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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Table Top Color</th>
<th>Playing Surface</th>
<th>Net Sets</th>
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<th>Playback Feature</th>
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<th>Wheel Casters</th>
<th>Leg Construction</th>
<th>THE BEST PRICE - GUARANTEED! NO ONE CAN SELL FOR LESS!</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stiga Quickplay I</td>
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ON THE COVER:

Fan Yi Yong, Photo by Gerry Chua ©2002

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- Optional control box mount for player's side of table. (See picture at right.)

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- A serve and continue mode: to eject a ball of any type and then continue with a sequence that has been setup.
- Automatic distance adjustment to the corners of the table versus balls delivered the center of the table.
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Results of 2002 USATT Election
Names in Bold were elected to 4-year terms.
Executive Vice President
Name Number of Votes Percentage
Jiing Wang 780 53.5%
Lily Yip 677 46.4%
Write-ins 2 0.1%
Treasurer
Name Number of Votes Percentage
Tong Lee 827 56.9%
Larry Rose 623 42.8%
Write-ins 4 0.3%
Vice President (Two Positions)
Name Number of Votes Percentage
George Brathwaite 803 54.1%
Barney D. Reed 514 34.6%
Attila Malek 389 26.2%
Jim McQueen 334 22.5%
Olivier Mader 316 21.3%
Write-ins 40 2.7%

USATT'S NEW HEADQUARTERS!
By Andrew Huck, USATT Intern

USA Table Tennis has moved into a new office in beautiful downtown Colorado Springs. The new building has shared ownership with four other National Governing Bodies, US Field Hockey Association, USA Fencing, USA Archery, and USA Team Handball.

"Thanks to the flexibility, dedication, and hard work of the USATT headquarters staff, our new office location has evolved into a bright and attractive work environment. Convenient access to the USOC and other local services has also allowed us to increase the amount of time spent in providing services to the members of USA Table Tennis," said Margaret Smith, Director of Operations.

Headquarters staff include:
- Margaret Smith Director of Operations operations@usatt.org
- Debbie Moya Director of Programs programs@usatt.org
- Deborah Gray Accountant accounting@usatt.org
- Chris McCartney Admin. Coordinator admin@usatt.org
- Felisa Huggins Ratings Coordinator ratings@usatt.org
- Andrew Huck Intern intern@usatt.org

You can reach us on the web at www.usatt.org, at our new phone number 719-866-4583, or fax 719-632-6071. Our mailing address will remain the same: USA Table Tennis, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

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USATT HALL OF FAME AWARDS BANQUET
The 20th Annual Hall of Fame Awards Banquet will be held at the Stratosphere Hotel, Las Vegas, Thursday evening, Dec. 19, 2002. As usual, there will be a cocktail period beginning at 7:00 p.m., then dinner, then the Awards presentation.

This year’s distinguished inductees are multi-time World and U.S. Wheelchair Champion Mike Dempsey, and former U.S. Women’s Champion Wei Wang.

The Mark Matthews Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to 1948 World Mixed Doubles and 10-time U.S. Open Champion Dick Miles.

The Banquet Room is always filled to capacity, but seating arrangements can be made early. Tickets are $40 if purchased in advance from HOF President Jimmy McClure, 4226 Country Club Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33904 (Phone: 941-945-1718).

NEW INTERNATIONAL UMPIRES ANNOUNCED
Three persons from the United States have successfully completed the 2002 ITTF International Umpire exam.
- Grady Gordon, Waco, TX
- Joseph C.H. Lee, Bel Air, MD
- Roman Tinyszin, East Hartford, CT

USA Table Tennis would like to congratulate Grady, Joseph, and Roman for their accomplishment and thank them for their dedication to the sport of table tennis.

CORRECTIONS
On page 46 of the last issue, in the listing at the start of column two, Lin Ling of Hong Kong is incorrectly listed as “world #23.” Her correct ranking, as noted at the end of column one of the same page, as well as later on in the same column, is #8.

TRAVELS IN TIME ... JULY 20, 1902
Submitted by Edgar B. Stein
It has struck Santa Fe. Ping pong. Almost every evening a score of young folks gather at the home of Judge and Mrs. N.B. Laughlin to play ping pong and are becoming adept at this game which amuses the young as well as the old.
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

The United States Olympic Committee recently conducted a Performance-Based Assessment with representatives of USA Table Tennis. The methodology easily translates into a practical tool that any club could use. As you read through this report, think of ways that you could tailor the exercise to fit your needs. In this “association primer series” article, I will also suggest creative ways to use this planning activity.

ATTENDEES

The USOC advised us which USATT individuals should attend. The USOC is focused on winning medals, so the USOC invited and funded our coaches, one athlete representative, staff, and the president of the association. (Attending from USATT was myself, Barney D. Reed, Todd Sweeir, Dan Seeiniller, Doru Gheorghe, Bill Lui, Clark Mitchell, Margaret Smith, Debbie Moya and Deborah Gray.) For clubs, the group could include club officers, league organizers, junior program advisers, your landlord, motivated volunteers, potential sponsors and others.

MEETING LOGISTICS

Plan for a time when everyone can attend the entire meeting. Allow for at least four hours. Have the following items: flipchart paper, markers, pads of adhesive paper (about 4”x6”), and colored dots (4 different colors).

OPENING PRESENTATIONS

The leader should address the group for 15 minutes, stating the history of the club and objectives that have been important to the club’s development as well as current initiatives. If there is another person who should also make a presentation, allow 15 minutes for that presentation as well. For example, if you have a landlord, a sponsor, or another significant party that your club interacts with, ask that person to participate and show your interest in knowing how you fit into his/her plan. Time: 15-30 minutes.

TARGET SETTING

Divide into random groups of 6-8 people. You can do this by calculating how many groups you’ll have, then counting off by that number. For example, if there will be four groups, count off 1-2-3-4 then go into the group of your number. The objective is to get fresh ideas. Feel free to make adjustments if two or more people are in the same group who might have very similar viewpoints (spouses, coaches, tournament directors, etc.).

Provide a flip chart pad to each group. Have a separate area in the room for each group. Once the groups are established, create a chart with time increments across the top columns and write one objective on each row. Each group can set their own time increments and objectives. Time increments could be yearly, quarterly, or monthly. Objectives might include items such as number of tournaments to be held, number of league participants, money to accrue in the club’s bank account, club memberships, community outreach events, strategy to get juniors onto the national team, or other matters important to the group. Each group should then fill out the chart they’ve created. Limit the targets to no more than six or seven items. Take 20 minutes for this exercise. Then have one person from each group present its chart. Time: 30 minutes.

FACT FINDING

The groups reconvene. Create a list of whatever facts are relevant to the club. These details could include what the daily/monthly/yearly membership fees are, what programs are already being run, what events the club hosts, what other events the players participate in, etc. Again, take 20 minutes to generate the facts, and then have a representative from each group share the findings. Time: 30 minutes.

MESS FINDING (Brainstorming)

Reconvene in your groups. Now, given your objectives and your facts, begin brainstorming. Have each group create a four-square grid and label each of the sections “Membership Development,” “Athlete/Coaches Development,” “Financial” and “Other.” You can, of course, have different categories, but agree in advance with all groups so that each group has the same four categories. The categories that the USOC used with us were “Athlete Development,” “Coaches Development,” “Feeder Programs” and “Other.”

During this brainstorming session, the objective is for the group to think of as many helpful ideas as possible to achieve the objectives listed in the target setting exercise. Each idea should be written on a sticky paper, sized about 4”x6’ and placed in the applicable category. Time: 30 minutes.

SOLUTION FINDING

Each group selects a person to present their ideas to the group. Take four fresh flipchart sheets and label each sheet with one category item. As the first group presents their ideas, all the participants will give feedback about the correct category. Each idea will be placed on the appropriate sheet in an unobstructed way. The next group then presents their ideas. If an idea is similar to one presented earlier, it should be affixed to the first idea at the bottom of the sheet. This process continues until all groups have presented their best ideas to accomplish the objectives. At the end, all ideas will be listed. Ideas that were generated by multiple groups will also be visibly shown.

Each participant is then given 12 dots. Each participant is asked to signify which items are the most significant by putting on three dots per category, with no more than one dot on any suggestion. Next, each person is given three dots of another color. The three dots can go anywhere, but again, only one dot is allowed per item.

Volunteers count the number of both colored dots and generate charts with the findings. The items with the most dots of the first color are rewritten in a new chart with the highest number of dots on down. Create a bar chart to indicate the number of dots each item received. On a separate chart, the items of the
other color dot should be listed in a similar fashion. Post the results in front of the entire group. Now give each person three dots again and ask each person to vote by placing their dots on the items that each person deems most important. Again, each person can only place one dot on any item. Then, on the sheet that shows the tally of the first 3-dot exercise, each person is allowed to vote again on those items. But, for this final vote, each person can place as many of his or her three dots as they wish on any item.

Volunteers then again tally the dots and create a list of the top 3-4 items per agenda topic. Usually the result will show a clear demarcation between the highest priorities per item and the rest of the list. This signifies that a few priorities, when focused on, will yield a more effective result than focusing on a huge field of agenda items. Time: about one hour.

**ACTION PLANNING**

Now each group will focus on the steps needed to implement the top 3-4 ideas per category topic. Groups should be reconfigured at this point to best match up with the category that they desire to promote. Depending on the number of people present, each group may be asked to assume responsibility for one item on another list or, if there are many people participating, some groups could deal with 1-3 priority items. Each group should generate a new chart for each priority item. The headings of the column are: strategy, time frame, responsible parties and cost. Start with the first step and work through each area. Take about 45 minutes, and then have each group present their findings to the entire group. Time: about one hour.

This process will create a sense of team unity because the ideas that are chosen are the ones that the majority of participants have consistently chosen. It creates momentum on the issues of general consensus. Someone from the club should prepare a summary of the group exercise. Another meeting can be set to follow up on initiatives and proposals.

Most of us have been involved in groups or clubs where one person puts forward the agenda. When others don’t support those ideas, the result is struggling clubs. Even in cases in which one person is the private owner of a club, this exercise can help generate volunteers and show the club owner the direction desired by club members. I was very pleased to discover in my group that many of our ideas would cost almost nothing to implement. It was very encouraging to have so many new ideas that could help us advance USATT without adding to our expenses. Another group, however, the one focusing on athlete development, presented a multi-million dollar expense list. The Board will review and consider our findings from the Performance-Based Assessment as we set the 2003 budget.

Clubs can follow up by creating a written strategy, including a triangular-shaped diagram showing at the top level the club’s vision, then the club’s mission at the second level, followed by about four goals on the third level, and listing about five initiatives along the base of the triangle. That diagram could then be posted in the club.

USATT could publish some of the club’s strategic plans as a means of sharing and generating best practices in the interest of the overall growth of our sport. Please forward your results to me if your club does this exercise. Let’s keep ourselves focused on working together, building up our association and achieving success.

**ELECTION**

As this issue goes to print, a space is being reserved for the election results. Congratulations to the winners!
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Jack Kabraelian, Table Tennis Pioneers
Mats Bandestiggen, STIGA
David Sakai, Senoda, Inc.

Thank you, to our athletes.
Players who attended 5 Tour Events:
John Jarema
Players who attended 4 Tour Events:
Fan Yi Yong & De Tran
Players who attended 3 Tour Events:
Donna Sakai, David Sakai, Max Li, Rick Martin,
Charlene Liu, Lim Ming Chui, David Zhuang,
John Wetzler, Valeriya Ort, Raghu Nadmichettu,
Andreas Muenchow, Gary Gudzenko,
Eric Finkelstein, John Harrington,
Wesley Fan, Reginald Keith Tademy,
Nazruddin Farag, Khaleel Ashgarali,
Keith Evans, Micheal Espino,
James Duan, Roman Drych,
Allen Brady, Tahl Leibovitz,
Andre Scott, and Ross Brown.

Thank you, to our Local Organizing Committees,
Supporters, and Friends.
Ronald and Gloria Murad, Pam Ramsey, Clark Mitchell, Kamran Azimzadeh and the San Diego Table Tennis Association, Greg Dell and the Newark Delaware Table Tennis Club, Krishna Kanuga and the Rutgers Table Tennis Club, Terry Bell, Linda Hsing, Tony Kiker and the Canadian Table Tennis Association, Our Friends at USA Today, Rob Kerner, John Jarema, Richard McAfee, Ross Brown, Larry Hodges, Larry Belay, Jim Williams, Olga Feingold, Stanley Kahan, Andre Scott, Amy and Brian (you guys know who you are!), Tony Turner, Greg Turner, Saul Weinstein, Krishman Rai, Sheri Pittman, Tong Lee, Dennis Taylor, Hank McCoullum, Tim Boggan, Allen Barth, Todd Sweeris, Dr. Jiing Wang, Barney Reed, Robert Mayor, Khoi Than, Grant Roch, and the Johns Hopkins Table Tennis Club, Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, and the Maryland Table Tennis Club, Johnny Hess, Kris Bell, Barry Dattel, Lily Yip and the New Jersey Table Tennis Club, and last but not least, Chris Troy.

Your NATT staff (from left to right):
Brian Pace, Wendy Troy, Richard Lee,
Fong Hsu, and Alan Williams.
NOT SHOWN: Zachary Sng

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Concerns of the ITTF Rules Committee

A lot of issues are under discussion at the ITTF Rules Committee. Most of them were presented at the U.S. Open in the Umpires Seminar. As usual, we try to communicate the material covered to players, coaches, and umpires who may not have had the chance to attend the seminar.

