
- Harold Russell: “No, I don’t like it. Can’t waste any points; can’t relax.”
- Jack Howard: “Terrible. I’m just getting into the game and it’s over.”
- Franz Schauer: “They should go back to 21 points.”
- Tawny Banh: “You have to stay focused right from the start. I’m finally getting used to it; at first it was weird.”
- Christian Lillieros: “I like it. It’s good for the spectators; it adds drama.”
- Lily Yip: “No. Too fast switching the serve; more pressure.”
- Shoni Aki: “It’s very confusing especially for seniors in doubles.”
- Dr. Michael Scott: “A better compromise might be games to 15 points.”
- Houshang Bozorgzadeh: “I like it.”
- Larry Hodges: “It might be good for the sport – I’m not sure yet. Personally, I hate it, especially alternating serves every two points. And putting all the best of seven or nine scores in the magazine is murder!”

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BOYS’ AND GIRLS’ CLUB SEeks Donations

By Eddie Branham

The Boys’ & Girls’ Club and The Teen Center in Brawley, CA, are opening up a Table Tennis Club. But we need your help with whatever donations you can offer. The Club and Center have the facilities, but they do not have the equipment or materials. We have the support from the Executive (Program) Director, Judy Chilcott. We have 20 children who are interested, ranging in age from 7-13 years old, and a few from the Teen Center that are older. Our goal is to have the tables where we can conduct large tournaments and have a clinic in this area.

All donations should be made out to “Boys’ & Girls’ Teen Table Tennis Club,” and sent to: Larry Hodges, Editor USA Table Tennis Magazine 13403 Demetrias Way Germantown, MD 20874 240-686-0127, larry@larrytt.com If you have any questions, please contact Eddie Branham (760) 344-2947, 144 W. Malan St., Apt. B. Brawley, CA 92227.

They Said It...

By Larry Hodges

“Ping-pong accident.” What a soldier said in the recent movie “Black Hawk Down” when asked why his lower arm was in a cast.

“This guy doesn’t show up to play the sport, like I do. He’s here to work.” Trinko Keen, commenting on his match with Ma Lin at the ITTF Pro Tour Finals. Ma won the tournament.

“Eric played unbelievable! I looped over and over, and he blocked everything back.” Cheng Yinghua, of his Men’s Singles final with Eric Owens at the Nationals. He added that he knew Eric could attack, but didn’t expect him to be able to block so well.

“What is this, the early 1990s?” Someone shouted this out during the Men’s Singles 8ths match between Jim Butler and Sean O’Neill at the Nationals.

“Yeah, no more second place!” Dan Seemiller, upon winning the Erie Open, after coming in second the last few times.
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

United Airlines is proud to support USA Table Tennis.
Dear Editor,

When I think of all the years I played table tennis without realizing that it was broken, I begin to feel that I really don’t know much about the game.

My Daddy, a long time ago, in his down-home manner, advised me not to fix something unless it was broken. I have followed that philosophy and found it was sound advice. What bothers me is that most of the time the object is broken, I deal with it clearly that “I am broken.” I have been playing table tennis for some time and I never noticed that it was broken. Perhaps it is because for a long time I knew the game as “Ping Pong.” Then I thought that perhaps, being a 780-level player, I do not have the ability to tell if it is broken.

I was not offensive methods I used for the five-point serve sequence were not correct; two-point serves are the proper way to play the game. I understand that playing 3 out of 5 11-point games will keep tournaments moving more quickly, much more quickly than any 21-point game format. I have played in tournaments with the 11-point format and in no way have seen the matches move much more quickly.

Since the 11-point rule was announced our local group has continued to play 21-point games, but we notice that the player who gets to 11 first is often not the same player who gets to 21 first. Much of the excitement of the game takes place in the battle of the last half of the game. The short serve time in doubles matches makes the game look like some form of square dancing. Of course this dance-like game is making table tennis much more interesting to spectators.

To summarize, if I am going to travel many miles to play in a sanctioned tournament and the 11-point rule is used to get the game over more quickly, I really don’t see why I will want to spend the time and money to play.

I guess I just didn’t know it was broken, and I am still unable to see that it is broken and that the 11-point game will fix it.

Sincerely,
Vernon C. Mauk, Pharr, TX

Dear Editor,

“Sports Person of the Year” should be awarded to Lily Yip. During the hardbat final at the North American Teams in Baltimore, Lily allowed her opponent, Tahl Leibovitz, to change to a different racket in the middle of the match.

Tahl had previously broken his hardbat and the substitute green and orange bat was of poor quality. Then someone found a better black and red hardbat; so, with Lily’s approval, the two umpires allowed the match to continue with the switch.

I applauded her then, and after she had won. Congratulations to Lily Yip.

Sincerely,
Jim Zimmerman, Cleveland, OH

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ON THE TEAMS’ DEFAULT

By USA Men’s Coach Dan Seemiller

After receiving my magazine and reading about the controversial incident in Baltimore I figured I might as well send in my thoughts.

So, Fan Yi Yong is a professional player but doesn’t carry a back-up racket? If you believe that one, then............ Clearly Fan wanted to re-glue his original racket and thought he got away with it. That’s breaking the rules. Varga never handed Fan his racket on the court. When Fan came back with the re-glued racket I was mad and I stated, “We will not play if you use the original racket, that’s against the rules.” Fan then went into his own bag, pulled out his racket case and said, “I’ll play with this one then.” My reaction was, “What gives? He’s got this racket all the time and NOW he wants to use it?” When Fan came back with the re-glued racket and I stated that we would not play because it was against the rules, I was only standing up for my team. I expected Dr. Azmy to then say, “Coach Seemiller you have one minute to have your player on the court or else your team will be defaulted.” Everything changed, however, when Fan went into his bag and produced his second racket. Azmy was livid; he’d been had.

Moments later, Azmy disqualified Fan.

Contrary to popular belief and what you have read, the U.S. Team didn’t “want a disqualification.” We just wanted Fan to play by the rules and use the second racket immediately and not delay the game for 15 minutes. Disqualification never seemed to be a possibility until it “happened.” After Azmy disqualified Fan I knew this would be bad for everybody – I then went to Azmy and said, “Are you sure you should disqualify Fan? You are the one who allowed him to re-glue.” Azmy replied he was sure that Fan had said 6 or 7 times that he did not have a spare racket and all the time he had one in his bag.

At this time, as Tim Bogdan so aptly put it, “a wave of shame came over our team.” I felt it – still do. This is not the way to win. Things tumbled out of control quickly – Varga threw a full can of Coke across the room, and Tursbok flung a barrier across the room and gave us the finger. Fan took the microphone and incited the crowd by saying he wins by skill and that we can only win by technical rulings. What were we to do? Ken Laughlin writes, “If Reed and Seemiller see that a default has become unavoidable, they should default first...” We had a quick team meeting and discussed that possibility. But how could we? There was only 5 minutes until the final, and we had just been assaulted by the Hungarian team. Could we just let them win even though they broke the rules? It all happened so fast. It was the referee’s decision, not ours.

Barney Reed did nothing wrong in pointing out that Fan had a bubble on his racket. Our other team members were not part of this controversy. You can blame me for being an overzealous coach, trying to protect his players. If I didn’t stand up for my team I’d feel even worse.

This whole controversial default would have been avoided if Fan had provided his second racket when initially requested by the tournament referee, Dr. Azmy Ibrahim.

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In Memoriam:

Saji Joseph

By Michael Wetzel

Dr. Saji Joseph, 38, was killed in a one-car accident in his hometown of Guntersville, Ala., on Dec. 10. Saji was a member of the North Alabama Table Tennis Club since November 2000 and rated 1804 after competing in two USATT tournaments – 2001 Alabama Closed and 2001 Decatur Open.

“Saji brought his competitive spirit to the club every week,” said Michael Wetzel, NATTC vice president and Saji’s doubles partner. “He worked hard to improve his game and excel at the sport. His positive impact on the club and its members won’t soon fade. And certainly his warm smile and firm handshake will sorely be missed.”

Saji, a native of India, was a medical physician specializing in dementia. He also enjoyed tennis, badminton, basketball, literature and guitar. He is survived by his wife Swapna and 2-year-old daughter Nicky.

He was buried Dec. 17 in Cochin, India.
TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE: Y.C. Lee, Lily Yip

Referee: Patrick Collins

Equipment: DoubleFish Official 45th World Championship Tables & Nets, 3 star 40mm orange balls.

entry deadline: Entries must be postmarked at April 25, 2002. Late entries by May 1, 2002 will be charged $15.00. Entries may be rejected if space does not permit.

Entry Policy: All entries must include payment.

Rules: All USATT laws and regulations apply.

Eligibility: All players must be USATT members or members of an ITTF affiliated association. (Except Events 4 & 19). Bring your membership card or receipt. Non-members must join USATT at the tournament. USATT membership: $30/yr, $75/3yr for adults; $25 for juniors; $60/yr for household (2 adults + minors). Adult players who have never been USATT members may purchase a One-Time Tournament Pass for $7. Junior players must be under the event age in their selected junior event as of the tournament date. Senior players must be 40, 60 by December 31, 2002. Novices (0-2 years experience no USATT Rating). Players ratings will be based on the March, April 2002 issue of the USATT magazine. The tournament committee reserves the right for acceptance or refusal of all tournament entries. Event 1 (East Regional League) will be league team matches. Teams will be selected by the Eastern Regional League Committee, directed by George Brathwaite.

Format: Events marked "RR" consist of preliminary round robin groups of 3-4 players. The player with the best record in the group advances to a single elimination draw. All matches are 3 out of 5, 11 point games except for the semis and finals of the OPEN which are 4 out of 7. The tournament committee reserves the right to modify the format or cancel events due to insufficient entries.

Directions: Take the Garden State Parkway to exit 135 Westfield - Clark. Follow signs to Westfield. Take Central Ave to second traffic light. Turn left onto Terminal Ave continue to next traffic light, turn right. This road becomes Rahway Ave. Follow about 2-3 miles to the Westfield Armory (on the left side)

The Westfield Armory is a few minutes walk from the Westfield train and bus stations.

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

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

I agree to comply with all tournament regulations. I accept full responsibility for my participation and relieve all sponsors, USATT and all tournament officials of any liabilities for injury to myself or my property. I agree to abide by all decisions of the tournament officials.

Signature (Parent or guardian if minor):

List Events by event # add doubles partner

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DoubleFish

New 45th World Championship DoubleFish Table and net set $995. After the tournament on sale for $675 (shipping included).

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Signature (Parent or guardian if minor):

Name: __________________________ Phone: __________________________ Club: __________________________ USATT: __________________________ Exp.Date: __________________________ Rating: __________________________

Street: __________________________ City: __________________________ State: __________________________ Zip: __________________________ Birthdate: __________________________

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An Official's View
By “Dr. Azmy”
Top Players and Their Performances

[Note: The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of USATT or its officers.]

Chatting with one of the USATT board members, who has been a good friend of mine through the years, we touched on some of our top players’ performances. The issue is the constant conflict between players and umpires due to some inadequate performances. He suggested to me that I should write a report about each of the top players after every major tournament. However, I cannot do that unless I am authorized by the board to do such a thing. Therefore, this article will talk in general about some of the problems which could affect our players when they travel to international tournaments.

The Serve

Some of our top players serve in a way that is questionable if not simply incorrect. The rule requires the ball to be resting on a stationary flat hand before it is tossed in the air at least 6 inches.

Some of our top players do not adhere to the concept of a flat hand. Cupping is a common act by many players. Others raise their hands up and even roll the ball a little before they toss it in the air. A frequent problem is when a player raises his hand very high but fails to toss the ball in the air 6 inches. It seems that the players believe that raising the hand is sufficient enough. And there is another top player who does not adhere to the idea of a stationary hand whatsoever. One can see the ball coming from his pocket to be tossed in the air by his fingers. Sometimes his hand is upside down before it is tossed in the air. Some players have a habit of twisting their hand while throwing the ball in the air, causing it to spin. We can all see the serve is illegal when a player throws it almost directly into his racket. But when the ball makes a circle in the air after a high toss many players think it is all right. However, this is the same effect as throwing directly into the racket. The rule says near vertical. From their point of view some players say it does not affect anything.

The Net

Some players come to the table and the first thing they do is touch the net with their fingers. Apparently they are testing the tension of the net. Others may hit the net with their rackets. Strangely enough they may do that after they lose a point, but they never bother to do that when they are winning. In any case when there is an umpire at the court the player should not touch the net at all. In fact every time a player touches the net, the umpire has to check it again, and the player may get a warning. If a player doubts the height or the tension of the net, all he has to do is ask the umpire to check it.

The Racket

The rule states that an approved legal rubber has to cover the striking side of the racket. However, some players present a racket to the umpire with rubber extending beyond the wood of the racket, or receding away from the wood. In both situations the racket is illegal. Then we have the problem of the colors. The rule is simple: the two sides of the racket have to be of different colors, cherry red and black, even if one of the sides is not used to strike the ball. The racket has to be above the table during the serve. If it swings under the table, then it is a fault.

Clothes

Once a player is on the rise, he suddenly does not want to tuck his shirt in his shorts. Somehow they consider it a symbol of their achievement. Another problem arises when the player wants to practice in his training suit. Once a player is on the court he has to wear the clothes and the number, if required, which he will use during the match. You can see this by looking in one of the international table tennis magazines.

Misbehavior

Some players feel they never make a mistake. If they lose a couple of points or a game, they throw their racket on the table or sometimes in the barriers. Others may utter unacceptable language. Lately, we see some who argue with the umpires or even say unkind statements to them. Watch the tapes of the prominent International players and learn the discipline, concentration, composure, and most of the time the calmness and sportsmanship.

What Could Be Done

Two suggestions come to my mind.
1. Players should not accept such behavior from their opponents while they are practicing.
2. The most important one is the role of the coaches. It is important that the coach discourage bad habits before they become costly, when umpires are judging them.

There is no umpire who likes to take unnecessary points from any player. Many times the players themselves are not aware of their mistakes. They have been practicing that way all the time. Some of them will face an umpire stating to him that they have been practicing that way all the time and nobody called it before.

Do not be surprised if there is a time when an efficient umpire will call all the rules. It is time to prepare our players for the International Arena.
Tables for Sale!

Tables used at the 2002 Stiga North American Table Tennis Tour are for sale! All tables are used only once and sold at an extremely low prices and we guarantee your satisfaction. For more info or to order a table, visit us at www.natabletennis.com!

Stiga Expert Table

~ Highest Quality Tables built in Germany
~ Convenient to fold and move into storage
~ Great for home and club use
~ Takes up little space
~ Net set included
~ ITTF Approved 1" Surface

$525 Home Price*
$465 Qualified Club Price*

Stiga Expert Roller CSS Table

~ Highest Quality Tables built in Germany
~ Easy to fold and move into storage
~ Excellent for home and club use
~ Takes up little space
~ Net set included
~ ITTF Approved 1" Surface

$625 Home Price*
$555 Qualified Club Price*

*Add $75 per table for shipping anywhere in the Continental United States. Multiple Table Purchase Discounts available.*

Contact Us:

NORTH AMERICAN TABLE TENNIS, Inc.
932 Hungerford Drive Suite 11-B
Rockville, MD 20850

Phone: 301-738-8250
Fax: 301-838-8921
Email: info@natabletennis.com
The 2002 

North American Tour

Western Open
SAN DIEGO, CA may 18-19

Stiga Open
NEWARK, DE june 15-16

more dates to come...

www.natabletennis.com

Check the reverse for table information.
Meiklejohn National Seniors Table Tennis Tournament- Over $14,000 in Prizes
June 6, 7, 8, 9, 2002 Leisure World, Laguna Woods, California: Clubhouse 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Sponsor</th>
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<tr>
<td>William Meiklejohn</td>
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<tr>
<th>Additional Sponsors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nittaku, LWTT Club, Golden Rain Foundation of Leisure World, Laguna Woods, Paddle Palace</td>
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<tr>
<th>Directors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olga Feingold Kahan, Director, Stanley Kahan, Assistant Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Kunze, Assistant Director, (949) 583-1696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walt Wehrli, Treasurer, (949) 380-0513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Referee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Miller</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Players must be 40 or over by December 31, 2002, legal US or Canadian residents, and members of the USATT or must include membership fees with their entry forms.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ratings are the USATT ratings listed in the March-April issue of the USA Table Tennis Magazine. Unrated players may participate in all events except rated doubles but may only advance in age events.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events Restrictions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No more than four events per day. No more than two doubles events per day; attempts will be made to find partners for those who need them.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rules</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All rules of the USATT will govern and be enforced. Games will be 11 points; most matches will be 3 of 5, some 4 of 7, and the open single finals 5 of 9.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stiga tables and Nittaku 40 millimeter balls.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Application Dates and Cutoff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All entries and fees should be postmarked by Monday May 20, 2002; after that, there is a late fee of $15.00. We only guarantee acceptance of the first 200 entries.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Driving Directions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Laguna Woods is 10 miles south of the Santa Ana Airport (Orange County Airport) via the 405 and 5 Freeways. Exit at El Toro and continue south 2.5 miles to Gate 9 at Calle CORTA. Ask the guard at the gate for directions to Clubhouse 5.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accomodations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayres Hotel, 24341 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods, CA 92653, (600) 594-8412: free airport/tournament shuttle and full breakfast, a special rate of $75.00 per night for reservations made before May 16, 2002.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meiklejohn Entry Form (Please Print)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name (Last, First)</td>
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<td>Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>City State/Zip</td>
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<tr>
<td>USATT # ExpDate Rating Birthdate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main Club at which you play Email address</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Enter me in the events listed below. I will abide by all regulations of the sponsors and the USATT. I relieve the sponsors and the USATT of any liability for injury to myself or to my property.

| Fee No. Name of Event Doubles Partner Fee No. Name of Event Doubles Partner |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, June 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Under 2300 Doubles 12:00 pm T T T T $10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single max 1300</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Over 75 Doubles 12:30 pm T T T T $10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Women over 60 RR 1:00 pm T T T T $10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Over 85 RR 1:00 pm T T T T $10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Over 80 RR 2:00 pm T T T T $10</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Under 1100 RR 2:30 pm T T T T $10</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Over 75 RR 3:00 pm T T T T $10</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Over 70 Doubles 4:00 pm T T T T $10</td>
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<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, June 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Under 2800 Doubles 9:00 am T T T T $12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single max 1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Over 70 9:30 am 100 50 25 25 $12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Under 1450 RR 10:00 am T T T T $11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Under 1200 RR 10:30 am T T T T $11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Hardbat RR 11:00 am 300 150 50 50 $14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Under 1300 12:00 pm T T T T $10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Women over 40 RR 12:30 pm 300 150 50 50 $14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Senior Elites RR 1:30 pm 500 300 150 150 50 $20</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hall of Fame</td>
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<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, June 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Draw Doubles 8:30 am 400* 200* 100* 50* 50* $15</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Over 50 10:00 am 350 150 75 75 75 $17</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Under 2400 RR 11:00 am 500 250 100 100 $18</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Over 60 11:30 am 200 100 50 50 $13</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Under 1800 12:30 pm 50 25 T T $12</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Under 1600 RR 1:00 pm 50 25 T T $12</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Under 3400 Doubles 3:00 pm 200* 100* 50* 50* $13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single max 2000</td>
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<tr>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Player's Party</td>
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<td>8:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, June 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Under 4200 Doubles 9:00 am 200* 100* 50* 50* $13</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Under 1900 RR 9:30 am 100 50 25 25 $14</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Under 4800 Doubles 10:00 am 500* 300* 100* 100* $16</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. over 40 Singles 11:00 am 1500 800 400 400 150 $20</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Under 2050 12:00 pm 150 75 35 35 $13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Under 2300 12:30 pm 350 150 75 75 $17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Send entry form and a check payable to NSTTTA to:
Ray Kunze
110 Via Estrada Unit B
Laguna Woods, CA 92653-4011
Email: rKunze@lea.net
2001 USATT HALL OF FAME AWARDS

By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

The 19th USATT Hall of Fame Awards Banquet was held in Las Vegas in conjunction with the U.S. Closed, on Thursday, Dec. 20 amid a cluster of stars windowed atop the Stratosphere Hotel. This year Jimmy McClure’s name was inscribed on the much admired Mark Matthews USATT Lifetime Achievement Award Trophy. New Hall of Fame Inductees were Players Scott Boggan and Richard Hicks, and Official Tom Miller. Here, capsulized, are some of their accomplishments. [Editor’s note – a longer version appears on the USATT web page at www.usatt.org, as well as individual Hall of Fame write-ups for these inductees and most past ones.]

Mark Matthews Lifetime Achievement
Award Winner

JIMMY McCLURE

1939 U.S. Open Champion

1934: Best record (16-1) at Parker Brothers’ American Ping-Pong Association InterCity. APPA National Champion with sandpaper racket made by his father. Received free trip to 1935 Wembley World’s by winning (with rubber racket) American Zone Qualifier. Began Coleman Clark Tour of 20 U.S. cities with visiting World Champion Victor Barna and his 1933 World Champion Doubles partner Sandor Glancz.

1936: Won World Doubles at Prague with Bud Blattner. Also won Doubles at U.S. Open with Blattner. Earned Best Performance Medal (11-0 record) at USTTA InterCity.

1937: Member of winning U.S. Men’s Team at the Baden World’s. Again won World Doubles with Blattner. Reached final of English Open in Singles (televised by GE) and Mixed.

1938: With Sol Schiff won third straight World Doubles – an achievement unmatched by any player since. The Awards Presentation, Sol and Jimmy agreed, was perfect. The Empire Pool and its 10,000 spectators were bathed in black. As the orchestra played The Star Spangled Banner, the American flag was spotlighted as was the official carrying the Men’s Doubles medals...as were the honored recipients Sol and Jimmy. McClure and Schiff also won the Doubles at the ’38 Philadelphia Nationals.

1939: After a good showing in East-West Matches, Jimmy received the encomium from Glancz that McClure has “been our most colorful player for years, but this year he seems to have a steadier and better attacking game.” Won Toledo Nationals.

1940: Won Doubles with Schiff at Indianapolis Nationals (run by Jimmy).

1942: Enlisted in the Navy, served in the South Pacific, returned home in ’45.

1945-47: Concentrated on building up his pre-war McClure Table Tennis Company and Play- Good Sports Shop business.

1949: Captain/Player of the U.S. Team to the World Championships. With the Women’s Corbillon Cup win, Jimmy added a 5th World Championship star to his warm-up jacket.


1957: Married Nellie Lee Orr.

1964-65: Referee at U.S. National Clay Court Tennis Championships.

1966: Charter member of USTTA Hall of Fame.

1979-: President of USTTA Hall of Fame.


1980-86: USTTA Vice-President.


1982-2000: Member of USOC Board of Directors.

1984-98: USTTA Foundation Chairman.

1985-98: USTTA Equipment Chairman (as he had been in ’49-51).


1987: Pan-Am Table Tennis Commissioner. Began two-year tenure as ITTF Vice-President for North America. Began and continues to be ITTF Hall of Fame and Merit Award Chairman. Pan-Am Table Tennis Commissioner.

1990-96: Active International Umpire and Referee.

1991-98: USTTA Vice-President.

1992-96: Olympic Commissioner and Jury Member for Atlanta Games, as he had been in Seoul.

1993: Charter Member of ITTF Hall of Fame and Indiana Hall of Fame. U.S. Open Tournament Director.

1998: Honored by Japanese TTA for his post-War World II help in getting the ITTF to accept the JTTA as a member body.

1999: Member of ITTF President Adham Sharara’s select Advisory Committee. Met IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch in Lausanne and awarded him an Honorary Life Membership in the USATT.

USATT Hall of Fame Player Inductee

SCOTT BOGGAN


1978: Member of U.S. Junior Team to Swedish Open Junior Championships. U.S. Open U-17 Doubles Champion. CNE Men’s Singles Finalist. Trinidad-Tobago Invitational Finalist. At USOTC’s, member of winning Men’s Team. U.S. Closed Men’s semifinalist (catches table edge in upswing, breaks his thumb, is forced to retire).

1979: Member of U.S. Team to Pyongyang, North Korea World’s. Pacific Coast Singles ($600) and Mixed Doubles Champion. Begins 4-year play in Second Division of German Bundesliga. Has hard time at first, but supports him, and four years later will finish #1 in the Second Division West with a 35 and 3 record. U.S. Closed Men’s semifinalist. U.S. Closed U-21 Finalist. Qualified for 1980 U.S. Team via Team Trials.

1980: Represented U.S. at Italian and German Opens. Coached a little in Belgium – Jean-
7th Annual St. Joseph Valley Open

38th ST JOSEPH VALLEY OPEN
at University of Notre Dame
May 25th & 26th, 2002
South Bend, IN

These hotels have agreed to set aside rooms until 04/22/02 for the St. Joseph Valley Open. The rooms will be released after that date so please take advantage of their support and reserve your room as soon as possible *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>1st</th>
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<th>3rd-5th</th>
<th>6th-8th</th>
<th>9th-10th</th>
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<td>$39</td>
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<td>3000</td>
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<td>Open Doubles</td>
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<td>U - 18 Guys</td>
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<td>SAT 2:30 PM</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>U - 18 Girls</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SAT 2:30 PM</td>
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<td>28 U - 4000 Dbls</td>
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<td>SAT 6:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 U - 12 Girls</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>SAT 6:30 PM</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>80</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

PLAYING SITE
- University of Notre Dame
- Joyce Athletic Center
- South Bend, IN

Players using this entry blank will be sent directions & map with tournament & motel locations.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR
Dan Seemiller

TOURNAMENT REFEREE
Chris Williams

TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE
TBD

ELIGIBILITY
St. Joe Valley is open to USATT members or those who join.

All age event cutoffs will be 05/25/02.

Events #4 & #5 - A legal 'hardbat' for the purposes of Event #4 must comply with the Laws of Table Tennis Rule 2.4.3.1. The red/black Laws of Table Tennis Rule 2.4.6 shall not apply. This event does not count for rating points.

NOTES:
1) Tournament management may modify, combine, or cancel events, limit entries & assign temporary rating for unrated players.
2) Draws WITHIN a round robin may be modified to avoid state/club duplication, but no modifications will be made BETWEEN round robin events.
3) All USATT rules will be enforced.
4) Events starting after 4 PM on Saturday MAY carryover final rounds to Sunday.
5) Entry Limitations - PLEASE DO NOT enter 2 rated events with same starting time OR more than 6 total events.
6) Unrated players may enter any event (except rated doubles), HOWEVER, they will not advance from their Round Robin!!
7) All events will be 3 of 5 games, except for Open Singles which will be 5 of 9.
8) Ratings will be from the March/April issue of USA Table Tennis magazine.
9) Any questions regarding the tournament, eligibility, or entry should be directed to Dan Seemiller at (219) 654-7476 between 6:00 PM and 9:30 PM EST.

Mail entry to:
Dan Seemiller
P.O. Box 608
New Carlisle, IN 46552

38th ANNUAL ST. JOSEPH VALLEY OPEN ENTRY BLANK

Mail entry to:
Dan Seemiller
P.O. Box 608
New Carlisle, IN 46552

Mail entry to:
Dan Seemiller
P.O. Box 608
New Carlisle, IN 46552

Enter early ENTER early ENTER early ENTER early ENTER early
LIMITATIONS WILL BE PLACED BY EVENT & IN TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

Deadline for entry is FRIDAY, MAY 10TH (but I would wait to the last minute!!)

Play on 50 BUTTERFLY TABLES using White 3-Star Butterfly Balls!!

Sponsored by the South Bend Table Tennis Center

Tell rooms are for the: Table Tennis Tournament - Dan Seemiller!!

* These hotels have agreed to set aside rooms until 04/22/02 for the St. Joseph Valley Open. The rooms will be released after that date so please take advantage of their support and reserve your room AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

Mail entry to:
Dan Seemiller
P.O. Box 608
New Carlisle, IN 46552

38th ANNUAL ST. JOSEPH VALLEY OPEN ENTRY BLANK

Mail entry to:
Dan Seemiller
P.O. Box 608
New Carlisle, IN 46552

38th ANNUAL ST. JOSEPH VALLEY OPEN ENTRY BLANK

Name

Street

City State ZIP Phone ( )

Birthday USATT exp. date Rating

Doubles Partner: Open/D U - 4000/D U - 3400/D

Your club's name

Please enter me in the circled events. I agree to comply with all USATT regulations. I accept full responsibility for my participation and relieve the sponsors & the USATT of any liability resulting from injury to myself or damage to my property.

Signature (Parents sign for minors)

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MAY 10TH, 2002

Event fees $ 3.00
Registration fee $ 3.00
USATT membership fee $ 30 / Junior - 1 year $ 20

T-Shirts $ 12.00 (circle size) S M L XL
Juniors Team Donation TOTAL ENCLOSED

Checks payable to: South Bend TTC

DO NOT MARK
Michel Saive one of his pupils. Quarterfinalist in Norwich Union Canadian Open. CNE U-21 and Mixed Doubles Finalist. Writes first of a number of overseas articles for USTTA Topics and for (father) Timmrk's magazine.


Thereafter played sparingly, became New York City firefighter, married, won 1991 World Policemen/Fireman's Games, permanently retired, fathered two sons.

USATT Hall of Fame Player Inductee

RICHAHD HICKS

1959: Wins first of 30 (!) Indiana Men's Singles Championships.
1961-82: Helped run, then, for 17 years, was part owner and operator of the Indianapolis T.T. Center, during which time he was Tournament Director for an estimated 80 USTTA sanctioned tournaments.
1963: Begins a run of 25 consecutive Indiana Men's Singles Championships. U.S. #7 for '62-63 season. U.S. Team Member in CNE International Match against Canada (defeated multi-time Canadian National Champion Max Marinko in deciding match to give U.S. a 6-5 win).
1964: U.S. Team Member at CNE – Mixed Doubles Champion.
1966: U.S. #6 for '65-66 season. First of two years as U.S. Midwest Regional Tournament Director. Won Barna Award (for contributing the most to the Sport during the season). U.S. Team Member at CNE.
1969: First of three years as National Tournament Director.
1986: Chairman for the Hoosier State Games.
1991-2001: Over this 11-year stretch, Dick's play in the U.S. Open and Closed, especially in both the Over 50's and 60's, has been of extremely high quality and consistency. To summarize: in the U.S. Open, he's been the Over 50 Singles Champion 3 times and the runner-up-once; the Over 50 Doubles Champion 4 times and the runner-up 4 times; the Over 60 Singles Champion once, and the runner-up 3 times; and the Over 60 Doubles Champion 4 times. In the U.S. Closed, he's been the Over 50 Singles Champion twice and the runner-up twice; the Over 50 Doubles Champion twice and the runner-up 6 times; the Over 60 Singles Champion 3 times and the runner-up twice; and the Over 60 Doubles Champion 3 times and the runner-up twice.

Such longevity in the Sport, and Dick's role as both contributor and player, had to be rewarded.

USATT Hall of Fame Official Inductee

TOM MILLER

1981: President of his Livermore, CA-area Tri-Valley Table Tennis Club.
1980-90s-Present: Began the Umpire and Referee work for which he's best known – quickly advancing to a string of starts as Chief Umpire at the U.S. Open and Closed. In 1990 umpired U.S. Open final between Waldner and Appelgren.
1985-: At U.S. Open began annual historic photo-scrapbooks of officials.
1987-88: In Cleveland County for 60th English Open. At Seoul, first U.S. Umpire to serve in the Olympics. 1990-: Officiated in many a California tournament and later was inducted into the California TTA Hall of Fame.
1990-: First of his now 13 trips to Japan to umpire. Held in such esteem there that in tournaments to date he's umpired 2 Women's and 8 Men's finals, including the Grand Prix Ogimura Cup with Waldner.
1993: Won Best Umpire Award given by Japanese at World Global Youth Championships. At U.S. Open won Worst Umpire Award...from a Dominican player, who, on being faulted and carded by Tom, snarled, “You come to my country and I kill you!”
1993-2000: attended the World Championships in Gothenburg; officiated at the European Championships in Bratislava; was out on court 20-plus times during the South American Championships at Curacao (in a hot and humid un-air conditioned gym), umped a Samsonov match in the Italian Open at Bolzano, was in Paris for the Pro-Tour Final, in Mexico City for the Pam-Am Paralympics, and in Eindhoven for the World Championships. At the 1995 Canadian National's he umpired 59 matches; at the '96 Arctic Games 78 matches. At the '99 Pan-Am Games was brought back on his day off without time even to put on his uniform. But he often works out of uniform – at 2001 U.S. Closed confirmed that, as a former measurements engineer and manager of a standards lab, he'd been in the right profession, for even in retirement he was into measurements and standards: went round, as was his custom before play started, to set the nets on all the tables (in this major, 75 of them). 2000:-was in Sydney for the Olympics, in Doha, Qatar for the Pro Tour carrying on a dialogue with a Prince and his racing camel, and at Osaka for the World's. Back at the 1996 U.S. Open, Tom had been chatting with a Chinese woman umpire named Ji Lan Liu. Four years later, as Ji in China was watching live table tennis action from the Sydney Olympics, who's flashed on the screen but the match umpire – Tom Miller! “I know him!” said a surprised Ji. Over to the phone she went, called former USATT Officials Chair Y.C. Lee. Y.C. relayed the warm greetings to Tom's wife Marilyn.
Marilyn e-mailed Tom at his Sydney residence dorm. And when Tom returned from the Games that day, he received Ji's testament to his far-flung fame. So who says USATT umpires go unrecognized?
STILL EXCITING.

STILL ENTERTAINING.

STILL ENERGIZING.

STILL THE BEST WAY

to get away.

LAS VEGAS

FREEDOM TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL
By Brian Pace

Brian Pace, a former National Collegiate Singles Champion, has been ranked among the top ten in the U.S. numerous times, and has been rated over 2600.

It took me about 7 years to realize what I was searching for and where to find it. It really took some pretty tough hits for me to realize what I had to do and why. For the last five years I have always been on the bubble of making the U.S. Team, but I have fallen short every time. Whether it was losing a big lead, missing a serve at a crucial moment, or just flat-out mental and emotional exhaustion, I found a way to fall short of making the Team. While I would fix one problem, one more would occur and that happens often when you are your own coach. I realized that I had no 6th gear to rise to the occasion. I hadn’t found that substance that put me at my best when I was among the best.

Take the four historically best players over the last four years in the U.S., and it is obvious that they all have it. They can turn on their 6th gear like hitting a light switch. We all see it happen, but how can you learn to nurture this emotional gift so that it is just a neuron away? This is a story of how I found my 6th gear in a totally unrelated sport, and how it affected my outlook to find it in the sport of table tennis.

My involvement in Mountain Bike is 80% of the reason why I decided to pursue table tennis abroad. In 1999, I started mountain biking as a cross-training boost to my table tennis game. It was the first time I have ever done any kind of workout besides table tennis. Just to set the record straight, I had never lifted weights in my life until the 2001 Fall Season. In 2000 I won the Southeastern Regional Championship in Mountain Bike. It consisted of eight races all over Florida, and I was also voted most dominant rider because of the way I rode the bike. I didn’t even know that there was a way you can ride a mountain bike. (I was labeled “Teflon Arm” because my right arm is about 1/3 bigger than my left because of table tennis, and on the starting line it really stands out.) I was often asked how I did it? I would always reply, “did what”? Apparently I possess a type of 6th gear that allowed me to rise to the occasion. I really didn’t understand it until people started to explain that my riding behavior was quite unique. From the starting line of a race to the actual trail is about 400 meters. In the eight races in the series, I always entered the trail and finished the first lap in 1st place. If I had a lead on anyone, they never passed me during a race. I didn’t realize it but I was punishing my field. If one rider finished 2nd behind me one week, he would finish 9th the following weekend. And if one rider finished 10th one week, he would manage a 3rd behind me the following weekend. So I was emerging as a consistent, dominant rider. I really stopped trying to search my feeling because there was nothing special that I was aware of. I knew I was doing nothing but riding like a chicken with its head cut off, then my fellow competitors started talking. Fellow competitors see qualities in you that they want. that’s why they mention it to you. Always give your fellow competitors a heartfelt listen: they are speaking from their hearts. (Doesn’t matter if it’s true.) They gave me the real scoop. I didn’t waste any energy nor did I make mistakes in races. I had great riding technique and balance. I could read the trails very well, and I was shifting gears at the best possible moment to maximize speed. I sprinted the fastest on the fire roads from trail to trail. The only mental quality I heard was, WILLPOWER. I just beat riders up that were trying to keep up with me. It is very difficult to race for 90 minutes at top speed with 70 guys, and to dominate every week. My competitors had helped me understand who I was in this mountain bike world. While winning the championship should have left me feeling very well rewarded and with something of an ego, it really left me quite sad because I knew I had spent an incredible amount of time on something I didn’t love. I suffered a broken pinky, cracked ribs, dislocated shoulder, concussion, and a countless number of cuts and abrasions for something I didn’t love at all. But I was determined to learn the lesson from this experience, because at that point I felt like I had lost.

I really started to think about what I had done. I was actually riding for a Team that had won the Team Championship the year before, so they were good. We trained harder and longer than any of the 550 teams in the Series. I had mastered all the techniques that made me an accomplished rider. But the most important factor was having the ideal environment. I trained with the best riders, under the most pressure, and there was an expectation for me to win. That is what I was missing in table tennis in Florida. If I wanted to put myself in a position to unlock my potential in table tennis, then I had to play table tennis abroad. Europe was the obvious choice if I wanted to pursue this.
So, if I was going to go to Europe (which is what I labeled the ideal environment) in pursuit of the 6th gear, I had to take a look and decide if I should really do it? At 29, I took a very critical look at myself. I looked at my physical body, and I had not acquired any wear and tear. Matter of fact, I have never been injured from my 15-year table tennis career. I also love to play and it would take an incredible amount of competition to get me to the point of burnout. The unseen factor that Jimmy Butler told me about years ago was missing living in America. However, I am just too hungry to let anything get in my way now. The last factor, and the biggest one, was could I learn the skills that would make me a great player? Gao Jun gave me this answer, and I didn’t even ask her. We did an exhibition together and she pointed out all the qualities that make a great player. She told me most great players only need 2 of the 3 physical skills to be world class. The skills were speed, power and touch. She told me I have all three and that is rare. She told me that she has seen me lose matches 3-0 to a player 2700 and I have touched every ball. I had not been played off the table, but simply out-skilled. Gaining skill is a matter of being in the right type of environment. The top Chinese players are taught the same skills for their style, but it is the players with the best physical ability that will stand out. The only question I asked her was does she think I could do it now? Her answer was she could not name a better person than me. She stated that almost all of the top players in the U.S. will never have my physical gifts, but through training I could gain better touch and feel for the ball. This all came from a person that won a Silver medal in the Olympics, and she really did not have to give me this kind of praise.

I have always asked myself why I have continued to play table tennis, and the main reason is I want to be all I can be before I walk away from that life. I really don’t want to have any regrets about it. If I walked away from it right now, I would feel like I had cheated myself. I have achieved a very high level for an American-born player, and it would hurt my character if I never went to see how I would respond in a more intense arena. I don’t think I would be able to live with myself. While the best players in the U.S. are not American-born, some players have retired and flat-out quit because of frustration of not being able to compete at that level. I won’t let that get in the way of my achievement as a player.

So now I have my plan of attack on making the 2004 Olympic Team and I will not deviate from this course. I will spend the 2001/2002 Season in Romania under Viorel Filimon rebuilding my game. He specializes in the fundamentals, and I’m sure I will take some strong hits and setbacks but I’m prepared for the trying time. I will spend May of 2002 training in China, and the summer in training to make the 2002/2003 Season my debut as the first American player to play the entire ITTF World Tour. I have set some very bold goals for myself. I now understand that it is not whether or not I will make the Team in 2004, it is if I will do everything that is necessary to be the best player I can be going into the period so that I can call on my 6th gear quality when I need it.

So when the players become critics and say I’m too old at 29, the foreign players are too good, my hand-eye coordination is going bad, the younger players are more ambitious, I can’t learn those skills that another human being has, in a flash I think… I think back to mountain bike and the broken pinky, concussion, dislocated shoulder, cracked ribs, and 9 stitches in my leg that made me open my eyes. I realize that when the time is right and I have acquired these skills I will be able to look at any player and let them know that I am willing to die before I let them win, but also to be able to play like it. That’s having that 6th gear to rise to that occasion. Then, in a flash, I’m back to reality, and to this seemingly uneducated person who’s just waiting to see how I respond, I simply smile and say something polite and walk away. Under my breath I harmonize, it’s just a matter of time until the 6th gear is mine.
It started in the basement, playing once a week with my cousin. Then came college, where during free time I used to play at the recreational facility with three regulars, we were around 1500 level. After my first tournament in 1990 I was rated 1549. I remember at that tournament watching 1800 players practicing crosscourt, and it looked incredible to me. I said to myself that maybe one day I will be able to practice like that.