One sometimes wonders why some things are covered in the rules and others are not. The answer is not that easy. Should we pass rules to cover all circumstances? Or should we avoid dealing with those which are obviously rare?

Let us take some examples and find out how you think.

• A player has an unusually large handle on his racket.
  1. Is it legal or illegal?
  2. In a rally the ball hits the handle and goes back in play, what will be the call, legal or illegal?
  3. The player covers that big handle with illegal rubber and starts using it to hit the ball, should it be considered legal or illegal?
  4. A player learned to hit the ball with the back of his hand, and is using it for the drop shots. Should we rule that drop shot legal or illegal?

• Coming out of the round robin stage and going to the single elimination stage, we have three players, #1 is from Sweden with a Bye, and #2 and #3 are from China. The Chinese players are asking for the application of the geographical separation rule. Can we forget the Bye and let one of them play against the #1 Swedish player?

• A player has an advisor and a translator. The advisor was given a warning for coaching during the game. Later, in the same game, the translator started giving advice to the player. Should the translator be given a warning or a red card?

• A player was given a warning for misbehavior in an individual event. He won his match and advanced to the next match. Once again he committed a misbehavior act. Should he be given another warning or a penalty point? There is a suggestion that warnings should be carried to all subsequent matches.

• There is a suggestion that the act of a misbehaving player should be reported to all Associations.

Another area of concern is the Practice Time.

• During practice time a player was injured. How much time should be allowed for the injury? Should he be allowed ten minutes? Give him more time because the match did not start yet? One referee may allow five minutes while another may allow 30 minutes. There is no specified rule on the matter.

• During practice the player interrupts his practice and talks to his coach.

• The player is not playing continuously, and he talks to other players or the audience.

• The player is playing with his training suite.

• The player is playing with a different color shirt, which he is not going to use during the match.

• The player is playing without his player number, saying he will put it on when the match starts.

• The player hits the table with his racket.

• The player changes his racket without telling the umpire or his opponent.

• The player is using different rackets.

If you have any objection to any of the above situations, remember, the player has the right to refuse to practice altogether.

There is a big concern now on the jurisdiction of umpires and referees over players during practice time. Is practice time a part of the match where all the rules have to be applied, or is it a separate time at the discretion of the player?

Please remember that none of the above situations are fictitious. They were actual situations, which were presented to the ITTF Rules Committee for their ruling. I hope you will see how difficult it is to reach a conclusion on at least on some of these situations.

Please feel free to send your comments or feedback on any of these situations. I will be glad to forward your recommendations to the committee.

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CUB SCOUTS BELT LOOP AND SPORTS PIN PROGRAM
By Todd Guay, New Hampshire TTC

The New Hampshire Table Tennis Club is involved in a number of programs that introduce our sport to youths. One of these programs, the Cub Scout Belt Loop and Sports Pin program, satisfies the scouting requirements for the table tennis belt loop and sports pin. This gives the Scouts additional incentive to participate. It is clear that a healthy future for our sport within the U.S. is dependent on strong youth programs. This program helps to introduce our youths to the sport early in order to maximize their potential. Youth participation in Cub Scouts involves boys, ages 6 through 11. The NHTTC felt that this organization was a natural pool of young talent at the right age to be introduced to the sport. Similar programs can be developed for organizations such as the Brownies, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts.

The NHTTC designed the program so that it can be easily adapted for use by other clubs. It is organized into two sessions, one that covers the requirements needed for the Scout to qualify for a belt loop award, and a session that covers the requirements for the more advanced sports pin award. The program includes a program guide that contains detailed instructions for setting up and running a session, a program brochure to advertise the program with local Scouting organizations, award certificate templates for each session, and session handouts to reinforce the lessons learned. A session mixes table tennis skills with fun activities that are intended to make learning the sport a memorable experience.

All the materials needed for the program are available from the NHTTC web site: www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Ring/2646. We encourage other clubs to use the material. Suggestions on ways to improve the program are greatly appreciated and will be worked back into the existing material.
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LIU GUOLIANG RETIRES AT AGE 26
Care of ITTF

China's Liu Guoliang, one of the World's best players in the 90's, has decided to retire.

When the Chinese League is over in the middle of August, Liu Guoliang will no longer be on the international scene - as a player. However, he received official approval from the Chinese association to become a coach.

With the decision, Liu will not be playing at the Asian Games - but he might show up as a coach!

"During the last months I have discussed my future with the officials in my association and now the decision is made," said Liu, who has been in the World top since he came into the Chinese national team at the age of 17. The small, fast-moving penholder was a "horror opponent" to many other top players because of his pimpled rubbers and his "nasty" services.

"The new 40mm ball and the new service rule is not good for me, so I have no regrets."

Though Liu is now only 26 he feels ready to retire. "I have won all the possible titles that I could ever dream of, and since I started so early I have been on the scene longer than most other players. The new 40mm ball and the new service rule is not good for me, so I have no regrets."

Going from playing to coaching Liu suddenly opens a possibility that nobody ever thought about before: Liu Guoliang coaching his good friend and doubles partner Kong Linghui at the Athens Olympics in 2004!

The retirement of Liu Guoliang is not a big surprise. With his style of play based on speed and with his wizard "hidden" services he was considered to be one of the players who would have difficulties with the bigger ball and the new service rule.

But what a retirement. When Liu Guoliang says goodbye he leaves ranked #9 in the World Rankings, and as the reigning World Team Champion! He swept men's singles & doubles at the 1996 Olympics, and won a silver and bronze, respectively, in 2000. He also swept men's singles & doubles at the 1999 World Championships, made the final of men's singles in 1995, and has won men's doubles twice, mixed doubles once and teams three times. He won the Men's World Cup in 1996. He has won nearly 20 Pro Tour titles.

Knowing his personality it is likely that his ambition will be to achieve the same as a coach as well.

JAN-OVE WALDNER BREAKS FOOT
Care of ITTF

Swedish star Jan-Ove Waldner will be out of action for about six months. Over the Sept. 21-22 weekend he fell on a slippery floor and broke his right foot at a restaurant owned by Swedish football star Thomas Brolin.

Waldner was immediately taken to the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm and operated on. For the next six weeks his foot will be protected in a special boot. After that, he will still need a few months to recover.

The accident is a severe blow for Waldner, who will be 37 on the Oct. 3. Waldner was supposed to play in the Men's World Cup in Jinan, China, at the end of October. Zoran Primorac (CRO) will be invited to replace him.

"I don't know how long this will take, but I know that I will come back to the table," said Waldner, who also feels sorry for the Swedish Table Tennis Association. Everybody was hoping that Waldner would qualify for the Pro Tour Grand Finals in December this year to be held in Stockholm, Sweden. "It is really a pity that I will miss the Grand Finals. That might have been my last international event at home."

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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.

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YOUTH SPORTS DAY
Colorado Springs, CO · June 1, 2002
By Debbie Moya

The Colorado Springs Sports Corporation held its first ever “Youth Sports Day,” to celebrate kids in sports. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing sports for the economic and social benefit of the citizens of Colorado Springs. Commonly referred to as “The Sports Corp,” the organization and its members are committed to cultivating and preserving a dynamic sports environment that enriches the quality of life for residents of the Pikes Peak region.

The one-day interactive event at El Pomar Youth Sports Park attracted the area youth and offered the opportunity to experience new sports for free. Altogether, 19 sports were represented, including Archery, Basketball, Cheerleading, Field Hockey, Shooting, Taekwondo, Volleyball, and (of course) table tennis and many others.

The USA Table Tennis booth gave away USATT gift tokens to all kids who showed their talent on the table. Representing USATT was Debbie Moya, USATT Programs Director, and Bob Tretheway, President, Rocky Mountain Table Tennis Association. For more information, log onto the Colorado Springs Sports Corporation web page at www.thesportscorp.org.

Manning the USATT booth: Bob Tretheway, Adam & Austin Preiss, Debbie Moya. Bottom: Debbie takes on a tough-looking spectator.

PORT WASHINGTON TTC
Port Washington, NY

Li Tsang, one of the principals of an environmental consulting firm, realized that he needed to be actively involved with sports at his forty-plus age. He first returned to badminton, which he had played years before. After a few months of playing at a badminton club in New York City, he realized that it was tough for him to play at the intensity and level that he possessed twenty years ago. He then turned his attention towards table tennis, a sport he also played before college.

He visited and played at a few table tennis clubs in the greater New York City metropolitan area. He discovered two major areas of improvement are necessary at most of table tennis clubs: 1) The club’s environment, and 2) The lack of youth programs. In comparison to the clubs of other sports, conditions at existing table tennis clubs are

Clockwise from top-left: Verdon Tsang hits with Coach Wang Chen; Wang with owner/founder Li Tsang; Wang in the Pro Shop.
Dickie Fleisher

Florida Table Tennis Player With Style
By Ray Spann

Dickie Fleisher is not your ordinary ping-pong player. Perhaps that is an understatement, because the folks who know Dickie continue to marvel at his broad spectrum of talents. Many central Florida table tennis players first got a glimpse of Dickie at the First Annual Countryside Open, held in Clearwater earlier this year. In that spectacular tournament, Fleisher came within the thickness of a concert harp string of winning the open division against Brian Pace, a well-known Florida player and former U.S. Collegiate Champion. Players from all over Florida and Georgia were held spellbound by the match that went the full limit, with Fleisher ahead most of the time, until the very end when Pace reached back for that little extra to get him over the top. Many players who saw the match continue to talk about it and characterize it as the best table tennis match they ever saw, bar none!

But Dickie is not just an outstanding table tennis player from Naples, Florida. In a Sports Illustrated full-page article in the April 3, 1995 issue (see photo), Dickie is lauded not only for his superior talent with a table tennis racquet, but his world-class expertise as a concert harpist. According to the article, Fleisher performs in close to 130 concerts a year. In an interview with Dickie at the close of the Countryside tournament, he said he was now touring with the world famous Doc Severenson and would miss the U.S. Open held in Ft. Lauderdale this year. He did say he would try to attend the Florida State Closed Championships in Orlando later this year.

Dickie's style as a table tennis player has been described as "one of the best off-speed players in the Western Hemisphere." Brian Pace made that observation after the grueling match in the finals at Clearwater in May of this year. Fleisher uses long-pips on one side of his racket, somewhat unique with players this year. Fleisher uses long-pips on one side of his racket, somewhat unique with players this year. Fleisher indicated that playing the vibrating strings of the concert harp has improved his hand-eye coordination, which in turn, has helped his table tennis play.

Fleisher got started in table tennis after jamming his fingers in a junior high basketball game and being blind-sided in a football game. Dickie insists that table tennis is fiercer than either basketball or football. He says, "It's got no gloves, no mats, no body armor, no teammates to bail you out on an off night, and you only get one serve per point."

Dickie Fleisher has style, and according to Laszlo Bellak (a three-time runner-up in Men's Singles at the World Championships), "If Dickie practiced more, he would be national champ." Bellak could be right. In today's fast-paced game, filled with stunning drives and powerful loops, there may be a place for a champion with the style and grace of a concert harpist. So the next time that someone yells out, "Dickie Fleisher is in the house!", you may very well be in for a treat, whether it is the racquet. Dickie, you make all of Florida feel proud!

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USATT Developmental Coach of the Year, 2002:

Larry Hodges

By Debbie Moya

Hodges, 42, is certified by USA Table Tennis (USATT) as a National Coach, the highest level. He is the Editor of USA Table Tennis Magazine (this is the 45th issue he’s done), and is the USATT Club Programs Director and Co-Wedmaster. (Selections were made by the USATT Coaching staff.)

Over the past year, Hodges developed and promoted two major coaching programs for USATT clubs: the Junior Training Program and the Beginning Classes Program. Hodges also wrote the manuals that go with these programs. They are available at the USATT Club Programs page at www.usatt.org/club_programs. (He’s now working on the upcoming USATT League, which you can also read about at the Club Programs page.)

Hodges was previously a full-time coach (he now coaches part-time) at the Maryland Table Tennis Center (MDTTC), which he co-founded in 1991 (as the National Table Tennis Center) with co-coaches Cheng Yinghua and Jack Huang, both past USATT Coaches of the Year. He has run over 60 five-day training camps at MDTTC, and helps preside over the largest and most successful junior program in the U.S.

For 12 straight years at the Junior Olympics/Junior Nationals, with Hodges acting as head coach, MDTTC juniors won more gold and more total medals than any other state. During this time, they have won more total gold medals than the other 49 states combined. At the 2001 Junior Olympics/Junior Nationals, MDTTC players won 25 of the 46 gold medals (including 8 of the 11 team events). In 2002, they won 29 of the 48 gold medals (including 8 of the 12 team events), plus 17 silver and 27 bronzes. (These include a few “shared” medals in doubles.) Hodges led contingents of 44 and 38 players these two years.

Hodges has 742 articles published in 45 different publications. 709 are on table tennis, including about 150 coaching articles. He is the author of Table Tennis: Steps to Success (over 18,000 copies sold), as well as Instructor’s Guide to Table Tennis, the official USA Table Tennis coaching manual for beginning coaches. He has also produced numerous program booklets for USATT for U.S. Opens, Nationals and other major events.