The highest seed at the tournament was a 2300-rated woman named Man Chai. I remember thinking that she was amazing and that maybe in my next life I could come close to that level if I were born in China.

In 1992 I moved back to New Jersey and joined the Westfield, New Jersey Table Tennis Club. At that time I was around 1600 level. I remember the first day walking in and seeing David Zhuang smashing backhands, and Barry Dattel coming up to me to help me join and make me feel "at home."

Some people say that they don't care about ratings, especially when their rating goes down, but deep down I think we are all obsessed by it. I consider myself a regular U.S. table tennis player who plays for fun and does not take the game too seriously – I never train for table tennis. However, year after year, with no real intention, my rating kept going up (with a rating of 2317 a few months ago), which of course I did not mind. Unfortunately I cannot say the same for most of the players at NJTTC. After nine years at the club I can safely say that most players' ratings did not change: those who were 1900 back then are 1900 today. From my observation I can conclude that the reason why most players don't improve is that they do the same thing over and over, same strokes, serves, serve return, footwork, etc. They never attempt to try anything new. I believe that most people have the potential to become 2300 or better players. I think the most important thing to remember is that they need to get off the habit of doing the same things day in and day out and try new and different approaches, especially if their level stays the same. If your rating is important to you and you don't see an improvement in your level, then it's time to work on something else. All the "good" players had to start somewhere. A 2500 player does not really possess anything different or special over an 1800 player, it's just that his/her loops, chops, serves, serve return, blocks, footwork, etc. are better, and I'm sure that at one time all of his/her loops, serves, etc. were those of an 1800 player until he/she started to use better strokes, move faster, work on serves, etc. Without trying these better strokes, etc., they would still be 1800 level.

After nine years of playing at the NJTTC I found that if I play once a week, my level goes down; twice a week, I will at best stay the same; and three times a week, my level improves. So in summary I would like to say for all of you adults out there that it's not only kids that get better, that it's not too late to improve. Play as much as you can, be confident, and don't be afraid to flip that serve, loop with your forehand from the backhand side, move faster, try new serves, take chances, etc., and in time all of these techniques will become natural. Just look at the top male players in the U.S., they are mostly over 30 and a lot of the top players are over 40. Remember, if your rating does not improve in time (max of one year), it's a wake-up call for you to change your "habits."

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By Patrick Mualem

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By Patrick Mualem

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Paddle Palace Open
SAN DIEGO, CA • DECEMBER 15-16, 2001 • BY ALAN WILLIAMS

The Paddle Palace Open was a very successful three-star tournament by any standard you wish to apply. Hosted by the San Diego Table Tennis Association at their marvelous facility, the Balboa Park Activity Center, the tournament was operated by North American Table Tennis. The title sponsor, Paddle Palace, the famous equipment distributor, supplied prize money and the Nittaku tournament balls.

140 players entered for the purpose of “warming-up” for the U.S. National Championships the following week. Dan Patch was on hand to represent Paddle Palace as was Les Sayer, with Nick Mintsivis serving as their Equipment Vendor. Pam Ramsey and Clark Mitchell were helpful, as always, with John Trentor lending his copy of the magazine for ratings verification and SDTTA members Michael Gift and Torn Plassed as willing and able manpower. Tournament Director Zachary Sng and President Richard Lee with Linda Hsing as Tournament Referee, posted the draws, set the tables and barriers, and started play at 9AM on Saturday.

Several players had great weekends. Albert Senter started his tournament by posting a victory over Tim Boggan in the Over 50, yet failed to advance in a two-way tie in their Round Robin. Al ended his tournament by playing the very last match in the hall, a thrilling 6-game win over Phil Vandewiele to take the Under 1900 title. In between, he had several ratings upssets and showed himself “ready for Vegas.”

A welcome newcomer was Kazakhstan native Elmira Zainabudanova, now living in Los Angeles. Ranked #39 on the ITTF Women’s World List back in April of 2001, Elmira was given an estimated rating of 2300 for her entry in Open Singles. This willowy raven-haired player was a victim in her Open Round Robin, yet returned on Sunday “just to watch.”

Barney D. Reed, the USATT Board member, also acquitted himself with honor, coming second to Avislyh Schmidt in the Over 40, and defeating Wade Sun for the Under 2100 title. Prisclida Umeel teamed with her father to win Under 4200 doubles, and finished first in Under 22 Women. Yet she seemed happier with the NTTA tee shirt she received for serving as a scorekeeper in Open Singles!

Oh… about those scoreboards… everyone assumed someone else was providing some, so it took a quick trip to Staples and Richard Lee’s “art talent” to make four of them in time for the Open Quarterfinals. “They look good, don’t they!” Lee assessed his own effort. Uh… Yeah. Well, they did the job, anyway.

Players preparing for the National Team Trials on Tuesday provided a stronger than normal field for Open Singles. It was decided that the Top 8 seeds would be formed in a SE bracket of 16 on Sunday, to meet 8 Qualifiers from the other 27 entrants. Eight RR groups played on Saturday to produce our challengers. A complete report is available online at natabletennis.com, so here, we go straight to the Quarters.

QUARTERFINALS

No prize money for the losers? No, no prize money below semifinalist at this event, making the outcomes more important for our contestants.

Barney Reed Jr. has no intention of being penless following a match with Philip Caillaud. Barney makes that clear with 5,4, wins in the first two games. But there’s life in the ‘old man’ yet, and he stuns Reed at 8 in the third game. He’s doggedly persistent the rest of the way, but the youngster manages (8,9) to close the door.

Ashu Jain, according to one knowledgeable observer, is too quick to retreat after his serve and too much in love with a ‘back-court,’ long-distance game. If that’s the case, a shaven-headed Razvan Cretu finds it difficult to exploit these flaws. Both players have large, vocal support groups as they stage the best match of the Quarterfinals. Razvan’s yellow-jacketed teammates like the 11-8 first game, but Ashu is playing at his best now, and takes both the second and third games at three.

Cretu ties it up, 11-9 in the fourth. Ashu breaks back in the fifth at 7. Facing elimination, Razvan wlls himself to an 11-9 decision in the sixth. The crowd roars for the spectacular seventh contest that ends 13-11. For Razvan and his jubilant U23(*): Tahl Leibovitz, 8,5,8,-8,-6,4.


Under 22 Men: P’ Lee McCool; 2”1 Ashu Jain.

Open Singles – Final: Fan Yi Yong d. Razvan Cretu, 3,7,8,-8,6; SF: Fan d. Sean Lonergan, 3,4,9,6; Cretu d. Barney J. Reed, 3,4,9,11; QF: Reed d. Philip Caillaud, 5,4,-8,8,9; Cretu d. Ashu Jain, 8,-3,-3,9,7,9; Lonergan d. Lee McCool, 3,5,-8,7,5; Fan d. Tuan Le, 2,4,4,3.

Over 40: Avislyh Schmidt d. Barney D. Reed, 9,-8,8,6,6.

Over 50: Bill Ukapatasyasal d. Tim Boggan, -8,3,-11,9,7,2.


Under 13: Veronika Birioukova; 2”1 Jeff Crane.

Hardbat: 1”1 Tahl Leibovitz; 2”1 Tim Boggan.


USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • March/April 2002
POWER PONG OPEN
Fountain Valley, CA • October 26-28, 2001

Open: 1st Barney J. Reed; 2nd Tawny Banh.
Open Doubles: 1st Tawny Banh/Than Tran; 2nd Le Tran/Loc Ngo.
Women: 1st Tawny Banh; 2nd Anzhelika Tyan.

FAIRFIELD OPEN
Fairfield, CA • November 10, 2001
Open: 1st Shuia Jafar; 2nd James Theriault.
U1850: 1st Trevor Runyan; 2nd Jim Bjornsson.
U1700: 1st Gene Schwartz; 2nd Albert Papp.
U1550: 1st Dave Bergevin; 2nd Jeff Pake.
U1400: 1st Harish Balan; 2nd Ruben Quevedo.
U1250: 1st Ruben Quevedo; 2nd Ralph Harriman.
U1100: 1st William Brin; 2nd James Ma.
Hardbat: 1st Bruce Liu; 2nd Lorin Benedict.

MILLCREEK OPEN
Erie, PA • October 20-21, 2001
Open – Final RR: 1st Dan Seemiller, 3-0 (d. Ekon, -9,10,5,8,15; d. R. Seemiller, 4-0; d. Andew Anderson, 4-0); 2nd Abass Ekon, 2-1 (d. R. Seemiller, 9-8,9,4,5,7; d. Anderson, 8-7,6,6,6,3); 3rd Randy Seemiller, 1-2 (d. Anderson, 7,8,6,5); 4th Andew Anderson, 0-3.
Open Warm-up – Group Winners: Dan Seemiller, Abass Ekon & Jared Lynch.

U2400 – Final: Randy Seemiller d. Dmitri Baikov, 4-1; SF: Seemiller d. Michael Walk, 8,7,8,10; Baikov d. Takigami, 8,9,9,8,8,1.
U2200 – Final: Ben Kim d. Colen Greenidge, 7,5-8,9,7,6,9; SF: Kim d. Dave Strang, 7,7,7,7; Greenidge d. Jared Lynch, 4-1.
U2050 – Final: Chandru Krishnan d. Dave Berenson, 1,9-10,8,9,5; SF: Krishnan d. Eric Leventhal, 7,8,5-9,8; Berenson d. Rajiv Issar, 7,8,5,8.

POWER PONG Director Attila Malek, Women’s Winner and Open Runner-up Tawny Banh, and Open Winner Barney J. Reed.

CONCORD YOUTH OPEN
Pleasant Hill, CA
October 21, 2001
Open: 1st Dennis Yi; 2nd Aura Malek; 3rd Jimmy Viet; 4th Wallace Liu.
U1700: 1st David On; 2nd Xin Jie Wu.

VALLEY OF THE SUN OPEN
Phoenix, AZ • January 12, 2002
Open: 1st Leo Lucas; 2nd Marc Quigley; 3rd Robert Bryant Jr.
Over 30: 1st Hao Phan; 2nd Rick Massoth 3rd Derrick Cone.
Over 60: 1st Chongli Cheng; 2nd Peter Au; 3rd Bernhard Schiele.
Over 69: 1st Bernhard Schiele; 2nd Wayne Johnson.

U1500: 1st Cecilia Chung; 2nd John Springer.
U1250: 1st John Springer; 2nd Colin Hwang.
U1000: 1st Raymong Yip; 2nd Colin Hwang.
U750: 1st Colleen Lee; 2nd Benjamin Chung.
U500: 1st Aaron Wang; 2nd Alan Quach.
U250: 1st Stephen Poons; 2nd Pearl Shih.
U4000 Doubles: Ngai Chi Chung/Dennis Yi; 2nd Sergy Gutkin/Auria Malek.
U2700 Doubles: 1st Jessica Yick/Atha Fong; 2nd Karen Phung/John Springer.
U1400 Doubles: 1st Crystal Liu/Margot Leong; 2nd Helen Ku/Colleen Lee.
Club Competition: 1st Concord 168; 2nd Palo Alto 149; 3rd SF Sunset 87; 4th SF Chinatown Club.

SENODA OPEN
South Bend, IN • December 15, 2001
Open: Roy Schlabach d. Jared Lynch, 4-3.
U2250: Jared Lynch d. Roy Schlabach, 3-2.
U2050: Andy Cochran d. Jeremy Yoder, 3-0.
U1900: Jeremy Yoder d. Eli Kahn, 3-0.
U1750: Sherri Wilson d. Brian Kuchaes, 3-0.
U1600: Michael Mast d. Stephen Creel, 3-0.
U1400: Stephen Creel d. Ahmed Mentash, 3-0.
U1200: Nicole Lynch d. Jack Hetfield, 3-0.

$1500 RIO GRANDE
Harrington, TX • November 17-18, 2001
Class A: 1st Clark Yeh; 2nd Moto Fujiiwa; 3rd Cesar Serna.
Class B: 1st Sergio Alvarez; 2nd Richard Howell; 3rd Rodolfo Garza.
Class C: 1st Art Villarreal; 2nd Manuel Lopez; 3rd Gabriel Nava.
Class D: 1st Herb Ward; 2nd Leon Penel.
Class E: 1st Ventura Rios; 2nd Patricia Thomas.
Class F: 1st Bob Britton; 2nd Evariston Rangel.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • March/April 2002
U1600: 1 v Wayne Johnson; 2” Bernhard Schiele.
Jerry Beerwinkle; 4”h Robert Trudell.
Open: i Marco Borrillo; 21 Derrick Cone; 3rd
Mesa, AZ •
Group F: 1 Yinnong Zheng; 2”1’d Justin Rogers.
Group E: 1” Adil Dhanani; 2w Rick Brown.
Group D: th’ David Racki; 2”1” Stetan Mitioi.
Group C: 1 w Carlos Cheon; 2nd Pin Xue.
•
October 27, 2001
Schaumberg, IL
The Hutchinson TTC, KS
•
January 12, 2002
Schiele.
Hardbat: 1” Marco Borrillo; 2”1’d Bernhard Schiele.
Group A: 1” Engelbert Solis; 2” Andy Ibanigor; 3rd Spenser Lamm; 4” Junduo Zhao.
Group B: 1” Jim Waltz; 2” Ahmar Hejri.
Group C: 1” Carlos Choon; 2” Pin Xue.
Group D: 1” David Racki; 2” Stefan Mitroig.
Group E: 1” Adil Dhanani; 2” Rick Brown.
Group F: 1” Yinnong Zheng; 2” Justin Rogers.

OUTPOST OPEN
Mesa, AZ • November 17-18, 2001
Open: 1” Marco Borrillo; 2” Derrick Cone; 3rd Jerry Beerwinkle; 4”h Robert Trudell.
Hardbat: 1” Yinnong Zheng; 2”1’d Justin Rogers.
Group F: 1” Yinnong Zheng; 2” Justin Rogers.

OUTPOST OPEN
Mesa, AZ • November 17-18, 2001
Open: 1” Marco Borrillo; 2” Derrick Cone; 3rd Jerry Beerwinkle; 4”h Robert Trudell.
Hardbat: 1” Yinnong Zheng; 2”1’d Justin Rogers.
Group F: 1” Yinnong Zheng; 2” Justin Rogers.

HUTCHINSON WINTER OPEN
The Hutchinson TTC, KS • January 12, 2002
Class A: 1” Stan Stoodley; 2” Laura Xiao.
Class B: 1’ George Taplin; 2’d Aaron Hendrickson.
Class C: 1” John Miller; 2” Li (Sam) Xiansong.
Class D: 1” Qiang Zhao; 2” Joseph Fong.
Class E: 1” Lyian, Zhao; 2” Adam Miller.
Hardbat: 1” Guy Hendrickson; 2” Carl Miller.
Under 12: 1” Lyian Zhao; 2” Jwoong Huh.
Under 3000 Doubles: 1” George Taplin/Jonathan Paretsky; 2” James Thompson/Eric Coutry.

DAVISON OCTOBER OPEN
Davison, MI • October 20, 2001
Open: 1” Ogundimu Gbenga; 2” Mike Veillette.
U2200: 1” Terence Kalicharan; 2” Dave Skrzypek.
U2050: 1” Mitchell Foster; 2” Nazim Nizar.
U1950: 1” Tobias Schraper; 2” Mike Cusick.
U1750: 1” Tobias Schraper; 2” John Rozmarek.
U1650: 1” Winston Kalicharan; 2” Joseph Helfand.
U1550: 1” Terry Robinson; 2” Mike Ward.
U1450: 1” Winston Kalicharan; 2” Joseph Helfand.
U1350: 1” Dana Long; 2” Winston Kalicharan.
U1250: 1” Winston Kalicharan; 2” Dana Long.
U1150: 1” Alex Minto; 2” Robert Kochler.
U1000: 1” Robert Kochler; 2” Bo Nowakowski.
Under 18: 1” Winston Kalicharan; 2” David Witt.

DAVISON NOVEMBER OPEN
Davison, MI • November 17, 2001
Open: 1” Ogundimu Gbenga; 2” Mike Veillette; 3rd Scott Endicott.
U2200: 1” Dave Skrzypek; 2” Dave Peradotto.
U2050: 1” Jim Dawson; 2” Chan Clement.
U1950: 1” Jim Keep; 2” Steve Dawson.
U1750: 1” Steve Dawson; 2” John Rozmarek.
U1650: 1” Steve Dawson; 2” Michael Hambert.
U1550: 1” John Rozmarek; 2” Charles Sherman.
U1450: 1” Joergen Schaefer; 2” Mike Word.
U1350: 1” Mike Monahan; 2” Brian Tsui.
U1250: 1” Chan Kim; 2” Jeff Tomsha.
U1150: 1” Edmundo Wong; 2” Dan Markus.
U1000: 1” Jonathan Wu; 2” Bill Rayewski.
U3600 Doubles: 1” Scott Endicott/Terry Robinson; 2” Don Hayden/Sid Stewart.

NEW HAMPSHIRE OPEN
Manchester, NH • November 4, 2001
Class A: 1” Jean-Philippe Haid; 2” Danya Budiman; 3rd Kim Bratlow; 4” Willie Lee.
Class B: 1” Sonu Bhatia; 2” Mark Hamilton.
Class C: 1” Jim Baird; 2” Ken Cameron.
Class D: 1” Denny Conley; 2” Paul Ferriero.
Class E: 1” Kevin Chau; 2” Eric Seymour.
Class F: 1” Ben Alvot-g; 2” Galina Seymour.
Class G: 1” Digger Micka; 2” Geoffrey Tang.
Class H: 1” Sharlene Squier; 2” Il-Kyung Karam.

MARYLAND CIRCUIT
Eldersburg, MD • January 5-6, 2002
Over 40: 1” Julian Waters; 2” Mark Davis.
Under 18: 1” Mike Harris; 2” Jeremiah Tsang.
Under 16: 1” Mike Harris; 2” Jesse Wasserman.
Junior Doubles: 1” Mike Harris/Paul Harris; 2” Jeremiah Tsang/Brandon Ayuyeiga.
U2100: 1” Jack Jacobs; 2” Julian Waters.
U1900: 1” Julian Waters; 2” Steve Hochman.
U1700: 1” Ray Chen; 2” Yvonne Kronlage.
U1500: 1” Tom Huff; 2” Sujoy Deb.
U1300: 1” Kent Wagner; 2” Robert Carmack.
U1100: 1” Mike Todd; 2” Warren Evans.
U900/Novice 1” Cathy Waters; 2” Ross Lewin.
U3000 Doubles: 1” Yvonne Kronlage/Sujoy Deb 2” Steve Hochman/Marty Staehlin.

COLUMBIA GIANT RR
Columbia, SC • November 11, 2001
Class A: 1” Sven Mestichen; 2” Chih-Sheng Huang; 3” Simon Brain; 4” Roger Jeanice.
Class B: 1” Bobby Jones; 2” Ira Goodman.
Class C: 1” Corey McElveen; 2” Mike Dorman.
Class D: 1” Gerard Schreuders; 2” David Phelps.
Doubles: 1” Roger Jeanice/Bobby Jones; 2” Mike Dorman/Corey McElveen.
I'm back in Tianjin, the site of the Great Victory, when the Chinese Table Tennis Team re-gained its dominant status in a commanding sweep of all titles of the 43rd World Table Tennis Championships.

This time, it's winter, people are bundled up, and traffic is positively frightening – unlike in the spring of 1995, when only alternating odd and even license plates were allowed on the street for the duration of the Championships, which gave the city a calmer, more organized look. Rather than police-escorted motorcades, now it's catch as catch can.

This time, also, the event is of a different nature. Only players who scored the top 16 points in Pro Tour events the past year are invited to the singles events, and only the top 8 teams to the doubles.

The mood of most players seems light. I've observed that before in such small-scale, high-caliber events. Unlike at the World Championships, where the sheer number of players and unknown faces seems to make them withdraw and hide in their concentration, here, most “big names” seem playful and relaxed. Maybe it's because they only have to focus on 15 possible opponents, and, although they are the best in the world, they are known quantities. Except for the Chinese Team, most don't have the luxury of having their favorite practice partner with them, so practice alliances are formed: Waldner doing his workouts with the two Danish doubles representatives, Allan Bentsen and Finn Tugwell; the Belgian Jean-Michel Saive with his “neighbor,” the Dutchman Trinko Keen, and – fittingly – the two east European dynamos Kreanga and Blaszczyk are together.