Hodges chaired the USATT Coaching Committee for four years; was at one time the director and a coach for the Resident Training Program for Table Tennis at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs; has been the coach for the U.S. Junior Team at numerous national and international tournaments; and has been nominated as a Coach of the Year three times previously.

Hodges has also chaired the USATT Club Committee and Resident Training Committee, and has been a member of the USATT Senior, Junior, Grassroots and Ratings Committees. He is a past USATT vice president. He has run over 100 USATT tournaments, including the largest 4-star tournament in history, the 1998 Eastern Open. He is certified as an umpire. He has arranged some of the largest TV showings of table tennis in history, including showings on CNN, Headline News, Nightline, and several on ESPN and ESPN2, along with local TV stations and hundreds of newspaper clippings. After years of promotion, Hodges is proud of the fact that Maryland now has more USATT members as a percentage of population than any other state in the U.S. Hodges is the founder of the North American Teams in Baltimore and the Classic Hardbat Association.

Hodges has a bachelor’s degree in math and a master’s degree in journalism, both from the University of Maryland, which he chose because of its strength in table tennis. He later coached their team to three straight national championships, including one year as a player/coach. Hodges holds 13 national (mostly hardbat and collegiate titles) and many state titles as a player. He is the reigning U.S. National Hardbat Doubles and Over 40 Hardbat Singles Champion, although he usually plays with sponge, with a current rating of 2215. He collects books on table tennis, and currently has 114 in English. He has a personal web page at www.larrytt.com.

USATT Coach of the Year, 2002:

Christian Lillieroos

By Larry Hodges

This is the second time that Christian Lillieroos has been USATT Coach of the Year—he also won the honor in 1997. (Selections were made by the USATT Coaching staff.)

Lillieroos, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is the head coach at Texas Wesleyan University, which became the first full-status varsity table tennis program in the country in 2001. This was a major breakthrough for U.S. Table Tennis. Texas Wesleyan swept the five main events (Men’s and Women’s Singles & Doubles, and Mixed Doubles) at the 2001 ACUI College Championships, the first time that has happened.

Lillieroos also coached Texas Wesleyan players Eric Owens and Jasna Reed to titles at the 2001 U.S. Nationals in December, with Owens winning Men’s Singles, Doubles, and Reed winning Women’s Doubles. Reed & Owens teamed up to make the final of Mixed Doubles. Lillieroos also coached both onto the U.S. National Team. When Owens won Men’s Singles, it was the first time in eight years that a U.S.-born player had won.

Lillieroos is certified by USA Table Tennis as a National Coach, the highest level possible. He is also certified by the International Table Tennis Federation as a Level 3 Coach, also the highest level possible. He is an ITTF Coaching Coordinator, and has held clinics in seven countries.

He was an elite college coach in Sweden before moving to the U.S. in 1986. From 1986 to 1987, he was the Canadian Provincial Team Coach, and also coached the Canadian Junior Team. From 1992-95, he was the Men’s and Women’s National Coach for Mexico. And from 1997-98, he was the U.S. Men’s National Coach. He was also USATT’s Coaching Development Director from 1997-99. From 1999-2000, he was Germany’s Director of Sport.

Lillieroos has also been active in Paralympics. He is the Chairman of the International Governing Body for Paralympic Table Tennis, and is a member of the International Paralympic Committee. He was the U.S. Paralympic coach at the Paralympics in 1992 in Barcelona, and has coached numerous Paralympic training camps. He has been a Competition Manager, Director or Technical Delegate at numerous international Paralympic Championships.
Is China Dumping?

By Bob Gusikoff
1959 U.S. Men’s Singles Champion Bob Gusikoff was a member of the 1959 U.S. Team to the Dortmund World’s, where in Swatchyling Cup play he beat former World Singles and Doubles Champion and that year’s World Singles finalist Ferenc Sido of Hungary.

Is China Dumping?
It was the latest news bulletin – or so a Birmingham, England newspaper thought, screaming its headline to those interested in the 1977 World Men’s Singles Championship. Japan’s Mitsuru Kohno, after defeating 1971 World Champion Stellan Bengtsson, 19 in the fifth quarter’s, had gone on to beat China’s Liang Geliang, 19, 14, 11, then in the final Guo Yuehua, -17. 9, 19, 13. Was this such a surprise? Kohno could play, right? Ten years earlier, with the Chinese absent because of the Cultural Revolution, he’d been World runner-up to his teammate Nobithiko Hasegawa and since then had been among the World’s top players. Indeed, in earlier Swatchyling Cup matches here before meeting the Chinese and being hopelessly outdistanced in the third by Liang Geliang, then routed by Huang Liang and his Super Racket, he’d compiled a 17-0 record.

Still, the fact that in the Singles at 20-19 down in the first, Liang pushed Kohno’s serve off, then just collapsed, and the fact that, down 18-17 in the third (after a 10-2 run in the second), Guo served into the net, then collapsed, got tongues wagging. Aficionados did not know yet that Guo would be in the next three World Singles finals, but they knew he was pretty good. They were also quite aware that Liang was playing well enough to win the Men’s Doubles with Li Zhenshi. And that Li, a super-player of an obstacle in the quarter’s path, who in the Team’s had beaten Bengtsson (as well as Johansson, Gergely, and 1975 World Champion Joyner), had been quickly disposed of in the first round by the Yugoslav #4, just as in Calcutta at the 1959 U.S. Men’s Singles Champion Bob Gusikoff was a member of the 1959 U.S. Team to the Dortmund World’s, where in Swatchyling Cup play he beat former World Singles and Doubles Champion and that year’s World Singles finalist Ferenc Sido of Hungary.

Is China Dumping?
At the 1979 World’s in North Korea, another Japanese, Seiji Ono, outlasted German Champion Peter Stellwag in five in the sixteenth. This was a very important win – the more so because the unheralded Ono was simply unable to play in Singles. and did mandate that if two

Is China Dumping?
Flash forward another decade – to the Chinese Women this time. To He Zhili, World Women’s Singles Champion in 1987, but who shouldn’t have been. Story was He refused to throw a match to a compatriot as she was asked to do, and so was not selected to represent China at the ‘88 Olympics. Whereupon she moved to Japan, changed her name to Chire Koyama- and suffered the hype she was a traitor. Of course, unlike the Chinese men, who sometimes go through a “crisis” in which other teams, most notably a strong Sweden, sometimes win the Swatchyling Cup, the Chinese women have won the Corbillon Cup every single World’s since 1975 – with one significant exception. In 1991, in a political oddity, a combined North and South Korea Team won the Cup from the Chinese – this when the World’s was played in Seoul.

Is China Dumping?
Flash forward further to “The World Is Watching” coverage of the 1997 Manchester World’s in our USATT magazine. I was in England for these Championships, as I’d been 20 years earlier – this would be my last World’s before my debilitating stroke. There I saw at the outset that the Men’s Singles quarter’s draw might look very Chinese (rankings as of Jan., 1997): Kong Linghui (#1) vs. Ma Wenge (#11); Ding Song (#8) vs. (if Vladimir Samsonov – #3 – were to be upset) Ma Lin (#26) or Wang Lijin (2001 World Singles/Doubles Champion-to-be); Liu Guoliang (#2) vs. Yan Sen (if Yan – #49 – could upset Kim Tae Soo (#7); and Wang Tao (#5) vs. … well, only here was the eighth Chinese in the quarter’s impossible, and Jan-Ove Waldner (#4) figured to advance. In the top half, the three Chinese, Kong, Ma, and Ding did advance, along with Samsonov, who beat Wang Lijin 16,-10, 22, 19. In the bottom half, however, Liu, the Olympic Champion, was upset in the second round in five games by a Yugoslav who wasn’t even on the Ranking list! Liu’s place was then taken in the quarter’s by an expatriate Chinese playing for Spain, He Zhi Wen (#69). With 5 of the 6 allotted places taken by Chinese players, Wang Tao went down 3-0 to Jean-Philippe Gatien (#14) – and Waldner zipped through the quarter’s, semi’s, and final. Liu Guoliang would do a bit better at the next World’s – would win it.

Is China Dumping?
Alright, enough examples, though others could find quite a few more.

Why would China dump? Don’t they want to win? …Well, yes and no. For since their return to Championship form after the Cultural Revolution, they’ve been trapped. They want to win, but they can’t continue to win, and win, and win – they’ll kill the Sport. It’s a problem which the ITTF tacitly recognizes today. Recently the Federation in discussing the permissible number of entries in the 2004 Olympics, tried to mandate that only two players from a country – that is, two Chinese – not the current three, be allowed to play in Singles, and did mandate that if two Doubles teams were permitted to play, they would have to place in the same half of the draw, making an all-Chinese final impossible!

Is China Dumping?
There are still onlookers who believe the Chinese have never dumped. But new technology has brought a new Game, different from the hardbat one I played for so many years. The Game now is fast and furious, chances have to be taken, serves aren’t returned, mistakes are inevitable. It’s much easier to fake the loss of a point, to err deliberately nowadays than when the Europeans were dominant. Would the Hungarians, the Czechs, the English, even the gambling Americans have stood for dumping matches, even titles? Certainly not, because such dumping would have been readily apparent – and they’d have been thought ridiculous.

But back then thousands of spectators always wanted to watch winners.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • November/December 2002 23
Doug Cartland arrived on the New York table tennis scene in the mid-1930's after graduating with honors from the University of North Carolina where he played on the tennis team behind nationally known Betsy Grant. Making the USTA's Top 10 for the 1936-37 season (he would also make it for the 1936-37 season), he was proclaimed one of the "most improved players in the East."

It was soon clear that "Dixie," as he was sometimes called, had his own inimitable ways of making a living. If he weren't already writing stories for pulp magazines he soon would be. More importantly, he was "a puzzle expert" - had won $15,000 in a New York Post contest. "Worst thing that could have happened," he later lamented - "all the players kept trying to borrow money from me." (But, as Doug inevitably had a consuming interest in their plight, it was something he'd put up with for decades.) He would go on to win other contests, other prizes - thousands of dollars, an automobile or two - under an assumed name or with the help of an intermediary.

Working legitimately or illegitimately he was diligent. For one of these contests Doug went to the sponsor's headquarters and got the official Dictionary the contestants would be bound by. He then saw what 99% of the others didn't see - that a single word could become two if used as a noun and also as a verb. Hence, since "nut," say, could not only be used in various ways as a noun, but also as a verb - to nut, "to seek for or gather nuts" - he ended up a couple of thousand words ahead of his competition.

Doug was very good with words, and always very focused - he was paid handsomely by Webster's for finding at least 150 misprints in their New, very focused - he was paid handsomely by Webster's Dictionary. He would have the reputation of being "the best hustler you ever met," and in the eyes of some, was never willing to part sense of decorum, disruptions in the heat of a wager could occur - for Doug would never willingly be taken as a member of the U.S. Team was in 1949 - and there wasn't some way that Cartland was seeing through it. There wasn't.

Cartland's first trip to the World Championships as a member of the U.S. Team was in 1949 - and resulted in his one-year suspension from the USTA, and Miles's and Reisman's as well. All three of course were proud, world-class professionals and felt they'd not been treated fairly as befit their stature. Doug's problems were mainly with the Swedish Association who'd paid the USTA (not nearly enough, said Miles) a $1,000 for a series of exhibitions by the U.S. Team. According to Reisman, who was with a wing of the Team, including Cartland, that went to northern Sweden, Doug was very unhappy about two things. One, meal after meal, he was being served reindeer meat until he was just sick of it. (The Swedish word for this meat sounded to Doug's ears like "shit.") And, two, repeatedly he and the others were being asked to take very early morning trains as they barmstormed about, usually playing in school gym.

Eventually at a tournament Doug just lost control. The prize was a pair of ski poles that Marty wanted, so he and Doug were playing for real. When the umpire made what Doug thought was a bad call, he became upset...and argued nastily. Then, oh, oh, when that same umpire made another bad call, Doug really lost it, began cursing - went berserk. Marty said the audience started to stamp their feet, and say in unison, Nay, nay. Whereupon Doug raised his hand, waved at them as if to wipe them all away,
Doug Cartland, Marty Reisman and the first sponge World Champion Hiroje Satoh of Japan in 1952

and said loudly, “Go to hell!” Marty was embarrassed, as who wouldn’t be – the more so when all the spectators got up and left. Later, likely at another stop, the U.S. players were guests at a dinner and were expected to say a few polite words. When it came time for Doug to speak, he said only, “I hate Sweden! I hate Swedes!” Some tried to see that as witty – as ironic American humor. But, said Marty, he couldn’t believe what he was hearing, for of course Doug couldn’t have been more serious. He was not a happy northern camper.

At a pre-World’s tournament in Gottenburg before a large, appreciative crowd, Doug beat that year’s World quarterfinalist Tibor Harangozo (after whom today’s Tibhar Co. is named). Later in Stockholm Doug lost in Singles to his friend and fellow grinder, Alex Ehrlich, 3-time World runner-up. In Doubles he and Miles got to the semi’s before losing to the eventual winners, the Czechs Ivan Andreatis and Frantisek “Ferko” Tokar.

Following the Stockholm World’s, on arriving at the Wembley Open as celebrity drawing cards (Marty would win the tournament), Miles and Reisman (but not Cartland) took it upon themselves to move to a better hotel (where the ETTA food coupons they’d been given were worthless) and threatened to cancel, or actually did cancel, a scheduled exhibition or two in or around London when ETTA officials at first balked at paying the extra food and lodging expense (which later they insisted on being reimbursed for). The New Yorkers were also accused of openly betting “under the noses of officials” and so were “a ruddy nuisance who spoiled the atmosphere of the tournament.”

Cartland’s suspension didn’t stop him from again touring with Cook. In the spring of 1950, Doug and Harry, being driven to Cleveland after an exhibition in Dallas, were involved in a bad accident when a big truck bolted out of a side road and hitting their car rolled it over. Doug emerged unscathed, but Cook, thrown out, had broken his pelvic bone. Sent to a hospital, he unexpectedly died there.

Over the years Cartland would sometimes represent N.Y. at the U.S. Open Team Championships. The most bizarre of these was the 1950 one at Columbus, Ohio where the buzzard that hit so was no one present a snowbound Reisman from joining his teammates Doug and Johnny Somael. Despite the fact that in every tie the New Yorket had to forfeit Reisman’s scheduled matches, Doug and Johnny almost won the tournament – for, with Doug, undefeated throughout and in the final winning the whole Chicago team, including U.S. #1 Bill Holzrichter, New York barely lost, 5-4.

In 1951, continuing to ride a wave of wins – the Capital Open in Washington, D.C., the Atlantic States Open in Philadelphia, and the Eastern’s in Pawtucket, Rhode Island – Doug was back on the U.S. team representing us for what was the 1951 World’s. There, in Singles, he beat England’s Aubrey Simons, last season’s World #10, then lost to France’s Michel Haguenauer, World #11. Doug himself was ranked World #14 that year, primarily because in a Swaythling Cup match he defeated – a remarkable feat – the legendary Bo Vana, deuce in the deciding 3rd. Granted Vana wasn’t at his 3-time World-winning best, he still was good enough there in Vienna to win both the Men’s and Mixed Doubles. Jack Carrington, the great English coach, mentor to two-time World Champion Johnny Leach, writing in the official ETTA magazine Table Tennis, had this to say of Cartland:

“...He has neither the skill, the touch, nor the speed of a great champion, but he knows how to get every ounce of value out of what Cartland has...and what the opponent has not.

His defeat of Vana in the Swaythling Cup match was a classic. Possessing neither a drive which could pierce Vana, nor a chop which could worry him, the left-handed Yankee so rang the changes in the play that he won out in the third game of what must have been one of Vana’s longest sets ever.

Cartland chopped Vana round to his backhand, then pushed the second drive wide to Vana’s forehand, and kept this up several times each point until the Czech was losing his speed. Then out would come a last-minute backhand drive to force Vana on to defense. Using short balls near the net, high low topspins to the baselines, counterthrusts to the body, and his disguised backhand slow drives, fighting, fighting every second, Cartland won the match against the master....”

After Vienna, Doug teamed with Reisman to begin several years of an adventurous life, one for a novel, including a prolonged tour with the Globorotter, and then on to Bombay for the ’52 World’s. There, Reisman would lose to the new sponge-bat sensation Hiroje Satoh, then win the Consolation where Satoh was winning the Men’s Singles. Cartland, down 2-0 to the South Vietnamese star, Mai Van Hau, rallied to win in 3, then lost in the quarter’s to World #13, France’s Guy Amouretti. In the Doubles, Doug and Marty were beaten in the quarter’s by the eventual Japanese winners Norio Fujita and Takahiko Hayashi.

Following these Championships, Reisman and Cartland embarked on a series of matches (summarized in fact and fiction in innumerable half-century articles about Marty) in Rangoon, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Hong Kong, Manila, Taipei, and finally Osaka where The Money Player allows Cartland to share the glory of their win against World Champions Sato and Fuji.

Doug and Marty’s life continued more or less routinely. In 1956 The Money Player tells us, while on tour with Miles, Cartland and two Canadian girls, Reisman, in his Terry-and-the-Pirates way, successfully served as a courier – smuggled gold from Manila to Bangkok.

In 1957, Doug, tripped up by a conferee, was not so lucky with his smuggling. He was caught with undeclared “goods [watches, believe estimated at $10,000]” for which transgression he was fined in Federal District Court in Trenton, N.J., $1,500. Of course the USTTA suspended him again for the “damaging...adverse publicity” his actions brought to the sport. He’d not been a member of that 57 U.S. Team, but, playing as an individual, a 42-year-old one, he’d defeated Brazil’s World #1 Ivan Severo, then had lost to Yugoslavia’s World #12 Josip Vogrinic, -13, -20, 21, -21, again “fighting, fighting every second,” as Carrington had said of him 6 years earlier.

Whatever the currency of Cartland’s long and varied life, he was first and foremost a table tennis player. But space permits only another example or two from his lengthy career. In 1965, Doug returned to the CNE. His opponent in the 8th’s was Jimmy Blommer, who this year and the next in Toronto would win the Men’s Doubles with Danny Pecora, and who this season would be ranked U.S. #8. “Dixie,” age 51, cheered on vigorously by fellow New Yorkers, of which I enthusiastically was one, beat Blommer. In what Topics would call “the comeback of the year.”

Cartland, as we’ve seen, was always coming back. Through the mid-1960’s and into the ’70s I played against him...and usually lost. I remember a tournament in Maryland where I’d won the 1st from him and from 20-13 down in the 2nd I’d miraculously rallied to go 2-0 up. As I passed him in changing sides, he said, “Well, I guess I’ll just have to play better.” It was such an upbeat comment, especially since he then beat me three straight, that I immediately tucked it into my own psyche’s portfolio.

After the New York clubs – Guiskoff’s and Reisman’s – closed, I would occasionally talk with Doug, interview him for my History, at a tournament he’d come to watch. The last time I saw him was at a 1995 reunion with Schiit, Paglia o. Reisman, Laszlo Nagy and others at Dick Miles’s home. The ravages of Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and the fatal prostate problem he’d already had surgery for in the early ’90’s were still in his dying future.

Now, though Doug is gone, the puzzle of his game lives on. Here’s New Yorker Alan Bell 30 years ago paying the timeless tribute:

“...shot, for shot he does}A appear to be as strong as he really is when you’re up there playing him. The reason for this, you discover, is that Cartland moves the ball so well within the configuration of his game that his opponent cannot use his striking edge even if he has one....

No one should ever rate a player over another, stroke by stroke. It doesn’t mean anything. Particularly if that player is an elderly gentleman of pleasant sympathies, disposed to smile, to learn, as in the side his wallet is on (which is not your side).

Break down Cartland, his game? Why, it defies analysis. As if you could learn to understand a great novel by reading dictionary definitions of all the words therein.”
Table Tennis Chapters from “Robot Adept”
Part 2 of 2 (con’t from last issue)  By Piers Anthony

Chapter 16: Decision

Bane shook his head. "He learned tricks he never knew before! I’m in a position to know. I could have finished the match by being smarter in the Chase, and now one more loss can finish it the other way. I know not we’er I have really been trying.”

"You tried," Agape said. "You were ahead, but then he used those peculiar serves."

"I know not who could have taught him those," he said. "I played the game all my life, but ne’er could match my father, and knew of none other could. Stile would not have trained him, and - " Then a thought caught up. "The renegade animal heads! They played not with others, but there were stories of an elephant head who was marvelously dexterous with his trunk! That could be it!"

"That, and the natural skill of your human body," she agreed.

"Aye, it be a good body," he said with a certain resigned pride. "This machine body makes errors not; but also can handle complex surprises not. He caught me often enough with shots I could calculate not in time. He knew my limits, as he should. It was his body longer than mine."

"But you can adjust."

"Aye. He can catch me once or twice with a new shot, but hereafter I be attuned to the device, and it be useless. I will be stronger for the next game, and soon."

He knew that freak shots could not be handled as he had to retreat far back from the table to have any hope of returning it.

But Mach remained up close - and the ball, crazily, came back, in another shaky but fair return. It seemed impossible, but there it was. How could it have happened?

Bane, shaken by this freak series, tried to trick shot. He wound up as if for the hardest smash yet, then dinked the ball down just over the net with a heavy backspin that damped it almost to a standstill.

Mach, though, was ready. The tip of his paddle caught the ball and flipped it to the side, forcing Bane to dive for the return - and then, of course, Mach slammed the setup to the other side, winning the point.

But Bane knew that freak shots could not be depended on. Mach had been extraordinarily lucky in his returns, then pounced on the opportunity that offered when Bane changed the pace. Had Mach been playing well back from the table, in anticipation of a slam, he would have never caught up to the dink shot. He served again, this time putting on backspin so heavy that though the ball started fast, it slowed dramatically and failed to clear the table for the second bounce on the far side. Bane returned it without even trying to counter the spin; as a result, the ball sailed up in an invitation for another smash.

But Mach accepted the invitation, and slammed it off Mach’s backhand corner. But Mach took it on his backhand without effort, and again it looped back. Bane slammed it off Mach’s forehand corner. Yet again Mach intercepted it in what should have been a return that careered wildly, but again the ball simply looped back to strike at the center of Bane’s table.

This was crazy! Mach wasn’t even trying to play offensively; he was simply making fluke returns! What was he up to? No one could play that way for long without losing the point; human reflexes were not swift enough to make the ball loop well back into the court. Mach had prepared diligently. The key was in the paddle.

Next day Bane was ready. This was freestyle, and he had prepared diligently. The key was in the paddle. Technology was able to produce a wide variety of sizes, surfaces, weights and surfaces, and he had tested them as thoroughly as he could. He now had a paddle that was virtually magical in its proprieties. The touch of finger or thumb on the controls near the joining of the blade and handle could change the hardness of the rubber. (It wasn’t rubber, but tradition called it that) all the way from diamond to marshmallow, and the adhesion from glass to glue. The paddle could hold the ball so that it would go straight, or be so slippery that the ball bounced away with its spin unaffected. It could completely dump out both the force and spin of an incoming ball, or put on devastating force and spin of its own. Because the nature of the surface was exactly what he specified it to be, without changing the appearance, the other player would have little notion what was coming. He could make an obvious gesture, applying phenomenal spin, but set the paddle on null so that none of that spin was imparted, and the other player would miss by compensating for non-existing spin. Such paddles had been illegal for centuries for tournament play, but popular for trick play.

Mach had never used one, preferring to hone his skill within tournament regulations. Adaptation to such a paddle could spoil a serious player for tournaments, because his reflexes were wrong. Only the mediocre players tried to shift back and forth between types; the top ones settled for a special paddle once they had mastered it.

Mach had not had all the advantages that Bane had. Mach had a different paddle, but of course, so did Bane. He did not try any special shots, preferring to save them for the game. Soon they were ready, and Mach caught the ball and hid his fists under the table.

Bane guessed right, and was right; he had the serve. Now was time for the surprises.

He started with a fierce cross-court topspin; the rubber softened and rendered tacky so that it
But Mach didn’t try. He simply joked his paddle at the ball – and the ball looped back in another of those high, amateurish returns.

This time Bane had been watching that paddle closely. The angle had not even been correct. By rights the ball should have flown off the table, a lost point. Yet it had flown fair, to the center of the table. It was like magic.

Magic! Suddenly Bane caught on. Mach had gotten hold of a magic paddle! That possibility had never occurred to him. There had been no magic paddles in Phaze, because there was no point to it. Why use magic to foul up a game of skill? But evidently someone had crafted one, perhaps simply for the challenge of it, and now Mach had it.

Bane tried to slam the ball again, but his realization about the paddle distracted him, and he missed the table. Love – two.

Obviously the paddle was enchanted so that any shot it made was fair. If no effort was made to guide it, the ball returned in natural fashion; a high arc to the center of the table. If Mach made a more aggressive shot, then it went where he sent it – but wouldn’t miss if he sent it wrong. Thus he could try for the most difficult shots with the certainty of making them. Or not try at all, and still get the ball back. He could not miss.

How was he, Bane, to win the game – when his opponent could not miss a shot? All his preparation with the special paddle had been nullified in a single stroke! Only in Phaze would magic work – but Mach was playing in Phaze. Since the validity of a shot was determined at the point of contact, there was no magic on Bane’s end of the table; the ball was correctly guided there.

If they had set it up to exchange courts at the halfway point of each game – but in this special situation that wasn’t feasible. So Mach would have the magic throughout the game.

Bane had thought he would win this game readily. Now, suddenly, he faced defeat and loss of the entire contest, because he had overlooked this possibility.

He glanced at the audience. They were watching, in Proton and in Phaze, but would not speak to him in the midst of the game. What advice could anyone give him, anyway? It could not remove the enchantment on Mach’s paddle!

He was behind by two points, a thrilling amount, yet he felt like resigning, to spare himself the humiliation that was coming. Could he win even a single point?

But battered pride kept him going. He would play his best regardless, so that everyone would know it. He would not give up just because the game had become hopeless.

He tossed up the ball for the third serve, and tried for a horrendous slice.

And missed the ball entirely. That was the danger in trying too hard; the angle was so sharp and the speed of the paddle so great that the tiniest misjudgment could become devastating.

Love – three. When the server made his pass at the ball, that was the serve. He had missed his serve and forfeited the point. Some brave try that had been!

Missed the ball entirely . . .