Nobody came thinking it was going to be easy. They came prepared to have fun and play their best. At the draw, the players sat together, and not a muscle moved in their faces when they found out whom they would play in the first round, or whomever else they might have to go through to make it to the final.

The hall was impressively set up with bright lights illuminating the playing area, while the stands disappeared in almost total darkness. Seven television cameras surrounded each of the two courts, lest any minor detail be lost.

At the official draw ceremony, ITTF President Adham Sharara announced a new “tradition” the ITTF will be starting next year: Bonuses for the top finishing places in the points standing. Although the new policy is not thoroughly fleshed out yet – how much, and down to which finishing position – they are committed to this new incentive. And in order to ring in this new plan, the ITTF has decided to give this year's top man and woman points finishers, Jean-Michel Saive (BEL) and Ryu Ji Hye (KOR), $8000 and $5000 respectively. I'd like to commend the ITTF for this generous addition.

Table tennis is still popular here in China. Autograph hunters mobbed the Chinese Team on their short walk from the shuttle bus to the hotel. While the players at the front filed into the safety of the lobby, Ma Lin, at the end of the group, was "cut away from the herd" and was stuck signing souvenir rackets and posing for pictures.

Everyone likes to practice on the competition tables, not in the practice hall, so there is a schedule, which allows each player some time in the main hall. Waldner comes in on the morning of the competition and requests some more practice time. Although it's scheduled for someone else, they don't show up and the King is accommodated. This is not a time for serious practice, but for familiarizing himself with the conditions. So he lob, high sidespin lobs that start out from the forehand side, curving hard to the left, looking like they will miss the table wide by several feet, but – magically, it seems – on their way down they curve back over the table, bounce and yet again reverse direction when that sidespin makes the ball break sharply to the left. It's all achieved with "corkscrew" spin, spin along the forward axis.

**Women's Singles Champion Wang Nan**

**MEN'S SINGLES**

**Round 1 (8ths)**

**Match #1** The #1 seed (from ITTF Pro Tour points) Jean-Michel Saive is the decided underdog in this match-up. Liu Guozheng, ranked higher than the Belgian, starts a bit cold and loses the first game. He comes out much stronger in the second and wins it easily. It seems like things will run their expected course after all, but Saive is nothing if not a fighter. He grinds out point after point, frustrating Liu, who seems a little offended – he should be winning pretty easily after all, what's this old guy doing putting up such a fight? Game 3 to Saive, and games 4 and 5, also, both at deuce, and Saive takes the 4-1 win over the Chinese youngster, 7-8,9,12,12.

**Match #2** What could have been an outstanding match-up, Chuin Chih-Yuan of Taipei against Lucjan Blaszczyk of Poland, turns out to be only OK. Chuin clearly plays more solidly – too clearly. Despite occasional beautiful points, Blaszczyk is forced into many errors. Except for the fifth game, where Chuin seems to take a well-deserved if not especially well-timed nap and loses at 3, the man from Poland is definitely outclassed today, 7-9,10-7.

**Match #3** Oh Sang Eun, the tall, lanky Korean, plays Kreanga from Greece. Kreanga, with moves that sometimes look more like gymnastics than table tennis, wins the first two games in counterlooping rallies, in which both rip forehands and backhands from far behind the table, and the Greek just plain seems to be more willing to go after the ball. But Oh uses his long reach to cover so much of the court while his much shorter opponent has to run around, and now the Korean seems to outlast Kreanga in the long points. He wins three beautiful games in a row, but drops the sixth. Before the last game, Oh salutes his coach in military style, like an officer who got his orders, and proceeds to annihilate Kreanga at 2. At the end of the match, he again salutes the coach. Order executed, 5-6,7,14,2,8.

**Match #4** The match between Ma Wenge and Wang Lijin, former and current Chinese National Team members respectively, showed how much more physical the sport has become over the past few years. Eight years ago, Ma's diminutive size didn't seem to matter much – he could take on – and beat – pretty much anyone. Today, the one-foot taller Wang Lijin showed him that unless you can hit the ball hard enough to get it out of his reach, he'll probably beat you. Although Ma wrangled out game three at 9 and deuced the fourth, Wang was just too powerful. A clear 4-1 for Wang, 4,6-9,12,7.

**Match #5** The evening session begins with Werner Schlager (AUT) playing Ryu Seung Min (KOR). The young Korean might be the fastest man on the table tennis scene these days. For a long time, Kim Taek Soo, Yoo Nam Kyu and several other Korean players have been burning up the floor mats with powerful, dynamic footwork. Ryu seems to have cranked it up another notch. His goal is not merely to reach every ball. He wants to get to every ball fast enough
to be there in time to pulverize it — and most of the time he does, as Schlager is to find out. He finds himself down 3-0 before he’s able to rattle Ryu a little. He wins the next two games, but he can’t stop a commanding performance by Ryu in the 6th and final game. Ryu wins, 3,8,8,7,12,7.

Match #6: The discussion about who has the biggest forehand in table tennis lately has centered on Kim Taek Soo (KOR) and Chiang Peng-Lung (TPE). Although I believe Ryu should be included in that discourse, the following match lets us do an A/B comparison of the first two contenders. I don’t know which one’s bigger, but Chiang has more of them. Except for a deuced second game, Kim is never really in this match and loses four straight, 8,12,7,7.

Match #7: J.O. Waldner (SWE) has had trouble with Ma Lin (CHN) lately. Tonight this rivalry looks for a while like it might get a new face. The Waldner of old shows up. Precise, smart, occasionally powerful, sometimes soft, using his full repertoire, he takes the first game from Ma. They trade the next two games, but then Ma forces mistakes and seems to impose himself against the 2,3, Waldner again soars and stops Ma at 5. He continues comfortably in control for most of the seventh and deciding game. Up 8-2, he must feel that he has this one in hand. But Ma throws everything into the next few points and catches up to 10-5. Five match points for Waldner, but he seems nervous, and misses a few finishing shots by fractions of inches. At 10-8 the Swede counter loops one of Ma’s backhands off the bounce and — what’s this? — the umpire points to the edge and awards him the match-winning point. He doesn’t notice because he thinks he missed and is looking to the other side. Ma doesn’t notice either because he’s picking up the ball. Both come back to the table ready to play, and the umpire gets up. Match is over, guys. The assistant umpire says she didn’t see the edge ball, and since neither of the players seems to have seen it, the umpire sits back down and lets them continue. Boom, boom, boom — three points for Ma, and he wins instead ... and thus, history is changed! Match to Ma, 5-6,8,6,6,5-10.

Match #8: The last match of the day is between Timo Boll (GER) and Trinko Keen (NED). Beautiful, athletic rallies, and the games go Keen, Boll, Keen, Keen, Boll, Boll and the match comes to game seven. At 7-4, Keen goes for a short ball and rips his forearm against the table edge, still makes the shot and wins the point, but within seconds is bleeding profusely. The match is stopped and a doctor comes to patch up a gash that later would require 15 stitches. A little rattled, Keen loses his lead, but regains his composure in time to eke out a 12-10 game and match win, 4-6,8,9,7-10,10.

Quarterfinals

Jean-Michel Saive vs. Chuan Chih-Yuan
Again, the veteran Saive has to face a powerhouse two-thirds his age, and again he surprises him with his fighting spirit. Chuan Chih-Yuan is faster, but Saive’s experience and absolutely relentless attack brings his opponent to his knees, 7-13,5,8,9.

Wang Liqin vs. Oh Sang Eun
The tall Wang Liqin and the even taller Oh Sang Eun display what might be the future of table tennis. Not only do they bring excellent schooling to the table, as have generations of players before them, but they both have advanced optimized techniques which allow them to take full advantage of their size. While others may have to step to make a clean shot, those two can just swing, and their long arms generate such a high racket speed that the resulting ball is simply too much for anyone to handle. Unless one anticipates perfectly or happens to have one’s racket in the way of the ball, there’s just no way to get it. Oh seems to be sharper. Over and over again, he forces Wang into backhand-to-backhand battles, which he almost always wins with his smooth, loose-whipping off-the-bounce backhand loop. Wang falls behind 0-2 games, but starting with the third game, a different Wang shows up: Much more dynamic, much more powerful and much faster than in the first two games, he no longer lets himself be entangled in those rallies but instead turns early and now even balls that initially appeared well placed yield an opportunity for a finishing shot. Towards the end — game five is an 11-2 blowout — he even regularly beats Oh’s backhand by pulling the backhand loop-kill trigger earlier. In a match that displayed the highest level of technique, the World Champion wins, 8-6,4,2,8.

Chiang Peng-Lung vs. Ryu Seung Min
Next, we again get to measure penhold forehand slingers. This time, Chiang and Ryu duke it out, and this time Chiang has a taller order to fill. This kid is all over the place, there’s no way past him, and from everywhere he can produce bombs that almost have the man from Taiwan duck for cover. Yet Chiang gradually grinds Ryu down, matching his power and, although his feet are not as fast as his opponent’s, he makes more efficient use of his assets. After splitting two deuce games to start the match, Chiang is more and more in control and he finishes the match with an increasing score gap and wins, 10,13,8,6,4.

Ma Lin vs. Trinko Keen
Trinko Keen has the unenviable task of trying to eliminate Ma Lin, and this one goes pretty much as expected. The Dutchman is always good for great entertainment, and nobody beats him with ease, but it is clear that Ma is in a different league as he wins, 7,6,10,3. On the bus ride to the hotel after his 4-0 loss, Keen commented: “This guy doesn’t show up to play the sport, like I do. He’s here to work.”

Semifinals

Wang Liqin vs. Jean-Michel Saive
So now we’re down to the semis. One more time, the Belgian gladiator steps into the ring against a heavily-favored player. Wang Liqin just can’t lose this one, can he? Well, after three games it’s 2-1 Saive, and anything seems possible. But in the fourth game it does start to look like he might be running out of steam. He’s still making the effort, but now he comes up a fraction of an inch short — enough to either make his shot less dangerous or make him miss. If that is because he’s slowed, or if Wang has added to his pace is hard to say. Probably a little of both — a combination that does not favor Saive. He loses, not easily, but clearly, 5-7,5-7,7-7.

Ma Lin vs. Chiang Peng-Lung
This is a beautiful battle of the two distinct penhold styles, one favored by Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese players (and Chiang), who use a long, squared racket, and the other distinctly Chinese, using a rounded racket, and — in Ma Lin’s case, with great regularity and effectiveness — the backhand side of the blade for looping or block-
Finalist Wang Liqin

ing. In fact, this edge seems what afforded Ma a victory that was as difficult as their respective rankings suggested, although the -9.3,-9.9,4.6 scores do not fully reflect it.

Final
Ma Lin vs. Wang Liqin

The final, “The Thriller in Tianjin,” with 149 points, is the longest match of the tournament. Although there have been several close matches, this one is more significant, because it is the final. Based on rankings and seeding, Wang is favored. After a 11-6 first-game loss, it is the final. Based on rankings and seeding, there have been several close matches, although the -9,3,-9.9,4,6 scores do not fully reflect it. Victories that were as difficult as their respective matches, although narrowing the lead by Wang is the kiss of death in most cases. Although this edge seems what afforded Ma a victory that was as difficult as their respective rankings suggested, although the -9.3,-9.9,4.6 scores do not fully reflect it.

WOMEN’S SINGLES

The women’s event almost saw an early exit by #1 Wang Nan, when she had to battle the extremely impressive Tamara Boros (CRO) in the quarterfinals. Boros was 7-4 up in the last game, but lost seven straight points, giving Wang the win, 9-3,6,15-4,5,7. In the upper half of the draw, Niu Jianfeng seemed to continue her quest to try and beat her opponents without allowing them any points in the last game. #1 seed Ryu Ji Hye (KOR) lost the last game against her at 1, and so did Li Jia (CHN), and as though wanting to dispense some poetic justice – Wang beat Niu at 1 in the 6th and deciding game of the final, 6,9,-9,3,1.

DOUBLES

Both men’s and women’s doubles had Korean winners. In the women’s event, it was South Korea’s Lee Eun Sil/Ryu Ji Hye over North Korea’s Kim Hyang Mi/Kim Hyoung Hui, 12,12,-9,10. In the men’s event, it was South Korea’s Kim Taek Soo/Oh Sang Eun over Hong Kong’s Cheung Yuk/Leung Chu Yan, 11,9,3,9. The outstanding match of that event, though, was a highly entertaining seesaw semifinal match between Hong Kong and Yugoslavia. Slobodan Grujic and the highly talented Aleksandar Karakasevic only lost one point more in the whole match than Hong Kong, but it made for an exciting match point of his own. Ma survives with a net ball, next blocks Wang’s repeated loops until he misses and finally gets him to dump a short underspin serve in the bottom of the net. Match and Championship to Ma Lin, 6,-8,10,-13,11,8,11.

Men’s Singles – Final: Ma Lin (CHN) d. Wang Liqin (CHN), 6,-8,10,-13,11,8; SF: Ma Lin d. Chiang Peng-Lung (TPE), -9.3,-9.9,4.6; Wang d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 5,-7,5,7,7; QF: Saive d. Chuang Chih-Yuan (TPE), 7,-13,5,5,8,9; Wang d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), 8,-8.6,4,2,8; Chiang d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 10,-8,6,4; Ma Lin d. Taiduo Keen (NED), 7,6,10,3; 8ths: Saive d. Liu Guozheng (CHN), 7,-8,12,12; Chuan d. Lucjan Blaszczyk (PLO), 7,-9,7,10,3,7; Oh d. Kallnikos Kreanga (GRE), 5,-6,14,2,8; Wang d. Ma Wenge (CHN), 4.9,12; Ryu d. Werner Schlager (AUT), 3.8,5,-7,12; Chiang Peng-Lung d. Kim Taek Soo, 8,12,7; Ma Lin d. Jun-Owe Waldner (SWE), 5,6,8,6,5,10; Keen d. Timo Boll (GER), 4,6,8,7,7,10.

Men’s Doubles – Final: Kim Taek Soo/Oh Sang Eun (KOR) d. Heung Yuk/Leung Chu Yan (HKG), 11,-9,4,3,9; SF: Kim/Oh d. Timo Boll/Zoltan Fejfer-Konnerth (GER), 10,-6,9,8; Heung/Leung d. Slobodan Grujic/Aleksandar Karakasevic (YUG), 8,-7,8,8,8,10; QF: Boll/Fejfer-Konnerth d. Wang Liqin/Yan Sen (CHN), 7,-10,5,9; Kim/Oh d. Werner Schlager/Karl Jindra (AUT), 10,-10,11,9,9; Cheung/Leung d. Chiang Peng-Lung/Chiang Yen-Shu (TPE), 18,9,9,-11,7; Grujic/Karakasevic d. Allan Bentson/Finn Tugwell (DEN), 8,4,-7,4.

Women’s Singles – Final: Wang Nan (CHN) d. Niu Jianfeng (CHN), 6,9,-9,3,1; SF: Wang d. Guo Yan (CHN), 3,-8,5,4,-8; Niu d. Li Jia (CHN), 6,4,12; QF: Niu d. Ryu Ji Hye (KOR), 6,-9,7,11; Li d. Aya Umemura (JPN), 10,5,2,6; Guo d. Kim Kyung Ah (KOR), 8,8,11; Wang d. Tamara Boros (CRO), 9,-3,6,15,4,5,7; 8ths: Ryu d. Viktoria Pavlovich (BLR), 6,4,5,8; Niu d. Lee Eun Sil (KOR), 11,5,9,-8,5,11; Li d. An Konishi (JPN), 3,11,6,4; Umemura d. Li Schopp (GER), 7,-10,6,9,5; Guo d. Liu Jia (AUT), 6,5,9,2; Kim Kyung Ah d. Bai Yang (CHN), 7,8,11,6; Wang d. Kim Hyoung Hui (PRK), 6,6,5,-9,6; Boros d. Yuka Nishii (JPN), 6,10,-7,8,9,9.

Women’s Doubles – Final: Lee Eun Sil/Ryu Ji Hye (KOR) d. Kim Hyang Mi/Kim Hyoung Hui (PRK), 12,12,-9,10; SF: Lee/Ryu d. Gao Xi/Li Jia (CHN), 8,-6,2,9,3,9; Kim/Kim d. Ai Fujinuma/Reiko Hiura (JPN), 4,3,8,7,6; QF: Gao/Li d. Bai Yang/Niu Jianfeng (CHN), 5,9,5,10; Lee/Ryu d. Jing Jun Hong/Li Jia Wei (SIN), 5,7,9,8,10,9; Fujinuma/Hiura d. Judit Herczig/Jia Liu (AUT), 6,8,6,7,5,9; Kim/Kim d. Kim Bok Rae/Kim Kyung Ah (KOR), 4,6,11,5,11.
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It was a contrast of the old and the new – Chang Jun Gao sweeping women’s singles, doubles and mixed doubles for the sixth straight year, while Eric Owens broke the Cheng Yinghua/David Zhuang stranglehold on men’s singles since 1993 and showed that a U.S.-born player can compete with them. It was 730 players battling in 67 events on 80 tables over five days. It was another well-scheduled tournament, leaving memories of past “disasters” merely memories from the past.

Also covered here are the USA Team Trials, which started the day before the Nationals, and finished the next day.

Bringing you this coverage is the writing team of Tim Boggan, Al Papp, Dennis Lui and Larry Hodges, and photographers Dean Kaus and Mal Anderson.

Many, many thanks go to those who put this event together – especially Allen Watson, who took over the reigns as tournament director just months in advance, as well as the overworked headquarters staff and volunteers that put so much time into this event. For a complete listing of the USA Nationals staff and sponsors, or to read the day-by-day accounts, go to the USA Nationals Home Page at www.usatt.org/events/2001nationals.

Women’s Singles
By Larry Hodges
8ths (round of 16)

The higher-rated player here won all eight matches by a combined game record of 30-1. Seven of the eight matches were easy 5-0 wins for the higher-rated player. Only 15-year-old Whitney Ping bucked the trend.

The eight matches:
- Chang Gao Jun d. Allison Seibel, 7,4,4,5,6
- Jackie Lee d. Judy Hugh, 8,7,6,3,6
- Simone Yang d. Marta Bastrzyk, 8,4,9,5,10
- Tawny Banh d. Pamela Jeffcoat, 5,4,1,1,6
- Virginia Sung d. Whitney Ping, 8,4,8,-6,9,4
- Lily Yip d. Katherine Wu, 2,8,2,4,6
- Michelle Do d. Laura Leach, 11,6,1,2,4
- Jasna Reed d. Kathy Chin, 2,5,3,3,5

Quarterfinals

There were two epic battles, and two not-so-epic battles here. Chang Jun Gao won easily (as she seems to do against everyone) against Jackie Lee, 5,7,5,4,8; and Tawny Banh won just as easily against Simone Yang, 2,2,4,6,11.

Michelle Do d. Jasna Reed, 6,4,11,-8,-8,-7,7,11

Who could have predicted it?! Michelle, now an aging “veteran” at age 18 with a 2238 rating, swept the first three games with an overpowering display of loops and smashes from both wings. Jasna, rated 2497, seemed to be playing a mirror image – the two play similar styles – except Michelle seemed totally unafraid on the attack. In the key third game, Jasna took an 11-10 lead, but Michelle deuced it, and got the ad with a spectacular backhand loop. The next point, Michelle put on a display of loops and smashes, with Jasna returning ball after ball from...
Nationals

Barney J. Reed

Jasna Reed

Sean O'Neill

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Chi-Sun Chui

Randy Cohen

Mark Hazinski

Andrea Lin

Scenes From The USA Nationals

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Transition From Robot Practice To Match Play
By Larry Thoman

Some players have difficulty with the transition from robot play to match play. Please realize that a robot is just one part of a complete training program. One-on-one drills, multi-ball practice, fitness training, practice matches, tournaments, and having a good coach are also necessary. Using a robot will accelerate development of a number of skills if used properly. A player can seamlessly go from playing on a robot to a competitive match with no deleterious effects if their training program is designed and executed properly.

This is what I suggest: Learn a stroke on the robot until you feel consistent against a variety of spins, speeds, and angles, practicing them one at a time. When you can handle a variety of different deliveries from the robot, then start working with a practice partner or coach to practice controlled drills that vary returns from shot to shot. Once you can modify your strokes "on the fly" to accommodate varying controlled returns, then it's time to start working this skill into practice games, where the object is to use this skill as much as possible in the game, win or lose. The last step is using this skill in actual competition. Skipping one of these steps will lead to poor results. Real improvement takes not only hard work, but working smart as well.

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off the table before Michelle finally hit a winner.