That was not supposed to happen to a robot; it was an unforced error. But the body was governed by Bane’s mind, and Bane had directed it to try his own extreme technique. By going beyond the body’s parameters, he had enabled it to err. Yesterday Mach had used trick shots that caused the computer brain to miscalculate; this time he had done it to himself. But that was of lesser significance.

Suddenly he realized how he could give himself a fighting chance. This game was not over!

He served again, making the paddle surface hard and fast, applying minimal spin, just enough to help control the ball. Spin made limited difference now, because the magic paddle nullified it; the balls Mach returned were spinless. But speed and placement counted, because Mach had to get the paddle to the ball. He now needed spin only to help control his shots.

Mach returned it with that familiar looping shot that was the paddle’s default. Ready for this, Bane smashed it back. Mach’s second return was higher, a perfect setup.

Bane decided to test the limit of the magic. He set his paddle for maximum hardness, and smashed the ball down as hard as his metal arm could do it. The ball flattened significantly against his paddle, then rebounded with such force that when it caught the edge of the table it broke, with half of it dropping down the side of the table while the other half dragged after.

But Mach’s paddle was there, jabbing at it. And the tip of the paddle caught the crushed remnant and hooked it over the net so that it plopped in the center on Bane’s side.

The point did not count; the broken ball had to be replaced but another type of point had been made; the magic paddle could return anything at all, even a demolished ball. As long as it touched it.

Bane served again, the same way. Mach returned the same way. A very similar shot offered, and Bane wound up for the same smash. But this time he bent his wrist sharply back and smashed the ball off the opposite side of the table.

And Mach’s paddle was there, just in time. And the tip of the paddle caught the crushed remnant and hooked it over the net so that it plopped in the center on Bane’s side.

Tomorrow will decide it,” Bane said. “And deprive myself of Fleta – that is when I had to try hardest to win.”

“Aye. But an Mach return to this body – ”

“Where else?” she asked with a wry smile.

“It would please me if thou didst play Fleta for him, again. I oppose him, but I hate him not, and his love for the filly o’ his heart.”

She did not answer right away. “I thought never to play that role again,” she said at last.

“Bane. But an I deprive him o’ her, what do I owe him in return?”

“And what of Fleta? What do you owe her?”

That returned him to reality. “Must needs I find another way.” He got up. “I will talk with Blue.”

“And I,” she said.

They went to Citizen Blue, who met them graciously, with Sheen. “On the morrow, mayhap I will win the match, Bane said. “And deprive myself and Mach o’ our lives, and the alien and the filly o’ theirs. That be no easy thing.”

“The imbalance must be corrected,” Blue replied. “But you will be able to visit the frames, while we work to find the key for correction.”

Bane took a deep breath. “Methinks we have the key already. It be between thee and my father.”

Blue arched an eyebrow. “The Oracle learned it,” Bane continued. “There be a line between ye two, and that be the line Mach and I followed. Methinks thou couldst exchange, an thou didst try.”

Blue whistled. “And lose our loves, even as we have asked of you.”

“I thought o’ it not that way!” Bane protested. “But it may be that way,” Blue said grimly. “Unless there be another way. The Oracle be studying that.”

“What way is that?”

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • November/December 2002
Mach used. He went for speed and placement with one ball at a time. so that he could devote his whole pass through each other without interacting. In fact, the imbalance remains. A game that leaves all of us our loves. ·We must explore this! If you and Mach- ·First must I win the game tomorrow. Then will Mach work with me, and with thee. Then can the root of this be explored. ·Yes. Win tomorrow, and the essential tool is ours. The Oracle and the Book of Magic, reunited- ·Aye,” Bane said, feeling better. Now he could do his utmost, and believe that the best would come of it.

The final game was Doublet; played with two balls and four paddles. It was not popular with serious players, because it tended to get wild, but dabbler liked it, as did some specialists. Each player had one standard paddle, and one freestytle paddle. Play was not required to alternate between them; rather, each ball had to be played with its own paddle. Thus this represented two separate games, played simultaneously. It could be a formidable challenge.

Bane had the first serve, which meant one pair of balls. He was required to serve the standard one first; the yellow ball, with the standard paddle. The second had to follow not before the first cleared the net, and not after the first returned; the window was while the opposite player was playing the first. Thereafter there was no set order; the balls were simply played as they came.

Bane had the standard paddle in his left hand. He tossed up the yellow ball with his right, his fingers also holding the other paddle, and struck it with the correct paddle. Then he tossed the red ball with his left hand, and struck it with his high-tech paddle. Both balls were served cross-court, requiring Mach to orient on the extremes rapidly.

The first was coming back as he completed his serving pass for the second. He played it back to the same court he had served the red one, and with a shorter stroke, so that it gained somewhat on the other. But Mach played them back to opposite courts. Whether it was better strategy to play them to the same court or to opposite courts was an open question; it depended on the player and the situation. Already Bane felt his robot intellect being extended; this was no easy task for it, tracking two at once.

Now the two balls were crossing oppositely. Theoretically there was the danger of them colliding, and that was a complication in regular play. But for this game there was no problem; the yellow and red balls were on different planes of reality, and would pass through each other without interacting. In fact, that applied to the paddles, too: the wrong one could not touch the ball, literally. Thus there would be no question whether the ball was returned with the wrong paddle. Bane wasn’t quite sure how this worked, and whether seemingly solid balls were mere images, extensions of the images on the far side of the table. They seemed solid, but he had learned not to believe everything that had seeming, in either frame.

Bane played conservatively, concentrating on one ball at a time, so that he could devote his whole competence to it. He put intricate spins on the red ball — only to see them nullled by the magic paddle Mach used. He went for speed and placement with the yellow ball, because the standard paddle was not as sharp on spins. But Mach could handle such straightforward play.

Mach played slow on the red ball, retrieving from the table to return it late, and fast on the yellow one. As a result, the two soon came into alignment. Bane tried to separate them in space. If not in time, angling the red one right and the yellow one left. That was his tactical error. Mach slammed them simultaneously, cross-court, and Bane was unable to field them both. He had to let one go, and chose to sacrifice the red one. He returned the yellow one.

...the paddle was enchanted so that any shot it made was fair.

Love-one. Now it was down to a one-ball game, with standard equipment. Mach had won their prior such game — but Bane had zoned in on the new tricks and was ready for them. Deceptive spin would not catch him. Also, Mach could no longer use the magic paddle, so could fail to return the ball. This was better for Bane. He played hard, moving the ball from side to side and front to back, until Mach’s fallible living body made the error of sending too gentle a return, and Bane put it away for the point. One-one.

Now it was Mach’s serve, both balls. Because of the special nature of this game, the serve changed each time, so as to prevent a facile combination of serves from generating too great a run of points. He served the yellow ball fast, crosscourt, and the red one slow, downcourt. He was trying to get the two aligned again, so as to catch Bane in the same split as before. But this time Bane had a trick of his own to play.

He returned the yellow fast and the red slow but not easy. He set his paddle to max-tack and sent what was known as the double loop: a high shot with extremely potent topspin. It came down on Mach’s side almost vertically and bounced away almost horizontally, retaining formidable spin. That would be an extraordinarily difficult shot to return, if it were not for the magic paddle.

Meanwhile, the yellow ball had lapped the red one, and he played it before the red one landed, slamming it to the far corner. Mach knew that if he went for it he could never get the red one. So he let the yellow go, losing the point, and caught the red. It was one-ball table tennis again — but this was the variant Bane had proven he could win. He smashed the ball back again, and again, until he maneuvered Mach out of position and placed a shot he could not reach. One-three, Bane’s favor.

That set the complexion of the game. Bane had greater reliability when the game was down to one ball, Mach had the advantage with two, because his living body was more flexible and his magic paddle gave him one sure return. After the initial points neither tried to align the two balls; it gave too much of an advantage to the one who had the first chance to make simultaneous slams. Mach ran the play on the two ball more often than not, and Bane the second. The bend was familiar; and changed often, but it was basically even ball.

Thus it was that they came to the conclusion neither had wanted: a 20-20 tie. Now it would be sudden death; the first to gain an advantage of two points would win the game and the match. Bane was torn: should he play conservatively, or draw on a special shot he had saved for emergency use? If he played conservatively, they would probably continue splitting points and the game would drag out interminably. If he gambled on tricky but risky play, he could win quickly — or lose as quickly. It was his set of serve; the initiative was his.

As a robot, he knew that his best chance was conservative. Mach, in the volatile living body, could make mistakes, magic paddle notwithstanding. But as a living being who was merely housed in a machine, he felt that his best chance was to take the gamble. At least it would be over quickly. He gambled. He served the key to a possible reversal of the situation, while he was on Blue’s side; now he was on the other side, by the terms of the deal, and was no longer free to provide such information. The Contrary Citizens and Adverse Adepts had no more with than Addept Stile or Citizen Blue to see the frames destroyed; perhaps some mutually satisfactory accommodation would yet be worked out. So it was not necessarily the end of decency. Or so he hoped.
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Knoxville, Tennessee was the host for the 2002 AAU Junior Olympics, a two-week long annual festival that brings youngsters from around the nation to compete in dozens of sports. For the second straight year, NATT organized and ran the Table Tennis portion of the event, August 8-10. Actually, it was three Table Tennis competitions, the Junior Olympics, the Junior National Championships and the Junior Teams competition, with each event occupying one day. Without a doubt, the Junior Olympics is one of the premier events in our sport in America, and one worthy of further development.

Knoxville truly went all out in hosting the Junior Olympics, mindful that the AAU plans on rotating the competition annually between a handful of sites. Wendy Mertz-Stifka and the Knoxville SportsCorp had a countdown clock to the Junior Olympics located in the heart of downtown and a banner position on the Sports Pages showing the days until the competition would begin for over a year. Their corporate tie-ins were outstanding, with exhibitions of most sports held in Department stores and retail locations all spring. When the event itself arrived, they really delivered, with two different TV stations giving table tennis coverage, a push for spectators and a feature newspaper story (with photo) that made all the participants feel like worthy of further development.

It was my pleasure to work with two former Junior Olympic Champions, Richard Lee and Karen Chang, throughout the tournament. Both of them know first-hand the joy of this competition and the lasting friendships that are spawned here. I admit to a wee bit of jealousy in seeing ten- and eleven-year-olds that are already playing at levels above anything I can reasonably expect to reach myself. The relative youth of my co-workers and the players was driven home with a smile by Coach Mark Nordby. As I played “The Police” during one day’s warm-up, Mark dropped this word on me. “Hey! I love the music! But that’s my era. Do you have anything more recent?” This came out six years before some of these guys were born!” Uh. Yeah. Mark, thanks for reminding me of how “unhip” I’ve become.

But how very “hip” to be a young and fearless competitor at this tournament! This is an attractive activity to list on any employment or College application, and to actual medal here is to bring yourself to the attention of America’s best coaches and the USAIT hierarchy. Among the coaches working the floor and supervising these kids were former U.S. Champions and several of the premier trainers and developers in our sport, including Dan Seemiller, Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, David Zhuang, Attila Malek, Marty Prager, Terese Terranova, WC Cleveland, Larry Hodges and Mark Nordby, among others. The contingents ranged from the uniformly dressed Georgia, Maryland and Florida teams to the “Lone Wolf” entrants, like California’s Trevor Runyan, an army of one. USAIT President Sheri Pittman was on hand to be part of the medal ceremonies and to observe first-hand those players that are the future of our sport within the Olympic movement.

But there was no sign that any player felt any pressure. One of the most remarkable things about this event continues to be the lack of conflict or dispute among these young people as they compete. Without an umpire in sight, they consistently enforce fair play and honesty among themselves. The only dispute that happened in three days was between two parents at courtside, from which our competitors walked away, arms draped over each other’s shoulders, no doubt wondering what the fuss was about.

The team spirit and joy these young people brought to Knoxville for three days gave hope to tired old hands like myself that the future is bright, indeed. Laughter was the dominant sound, and smiles the dress code observed by our players, who love the sport so, that after three days of full-throttle non-stop play they were still drilling and playing practice matches as the tournament tables were removed on Saturday evening!

Every one of the players deserves mention for their excellent sportsmanship and standard of behavior. Obviously space does not allow me to mention every noteworthy performance or valiant effort, but there were many. But there are some that demand to be mentioned, and of these, the first is Atha Fong’s. “Little” Atha Fong no longer, this young woman is growing into a force to be reckoned with in the Junior Women’s competition. After taking a Bronze medal in Girl’s Under 14 during Thursday’s Junior Olympics competition (ousted in the semifinals by Sarah Zheng in seven games, six of which went deuce!), Atha elevated her play on Friday, going so deep into several events that the Awards ceremony had to be postponed! When the dust had settled she had beaten Kita Wu for the U-14 crown, been ousted by Barbara Wei in the U-16 semis, and played through a deep and talented field in the U-18 to reach the final. There she met the 2155-rated Katherine Wu, and it was all Katherine could do to make Atha settle for Silver (-10, 6, -12, 9). Throughout this test of stamina and skill, Atha comported herself like a Champion.

Similarly, Amy Huang was the paragon of a champion, handling her Gold Medal performances with grace and dignity, yet not aloof. Mark Hazinski ... well, what can you say? This
past Joel Ferrell award-winner was untouched in competition, and beyond reproach. He is one classy player and one classy person. Pan Lin was yet another young man whose tournament record and demeanor makes him worthy of special mention. It is no coincidence that these players were all in the running for the prestigious Ferrell award, which, according to the guidelines delivered to the Tournament Committee, was to be given based on Outstanding Performance and Sportsmanship.

The Committee was further burdened by only having one award to give. Unlike 2001, when two awards were at our disposal, only a single player could be honored in 2002. “You must have at least 300 participants before both a Men’s and Women’s award can be made,” the AAU informed us. So we sought objective criteria. We counted match records, devised a point system for medal counts, and agonized for two days over whom to honor. We did take one step to make things easier on ourselves, and to recognize the fact that so many were deserving, and that was to eliminate past winners, taking Hazinski, Katherine Wu and Eric Finkelstein out of consideration. But in the end, the three of us did reach a unanimous verdict.

The 2002 Joel Ferrell Award belonged to Yao Xu. For the second straight year, Yao won the Boys’ U-14 Junior National title and the JO Gold Medal in the same bracket. But equally impressive were his semifinal loss in the Junior National U-16 to Eric Finkelstein, (-9,9,9,9), a hard-fought match and a tough loss that Mr. Xu accepted like a Champion.

Needless to say, we would like nothing better than to have both a Boys’ and Girls’ award at our disposal in 2003 in Detroit for this competition. But that is entirely up to you, the reader. Only by reaching the 300 participant mark can we have that luxury. With so many great players and coaches, so many great programs represented and so much time and energy lavished on this event by its organizers, I promise you that you will never regret attending.

The AAU Junior Olympics is a unique environment for our youngsters, and as well organized and well run a competition as we can make it. Because that’s what counts in the end, giving these wonderful kids a spotlight and a meeting place of their own, to test the mettle of their makeup against the demands of competition.

See results next page.
More photos on page 63.
### 2002 Junior Olympics/Junior Nationals Results

**Note:** Potomac Valley (PV) is an AAU region including parts of MD and VA. All players represent states or AAU regions.

#### JUNIOR OLYMPICS

**Under 10 Boys**
1st: Peter Li (MD)
2nd: Vincent Ning (PV)
3rd: Devin Zhang (PV)

**Under 12 Boys**
1st: Marcus Jackson (PV)
2nd: Michael Mast (OH)
3rd: Shelby Lane (TN)
4th: Preston Chin (GA)

**Under 14 Boys**
1st: Kevin Ma (PV)
2nd: Joseph Mast (OH)
3rd: Trevor Runyan (CA)

**Under 16 Boys**
1st: Pan Lin (NJ)
2nd: Joseph Cochran (IN)
3rd: Michael Shao (PV)

**Under 18 Boys**
1st: Yoo Xo (PV)
2nd: Joseph Cochran (IN)
3rd: Michael Shao (PV)

**Under 22 Boys**
1st: Khaleel Asgarali (MD)
2nd: Joseph Cochran (IN)
3rd: Michael Shao (PV)

#### JUNIOR NATIONALS

**Under 10 Boys**
1st: Peter Li (MD)
2nd: Devin Zhang (PV)
3rd: Charlie Sun (PV)

**Under 12 Boys**
1st: Kevin Ma (PV)
2nd: Preston Chin (GA)
3rd: Joseph Mast (OH)

**Under 14 Boys**
1st: Yao Xo (PV)
2nd: Joseph Cochran (IN)
3rd: Michael Mast (OH)

**Under 16 Boys**
1st: Pan Lin (NJ)
2nd: Michael Shao (PV)
3rd: Pan Lin (NJ)

**Under 18 Boys**
1st: Yoo Xo (PV)
2nd: Joseph Cochran (IN)
3rd: Michael Shao (PV)

**Under 22 Boys**
1st: Khaleel Asgarali (MD)
2nd: Joseph Cochran (IN)
3rd: Michael Shao (PV)

#### JUNIOR Doubles

**Under 10 Boys**
1st: Peter Li/Devin Zhang (MD/PV)
2nd: Janiel Li/Vincent Ning (PV)
3rd: Charlie Sun/A.J. Brewer (MD/IN)
4th: Wesley Fang/Jared Frost (NJ/VA)

**Under 12 Boys**
1st: Marcus Jackson/Michael Mast (PV/IN)
2nd: Kevin Ma/Shelby Lane (PV/TN)
3rd: Derek Chen/Joseph Wang (GA/PV)

**Under 14 Boys**
1st: Yoo Xo/Trevor Runyan (PV/CA)
2nd: Duncan Chou/Anthony Shen (PV)
3rd: Kevin Lin/Brian Lan (FL)

**Under 16 Boys**
1st: Khaleel Asgarali/Michael Shao (MD/IN)
2nd: Michael Shao/Pan Lin (NJ)
3rd: Joseph Cochran/Michael Teroa (CA)

**Under 18 Boys**
1st: Andrew Cochran/Mark Hazinski (IN)
2nd: Michael Amren/Peter Randall (CA)
3rd: Thomas Haynes/Michael Caplan (OH/NJ)

**Under 22 Boys**
1st: Samson Dubina/Jared Lynch (OH/IN)
2nd: Roger Abbott/Rong Xu (PV)

**Under 10 Girls**
1st: Amy Huang (FL)
2nd: Kevin Lam (CA)
3rd: Andrea Lin (FL)

**Under 12 Girls**
1st: Amy Huang (FL)
2nd: Linh Li (IN)
3rd: Jessica Mast (OH)
4th: Janice Lan (PV)

**Under 14 Girls**
1st: Atha Fong (CA)
2nd: Rita Wu (PV)
3rd: Sarah Zheng (FL)
4th: Barbara Wei (PV)

**Under 16 Girls**
1st: Barbara Wei (PV)
2nd: Jennifer Mast (OH)
3rd: Rita Wu (PV)
4th: Atha Fong (CA)

**Under 18 Girls**
1st: Katherine Wu (PV)
2nd: Atha Fong (CA)
3rd: Felicia Chiu (NY)
4th: Barbara Wei (PV)

**Under 22 Girls**
1st: Katherine Wu (PV)
2nd: Chao ‘Kathy’ Wang (PV)
3rd: Dana Huang (PV)
4th: Felicia Chiu (NY)

**Under 10 Boys**
1st: Peter Li/Devin Zhang (MD/PV)
2nd: Janiel Li/Vincent Ning (PV)
3rd: Charlie Sun/A.J. Brewer (MD/IN)
4th: Wesley Fang/Jared Frost (NJ/VA)

**Under 12 Boys**
1st: Marcus Jackson/Michael Mast (PV/IN)
2nd: Kevin Ma/Shelby Lane (PV/TN)
3rd: Preston Chin/Joseph Wang (GA/PV)

**Under 14 Boys**
1st: Yoo Xo/Trevor Runyan (PV/CA)
2nd: Duncan Chou/Anthony Shen (PV)
3rd: Kevin Lin/Brian Lan (FL)

**Under 16 Boys**
1st: Khaleel Asgarali/Michael Shao (MD/IN)
2nd: Michael Shao/Pan Lin (NJ)
3rd: Joseph Cochran/Michael Teroa (CA)

**Under 18 Boys**
1st: Andrew Cochran/Mark Hazinski (IN)
2nd: Michael Amren/Peter Randall (CA)
3rd: Thomas Haynes/Michael Caplan (OH/NJ)

**Under 22 Boys**
1st: Samson Dubina/Jared Lynch (OH/IN)
2nd: Roger Abbott/Rong Xu (PV)

**Under 10 Girls**
1st: Victoria Huang/Amy Xiao (PV)
2nd: Andrea Lin/Michelle Chen (FL)
3rd: Katlin Zheng/Jessica Mast (OH/IN)

**Under 12 Girls**
1st: Linda Li/Janice Lan (PV)
2nd: Emily Randall/Brittany Malek (CA)

**Under 14 Girls**
1st: Diana Li/Sarah Zheng (FL)
2nd: Barbara Wei/Rita Wu (PV)
3rd: Atha Fong/Gaia Giladi (CA)
4th: Karen Ma/Stephanie Shih (NY/NJ)

**Under 16 Girls**
1st: Melissa Vasquez/Nicole Lynch (PR/NJ)
2nd: Jane Li/Amy Huang (FL)
3rd: Angela Zou/Alice Li (GA/PV)

**Under 18 Girls**
1st: Katherine Wu/Chao Wang (PV)
2nd: Tatyana Zaleskaya/Felicia Chen (NY)
3rd: Amanda Dubina/Jennifer Mast (OH)
4th: Christina Cheng/Arianna Mah (PV/GA)

**Under 22 Girls**
1st: Louise Giam/Dana Huang (PV)

**Under 10 Boys**
1st: Maryland (Peter Li, Devin Zhang, Charlie Sun)
2nd: Potomac Valley (Janice Li, Vincent Ning)
3rd: Georgia (Jose Barrow, Racheed Reamees, Dravion White)

**Under 12 Boys**
1st: Potomac Valley (Marcus Jackson, Kevin Ma, Joseph Wang, Amareh Sahu)
2nd: Florida (Collin McLeod, Michael Chen)
3rd: Tennessee (John Dunlap, Spencer Lane)
4th: Indiana (Tomas Orozco, Yen Jun Chun)

**Under 18 Boys**
1st: New York (Taiyee Chen, Brian Lam)
2nd: Florida (Kevin Lam, Brian Lam)
3rd: Potomac Valley (Yao Xo, Duncan Chou, Max Li, Anthony Shen)
4th: North Carolina (Zach Pomer, Ashwin Peress-De-Silva)

**Under 22 Boys**
1st: Ohio (Samson Dubina, Michael Mast)
2nd: Potomac Valley (Roger Abbott, Rong Xu)

**Under 10 Girls**
1st: Potomac Valley (Victoria Huang, Amy Xiao, Katlin Zhang)
2nd: California (Andrew Lin, Michelle Chen)

**Under 12 Girls**
1st: Potomac Valley (Linden Li, Janice Lan)
2nd: California (Brittany Malek, Emily Randall)

**Under 14 Girls**
1st: Potomac Valley (Barbara Wei, Ritu Wu, Alice Li)
2nd: Florida (Sarah Zhang, Diana Li)
3rd: California (Atha Fong, Gaia Giladi)
4th: New York (Karen Ma, Stephanie Shih)

**Under 16 Girls**
1st: Florida (Jane Li, Amy Huang)

**Under 18 Girls**
1st: Potomac Valley (Katherine Wu, Chao Wang, Jing-Si Cheng)
2nd: New York (Tatyana Zaleskaya, Felicia Chiu, Janet Ma)
3rd: Ohio (Amara Dubina, Jennifer Mast)
3rd: Georgia (Ariana Mah, Angela Zou)

**Under 10 Boys**
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2nd: New York (Tatyana Zaleskaya, Felicia Chiu, Janet Ma)
3rd: Ohio (Amara Dubina, Jennifer Mast)
3rd: Georgia (Ariana Mah, Angela Zou)

**Joel Farrell Award**
Yao Xu

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2nd: Joseph Wang
3rd: Karen Ma, Joseph Cochran
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<tr>
<td>RP 540 Upgrade Kit</td>
<td>$199.00</td>
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USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • November/December 2002
Tawny Banh and Shashin Shodhan. Several Four-Star event.

At the Eastern Open! Over 250 players participated tied the attendance record set earlier in the summer tournaments and at the California Open, the fourth weekend as the record turnout kept 30 tables in constant play over the two days. A cast of old Pioneers spread their wares and had a front row seat for action at Table 1.

The NATT staff - Fong Hsu, Alan Williams, Brian Pace, Wendy Troy and Richard Lee - was kept on their toes throughout the weekend as the record turnout kept 30 tables in constant play over the two days. A cast of old friends and first-time NATT customers made for an exciting tournament, with excellent sportsmanship displayed by all!

It was especially pleasing to see a good turnout by the women. Standouts like Atha Williams, Brian Pace, Wendy Troy and Richard Lee - was kept on their toes throughout the weekend as the record turnout kept 30 tables in constant play over the two days. A cast of old friends and first-time NATT customers made for an exciting tournament, with excellent sportsmanship displayed by all!

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Victoria's Mother/Daughter doubles pair of Lily Yip and Judy Hugh (magnificent play together) gave a more balanced than usual appearance to the tournament. Whitney Ping once more acquitted herself with honor, snaring both the Women's U-22 and U-18 titles. Lily showed that the girls do “have what it takes” by making Open Singles Quarters and conquering the U-2375. Tawny Banh found the NATT format dominant, finishing 12-0 and justifying his 1 1,10,6. lo! came out on the short end of the victory over her (11,7,7,2) it was the most efficient victory. In an extended format, in the Labor Day heat of San Diego, you had to worry about hard-fought victories and the effect they might have in subsequent rounds. Still, Lily, Rudy, Tuan and Gu each pocketed $60 and the winners were now guaranteed $250 as Semifinalists.

GROUP 2: Ashu Jain topped the group at 3-0, but displayed a bad tendency to go deuce and drop games to opponents he should beat handily.

Auria Malek stretched Ashu to two games apiece before falling aside. Malek would have been well advised to follow Tuan Le’s example of playing your best all the time as well. Le never lets up, regardless of the game score, and in the three-way tie between himself, Malek and David Umel, this served him well. A single game was the difference between himself and Malek, giving Tuan a trip to Quarters, and Malek cause to reflect after losing to Umel, 4-1.