Down 3-0, Jasna staged a great comeback, looping and counterlooping to win the next three games. In the seventh game, Michelle leads 8-5, then 8-7, then wins the last three, 11-7.

The last game was a classic. Michelle goes up 6-0, and it seems over. But Jasna suddenly really raises the level of play, and with a display of shot-making, ties it up 8-all, then leads 9-8. Michelle takes a one-minute timeout, and then Jasna loops her serve off, 9-all. Jasna goes up 10-9, but Michelle wins a spectacular exchange, 10-all. Michelle attacks hard, but loses the next point when she misses the finishing backhand kill, and Jasna’s up again, 11-10. But that’s as far as she gets: Jasna misses a backhand loop, misses a kill against Michelle’s backhand loop, and then counterloops off. Match to Michelle!

Virginia Sung d. Lily Yip, 8-,-4,6,-6,7,-7

This was your basic match-up of pips-out penholder hitter (Lily) vs. chopper Virginia Sung. Virginia would throw in point-winning loops whenever she got the chance, but most of the points Lily would mix in steady drives and pushes, looking for a chance to smash. The rallies were long, often spectacularly long.

The turning point? “When Michelle beat Jasna during the eighth game, I just totally relaxed. I knew I had a good chance to make the final.” Virginia won the last two games by identical 11-3 scores. “I was having trouble adjusting to the conditions,” she said, referring to the 3000-foot altitude, which means thinner air, and so a faster-moving ball that curves less. “Now I feel confident for the first time.” Virginia would play Michelle the next day in the semifinals.

Semifinals
Chang Jun Gao d. Tawny Banh, 5,4,10,3,6

It was a pity that these two had to meet in the semifinals. They’d met in the final the past three years in a row. But this year, with Jasna Reed eligible for the first time, Tawny was third seed – and when they flipped the third and fourth seeds, she was stuck with Gao. It’s an argument against this system of flipping – wouldn’t it be fairer to simply have 1 play 2, 3 play 4? And set up the more obvious Tawny vs. Jasna match for the opportunity to play Gao in the final? (Or, in this case, Tawny and Michelle, since Michelle upset Jasna?) But that’s what the rules have you do. So we ended up with the two highest rated players in one semifinal. However, Gao has swept women’s singles, women’s doubles and mixed doubles for five straight years (and has already won women’s doubles and mixed doubles this year). There’s no stopping her – she’s just a level or two ahead of the competition. (It’s only been about four years since she was #3 in the world.) With her pips-out penhold steady blocking and pick-hitting, she simply isn’t seriously challenged – although Tawny gives her a battle in game three.

Virginia Sung d. Michelle Do, 6,7,3,10,-7

Michelle had played great in winning her quarterfinal match against Jasna, but playing a topspin player like her is very different than the chopping and pick-looping Virginia. Michelle doesn’t seem to have experience against choppers, and often doesn’t seem sure how to play this style. She gradually gets comfortable, and battles in games four and five (winning the latter at 7), but it’s too little too late. Like Eric in the men’s, we have a new finalist!

Final
Chang Jun Gao d. Virginia Sung, 9,6,3,1,3

But finalist or not, there simply is no denying that Gao is simply too strong. While primarily a blocker against most players, Gao seems even better against choppers. Virginia starts off strong, and leads 9-6 in the first. But Gao scores 5 in a row to win. In the second, Virginia makes it to 5-5 – but Gao scores 5 in a row again, and wins at 6. In the third, Gao leads 6-3 – and wins the last 5 in a row. She follows that by scoring the first 10 in game four, 15 in a row! But Gao has a heart, and she seemed to intentionally smack one in the net at 10-0 in the fourth, and wins 11-1. If she’d scored that point, it would have been a steady progression of scores: 9, 6, 3, 0! In the fifth, down 2-3, Gao scores 9 in a row! In all five games, Gao had had a streak of at least 5 in a row, and along the way had streaks of 15 and 9 in a row. She’s now completed her sixth straight sweep of the Nationals. In her four events – Women’s Singles & Doubles, Mixed Doubles and the Team Trials, she has a combined match record of 16-0, and a game record of 64-2, with only Simone Yang in the Trials and Tawny Banh/Simone Yang in Women’s Doubles getting a game off her.

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Men's Singles

By Larry Hodges

32nds - interesting matches

- Randy Cohen, rated 2384, barely defeated Rick Seiler, rated 2038, at 5,7,-9,10,9.
- Scott Preiss, rated 2169, upset 13-year-old Misha Kazantsev, whose rating after the North American Teams had jumped to 2407, at -9,7,4,-11,9.
- Lee McCool's ultra-close win over Rudy Miranda, rated 2307 and 2176 respectively, at scores of 8,-9,-6,7,14!

16ths (Round of 32)

Most of these matches (best of nine to 11) were pretty straightforward. The one nine-gamer was Loc Ngo's 5-4 win over Frank Remenyi: -10,5,6,7,4,-5,8,-8,4.

The only upset of the round was Samson Dubina's surprising 5-0, 3,8,10,9,11 win over Puerto Rico junior star Santiago Coste, rated 2420 to Dubina's 2280 in the ratings here.

Barney Reed had some problems with Tuan Le - especially when Tuan won the first. But Barney won the match, -5,8,6,5,-9,3,7.

Lee McCool gave U.S. Team Member Ashu Jain a scare, winning the first and leading 9-6 in the second before losing five in a row. Tied at 3-3, Ashu pulled out the seventh, 15-13, and won the match 5-3,-8,9,7,4,-9,13,8.

Chi-Sun Chui also had trouble, going eight with Jared Lynch, -8,8,-6,4,6,8,-12,3.

In other matches:
- Cheng Yinghua d. Tahl Leibovitz, 6,4,6,7,3
- Adam Hugh d. Courtney Roberts, -8,-9,8,10,11,-10,6
- Nison Aronov d. Mark Nordby, 7,2,6,9,3
- Sean O'Neill d. Messan Lawson, 4,5,5,3,7
- Jim Butler d. Avi Shy Schmidt, 7,4,9,4,6
- Eric Owens d. J. Russell Hamilton, 2,4,7,3,10
- Sean Lonergan d. John Nguyen, def.

In the 16ths final, Cheng Yinghua d. Adam Hugh, -5,7,3,4,8

Adam pressed the attack in this match of the top senior vs. the top under 14 player. But Cheng, often just spinning and blocking easy, letting Adam make mistakes, simply out-steadied him. After the first-game excitement, it was all Cheng.

5ths (Round of 16)

Mark Hazinski d. Barry Dattel, 4,4,2,5,7
Brian Pace d. George Brathwaite, 8,6,3,3
David Zhuang d. Ramin Samari, -6,8,9,2,3,7,6

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Nison Aronov d. Randy Cohen, -4,8,6,7,5,12
This match was about as pure an example of straight looping, counterlooping, topspin defense and lobbing as you'll get, as both players furiously topspinned everything, with some of the more spectacular rallies of the tournament. Nison, who is getting a reputation as possibly the best lobber in the U.S., seemed all over the court, but was often matched spectacular shot for shot by Randy. The two also matched each other shout for shout — with Nison yelling, "Chow!" whenever he won a point, and Randy shouting "Choe!" when he scored. There were more Chows than Choos in the end.

Ashu Jain d. Chi-Sun Chui, 8,10,13,7,8
After pulling out the 12-10 second game, Ashu was behind 10-11 in the second, threw up a weak, short lob — but Chi-Sun missed! "Oh God!" he cried, and a few points later, Ashu won the game, 15-13. Chi-Sun battled with Ashu, often returning shot after shot from a step off the table as Ashu looped, or battling him backhand-to-backhand, but Ashu was too forehand-loop strong this match. Soon after the match, Ashu was seen with ice packed all over his shoulder, upper arm and upper back — Ashu explained what areas were actually hurt, but in layman's terms, it was most of his upper body.

Jim Butler d. Sean O'Neill, 12,6,6,10,-9,-6,7
"What is this, the early 1990s?" someone asked, watching the match. With eight national men's singles titles and a pair of retirements between them, the two unretired champions battled it out. In the first game, at 9-9, Jim smacks a crosscourt backhand "winner," but transporting himself back to those days of early 90s yore, Sean had already stepped around, tried to rip a forehand loop, but missed. "Yaaaaah!" he yelled, sounding as if the shot had not missed. Leading 10-9, Jim served off the end, 10-all. Jim then backhand kills a winner, 11-10, but promptly misses his serve again, this time into the net! 11-all. Sean gets another ad when Jim misses a backhand kill, but then flips Jim's serve into the net. Jim finally wins the first when Sean loops his serve into the net, 14-12. When Jim won the next three — including pulling out the 12-10 fourth — it looked almost over. Sean still wouldn't let go, winning the next two before Jim finally won the seventh.

Eric Owens d. Loc Ngo, 5,4,7,6,5
Loc is a very steady player — but it takes speed and steadiness to stop Eric's forehand. Eric wins easily.
Sean Lonergan d. Mark Hazinski, 8,8,9,-5,7,5
With a mixture of deceptive serves, changing speeds on his loop, and a strong backhand hit, Sean kept Mark off balance throughout the ten straight games - 3-0 in the first round against Alireza Hejazi. 5-0 in his surprisingly easy upset of Santiago, and now the first two against the overpowering shot-making of 2516-rated Brian Pace. Samson was combining a very steady looping and blocking game, and was handling Brian's loops surprisingly well, just as he had Santiago's. But Brian served notice that enough was enough in the third, winning 11-1. Although Samson battled and stayed in each game until the end, Brian simply overpowered him the rest of the way.

Brian Pace d. Samson Dubina, 6,-8,1,5,7,9,8
After the first two games, Samson had won ten straight games - 3-0 in the first round against Alireza Hejazi, 5-0 in his surprisingly easy upset of Santiago, and now the first two against the overpowering shot-making of 2516-rated Brian Pace. Samson was combining a very steady looping and blocking game, and was handling Brian's loops surprisingly well, just as he had Santiago's. But Brian served notice that enough was enough in the third, winning 11-1. Although Samson battled and stayed in each game until the end, Brian simply overpowered him the rest of the way.

David Zhuang d. Brian Pace, 2,5,11,7,7
It seemed like most of the games were close half-way, and then David would just turn it on. Brian faces two problems against David: First, David's serve & receive are so good that they just take away Brian's big forehand loop and footwork. Second, when Brian does get the big forehand, he's not used to so many of them coming back. But Brian's training in Europe in a league in Romania, and plans on training there until he reaches 2700. His backhand seems to be improving, as is his receive, but both need work to reach that level. His forehand and footwork remain the backbone of his game, already at the 2700 level. In game three, David led 10-8, but Brian pulled off two great shots to deuce it ... then, down 11-10, served into the net. The look of disgust on Brian's face might have melted his sponge.

Quarterfinals
Cheng Yinghua d. Nison Aronov, 5,5,2,-9,6,7
Nison might be the best lobber in the U.S., and he has a spectacular off-the-table topspin loop to end it.

Jim Butler d. Ashu Jain, -5,3,3,9,5,10
Ashu was having shoulder problems, and had defaulted his quarterfinal hardbat match to save himself for this match. He started out strong, winning the first easily, but after that he was too erratic, and Jim's two-winged attack - forehand loop, backhand smash - was just too much. In the last game, down 8-10, Ashu made it to deuce, but Jim looped a winner, and Ashu whiffed a loop to end it.

Eric Owens d. Sean Lonergan, 10,-7,8,-5,7,10
Eric had a very difficult time here, just as he had in the Team Trials a few days before when he'd also had to battle to win (-7,11,6,8,-10,6). Sean often takes control of the serve & receive, and gets the first attack. In the rallies, Sean's backhand gives Eric trouble. But Eric's forehand and footwork, and his much improved backhand, carry the day again. This time around, Eric took a 10-7 lead in the first, but had to win in deuce. Up 5-2 in the second, he loses 7-11. Down 3-6 in the third, he wins 11-8. (Yes, a topsy-turvy match!) After losing the fourth at 5, he's behind 4-6 in the fifth, but scores six in a row and wins at 7. From 4-4 in the sixth, he wins at 7. Finally, with both players pulling off some major backhand block winners amongst a battle of forehand looping (Eric's power, Sean's steadiness), Eric pulls it out at 10.

Eric Owens d. David Zhuang, 8,7,-9,9,11,-9,-3,9,6
Eric Owens had won the last two times they had played, winning 3-2 (games to 21) at the World Team Trials in February, and 4-3 (games to 11) in the U.S. Team Trials four days before. (David had beaten Eric at the 2000 Olympic Trials, the previous time they had played.) And for the third straight straight time, they went the distance ... and for the third straight time, Eric pulled it out.

The crowd, for whatever reason, was decidedly pro-Eric. When Eric scored a point, they went crazy; when David scored, it was relatively quiet. Did this spur Eric on, or affect David? It's hard to say. At one point, David missed an easy shot, allowing Eric to tie the score - and the crowd had cheered very loudly. David looked up at them, smiled, and shook his head. At the crowd or at his missed shot? Unlike the Chinese David, Eric's a USA-born player, but David's been such a great champion that the crowd's treatment of him seemed rather unfair.

Eric played the match with two-winged looping ferocity. Whenever the ball was "loose," he'd rip a forehand. But "loose" is a loose term, and often he'd find "loose" balls where others would see an incoming winner. A lot of it is simple anticipation ... and great confidence.

But you can't beat the quick-blocking David without an excellent backhand, and Eric's backhand seems to get better every year.

How close was the match? At one point, four straight games went to 9-all (games 3-6), with Eric winning three of them. David had his chances, especially in the fifth, where he led 10-9 before losing at 11. In the eighth, Eric went up 7-1 ... and David, leading 4-3 and hoping to end it here, came back to 10-6, then 10-9! But Eric would have none of this - he flip-killed David's next serve for a winner to end it.

Between games, the crowd stomped their feet in rhythm so loudly you couldn't hear a neighbor speak.

In the ninth, David takes control, and goes up 4-1. And then a surprising thing happens. Until now, Eric's been overpowering David when he scores. Eric starts to slow loop ... and David misses! Up 4-3, David misses two smashes against these slow loops, and Eric's up 5-4. Perhaps so used to the earlier power, David's blocking begins to suffer, and his blocking and hitting becomes erratic. He misses another smash to fall behind 4-8. Then he makes a smash - but Eric counters it back for a clean winner! Eric's now scored eight in a row, and leads 9-4. David scored the next two, but that was it. Eric won the last two points with slow loops, with David blocking one into the net, the other off the end. And Eric is in the final!
One streak was affected: Except for 1996, David had been in the Men’s Final every year, starting in 1992 – 8 of the past 9 years (he’d won it four times), including the last four years in a row. Will he begin a new streak next year?

On so we go on to the final: Will we see the Eric who lost to Cheng so convincingly three days before in the Team Trials, or a new Eric? Will we see the Cheng of old, or an old Cheng?

Final

Eric Owens d. Cheng Yinghua, 10,9,13,5-4,5

A changing of the guard? A new Eric? It’s too soon to tell. There were no indications coming into this match that this would be Eric’s big breakthrough. After all, Cheng had beaten him in the team trials three days before at 6,7,6,2. He’d beaten him just as badly at the previous year’s Nationals, in the semifinals, at 11,10,15 (games to 21). He’d never lost to Eric, except for an injury plagued match at the North American Championships in 2000. So what was different?

Well, let’s face it. Cheng is 43, and not as fast as he once was. Having said that, the 43-year-old Cheng is still 2700, and if he’s not that level, he’s pretty close. It would take quite an effort from Eric to win – and that’s exactly what happened. Eric has now joined the select USA 2700 club. You put him, David and Cheng up against each other on any given day, and it’s a toss-up.

Technically speaking, Eric may have the best forehand in the country. But from a top player’s perspective, that’s not enough. To Cheng, great forehands are a dime a dozen, and there are plenty of ways to stop a one-dimensional player. While Eric won many points with his big forehand, what he really won the match on was his backhand, his return of serve, and his steady blocking. Those are what gave his forehand a chance to get into play, and kept Cheng from scoring points that would normally have been Cheng’s. Eric seems to have developed two backhand loops, and both are effective. He can do it from over the table, spinning the ball quick off the bounce, not giving the opponent time to react. And he can do it from off the table (as he mostly did against Cheng), controlling play from the backcourt until the opponent misses or he finds a chance to rip a forehand. Not surprisingly, this is almost the same way Cheng plays his backhand loops. It was almost as if Eric had developed a matching Cheng-like backhand (even blocking similarly), but a stronger forehand.

“Eric played unbelievable!” Cheng said afterwards. “I looped over and over, and he blocked everything back.” He added that he knew Eric could attack, but didn’t expect him to be able to block so well.

Coaching Cheng between games (and in previous matches) is Tong Huang, Cheng’s former coach from China, now living in California. Coaching Eric is Christian Lillieroos.

The match was closer than the 5-1 game scores show - but Eric won most of the key points. The first three games were 12-10, 11-9 and 15-13. Down 9-10 in the first, Cheng deuced it with a nice angled backhand block to Eric’s counterloop, and then Cheng missed a backhand loop of his own. Up 7-3 in the second, Cheng couldn’t hold off Eric’s attack, and Eric tied it up at 8-all. Cheng serve and ripped a winner, but then missed a backhand loop and a flip, and Eric won, 11-9. In the third, Eric led 10-7, but Cheng charged back to deuce, and led 11-10, 12-11. At 12-all, Eric showed that he wasn’t just a forehand player – he backhand looped six in a row to win the point and lead 13-12. Cheng got a net to tie it 13-all, but Eric countered with an edge to lead 14-13. A nice short return of serve caught Cheng off guard, and Cheng lost the game by serving and pushing off … and Eric is up 3-0! And, when Eric rips at will in the fourth, and Cheng is erratic, Eric’s up 4-0!

Memories of David’s comeback against Razvan Cretu in the Team Trials a few days before come back. David had lost the first three, then won four straight in that best of seven. But Cheng would have to win five straight here. And he starts in that direction, winning the fifth, 11-4.

But Eric’s not the Eric of three days before. At 2-2, he wins five in a row, and it’s essentially over. Or is it? Cheng switches to a backhand serve from the front of the table for the rest of the game, and seems to give Eric some trouble. But twice he misses serve and backhand loops, and Eric continues to dominate on his own serve. The end comes quickly – at 9-5, Eric serve and loops, and Cheng blocks off; and 10-5, he serve and absolutely cream a forehand loop, and the match is over. The King of USA Table Tennis has met defeat, and a new champion is born – the first U.S.-born player (in fact, the first player other than Cheng Yinghua or David Zhuang) to win since Jim Butler in 1993.

The King is Dead! Long Live the King!
Men's, Women's and Mixed Doubles

Men's Doubles
Interesting early matches:
• Second-seeded Cheng Yinghua/Sean Lonergan lost in the quarterfinals to Barney J. Reed/Lee McCool, 6,7,-6,6,5.
• Sean O'Neill/Brian Pace pulled off a great comeback to defeat Reed/McCool in the semifinals, coming back from losing the first two games, and pulling out three straight 11-9 games: 6,-7,9,9,9.
• On the top half, top-seeded David Zhuang/Eric Owens coasted to the final, losing only one game, to Nison Aronov/Tahl Leibovitz in the semifinals, 7,7,-12,4.
Final: David Zhuang/Eric Owens d. Brian Pace/Sean O'Neill, 8,-9,-10,7,5
Both David and Eric played mostly a steady control game this match, picking their shots, and letting Brian and Sean take the shots. Brian especially was the match shot-maker, and dominated — and almost won — the match with winner after winner. In the third game, David/Eric led 10-7 — but five shots later — four of them winners by Brian, including a spectacular down-the-line backhand loop — and Brian/Sean led 2-1. But in the fourth, at 7-all, David/Eric won nine in a row to win that game, and go up 5-0 in the fifth.

Women's Doubles
There were only a disappointing three teams. Tawny Banh/Simone Yang defeated mother/daughter Lily Yip/Judy Hugh in the semifinal, 5,-7,8,7. Chang Jun Gao/Jasna Reed were seeded into the final.
Final: Chang Jun Gao/Jasna Reed d. Tawny Banh/Simone Yang, 7,-6,12,9
Gao and Jasna were the overwhelming favorites. They not only are the top two seeds in singles, but both are Olympic Women's Doubles Medalists: Gao won a silver for China, and Jasna a bronze for Yugoslavia. Gao was also former World Women's Doubles Champion.