GROUP 3: Brian Pace dropped only a single game (to Lily Yip) in advancing. When Lily handily dispatched both Misha Kazanszev and Tung Phan in straight games, Misha decided that third place was not worth fighting for and defaulted to Phan. Lily was exceptionally sharp throughout the tournament, and obviously found her recent trip to China to be good for her game.

GROUP 4: A very close group ended in a three-way tie, with Tawny Banh, Lu Gui Hui and Shashin Shodhan sporting identical 2-1 records. Howard Lamb was the only player not following the math as Linda and Fong broke the numbers down. Tawny, who managed to win the first overtime game against Shashin, and took seven games to beat the aggressively looping Lu (-9,12,-10,-11,10,6,10) came out on the short end of the stick, leaving Shashin as a #1 seed and placing Lu against Fan in the Quarters.

QUARTERFINALS

Lu Gui Hui lives in Los Angeles, and learned the sport in his hometown of Shanghai. He was definitely excited about an opportunity to play Fan, and showed no sign of being intimidated. Their match was marked by exceptional shot-making and Fan’s ability to tactically outwit his opponent. Lu’s lefty looping was a good match-up to Fan’s backhand, and they played very exciting points. About midway through the third game, however, Fan showed the crushing dominance that demoralizes his opponents. Lu hit an absolutely wicked loop to Fan’s backhand, which was off-the-bounce blocked straight back. Lu quickly re-loaded, and sent an even more wicked loop down the line to Fan’s forehand, which Fan crushed for a winner into Lu’s backhand corner. You could see the wind leave Lu’s sails as two of the best shots he hit in the entire tournament were answered in one point. Fan wins. 8,5,6,6,4.

Brian Pace had been defeated in the U-2500 by Dr. Tuan Le, but was determined not to allow a repeat of that result. Tuan, for his part, never concedes a thing. These two resolutions met and resulted in a Pace straight-game victory, 5,9,9,7,11, that was every bit as hard-fought as the scores indicate.

Shashin Shodhan fought off a hard-charging Rudy Miranda in his Quarter. Taking the first game at 7. Shashin had to fight to salvage each of the next two at 13-11. Miranda seemed to lose patience and began to flag after the two disappointing losses, his forehand deserting him to the point of missing an easy kill against a lob in the fourth. The 7 and 6 point scores in the last two games left a drenched Miranda exasperated with himself. Disagree. Rudy left it all at the table in a magnificent effort.

Ashu Jain and Lily Yip are no strangers to each other, so there was no period of discovery in their match. It seemed to me that Ashu was too quick to yield the table against Lily, who exploited the angles in a backcourt opponent to win the first at 9 and the third game at 3 (while losing the second at 6), to go up two games to one. While Ashu did assert himself from there (11,7,7,2) it was not the most efficient victory.

In an extended format, in the Labor Day heat of San Diego, you had to worry about hard-fought victories and the effect they might have in subsequent rounds. Still, Lily, Rudy, Tuan and Gu each pocketed $60 and the winners were now guaranteed $250 as Semifinalists.

SEMI FINALS

“Sure, I respect Fan. But I come straight at him. I have no fear of Fan,” said Brian Pace, both before and after his Semifinal with the 2001 STIGA NA Tour Champion. Fan was merciless and ruthlessly efficient against Pace, as he is against everyone. Brian put his forehand into play as often as possible, while Fan favored backhand to backhand encounters. Fan showed respect for Brian’s power and negated it with perfect placements to force him wide or to constrain his shots by coming at his elbow. Fan advanced against Brian’s best efforts, 4,6,2,4,8.

Ashu Jain and Shashin Shodhan were still at the table long after Fan had decided one half of the bracket. Taking the first game impressively, 11-4. Jain looks like a good candidate for a Finals berth. But Shodhan comes charging back to win the second, the third, and the fourth games at 8,6,9. Ashu gains some breathing space, 11-6 in the fifth game, but Shashin strikes again 11-8 in the sixth to take a 4-2 lead. Ashu has remarkable skills, quick hands, the ability to cover and use the entire court, and exciting risk-taking shot selection, but he seems more reactive than dictating, until the seventh game, an 11-2 win for Jain. Shodhan, however, ends the match with an eighth game victory, 11-6. Ashu had outscored Shashin, 70 to 67, but lost the match 5 games to 3.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • November/December 2002
Judy Hugh (L) and Whitney Ping (R) were the Under 18 Girls' Finalists, with Whitney winning. Whitney also won Under 22 Women over Victorya Birioukova. Judy teamed with mom (Lily Yip) to win U4200 Doubles.

**FINAL**

Throughout the single elimination matches, the players performed to a large, appreciative and knowledgeable audience in bleachers bordering the four feature courts. Nowhere are the fans as informed as in San Diego! The players seem to be inspired by this attention, and Shashin Shodhan, in his first NATT appearance, will challenge Fan Yi Yong in the Final in front of them.

Shashin comes out smoking against Fan, falling just short of victory in the first, 12-10. Perhaps this is the beginning of the challenge everyone hopes to see. No. Fan does not just close the door; he nails it shut, dominating every aspect of play, service, return, forehand and backhand. He'd have won points for toweling if they were awarded. 10,1,5,3,1 it takes Shashin four games to equal his point total in the first, and Fan is once again the recipient of $1,500, this time without losing a game in the entire tournament.

After the match, Shashin is crestfallen over having been so handily dispatched. “The last time I played him in 21-point games, I got 15 and 16. One? One!? This is humiliating. I played very nervously.” For what it’s worth, having seen him Coast to Coast for two years, I can contradict you. Shashin. Fan is the most dominant player of the past 24 months in America. And at the California Open, he showed no sign of relinquishing that position any day soon.

And so the 2002 North American Tour closes its fourth event of the year, deeply grateful to the record-breaking turnout and content that we have done a good job in providing well-managed events in the best possible conditions. As the truck is reloaded and the floor coverings rolled up, we think fondly of you, our friends and fellow Table Tennis Nuts. Together, we are giving our all to build the sport in America.
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- Samuel Dubina
The Hagerstown Table Tennis Club hosted the last stop on the 2002 Stiga North American Tour. Fan Yi Yong has been the gatekeeper for the entire season, winning all four Tour events this year. In Memory of Matthew J. Murad, Matthew’s parents Ronald and Gloria Murad supported this event for the third year in a row. Matthew and his brother Michael lost their lives in a car accident a week after the 1999 North American Teams Championships. Matthew will always be remembered in the table tennis community. A Perpetual Trophy is presented to the champion each year and then is proudly displayed at Ronald and Gloria’s home.

The tournament got underway with the U-2500 event. Paul Kotz, rated 1524, was an easy winner over Michael Hyatt, a no-show default. Michael’s flight from Jamaica was cancelled due to Hurricane Isidore. John Jarema gave Anson Bispham a fight to the end, but bowed at 7 in the seventh. Top-seed Hail Xiao and myself, the second seed, were given byes, but we would face Keith Evans and Nison Aronov, respectively. In the quarters, things started to heat up as Pierre-Luc Hinse got by De Tran of New York, 4-3. I was able to take care of Nison, but not without a fight. His topspin defense is probably the best in the country, and he was able to win two games as a result. Paul Kotz’s run was stopped in straight games by a much-relieved Anson. The real barnburner was the seven-gamer between Keith and Han. They are a classic match-up in that both of them are control spinners. Han loops closer to the table and with more angles, while Keith maximizes his lanky 6’2″ frame with a two-winged looping style. At the start, Keith got the better of the two and went up three games to one. Then Han found the right tactics, and the match took a turn in his favor. Match to Han, but he dodged a bullet, as Keith is much improved and more confident in his attacking game.

The U-2500 semifinals were a little bit more melodramatic as Han and myself both went down 4-2 to the Canadians. Pierre-Luc defeated Anson Bispham in the final, 4,4,7,3,2. However, after defeating Mark Hazinski and Han Xiao, both rated in the 2500-2600 range, Anson (rated 2446) would be upset 3-2 in Under 50 by Raghu Nadmichettu, a 15-year-old rated 1820! Raghu would later be awarded the tournament’s Sportsmanship award by the tournament committee – who didn’t even know about his 600-point upset when they chose him.

In the Open Singles Qualifying Round, De Tran and John Wetzler were walkover winners in Groups B and C when Michael Hyatt and Yuxiang Li didn’t show. Nison Aronov won Group A pretty easily over Anson Bishop. Keith
Evans dominated Group D as he used his control and consistency to beat out Mark Nordby and Pierre-Luc Hinse.

Two tables down from the Open group, a fierce battle was going on. Gary Kennedy and Gerald Chang were locked in a duel to take the U-1400 title. They both came back to the desk between each match in the early rounds to see how the other was doing. They laughed when they found out that they had to play each other in the final. Before the tournament started they just happened to practice with each other, and later stated that they had expected to see each other in the final. Gerald’s laugh turned into a growl fast enough to turn the match into a 6,8,3,3 victory for him.

The Canadians took the older youth/junior events. Faazil Kassam defeated Pierre-Luc Hinse in an all-Canadian Under 22 final. In the U-18 Men’s, Canadian Bence Csaba would be the victor over USA and Killerspin’s Mark Hazinski in a close match, 8-7,9-6,7-4. Hazinski looked a little frustrated from missing easy balls, and Coach Mark Nordby didn’t look too happy either.

Moving on to the U-2375 event, Eric Lathrop had just come back to the control desk with the clipboard as he was the runner-up in U-1550 and had to unleash a surprise. Two players had already defaulted out of his U-2375 group, and I was trying to convince the last person to stay in, but failed. So when Eric came to check in, we informed him that he had already made it to the quarterfinals! “I can live with that,” he said. His next match would be a tough one since it is rare to find a 1450 player in the quarterfinals of the U-2375 Event. Mark Nordby beat Eric 4-0. “It was fun while it lasted,” was Eric’s last comment as he packed up and left. Mark Nordby would find a wall in a red-hot John Wetzer. John made quick work of Nordby with well-placed chop blocks with the long pips on his backhand, which complemented his forehand loop kills. John explained, “8:30 PM is the normal time I train with Rich Burnside.” That would explain all the winners, but then he said, “How good I can play at 9 AM tomorrow remains to be seen.”

John’s opponent was Keith. and the tide would turn. The forehand loop that was unstoppable the night before was not landing for him in the final. Keith capitalized on that by taking his time to pick his shots. 8,7,10,6 to Keith, and John, with a second-place check, was off to see Sunday Football.

The U-2250 event was an all-Asgarali affair, as 15-year-old Khaleel faced his father, Nazruddin (“Oscar”), in the best of seven final. Down 2-1 in games, Khaleel went on a run, winning two games at 1 and 3. His dad won the sixth. Khaleel led 5-0 in the seventh, when dad pulled out his “tomahawk” serve, and scored eight in a row, and went up 10-7 match point. Then Khaleel scored four in a row to lead 11-10 match point, with dad serving. Dad threw another tomahawk serve at him – into the net! Match to Khaleel, -5,5,9,1,3,7-10.

OPEN GROUP A - Fan Yi Yong, Mark Hazinski, Xavier Therien, Nison Aronov

Fan started his attack in the group against Therien, and four games later (4,2,5,5) it was over. Mark had his hands full with Nison, but Nison was only strong enough to make one game close, 9,13,3,4. Next, Fan made short work of Nison in another four-game contest, 4,6,2,5. Fan is not the type of player to waste games – he gets it over as quickly as possible. That is exactly what he did in his final match against Mark Hazinski. Mark was able to put up enough fight to get 10 points in the last game, but lost 1,4,5,10 as Fan wrapped up the number one spot and reversed his loss to Mark earlier in the year.

OPEN GROUP B - Pradeeban Peter-Paul, Michael Oyebode, Sean O’Neill, De Tran

Michael Oyebode was a no-show so the key match to advance was Sean against De. Sean was able to win 4-1 and advance. Peter-Paul won both of his matches easily.

OPEN GROUP C - David Zhuang, Faazil Kassam, Han Xiao, John Wetzer

Han was able to play David close every game, but David just pulled away at the end each time. Match to David, 5-10,5,4,9. Faazil had his work cut out for him in his match-up against John. Faazil likes to push the ball out and block his way into control over the table. Most of John’s first balls came courtesy of the long pips on the backhand, which made Faazil move in. That left him too close to the table, and John was able to give him trouble the first two games, but couldn’t answer the call once Faazil found his range, and Faazil won, 10,16,6,2. The next match was Han against sometimes-practice partner John, and it was a 4-1 win for Han. The final match was a 8,5,4,3 win for David over Faazil, with David going for more forehand kills than usual.

OPEN GROUP D - Bence Csaba, Atanda Musa, Brian Pace, Keith Evans

Musa was a no-show, so the key match-up was between Keith and I. First I played Bence and lost 7,6,11,6,12. I had my chances to even up the match, especially in the last game. I simply didn’t step around and attack with my forehand. But he would run out of gas! I decided I would capitalize on it. I came out serving long and willing to block two or three balls. It worked for me in the first game, but in the second Keith was on to my strategy and he started serving long also, and won the second game copying my strategy. In the next three games I would mix up blocking and loop to keep Keith off balance, and I won the match, 9,9,9,4,2.