Mixed Doubles
The almost huge quarterfinal surprise was when mother/son, Lily Yip/Adam Hugh, led 6-5 in the fifth against second-seeded Eric Owens/Jasna Reed in the quarterfinals. But now a pair of streaks: Eric/Jasna score five in a row to go up 10-6 match point; then, fueled by Adam's steady looping and Lily's smashes and blocks, Lily/Adam score four in a row to tie it up, 10-10 in the fifth this best of five! They go for it, with Lily just missing a smash to go down match point. In the next point, Adam loops, Eric quick-blocks to the wide forehand, and again Lily/Adam have a chance — but Lily just misses the running smash, and Eric/Jasna sigh with relief in winning 5,-9,8,-7,10.
It wasn't the only close quarterfinal match: Lee McCool/Priscilla Umel upset Mark Hazinski/Jackie Lee, 10,-3,7,-10,10. In other quarterfinal matches, Cheng Yinghua/Chang Jun Gao d. Ashu Jain/Whitney Ping, 2,3,2, and Brian Pace/Tawny Banh d. Barney J. Reed/Michelle Do, -9,9,6,5.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • March/April 2002
**Youth & School Events**

**By Dennis Lui & Larry Hodges**

**Under 22 Men**

In a draw dominated by junior players (under 18, often under 14), top-seeded Mark Hazinski, 17, defeated 13-year-old Adam Hugh in the final, 11,7,10.6. In the semifinals, Hazinski had received a default for unknown reasons from Lee McCool, while Adam defeated Puerto Rico’s star 16-year-old, Santiago Coste, at 11,5,8. The quarters were also mostly top juniors – Hazinski over 13-year-old Misha Kazantsev (5,-7,4,4), McCool over 17-year-old Samson Dubina (9,6,5), Adam over 18-year-old David Umel Jr. (6,5,8), and Santiago over 17-year-old Jared Lynch (-7,4,12,6).

**Under 22 Women**

Michelle Do and Jackie Lee had another of their usual barn-busting matches, this time with Michelle winning, 11,9,5,8,8. The points, as usual, were fast & furious, and they might as well have started in the fifth game, since the two are so evenly matched. However, despite a bad loss in High School Girls’ Singles, this was Michelle’s tournament, with her win over Jasna Reed in Women’s Singles. Neither of them lost a game in getting to the final.

**Boys’ High School Singles**

Mark was obviously a bit too strong for the field, with a rating in the mid 2500s, and he easily defeated Samson Dubina in the final, 5,6,7.

The big match of this event was Samson’s long battle with Mark’s practice partner, Jared Lynch, in the semifinals. In an up-for-grabs match that went deuce in the fifth and featured hot and cold streaks from these two 2200+ level juniors, Samson Dubina looped his way to the win. After splitting the first two games, Lynch appeared in control of the match in the third, winning several counterlooping rallies for a convincing 11-2 win. The momentum shifted to Dubina in the fourth, however, as he ran out to a 6-0 lead in winning 11-7. The fifth game saw Dubina starting cold, missing his loops, as he fell behind 6-2. But Dubina remained aggressive, avoiding any letdown, and won the next five points for a 7-6 lead. From there it was back and forth, until Lynch had match point at 11-10, but missed a smashing drive wide right. Lynch then hit the ball into the net, and blocked a Dubina loop long, which sealed the ultra-close match for Dubina, 8-6,2,7,11.

**Boys’ Junior High School Singles**

This match was chosen as a “highlight” match, and was played in the main arena between the women’s and men’s singles finals, with a huge crowd. A pair of 2400 players – USA’s Adam Hugh and the Puerto Rican star Santiago Coste (who has done extensive training in the U.S.) strode to the table. Both are straight topspin players, with Adam steadier, Santiago more powerful. After Adam won the first 11-6, the two played to 10-all the next two games, with Adam winning both of them 12-10. Santiago deuced the third game from down 10-8 match point, but at 10-all, Adam hit in two backhand winners, the second one off Santiago’s serve.

Boys’ Junior High School Singles Champion Adam Hugh (R) hits his backhand in the final against Santiago Coste.

Boys’ Elementary School Singles

Top-seeded Marcus Jackson ran away from the field, not losing a game or letting anyone past 8. In the final, he defeated rival Preston Chin at 8,8. Marcus turns 10 in early January, and will leave the age group as both the top-ranked player in under 10 and under 12 with a rating of 1783 going into the Nationals.

**Girls’ High School Singles Semifinals**

In one semifinal, Jackie Lee won at 7,6,6 over Marta Basztiryk. In the other semifinals, Katherine Wu faced down the loops and counterdrives that Michelle Do threw at her, and stayed quick and aggressive with her blocking and hitting game to win it, 8,10,9,5. “Michelle seemed relaxed at first, but got more tense as the match went on,” said Wu, who recently has gone over 2100.

**Final**

This final saw Jackie Lee changing from an offensive game to a defensive one, and then a combination of the two to pull out the match over Katherine, 10,9,5,10. Katherine took Lee to deuce in the first before dropping it, but won the second 11-9, blocking Lee’s loops in both games, driving her from side to side, and forcing Lee into several errors. As the third game started, Lee cut way back on her looping and began to push the ball deep, baiting Wu to loop more herself. Wu did loop, but her looping was not nearly as efficient as her blocking, and she missed several off the table and into the net as Lee won convincingly at 5. Wu was noticeably off her game at the start of the fourth, falling behind 8-3 as Lee varied her shots. Wu didn’t give up, and began to hit winners while Lee started to rush her shots and miss – and Wu won five in a row, 8-all. Lee called a time-out. After the time-out, it went to 10-all – but a pair of misses by Wu and Lee won the match and the first place trophy.

**Girls’ Primary School Singles Semifinals**

It’s hard to imagine a five-game match...

Sarah Zheng loops to Veronika Birioukova in the Girls’ Primary School Singles Final, won by Veronica.
getting any closer than this, as it was one long and fast rally after another with Veronica Birioukova trading game for game with Diana Li in the semifinals through three deuce games before winning at 9-11,6-11,10. Having won over top seed Judy Hugh in the previous round, 11-year-old Birioukova became the one to beat in this event. Birioukova recently immigrated to the United States after growing up and training in Russia, but she is actually a U.S. citizen, having been born in America. Birioukova’s strong forehand loops, pick hits, and her ability to fish and when needed, gave her this close victory.

In the other semifinal, Sarah Zheng stayed rock steady to come back from down 2-1 in games to take the match from Atha Fong, 9-8,4-5,7. Fong appeared to be on a roll after the third game, hitting aggressive loops. But it seemed Fong’s loops did not bother Zheng too much, the latter using medium pips on her backhand. In the fifth game, Zheng was down 2-6, but she only lost one more point the rest of the way.

**Final**

Having heated up in a real hitting match with Diana Li earlier in the morning, Veronica Birioukova’s play was too strong for Sarah Zheng to stay with, and she won the final three straight, 3,7,7. While Zheng did not make many mistakes, Birioukova’s aggressive play paid off in getting the majority of winners to take the match.

**Girls’ Elementary School Singles**

Amy Huang dominated the event, winning the final over Andrea Lin, 2,4,5, in an all-Florida final.

**Boys’ High School Doubles**

**Final:** Samson Dubina/Auria Malek d. Mark Hazinski/Jared Lynch, 6,5,-6,11

On paper it would seem the Mark Hazinski/Jared Lynch team would be the favorites, with a combined current rating of over 4700 compared to the 4543 of Samson Dubina and Auria Malek. But the match started rough for Hazinski and Lynch, as they seemed inconsistent and missed a number of routine shots, and gave too many long, angled returns, which the looping duo of Dubina and Malek were able to loop away at wide angles.

**Girls’ High School Doubles**

**Final:** Jackie Lee/Whitney Ping d. Michelle Do/Kyna Fong, -11,7,-9,10,5

This was a very even match-up, with both teams combining to be around 4350 using current ratings. Jackie Lee and Whitney Ping came from behind 1-0 and 2-1 to take the match from Michelle Do and Kyna Fong. The first game was the closest, as a lot of counterdrive rallies turned into looping rallies, and a hit or missed loop usually meant the end of the point.

**Junior High School Doubles**

**Final:** Laura Leach/John Leach d. Judy Hugh/Atha Fong, 1,7,5

The sister and brother team of Laura and John Leach made quick work of U.S. Girls’ Cadet teammates Judy Hugh and Atha Fong, winning in straight games. The Leach team came in with a current combined rating of just over 3850 compared to Hugh and Fong who combine for just short of 3600, so the result was expected. The first game set the tone, with the Leach team controlling every single topspin rally.

**Boys’ High School Doubles**

**Final:** Laura Leach/John Leach d. Judy Hugh/Atisa Fong, 7,5

This year’s U.S. Closed Over 50 finalist (but who had to leave early, and so missed the Over 60’s), 65-year-old lefty penholder Peter Chen, created quite a stir among the spectators in the Vegas Convention Center who didn’t see him play before. We were watching him not just because he was advancing to upset the #1 seed, George Brathwaite, but because of his unique playing style.

“Look at this guy,” said one aficionado — “he blocks like the Bozorgzadeh of old, moves you around like Marinko used to do.” The analogues, meaningless to many today, had to do with former world-class stars who played a stay-at-the-table, controlling game, steadily deflecting their opponents’ attempts to mount an attack, or power their shots through, by artfully positioning the ball to various parts of the table. Key to this strategy was keeping their block returns exasperatingly short, while waiting for a loose ball to bang in.

But while Peter was entrancing an audience desperate in this homogenous age to see a player who was “different,” it turns out that his idiosyncratic play was well known to those in the San Francisco area. So well known, in fact, that the tournament with their fan club shirts!

**Girls’ High School Doubles**

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Senior Events  By Tim Boggan

Over 30 Singles

Sean O’Neill, in successfully defending his Over 30 Championship, was $250 richer by defeating Californians Tri Dinh in the semi’s and Dr. Tuan Le in the final – though, please, Sean’s wife Elizabeth, who also happens to be Dr. Le, has warned that anyone’s attempt to find Freudian victory-vying symbolism in the win will not be invited to dinner.

Last year’s Under 2400 winner, Nison Aronov, once a professional player in Tajikistan, took twisted hold, as it were, of former Dwarf Athlete of the Year, Mitch Seidenfeld, and his Bachnoboxer thera-cane, and, as if he might mistake one for the other, yanked the both of them out of contention. Then he disposed of last year’s Over 40 Champion Avishy Schmidt. However, against Le, Nison, perhaps too often back playing a soft topspin defense, lost a pivotal 12-10 3rd game, and in the 4th couldn’t recover.

O’Neill’s toughest match on his way to the Championship was against Ramin Samari, who at the Closed three years ago had won the 2400’s. Up 2-1 and 9-8, Sean, on receiving Ramin’s cross-court serve, loops it around the net post for a winner. Whereupon, down double match-point, Samari calls Time, and O’Neill comes back to his Coach, David Marcus, and asks him, prepatory to serving. “High toss? Or safe backhand?” David says, “High toss.” So, up into the lights Sean serves, and down under the table goes the ball. Oh well, next time.

Over 40 Men’s Singles

The most exciting of the early-round matches was that marathon encounter between Dave Sakai and Richard Hicks – both of whom were hurtin’. Some months ago in a tournament, Dave’s foot caught on the court floor and the slow-to-heal Rating result was that his Achilles tendon is still stiff and sore. Dick, meanwhile, having had back problems for years, ever since he was a civil engineer and lifted one manhole cover too many, was wearing a weightlifter’s belt with a back brace. In the Expedited 5th, Dave, forced to attack, though not being able to push off on that tendon and loop forcefully, was down 8-4...8-6, then missed a hanger...then was down 10-7. At which point triple-match-point Hicks uncharacteristically smashed a ball into the bottom of the net, then topspinned way long, then missed a backhand loop...and finally lost the match 13-11 by failing to hit in a pop-up. Moral of the story? Even Hall of Famers sometimes falter.

Another question: what was Cheng Yinghua doing playing one match in this event before defaulting to Barney Reed? Answer: he was too tired from the team trials. and so defaulted to rest defaulting to Barney Reed? Answer: he was too tired from the team trials.

Over 40 Women’s Singles

Two prominent upsets in the Women’s 40’s. The #2-seeded player, Bella Livshin, who’d won a number of major U.S. Championships since coming to this country in 1993, was eliminated early by Yejevnya Kotlerman playing in her first National’s. As it happened, both players were familiar with one another’s games, for both were from the Ukraine, where, before emigrating to the U.S., Bella had been the #4 senior woman player in Russia and a coach at a Yalta Sports School. In the second upset, Donna Sakai was beaten in five by Virginia’s Chang Kyong Sik, who was obviously far better than her 1377 rating.

Other matches made the ratings suspect too. Chang’s 12-9,8,3 battle with 1295-rated Betty McCloskey, who, 53 years ago as Betty Jane Schaefer, was ranked U.S. #6 and with USATT Hall of Famer Bill Price had gotten to the final of the U.S. Open Mixed. Tyrus Parkin’s 285-point upset-win over Kathy Chin (“First fun thing I’ve done in years,” said Tyrus). And (1939) Charlene Xiaoying Liu’s forced extension into the 11-9 4th by Polish-born Danuta Andrzejewska (1727).

In the one semi’s, Liu decisively took out the ’97 U.S. Closed Over 50 Champion Suzanna Sanders, but in the other, newcomer Kotlerman, the 330-point favorite, came (-14, 7 -4, 9, 6) perilously close to being knocked out by Chang. As expected, Charlene, who’d lost deuce in the 3rd in the semi’s last year to Donna Chen, convincingly defeated Yejevnya to win this year’s Championship.

Over 40 Hardbat Singles

Larry Hodges, in totally dominating this event, beat U.S. Open Hard Bat Champion Steve Berger in the final, 10,6,7. I was denied the pleasure of losing to Larry in the semi’s when (blot it out, Tim), leading Ray Mack double match point, I did something wrong, or Ray did something right.

And Marty Reisman – for whom this new event was orchestrated – where was he? Wondering a nite too casually where the shuttle bus from the hotel to the venue might be, then stopping to chat with his many fans, until his opponent, former U.S. Top 10 player Steve Isaacson, received a default. Another test of officials ended differently when at another table a 15-minute grace period was extended to a late opponent. “Sorry,” said the guy rushing in, “I was just across the street getting married.”

Over 40/Under 1600 Singles

This popular, near 60-entry event saw the Northwest’s Gary Jackson, seeded 3rd in his preliminary round-robin with a rating of 1440, score upset after upset, then prevail over N.Y.’s Mark Berg in the final.

Over 40 Doubles

Defending Champs Cheng Yinghua and Dave Sakai had only to walk to the table to win again. Hicks/Mintseris, though appreciably outscored (-1,15,7,-4,12) by Dattel/Schmidt, reached the final.

Over 50 Men’s Singles

In one of the four 8th’s matches of note, Defending Champion Jiri Hlava, who’d long ago been coached in Prague by multi-time World Doubles holder Ivan Andreatis, escaped Nick
In the Crimea, on 8-10.10.11.8 reversing what Livshin, also. like his wife Bella. a former coach Champion Zhuang Zedong when Howie and his old Peter elsewhere in this issue).

Mintsiveris, 11-9 in the 5th. Meanwhile, in his 8
in the 4th win, penholder Peter Chen's eccentric blocking game had to have tried even Dawidowicz's patience (see my article on 65-year-old Peter elsewhere in this issue).

Someone said Alirea Hejazi, who'd represented Iran at three World Championships, 1967-71, had been eating too many Subway sandwiches, but there were enough winning ingredients packed into his game to get him by Howie Grossman, 14-12 in the 4th. Later, Howie was showing me photos taken of the great World Champion Zhuang Zedong when Howie and his Chinese wife visited the Zhuangs in their Beijing home. In the closest 8th's match of note, Boris Livshin, also, like his wife Bella, a former coach-in the Crimean, on -8, -10, 10, 11, 8 reversing what

In the quarter's, Hicks didn't have too much trouble with Livshin. Hear that roar? Down 10-9 in the 1st, Boris has just served off – then down 10-9 in the 3rd he might just as well have.

Meantime, against Hejazi, Sakai, down 9-4 in the 1st, begins a flurry of points, and with a “YES!” wins it at 12-10. Then follows by taking the 2nd at 7. Ali, troubled by weak knees, and down 2-0, hasn’t a leg to stand on? Not exactly, for he has a strong psyche. In the 5th, from 8-All, Dave, on Ali’s serve, moves to 10-8 match point, then goes for his towel, wipes his forehead, his glasses (as is his every 6 points right), serves – and Ali returns the ball off.

Up on top of the draw, Brathwaite is 5 and 3 being beaten down by Ilava. Surely Jiri’s going to repeat as Champion? But George gets back into the match…only in the 4th, from 7-All, to overhit two forehands. However, he knows he has to stay aggressive and, picking the right balls, darts three backhand winners in that sends the match into the 5th. Here, from up 5-2, Jiri loses it, takes a long fall. His shoulder, he’s to say later, just tightened up on him.

In the companion quarter’s, Changping Duan is pouncing backhand jabs and furious flat forehands at Grandfather Chen. But he can’t hold his 2-1 lead as Peter protectively cradles balls back on his forehand and craftily blocks the ball positionally on his backhand.

In the semi’s, Brathwaite’s 1st-game 6-2 lead against Chen is quickly gone when George loses 6 in a row and 8 out of 9. Having lost the 1st, he then finds himself down 7-0 in the 2nd. In the 3rd, George again starts strong, is up 4-0, but from 8-all finishes with three errors. Peter’s strange blocking game is just too hard for him to adapt to.

Hicks and Sakai are at it again, but though Dick is up 8-3 in the 1st, David wins 8 of the next 9 points, mostly because of his opponent's errors. Belt and brace aside, this has to weigh heavily on Dick, and he loses in 4.

Preatory to the final between Sakai and Chen, I hear one guy say, “Dave will need psychoanalysis after this.” Says another, “You need a putaway backhand to beat Peter.” Which of course Dave doesn’t have. And, as it turns out, doesn’t need. For Peter’s game plays off power – and these days David, though not as valuable as Achilles, has little power. But, having played Peter before, he does have plenty of prescience.

Only once does Chen challenge. In the 2nd game, he’s down 10-6, draws to 10-9, but then Sakai gets a winning loop in. And now we hear, “Dave’s a good big-point player.” So he has a fan club too.

Over 50 Women’s Singles

In the only quarter’s scheduled (because there were five preliminary round robins), Sharlene Krizman Wilson defeated Danuta Andrezewska in a reenactment of her 50’s final at the ’94 Closed. Spunky Danuta, who’s invariably strapped with some ache-and-pain wrapping somewhere, was relieved to play against Sherr’n hard ball (“Not so confusing”), and though she was beaten in straight games, two of those went to 11-9.

However, in the semi’s, USA Hall of Famer Wilson – winner of five straight U.S. National Junior Miss titles in the 1950’s – couldn’t contest with the younger, more practiced Livshin.

In the other semi’s, sports-loving Suzanne Sanders 8-9, 13, 9 eked out a win over Donna Sakai, whose husband seemed to have no sympathy for her – not if she “expected to win at a big tournament like this without practicing.” Just in passing, Dave pointed out to Donna that when Suzanna rolled her ball back to Donna’s backhand and Donna not very strategically tried “like her sister Barbara” to push the ball back, she was in trouble. And, sure enough, Donna, up 10-6 in the 3rd lost at 15-13, then lost the 4th 11-9.

In the final, Bella, overly aggressive, dropped the 1st game at 2, then, becoming “very cautious, very patient,” went on to win the Championship three straight.

Over 50 Men’s Doubles

Brathwaite-Sakai successfully defended – but, surprise, last year’s runner-up team, Hicks and Mintsiveris, were 2,5, 6 routed in the semi’s.

Right off, two 1st-round matches made for an historical oddity. Unexpectedly on court were Dick Gordon and Priscilla Resek Hirschkowitz. U.S. #2 for the ’66767 season, and, at a table not far away.

Over 60 Singles

Ray Fahistrom, a mere 37 years ago ranked U.S. #8, had been taking (if it had worked successfully the suction-cup extension at the end of his racket could, oral least tired(!),

Over 60 Doubles

The Likes of the pairs in the 40’s, 50’s, and 60’s, Frank and I successfully defended in the 70 Doubles. In the final we beat Marty Reisman – at the moment not at his best, for he has literary ambitions – and his partner Neil Smyth who felt rightly that Dwelly’s ambidextrous play greatly contributed to our 9 in the 4th win.

Over 75 Singles

Dr. Grady Gordon, bothered by fluid in his knee but buoyed by the Glucosamine Condroitin he’d been taking (if it had worked successfully on animals in Europe, why wouldn’t it work on him?) managed (8-9, 9-6, 8) to stand just strong and long enough to take this Championship from Dwelly. His 78-year-old opponent’s pick-me-up – the suction-cup extension at the end of his racket that benevolently hugged any wayward hall – was the momentary bent of many an onlooker’s conversation.

Over 80 Singles

Eighty-four-year-old Arthur B. Chase (the B’s for “Buster”), got the better of Dr. Michael Scott in 5 in the Over 75 event. But here in the 80’s, Michael left Buster not a sore loser but sore all over. Usually everyone coming to Vegas is eager to see George Hendry, last year’s Over 80 gentlemanly Champion and long a winner in all age divisions. But on this occasion, Michael, with a twinkle, quickly wrote a note to George thanking him for… not coming.
Over 40 Hardbat

Coverage is under the
Senior Events. Read about
your illustrious editor's
second great victory!

Under 2000 Hardbat

Bruce Liu was
victorious, 6,10,3,11, over
Las Vegas resident Ralph
Stadelman. This was a
high-quality match, featuring
Liu's relentless penholder
attack against Stadelman's
chopping and hitting game.
With his win, Bruce continues
to keep the Under
2000 Hardbat titles in the
San Francisco Bay Area of
California. (Scott Gordon
was the defending champion
from the year before, while
Lorin Benedict had won the
event at the U.S. Open.)
Bruce, who was a full-time
hardbat player most of last
year (but now uses pips-out
spoon in non-hardbat
events) also had a win over
Marty Reisman in the Open Hardbat preliminaries.

Under 1500 Hardbat

There were a couple of surprises early on.
In the semifinals, Berndt Mann outlasted Tim
Wright in a close five-game match, 6,11,4,6,6,
while David Lipsky won over Jerry Ciesielski.
In the final, Berndt Mann defeated David Lipsky
at 8,6,8,6. Berndt's reverse penhold backhand
must have just proven too strange to his
opponents. Mr. Mann may perhaps be the only
under 1500-rated player to use this shot
regularly. In fact, he almost appears to favor the
reverse penhold backhand to his forehand hit.
The Hardbat Committee meeting had to be
postponed from its 8:00pm start because Berndt
Mann is a committee member and his Under
1500 Hardbat final did not conclude until about
8:20pm.

Multiple Winners at the USA Nationals

Jackpot Winners!

QUADRUPLE WINNERS: ★★★★★
Gao Jun Chang: Women’s Singles & Doubles, Mixed Doubles, Women’s Team Trials
CHENG YINGHUA: Mixed Doubles, Senior Doubles, Men’s Team Trials
DVE SAkAI: Over 50 Men’s Singles, Over 40 Doubles, Over 50 Doubles
JOHN LEACH: Boys’ Primary School Singles, Jr. High School Dbls, U4200 Dbls
TAHL LEIBOVITZ: Under 2300, Standing Disabled, Men’s Class 9-10 Singles

DOUBLE WINNERS: ★★
ERIC OWENS: Men’s Singles & Doubles
RICHARD HICKS: Over 60 Singles & Doubles
FRANK DWELLY: Over 70 Singles & Doubles
MARK HAZINSKI: Under 22 Men, High School Boys’ Singles
ADAM HUGH: Boy’s Junior High School Singles, Under 2400
JACKIE LEE: Girls’ High School Singles & Doubles
LAURA LEACH: Girls’ Junior High School Singles, Junior High School Doubles
LILY YIP: Hardbat Singles, Under 4200 Doubles
SERGY GUTKIN: Under 1800, Under 1700
ALEX KOTLYAR: Under 1500, Under 1400
DERRICK POON: Under 1300, Under 1200
KATIE POON: Under 1000, Under 1000/Under 16
LARRY HODGES: Over 40 Hardbat, Hardbat Doubles
**2001 USA National Results**


Over 40 Doubles - Final: Cheng Yinghua/Dave Saka d. Richard Hicks/Nick Mintsivos, 5,6,7; SF: Chang/Saka d. Solomon Voronin, 3,9,9; Mintsivos/Deidrick/Schmidt/Dattel, 10,11.


**Women's Singles** - Final: Chang Jun Gao d. Virginia Sung, def.; Hazinski d. Barry Dattel, 4,4,2,5,7; Pace d. George Jain d. Lee McCool, -8,9,7,4,-4,-9,13,8; O'Neill d. Messan 6,-8,1,5,7,9,8, Zhuang d. Barney J. Reed, 7,9,-79.35.

16ths: Aronov d. Randy Cohen, -4,8,6,7,5,12, Jain d. 9,6,3,1,3.

SF: Chang d. Tawny Banh, 5,4,10,3,6; Sung d. Lawson, 4,5,5,3,7.

Butler d. Avishy Schmidt, 7,4,9,4,6, Pace d. Tahl Leibovitz, 6,4,6,7,3, Hugh d. Courtney Roberts, Brian Pace, 2,5,11,7,7,7,8.

8ths: Cheng d. Adam Hugh, -9,9,6,5; Owens/Reed d. Adam Hugh/Lily Yip, 5,-9,8,-7,10.

**Over 50 Men's Singles** - Final: David Sakal d. Peter Chen, 9,3,7, Kotlerman d. Kyong Sik Chang, -14,7,-4,9,6.

9,4, Schmidt d. Xiaobin Tao, 9,4,5; Dattel d. Masaru Schmidt, 8,8,12.

QF: Miranda d. Barney D. Reed, -5,4,5,4.

**Over 40 Men's Singles** - Final: Barry Dattel d. Xiaobin Tao, 9,4,5; Dattel d. Masaru Schmidt, 8,8,12.

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**Over 30 Singles** - Final: Sean O'Neill d. Tuan Le, 7,5,6.

**Over 80 Singles** - Final: Dr. Michael Scott d. Arthur Chase, 1,6,4.

**Youth Events**

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USA Team Trials
By Larry Hodges

Note - For a complete write-up of the Preliminaries, go to www.usatt.org/events/2001_nationals.

The top 16 men and top 10 women gathered to do battle to make the USA Team ... not to mention the Olympic stipend money that came with it: 1st $2750, 2nd $2000, 3rd $1500, 4th $1250.

One problem was unavoidable: Las Vegas is 3000 feet above sea level, which makes the air thinner. That means the ball travels faster, doesn’t curve as much, and spin doesn’t die as quickly.

Because of this, many players wanted to practice early, but weren’t allowed to until the tables were opened for practice at 6 PM, with the Trials starting at 7 PM. Ironically, USA Team Member Mark Hazinski, to get ready for the altitude, trained in Colorado Springs (6000 feet altitude) with Mark Northby for a week before the Trials. He arrived in Las Vegas on Sunday, giving himself two days to adjust to the 3000 feet altitude — but wasn’t able to until one hour before the Trials. So while others were trying to adjust to the thinner air, he was trying to adjust to the thicker air ... and didn’t.

Another snafu was that some of the players thought that the draws would be made according to the ratings used to select the 16 players, and knowing the “snake” method that would be used for the draw, figured out who they would be playing, and trained for those players. However, newer ratings were used, and so the draws were not as they expected.

Missing from these trials was USA Team Member Barney J. Reed, who, training in San Diego until a few days before the deadline for entering the Trials, neglected to enter until after the deadline. He appealed to the Board, but with the potential threat of grievances by players if they didn’t follow the rules — which also meant sticking to 16 players, meaning 16th seed Adam Hugh wouldn’t play if Barney were put in — but the Board turned down his appeal.

Men’s Team Trials

Format: The top 16 players entered were put into four groups of four, with the top two in each group advancing to a final group of eight. Matches from the qualifier carried over to the final group. All matches were best of seven to 11.

Preliminaries

Advancing out of Group One was Cheng Yinghua and Sean O’Neill, with Chi-Sun Chui and Avishy Schmidt coming in third and fourth. Advancing out of Group Two were David Zhuang and Sean Lonergan, with Nison Aronov and Randy Cohen coming in third and fourth.

Group Three was easily won by Eric Owens. The big upset there was Adam Hugh’s win over Brian Pace, 9,3,4,9,9. Brian had been training in Romania recently, and hoped it would elevate his game. But not this time — Adam was two angle-consistent, and Brian a bit too erratic, and Adam pulled off the upset to advance along with Eric. Coming in third and fourth were Brian Pace and Tuan Le.

Group Four was the most balanced, and it came down to a three-way tie between Ashu Jain, Razvan Cretu and Mark Hazinski. Ashu defeated Razvan at -8,10,-8,-9,7,3,7. Ashu said of that match, “The conditions here are very fast, with the thin air. I couldn’t spin the ball and control its placement, so I gave up spin and went for placement. Razvan played smart, stepping back and spinning my deep serves.” Razvan defeated Mark at 7,9,5,10. At this point, Razvan had clinched advancing, and it came down to the final match between Ashu and Mark. Some quick figuring showed that to advance, Mark had to win 4-1. He went up 3-1, and so it all came down to one single game to 11 — but Ashu won that game 11-7, and Mark was out, and knew he was out. The rest of the match he tried, but the fight was gone as Ashu won the last three and the match, -4,6,-9,9,7,9,7. Ashu would advance with the all-important carry-over win against Razvan. Mark would come in third, with Richard Lee coming in fourth.

USA Men’s Team Trials: Final Eight

If there were only three spots on the USA Men’s Team, it would have been a relatively boring Trials, as three players ran away from the field. Early on, Cheng Yinghua was so dominating, giving up so few points per game, that he looked unstoppable. He was finally stopped, but not enough to stop him from coming in first, edging out David Zhuang (second) and Eric Owens in a three-way tie for first.

Let’s go over this three-way battle first, and then we’ll get to the battle for the fourth spot.

Early on, Cheng played Eric ... and there was no indication of the dogfight to come. Cheng won easily, 6,7,6,2.

However, in the best-played match of the Trials, the top two seeds — Cheng and David — faced off. Why were they playing early on, rather than playing last, as the top two seeds usually do? “I’m glad you asked,” said Trials Referee Wendell Dillon. It turns out that when there is a Trials for a team, the most important match is considered the match between the weakest player seeded to make the team, and the strongest seeded not to make it. So the matches between the fourth and fifth seeds (seeding based on results from the Qualifier round) are saved for last ... except in this case, the fourth and fifth seeds, Ashu Jain and Razvan Cretu, have already played. But they really still go with the schedule, other than this match. With regard to making the team, the Cheng-David match is not important. However, with prize money for first through third being $2750, $2000 and $1500, it’s important ... to the players!

Cheng is looping over and over from both sides, and absolutely creaming forehand loops every few shots. David is controlling play with his steady blocking and sudden smashes. When David pushes Cheng off the table, or starts hitting, he’s in control; when Cheng starts looping strong, he’s in control. David takes control and goes up 3-2 in games. But Cheng goes up 8-4 in the sixth ... and then loses 6 in a row! David has two match points at 10-8, but Cheng won’t let go. He rips a backhand loop, and absolutely pulverizes the block return, 10-9. When David smashes into the net, it’s 10-all.

11-10 Cheng, 11-11, 12-11 Cheng. Cheng wins it with a down-the-line backhand loop, and we’re into the final game.

David runs away with it — 5-0, 7-2, 9-5. Then Cheng ties it 9-all with a series of all-out power loops — he’s thrown control to the winds, but he’s making them all. Then Cheng rips two forehand loops, David blocks them, and Cheng misses a running backhand loop. When David loops his serve, and Cheng blocks in the net, David has held on to win, 11-9 in the seventh.

But will David come in first? He plays Eric Owens next — and Eric wins the first two at 9 & 8, with a relentless forehand looping blitz attack. This is Eric at his fastest and most powerful. David wins the next two, both at 7. Eric wins the fifth, 11-9, but loses the sixth ... 11-11! But the momentum switches in the seventh, as Eric goes up 7-1. Then it’s 7-3, then 10-4 match point. A moment later, it’s 10-8, and Eric has called a time-out. After the break, Eric serves, rips a forehand winner, and the match is over, 9,8,-7,7,9,1,8.

In the three-way tie between the three (assuming all three win their final round matches — all three have long since clinched spots on the team, and are only playing for position and prize money), Cheng has defeated Eric 4-0, while losing to David 3-4, and so is 7-4. David defeated Cheng 4-3, lost to Eric 3-4, and so is 7-7. Eric defeated David 4-3, but lost to Cheng 0-4, and so is 4-7. It’s 1” Cheng, 2” David, 3” Eric. Unless, of course, one of them loses in the final round! In the final round, David plays Razvan Cretu, Eric plays Ashu Jain, and Cheng plays Sean Lonergan. And we haven’t gotten to the story of the fourth spot yet.

13-year-old Adam Hugh won games off Lonergan, O’Neill and a playful Cheng, but finishes 0-7. He’s out of the running, and finishes eighth. But who would have expected him in the final eight?

5-time U.S. Men’s Champion Sean O’Neill is no longer in his past playing shape, and lost his first five matches before winning his last two against Ashu Jain and Adam. He finished seventh at 2-5 ... but his 4-3 win over Ashu, in...
the sixth round, set up the nail-biting finish in the battle for the fourth spot.

After taking a year off after the 2000 Olympic Trials, Sean Lonergan is back, and playing pretty well... but not quite well enough. Losses to rivals Ashu Jain and Razvan Cretu knocked him out. Yet... if he'd beaten Ashu 4-2 or better (or 4-3, and win on points in a three-way tie), he'd have made the team. Coming in, he had a very strong record against Ashu, but this time he lost, 13,5,-8,7.10. Lonergan finished sixth at 2-5, finishing ahead of O'Neill by winning head-to-head, 4-0.

Which brings us to Ashu and Razvan. Ashu had his carry-over 4-3 win over Razvan from the qualifier, so all he has to do is match Razvan, and he wins head-to-head. Only Lonergan can force a three-way tie, and Ashu beat him head-to-head as well, so he'd win any three-way tie.

And, to get into this three-way tie, Lonergan had to beat Razvan, so all he has to do is match Razvan. Razvan would have to beat Cheng in the final round - which Cheng wasn't likely to allow easily, since it would drop him to third place, $1500 instead of $2750.

After Ashu loses to O'Neill in round six, and Razvan comes from behind to beat Lonergan (-15,-5,12,10,-7,1,4), Razvan and Ashu are tied at 3-3, but with Ashu's head-to-head win looming large. For Razvan to make the team, he'd have to beat David in the final round, while Ashu would have to lose to Eric. It won't be easy - not only does he have to find a way to get through the great wall of Zhuang - something that few can do - but he's having shoulder problems, taking an injury break after the fifth game against Lonergan, and getting shoulder massages between nearly every game he plays.

Eric quickly won against Ashu, 5,8,8,8, and so all Ashu could do is watch to see what Razvan was doing with David.

Or more closely, what was Razvan doing to the "favored" David? Razvan played Goliath, and went up 3-(), at 7,5,7. Both David and Ashu are from the New Jersey TTC. would David let the qualifier win? Razvan played Goliath, simply wasn't close. with David winning all four, 5,4,5,5. What a comeback! And Razvan - so close, four chances! But the team was set. Ashu and Razvan are tied at 3-4, but Ashu wins, head-to-head. The final order, with the top four making the USA Team:

1. Cheng Yinghua 6-1
2. David Zhuang 6-1
3. Eric Owens 6-1
4. Ashu Jain 3-4
5. Razvan Cretu 3-4
6. Sean Lonergan 2-5
7. Sean O'Neill 2-5
8. Adam Hugh 0-7

Women's Team Trials

Format: The top 10 players entered were put into two groups of five, with the top three in each group advancing to a final group of six. Matches from the qualifier carried over to the final group. All matches were best of seven to 11.

There were 20 matches in the preliminaries - and the higher-rated player won 19 of them, with a 76-5 game record in those 19 matches. In fact, except for Tawny Banh's 4-3 win over Jasna Reed (7,8,-8,7,8,4,4) in Group Two, the higher-rated player won every match 4-0 or 4-1.

The Tawny-Jasna match was a vintage match between the "Asian" style of Tawny versus the "European" style of Jasna. Tawny, hitting everything quick off the bounce with her pips-out backhand, looping her forehands at the top of the bounce, and never letting up the attack, while Jasna played different speeds, sometimes playing offense, sometimes defense, sometimes close to the table, sometimes away, but always topspinning everything at different speeds.

Advancing from Group One were Chang Jun Gao, Virginia Sung and Lily Yip. Advancing from Group Two were Tawny Banh, Jasna Reed and Simone Yang.

USA Women's Team Trials: Final Six

As expected, Chang Jun Gao won all five matches. In fact, only sixth seed Simone Yang was able to get a game against her, as Gao finished 5-0, with a 20-1 game record.

Also as expected, Tawny Banh and Jasna Reed battled for the second and third spots. Tawny's carry-over win from the qualification round - where she'd won a 4-3 battle - was the turning factor. Tawny lost to Lily Yip in what might have been the most bang-bang match of the tournament between the "Asian" style of Tawny versus the "European" style of Jasna: Tawny, hitting everything quick off the bounce with her pips-out backhand, looping her forehands at the top of the bounce, and never letting up the attack, while Jasna played different speeds, sometimes playing offense, sometimes defense, sometimes close to the table, sometimes away, but always topspinning everything at different speeds.

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## National Rankings

### Men

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2. **MD** 2737 Cheng, Yinghua
3. **IL** 2713 Lupulesku, Ilia
4. **NY** 2706 Reed, Barney J.
5. **NY** 2698 Zhuang, David
6. **TX** 2696 Owens, Eric
7. **CA** 2694 Nguyen, Khoa
8. **NY** 2695 Musk, Alands
9. **TX** 2691 Butler, Jim
10. **TX** 2692 Tretu, Razvan

### Women

1. **CA** 2427 Reed Jasna
2. **CA** 2426 Banh, Tawny
3. **TX** 2427 Reed, Jasna
4. **NY** 2394 Sung, Virginia Wei-Ni
5. **NY** 2376 Peluchova, Renata
6. **OR** 2367 Yang, Simone
7. **NJ** 2366 Yip, Lily
8. **CA** 2362 Lee, Jacqueline
9. **CA** 2362 Dheeru, Michelle
10. **CA** 2358 Tyan, Anhelika

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### TOURNAMENTS INCLUDED IN RANKINGS

- Davison October Open
- High Desert Open
- Best of the West
- Fox Valley Open
- Austin Open
- Tri-City open Fall Double RR
- Colorado Springs 16th Annual Open
- 2001 Millcreek Open
- Concord Cup Youth Open
- Power Pong Open
- Boston TTC October Open
- Wall Middle School Open
- Maryland Oct. Circuit - Giant RR
- Cincinnati Giant RR Open
- $1400 Schaumburg RR Open
- Simons Fall Open RR

### TOURNAMENTS PROCESSED

This list was compiled on 1/25/02 and includes all tournaments played through 1/15/02. Due to space limitations, only current members who have played in a tournament since 10/15/01 are included. This document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2002.
<table>
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**Note:** The table represents the tennis rankings and scores from March/April 2002.
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### Players' Favorite Source for Table Tennis Supplies

- Brathwaite, Ormond Gordon, Steve
- Odle, P.Q.
- Wana, Michael Boye, 1. JPN
- De May, David
- Powell, Jaime
- Whaley, Jiachen David
- Ruiz, Luis E
- Fort, Darlos

### Other Information

- USA Table Tennis Magazine
- March/April 2002
- Paddle Palace 1-800-547-5891
- Players' favorite source for table tennis supplies
**USA Table Tennis Tournaments**

**March 2 - RPI Open, Troy, NY. Contact: Lily Yip, 732-748-9712. atlanta94@msn.com. **

**March 2-3 - Irving RR, Irving, TX. Contact: David Livings, 817-265-3664. david.livings@atbti.com. 0 Star**

**March 2 - Charlotte Spring Open, Charlotte, NC. Contact: John Pahl, 704-587-0864. 0 Star**

**March 2 - Grand Canyon State Games, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Wayne Johnson, 602-741-9976. wjohnson@dancris.com. 0 star**

**March 9 - Atlanta March Giant RR, Atlanta, GA. Contact: John Pahl, 704-587-0864. 0 Star**

**March 16 - 1st Annual Stiga Cary Open, Cary, Anchorage, AK. Contact: Karl Augestad.**

**March 9 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**March 16 - 1st Annual Stiga Cary Open, Cary, Anchorage, AK. Contact: Karl Augestad. actvid@mailbox.net. 0 Star**

**March 16 - 1st Annual Stiga Cary Open, Cary, NC. Contact: Mike Babuin, 919-462-3932. mbabuin@cr.cary.nc.us. 0 Star**

**March 23-24 - NJTTC March Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavlly, 732-828-3511. atlanta96@msn.com. 0 Star**

**March 23 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**March 29-31 - Spintech Open, Woodbury, NY. Contact: Michael Lavalani, 516-753-0853. **

**April 6-7 - MDTTC April Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 301-916-4862. weixiao42@hotmail.com. 0 Star**

**April 13 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**April 20-21 - Tri-Cities Spring Open Double RR, Richland, WA. Contact: Kirby Parker, 509-375-1587. slvrfox@dt.com. 0 Star**

**April 27 - Maryland Closed, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**May 4 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**May 11 - Maryland Medallion Championship, Frostburg, MD. Contact: Alan Williams 301-722-5211. jwms@ mindspring.com. 0 Star**

**May 11-12 - 3rd Garden State Open, NJ. Contact: Lily Yip, 732-748-9712. atlanta96@msn.com. 0 Star**

**May 18 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**May 25-26 - St. Joseph Valley Open, South Bend, IN. Contact: Dan Seemiller, 219-654-7476. 0 Star**

**June 1-2 - MDTTC June Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 301-916-4862. weixiao42@hotmail.com. 0 Star**


**June 8 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**June 22 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**July 3-7 - US Open/ITTF Pro-Tour, Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Contact: USAATT, 719-578-4583. admin@usatt.org. 0 Star**

**July 13 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**July 14 - Sportsfest 2-Person Team, Allentown, PA. Contact: Fred Kistler, 610-797-6637. f_kistler@yahoo.com. 0 Star**

**July 27 - Waco 2002 Summer Round Robin, Waco, TX. Contact: Grady Gordon, 254-772-2838. ggormond@clearsource.net. 0 Star**

**August 3-4 - Colorado State Games, Colorado Springs, CO. Larry Rose, 719-685-0141. lrose@dragon.net. 0 Star**

**August 10 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

**August 17-18 - Macy Block Open, Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: Dan Seemiller, 219-654-7476. 0 Star**

**August 24 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star**

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**ANTI-DOPING POLICY**

**By Michael J. Scott, MD**

**ITTF Sports Science Committee**

**ITTF Research & Development Committee**

As I reported in the Nov/Dec 2000 issue of USA Table Tennis there is a new era in the United States Olympic Committee’s Drug Testing Policy. The United States Anti-Doping Agency is now in control and not the National Governing Boards (the various sports such as Table Tennis) nor the USOC. Therefore athletes now found using banned drugs will be uniformly disciplined according to the rules without exception. As I mentioned in that article it behooves our National Athletes to be aware and vigilant in this area.

Ignorance is never an excuse. It is the personal responsibility of each athlete to ensure that he or she does not allow any Prohibited Substance to enter his or her system or use or allow the use of any Prohibited Method. Whether or not the use of a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method enhances performance does not matter. The inclusion of a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method in the Code is not subject to appeal. The presence of a Prohibited Substance above the permitted concentration in an athlete’s urine constitutes an offense, regardless of the manner in which the Prohibited Substance came to be in the athlete’s system. For example, the detection of caffeine in urine is quite lenient and many officials believe they are still far too lenient. To reach this level the average individual would have to consume 6 to 8 cups of coffee or 15 twelve ounce bottles of Coca-Cola in one sitting and be tested within 2 to 3 hours. The permitted concentrations in all banned substances is therefore quite lenient and many officials believe they are still far too lenient. However, one should not attempt to predict the urinary concentrations of caffeine since they vary significantly for each individual and are influenced by factors such as age, sex, body size, weight, diet, and metabolic rate.

**The General Classification for Prohibited Substances are**

- Stimulants
- Narcotics
- Anabolic Agents
- Diuretics
- Peptide Hormones, Mimetics and Analogs (and all releasing factors)

**The Prohibited Methods are**

- Blood doping
- Administering artificial oxygen carriers or plasma expanders
- Pharmacological manipulation

Some International Federations may have more testing lists.

Punitive action is taken against athletes found positive for banned substances over the permitted level. If a USA athlete does not accept the sanction proposed by the USADA he/she may appeal the decision to the North American Court of Arbitration for Sports or to the International Court of Arbitration for Sports. The latter’s decision is final.

Many so-called supplements contain banned substances and their use is completely at the athlete’s own risk. There is no complete list of banned drugs as new products come on the market almost daily. Prior to taking any medication or supplement, check whether any substance in the products is prohibited or restricted. Call USADA’s Drug Reference Line (1-800-233-0393).
Lily Yip in China ... In the Beginning!

By USATT Historian Tim Boggan

As many readers know, Lily Yip is a two-time Olympian, and twice a Singles Silver Medalist, twice a Doubles Gold Medalist at the Pan-Am Games. She also came first in the 1994 Olympic Festival. From 1993 through 1995 she was our U.S. Closed Women's runner-up, and for three years was named USOC Female Table Tennis Athlete of the Year. At the just completed 2001 National's, she won the U.S. Hardbat Championship.

Lily today, being interviewed by Tim.

I know, Lily, that Rhoda Samkoff of your Westfield, N.J. Club did a lengthy interview with you for the Jan.-Feb. 1994 issue of the USA Table Tennis magazine in which you reveal some intimacies—that you enjoy drinking gin, for example. My brand's Bombay Sapphire, and yours is still ... Gin Seng Elixer? But, much as I might be interested, it's not your current 38-year-old adult life I want to ask you about here. Rather, since you were so nice as to resurrect these two photos from your youth for me, let's talk about how, in China, you came to be a good player. Obviously, even at a young age, you enjoyed posing with a table tennis racket. When and where was this picture of you with the other five girls taken?

Lily: That was 30 years ago, and these girls are my table tennis teammates in an elementary school near my home in Canton in Quangdong Province. I'm the youngest, eight years old, and the two girls on the right are 12 or 13.

I gather you showed extraordinary promise at a young age—but you seem to be holding the racket in this photo as if you might have started as a shakeshand player.

Lily: No, I always played penhold. In 1970, when I was seven, I was picked from hundreds of kids to possibly pursue, really pursue, my interest in table tennis.

Just to possibly pursue your interest in table tennis, even when you were so precocious at it?

Lily: Yes, I joined a table tennis school in Canton City, where I had my first coach, a woman with the name of Liu Yang, and I became the best player on it.

Lily in 1971, age 8 (third from left, with big grin!).

That sounds intimidating—as if you were free to choose only these two options in the long life that awaited you.

Lily: In China, if you wanted to excel, you had to choose early. There was good support from the Government for Table Tennis, and people were in place to help you if you were serious. I also had the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument, one similar to a guitar—though now I've forgotten how to do it. In fact, right now my son Adam and I are taking piano lessons—Adam's better, my piano-playing rating's about a 1000. Of course I was serious about my table tennis. Our grade school had one of the strongest teams in the city, and I became the best player on it.

Then what?

Lily: When I was 12, I was sent to a special table tennis school, where I stayed in a dorm, spent half a day in classes and half a day in training, and could come home over the weekend. After 3 and ½ years representing Canton City, I graduated into being a professional player representing Quangdong Province. I have to say that this advance wasn't easy, for I turned out to be the first professional representing Quangdong Province. I had to choose between continuing in school or quitting. I chose to quit and be a professional.

And being a professional brought about what changes?

Lily: To begin with, my coach let me choose a special racket. I picked an 8-ply one—and I was able to develop my own style. I always played with it and it never broke. I don't use it now, but I still have it, even with me here in Vegas. Also, though I liked my hair long, it was as if I were in the military—short hair was mandatory. I was paid to play by the Government, and if my Quangdong team finished among the Top 4 Provinces, our Janlibo sponsor—they make a high energy sport drink—gave us a bonus.

So how'd you do?

Lily: Well, of the 16 girls on our Quangdong team I was originally #15. We played maybe half a dozen regional and elite tournaments a year as well as the National's where—a little different from this one in Vegas—there were seven events. I improved rapidly and by my second year on the team, in 1980, I'd made a dramatic move up to #2.

With the result that you had, or would begin to have, some good wins?

Lily: In 1980, I beat the 1979 Chinese National Champion, Liu Yang, and came 3rd in Women's Doubles at the National's. This picture you see of me at the Great Wall with Wenguang "Johnny" Huang (third from right) was taken after these 1980 National's. Great haircut, huh? Johnny, on emigrating to Canada, has continued to be a world-class star and just this year was runner-up at our U.S. Open to China's Liu Guozheng. The other woman in this photo became a table tennis coach in Hong Kong. I also had another very good career win—at the 1982 National's. I beat Geng Lijuan, who'd go on in the mid-'80's to become both the World
Women's and Mixed Doubles Champion and the World Women's Singles runner-up. In 1989 she'd emigrate to Canada and marry the Canadian international Horatio Pintea.

But, alas, like so many other very fine players, you still weren't good enough to be on the Chinese World Team, and - live with it - you knew you never would be?

Lily: I was in the Top 16 three times at these Chinese National's, won a tournament in Hong Kong, and in 1982 was Guangdong Province Champion. But you're right - I trained for three months in Beijing with future World Champion He Zhili, later playing as Chire Koyama for Japan, and other stars. Of the 12 members of our National Youth Team, the top 10 would be World Champions - I was #11. So by the time I was 20 I thought I'd better find other directions to pursue. Beginning in 1984, though I continued to play table tennis, I started college, which the Government paid for, and three years later, I had a Phys. Ed. Degree. I also had thoughts, after studying English, of coming to the U.S. - or, momentarily, of even going to Singapore, where my father, a victim of the Cultural Revolution, was from.

Which is not, I suppose, what your Quangdong Province Team wanted you to do?

Lily: Of course they wanted me to stay as Women's Team Coach. I enjoy coaching, and do a lot of it now. But I had dreams of freedom and opportunity. So in 1987 I came to the U.S., retired from table tennis, married a chess player, had two children, and...

...And, readers, end of this story...for, with racket in hand and that same recognizable smile of 30 years ago, Lily, as we know, started a new and very satisfying life with husband Barry, son Adam, and daughter Judy - all of them U.S. Champions.

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**CINCINNATI TABLE TENNIS CLUB**

By Barb Curtis

In 1997 at the Schmidt Fieldhouse. The Fieldhouse is a table tennis player's dream - spacious, well lit, hardwood flooring, a 40-foot ceiling, and a seating capacity of two thousand. Equipment includes eight Donic Persson 25 tables, ample barriers, and a Newgy 40mm robot. There are four certified coaches and many dedicated players willing to work with others in order to improve everyone's overall game.

Over the past year the club's membership has grown to the point where the nightly fees have been reduced from $5.00 to $3.00. Club president Mike Lecture (also current president of the Ohio Table Tennis Association) credits part of the growth to a full-page article that appeared in *The Cincinnati Enquirer* in May of 2001. The article gave an accurate description of the true nature of the game. Impressed with the unique and widely varied ethnic diversity among the members, the newspaper ran a second half-page article in just over two months.

All of this attention has attracted many new novice players. To help them improve their skills, the club recently completed an 8-week training session hosted by some of the club's top players (Larry Hawkins, Nick Snider, Williams Capilo & Rick Morris).

The club hosts a sanctioned tournament in the autumn of each year. For more information, you can email the club at info@cincytt.org or visit their website at www.cincytt.org.
For the spectators who had the pleasure of watching the last U.S. National Championship’s exciting final, one thing became obvious very quickly: Eric Owens’ forehand was much bigger than any of us had seen it before. Bigger in every sense – more powerful and the stroke was much more sweeping. It might have been the main factor in his victory, because even when Cheng Yinghua did make contact with it, it was difficult for the “Master Blocker” to control the power.

This new power stroke has appeared in many top players’ arsenal and might be the first clear technical development in response to the 40mm ball. Although conceptually not completely new – greats like Waldner, Saive and Kim Taek Soo have used large upper body movements to produce a finishing shot for a long time – this technique now has become much more prevalent, and virtually all players at the top of the world rankings employ it regularly, no longer only as a finishing shot, but within a rally to produce a powerful shot.

A tendency, that has existed in men’s table tennis for a long time, seems to be growing stronger with the increasingly physical nature of the sport. While there has always been a clear difference between the short game – over the table, generally at the be-
The late portion of the point - and the long game, farther back in the order to get the racket to travel at the desired speed, in the intended direction and with the necessary power at contact, a complete motion needs to be developed. If that motion includes that “violent” follow-through, the portion at contact is affected exactly in the way required for the correct trajectory. Wang starts with a backswing that rotates his shoulders beyond perpendicular to the end-line (frame 6, rows 1 and 3). His stance is extremely wide to provide a strong base. With the racket still all the way back, he starts the uncoiling motion, and the racket arm “catches up” with the shoulder right at contact. The arm is only slightly bent.

By now, Wang Liqin needs little introduction. Since I last wrote about him at the beginning of 2001 he has added a World Championship to his achievements, and he doesn’t look like he’s going to slow down anytime soon.

Wang’s biggest weapon is his huge full-swing forehand, the same shot that won Eric the National Championship, maybe even a little bigger. Wang has optimized this shot to take advantage of his great height and long arms, and he develops a very high racket speed, but as players like Liu Guozheng and Ma Lin prove, you don’t need to be over six feet tall to gain an advantage from this technique. It benefits all.

NEW AVALOX PRONTE
HIGH PERFORMANCE RUBBER
Brand new rubber - custom formulated for the 40mm ball

AVALOX PRONTE - a combination of the latest German and Japanese rubber and sponge technologies. It represents a quantum leap forward. While other products, like G888 or Hurricane, allowed to impart great spin on a 40mm ball, they did so at the price of a loss of feel and high weight.

AVALOX PRONTE changes all that! Lighter and more flexible than its predecessors, PRONTE’s soft sponge, custom designed and manufactured in Japan, provides outstanding dwell characteristics, and the revolutionary molecular composition of the top sheet, developed in Germany, gives the player control over his shots. It produces a high trajectory, which allows energy otherwise expended in lifting the ball to be put into forward motion. The result is a devastating drive shot with tremendous spin.

Used by Bundesliga Ace and former Chinese National player Ma Wenge

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AVALOX BLUE THUNDER
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Made in Sweden

The feel of the coveted “old” Swedish blades in a new blade. Small production numbers allow tight tolerances - a blade custom made for pros available to you at the price of a mass market item. $44.00

A550 - 5-ply - soft, light, springy - a looper’s dream! The 40mm ball enhances the “trapoline effect”.
A555 - an offensive 5-ply blade, fast, yet great control. Drive the ball with confidence.
A777 - All the power of a 7-ply blade without the weight. One of the fastest all-wood blades on the
Table Tennis has a wonderful museum that you can only visit on the Internet at www.tabletennismuseum.com. Chuck Hoey is the curator of the Table Tennis Heritage Museum collection. The Collection is diverse and well rounded, featuring equipment, art, fine jewelry, and many other interesting pieces that show the beginnings of the game we love.

I will let Chuck Hoey describe himself and his museum.

“I developed an old-fashioned chopper/pick-hitter style game back in my college days, preferring a Hock hard bat. But the sponge players were very difficult to compete with, though I used anti-spin for a while. I haven’t played in a long time because of a recurring lower back injury that I sustained in a tournament. So, I became a collector and historian instead!

“I’ve compiled the collection over the last thirty years. It started gradually, progressing from a casual hobby, to a strong interest, to a great passion ... and finally to utter servitude – often requiring many personal sacrifices to pay for all the acquisitions. The collection goes well beyond the usual technical (equipment) coverage, focusing on vivid evidence of society’s love affair with the new game, and it’s blossoming into a world-class sport.

“Work on the website began about seven months ago; version 1 became operational in August 2001. I update the site almost every day with new acquisitions or fine tuning the captions. The site recently expanded to eighteen sections to better group related items and to facilitate maintenance. I have a software engineering background from many years ago, but the new technology is a humbling learning experience. The result is a unique blend of antiquarian and hi-tech.

“As a former player my favorite items in the museum are early fine quality bats – the website showcases some amazing varieties. I also love the old boxed sets with their beautiful color lithographs ... and the ball pick-up devices ... and the porcelains and cards ... and ... well, I guess I love everything in the collection, except for the loathsome sponge bats, which have mutated the game to the point that the average tournament rally lasts about 4 strokes. What fun!

“The collection is currently viewable only on the website. I am looking for sponsors who can provide a good home for the collection, so that people can enjoy what I’ve created – the world’s most comprehensive documentation of the origins and evolution of the great sport of table tennis.

“Currently, I am seeking early fine-quality bats, a good example of a Macrossen bat, and early sponge bats from the 1950s (plain or textured thick sponge, with no rubber layer on top). Also the pin from the 1950 World Championships at Budapest continues to escape my grasp – can anyone help?

You may contact Chuck via email at Curator@tabletennismuseum.com, if you have any questions. I am sure you will find the museum to be an interesting educational experience.

TOP: The New Table-Tennis, boxed set made in 1902, with pair of sheepskin vellum drum battledores and very rare cloth covered celluloid balls. One of the finest early sets extant.

MIDDLE: Spalding’s Table Tennis boxed set from 1902, with superb color lithograph and elegant pair of cane bamboo rackets with single piece of vellum embedded in the racket head.

BOTTOM: Very rare hand-held scoring device from 1902, using lawn tennis scoring method.
Interview with **U.S. National Men’s Singles Champion**

*By Larry Hodges • January 2, 2002*

Eric, 26, just won Men’s Singles at the U.S. Nationals by upsetting top-seeded Cheng Yinghua in the final and defending champion David Zhuang in the semifinals. He was in the semifinals of Men’s Singles in 1999 and 2000 before making the big breakthrough in December 2001. He also won Men’s Doubles (with Zhuang), which he had also won in 1998 (with Barney J. Reed). He is a long-time member of the U.S. National Team. He was on the Team that won the gold medal at the 1999 Pan Am Games. During the phone interview, Eric was undergoing neuromuscular therapy, lying on a table, and periodically yelling, “Ow!”

Tell us what you had to do to beat Cheng Yinghua in the Final?
Well, the tactics against Cheng were to play very aggressively, play into his middle, and vary serves a lot. I served a lot of short topspin so he had to flip out to me. Then I could start from mid-distance, looping forehand and backhand. Before I had had trouble going backhand to backhand close to the table. This time I played mid-distance.

And what did you have to do to beat David Zhuang in the Semifinals?
Against David, I wanted to also play mid-distance, and loop forehands and backhands to his middle and backhand very consistently. I was always setting up for my forehand. I served long and fast over and over, mixing up the spins and placement.

Did you have any trouble with Sean Lonergan in the Quarterfinals?
I have trouble with his serves. He’s always done well against me.

What made you decide to go to college?
When I didn’t make the Olympics in 2000, I was burned out, and wanted a break from table tennis. That’s when I decided to go to massage therapy school. I took almost a year for my internship there. I got that degree so I could start working in my dad’s office. During massage school, taking the anatomy and physiology classes inspired me to learn more about the body. So I thought about it for a few months, and decided to actually go to college, maybe go into physical therapy or medicine. January 16 is the first day of class.

Any idea what you’ll be majoring in?
Biology.

Tell us about the Texas Wesleyan program.
It’s a program started by Christian Lilieroos. He’s the athletic director for table tennis. I don’t know how the whole program came about — you should ask Christian. Christian knew I was interested in going to college, and asked if I’d be interested in attending Texas Wesleyan University and playing table tennis. They have scholarships available for tuition on an individual basis. There’s a travel budget for players as well. I think it’s a great opportunity for anyone thinking about going to school and practicing with many of the best players in the country — myself, Jasna Reed, Razvan Cretu and Idan Levi. Jim Butler is also thinking of going.

How did you develop your backhand? *Editor’s note — Eric’s always been known for his forehand, but in recent years his backhand has sneaked up on us, and is now one of the best in the country.*
Lots of practice! All kinds of different drills. Lots of people do forehand footwork drills. Backhand footwork drills are also important, and I did lots of them. A lot of random drills into the backhand corner.

After winning the Nationals, did you have second thoughts about going to college?
No. In Houston, I don’t have the opportunity to play full-time, since I have to work for a living. So, between working in my dad’s clinic and giving lessons, I didn’t have time to fit in time for my training. The school is giving me an opportunity, since my expenses are covered. This allows me to train and go to school full-time.

What did you think of your chances going into the Nationals?
I took a different approach to the game, ever since the 2000 Olympic Trials. I took a more relaxed approach, not really caught up in winning or losing. I just want to have fun.

Anything else interesting you’d like to add?
I’m going to be calling you for math help!
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