THE NEW SERVICE RULE

Before the quarterfinals, Tournament Referee Terry Bell called all the eight players
and the umpires (Ross Brown, Richard McAfee, C.J. Williams and Larry Hodges) for a meeting. All agreed that most of the players had questionable serves under the new service rule (where ball and contact cannot be hidden from the opponent). They decided that they would have to crack down on any serves that were illegal. The assessment was that players kept slipping back into their normal (no longer legal) serves when the games became close.

QUARTERFINALS

Fan Yi Yong vs. Faazil Kassam

It quickly became apparent that this game would become a block and loop battle. Faazil did not try to return serves short, opting instead to just push deep and get ready to block. That would be a big mistake as Fan had no trouble with this strategy, and won the first four games pretty easily. However, Faazil was adjusting to Fan’s loop. In game five, it was even all the way to deuce as Faazil raised his level to stay in the match. He saved three match point after Fan had seemingly smacked in outright winners. The game went to 15-all, and Fan finally had enough and ended the match with two convincing winners. Match to Fan, 5,7,5,7,15.

Bence Csaba vs. Sean O’Neill

This match was more even than it looked. After the first two games, it mostly turned into a battle until 9-all or deuce. Fan took the first game pretty easily at 5, but Bence answered back with an easy second-game win at 7. By the middle of game three both players had adjusted to each other, and it became a classic match-up of two-winged spiner (Bence) versus power player (Sean). Sean was in control when he was able to get the first attack, whether it was backhand or forehand. If Bence was to get into a backhand exchange, then he had the upper hand. Bence was able to take the third 14-12, and that set the tone for the match. He was able to hold off Sean’s attack while trying to pin him on the backhand. Bence won the fourth at 4, but then had to battle the last two games. Sean raised the level of his game, with a stronger attack starting in game five. However, Bence was able to come out on top in each game, and took the game, 12-10. The final game was nearly a duplicate of game five with Bence holding off the O’Neill onsight to win 11-9. Match to Bence, -5,7,12,4,10,9.

David Zhuang vs. Brian Pace

This was one of the first times when I had trained specifically for David. I was in China last month and I had a chance to train with some pips-out hitters. The difference with the players in China is that they hit much harder than David, but are not able to angle the ball outside the sidelines like David does. In this match I tried to take advantage of the “slower” shots, but David’s angles are so sharp that it is very hard to really catch hold of a ball. I went up 4-2 early in the first game, but David made a 9-2 run to take the game. He would continue the momentum to romp in the second, 11-1. The game wasn’t in total vain because I was adjusting to him. I lost the next game at 8. The next game I started to form a strategy (it’s a secret!), but I lost at 5. Then, in game five, I had a chance to try it out with confidence. I controlled the entire game and won at 7. However, David bore down in game six, and won, 11-3. Match to David, 6,1,8,5,-7,3.

Peter-Paul vs. Mark Hazinski

This was a totally even match. Each game had even scores until about 6- or 7-all. Peter-Paul initially took control over the match with less forced errors. But Mark staged his own comeback with more controlled attacks landing on the table. It went to 4-4 in games. In the final game, Peter-Paul took a 10-2 lead. Mark fought his way back to 10-6 before losing. Match to Peter-Paul, -10,7,7,-7,5,-6,4,-8,6.

SEMFINALS

Fan Yi Yong vs. Bence Csaba

In game one, Fan came out smoking and won 11-9. Bence was on fire in game two, landing every big shot, and went up 10-2. Fan came all the way back to 10-9, and then missed a serve return. Fan won game three easily, 11-6. Game four was even all the way to 9-all. Fan slow looped, and Bence made a great counterloop winner. But then he missed a backhand loop down the line. Fan held tight, and Bence made two unforced errors to lose at deuce. Game five was a duplicate of game four, with Bence taking all the chances and missing. In game six, Bence reaches 9-all, and this time he doesn’t miss. This time Fan was the one to overplay, hoping to bring the jeou to an end, but lost at 9. In game seven, Fan just took over, and it is clear that he is in control at 8-3. He is playing like he is the gatekeeper holding all the keys. Match to Fan, 1,-9,6,10,-9,7.

David Zhuang vs. Pradeebron Peter-Paul

David had lost to PP three of the last four times, and he came out playing like he had something to prove. But at 9-all he misses a forehand crosscourt, then misses a backhand block down the line. In game two David lands all these shots, and wins 11-4. Both of the players are playing safe until the middle of the game. In the third, it’s 6-all, 8-all, then David takes a 10-8 lead. PP deuces it, but David wins, 12-10. Again, in the fourth, neither player becomes daring until the middle of the game – then David takes the shots and wins. From 7-all in the fifth, David wins 4 of 5 points to take the game. In game six PP plays like he has his back against the wall and goes up 4-0, 6-1. David then raised his game and caught PP at 7-all. They both play sub-par until it’s 9-all. David buckles down by putting a little bit more angle on his blocks and a little bit more spin on the push – and PP misses. Match to David, -9,4,10,8,7,9.

FINAL

Fan Yi Yong vs. David Zhuang

Unfortunately, David re-injured an old injury in his foot in his semifinal match, and was unable to continue – and so had to default the final. So ended the fifth and final stop of the 2002 Stiga North American Tour, exactly as four others had – with Fan Yi Yong winning twice in San Diego, in Piscataway, and now in Hagerstown (but not winning in Newark, where he didn’t play).

Open Singles - Final: Fan Yi Yong d. David Zhuang, def.; SF: Fan d. Bence Csaba, 1,-9,6,10,8,-9; Zhuang d. Pradeebron Peter-Paul, -9,4,10,8,7,9; Quarters: Fan d. Faazil Kassam, 7,5,7,15; Zhuang d. Brian Pace, 6,1,8,5,-7,3; Csaba d. Sean O’Neill, -7,5,12,4,109; Peter-Paul d. Mark Hazinski, -10,7,7,-7,5,-6,4,-8,6.

Over 40: Keith Evans d. Lim Ming Chui, -5,6,5,6,9. Over 50: David Sakai d. Richard McAfee, 6,7,5,7.

Over 60: Gary Gudzenko d. John Harrington, n.s.


Under 18: Bence Csaba d. Mark Hazinski, 8,-7,6,8,7,4.

Under 16: Eric Finkelstein d. Max Li, 7,6,4,7,7.

Under 16 Girls: 1st Alice Li.


Under 13 Girls: Janice Lan d. Linden Li, 3,8,10,def.

Under 10: Wesley Fang d. Charlie Sun, n.s.


U2375: Keith Evans d. John Wetzler, 8,7,10,6.

U2250: Khaleel Asgarali d. Nazuddin Asgarali, 5,5,9,1,3,-7,10.

U2125: Michael Leshinsky d. Eric Finkelstein, -9,4,5,8,2.


U1850: Alex Gao d. Alden Fang, -7,-3,8,9,4,5,10.

U1700: Irving Goldman d. Arnold Stux, -6,7,-9,10,5,9.

U1550: Andrew Goodling d. Eric Lathrop, -7,10,6,9,8,3.

U1400: Gerald Chang d. Gary Kennedy, 6,8,3,3.


U1100: Michael Obriick d. Daniel Li, 8,-6,6,5,8.

U950: Rahinan Sarahan d. Andrew Russell, 6,7,6,5.

U800: Keith Brown d. Ed Foote, 7,8,8,12.

U4200 Doubles: Alden Fang/Eric Finkelstein d. Valery Ort/Lim Ming Chui, n.s.

U3200 Doubles: Gary Kennedy/Chen Xianzhong d. Khoi Duc Than/Grant Roch, 4,10,9.

$5000 Eastern Open
Piscataway, NJ • July 27-28, 2002 • By Alan Williams

In the movie Field of Dreams, a mysterious voice from the heavens tells a man to “build it, they will come.” In his journey to find the meaning of these words he encounters financial difficulty and skepticism. But in the end, he builds it, and in the end, they come.

The 2002 Eastern Open reminded me of nothing else so much as Field of Dreams. During planning earlier in the year, NATT had misgivings about scheduling a major four-star tournament so close to the conclusion of the U.S. Open. Additionally, our Canadian friends would be “otherwise engaged” at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. But working with the dates available from Rutgers University, it was July 27-28 or find another park. So we booked it. It had a happier ending than we could have hoped for, as the STIGA North American Tour set a new Tour attendance record with 263 entrants, and all weekend long, we saw dreams come true.

Tournament Director Fong Hsu packed a schedule of play onto 28 tables and kept it timely all weekend. Tournament Ref Terry Bell, ably assisted by Pat Collins, Jim Williams and Larry Bavly, applied the rules and kept score for the “big matches.” Sponsor Table Tennis Pioneers sent not only reps Rob and Jack, but Canadian Juniors Ignacio Cabrera and Pierre-Luc Hinse.

And they came. They came from California, from Washington, Minnesota and Michigan, Georgia and Texas, Hungary and Germany, to play their best at the Eastern Open. Dreams came true for John Wetzler of Pennsylvania, who made the elite group of singles and found himself face to face with Fan Yi Yong. Dreams came true for Howard Lamb, 20-18 in the fifth to win Under 2250 over Pan Lin, with the two juniors dominating the event.

What a pleasure to meet former World Top 10 Li Yuxiang! A German resident on a “busman’s holiday” to be with the Manhattan Club’s Musa and Wartski. Li moved through the hall like a breath of fresh air, smiling and laughing, even serving behind his head, but the short-pipped penholder was all business when he met Keith Evans in the Over 40 Final, building a 3-1 lead in games before… DREAM IT! … Evans wins, deuce, deuce and 51 to take the match and the event. Keith book-ended his title by taking the Under 2375’s over Pat Mualem in five hard-fought games.

As the weekend developed and the field began to narrow for Open Singles, who dared to dream the biggest dream of all? A win over the defending Eastern Open Champion and defending Tour Champion, Fan Yi Yong?

OPEN SINGLES ROUND ROBIN STAGE TWO

Group 1: Fan Yi Yong, Shao Yu, Anson Bispham, John Wetzler

With Bispham defaulting, the main excitement here was seeing John Wetzler pursue his dream of Elite level play, coming all the way in from the qualifying rounds to meet Shao Yu and Fan. With his combination racket (long pips and inverted) and quick hands, John acquitted himself nobly, going down to Shao 7,6,5,9, and to Fan, also four straight. But the most remarkable thing was how well John handled Fan’s serve, often able to flip that short no-spin version for an aggressive opener, and winning points with down-the-line loops. As if to remind him who was expected to win, Fan would sometimes rip John’s “hand-mirror” service for a backhand winner himself, but overall John impressed with his courage and effectiveness in serving into Fan’s deep backhand corner. When Fan defeated Shao Yu, 10,9,8,10, he established himself as Top Seed for the Quarters on Sunday, with Shao also advancing.

Group 2: David Zhuang, Michael Oyebode, Pierre-Luc Hinse, De Tran

De Tran likewise made the most of his Open Singles opportunity, taking Hinse to seven games with a storming back determination before losing (9,8,7,9,9,8,9). Tran showed the same strength of will against the “Big O,” taking two games (11,6,5,7,9,11) before bowing at deuce in the sixth. David Zhuang, however, only dropped one game (to Michael). Hinse and Oyebode played to determine who else would advance, which they did in a barnburner of topspin attackers. In the end, Michael had too much for the junior to answer (-11,9,8,6,7,14,7), but Pierre never quit. Zhuang and Oyebode advance.

Group 3: Attila Turbok, Li Yuxiang, Ignacio Cabrera, Paul David

The Hungarian’s mastery of spin carried him to a 3-0 record, dropping single games to David and Li. Turbok was quietly effective in maintaining his dominance. Li conquered Cabrera in seven games after building a 3-0 lead, only to win the seventh game 11-3. Now only Paul David could stop Li, but in four games could not find an answer. Small frustrations got the better of Paul, who did not like the way Li would call “loose ball lets” and served what he claimed was a “wet ball.” In disappointment, David defaulted to Cabrera to complete the group.

Group 4: Atanda Musa, Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi, Michael Hyatt, Tahl Leibovitz

By strange coincidence, two of the four entered players defaulted their group here, leaving only Leibovitz and Musa, both automatically guaranteed an advance to the Quarterfinals. Even more strangely, this was one of the best matches in the Second Stage RR, and a dream come true for Tahl Leibovitz, a screaming “YES!” filling the hall when he dispatched Musa, 4-1 (6,11,-1,7,14).

QUARTERFINALS

David Zhuang vs. Atanda Musa

It was more than Musa pride that was hurt against Tahl on Saturday evening. In the course of play he strained his back and defaulted...
against David. “You know Moose!” Oyebode informed the desk. “He is a very strong man. If he could be here, he would. Today, he cannot even get out of bed, the pain is so bad.” Musa’s pain became Zhuang’s pleasure, giving him a pass to the semifinals.

**Attila Turbok vs. Shao Yu**

Shao’s wide open Backhand swat has often baffled players seeing it for the first time, but here it was Shao who seemed baffled and frustrated. Against Turbok, Shao was often seen spinning on his heel, his back to the table, hands on his hips and eyes to the heavens as shot after shot went long and off the table. Turbok’s mastery of spin showed in the score as he advanced to a meeting with David Zhuang in the semifinals, (4,7,8,4,5,3) in the best of nine.

**Fan Yi Yong vs. Li Yuxiang**

Recognizing early that he could not be competitive with Fan, the age difference being too great to overcome, Li played to the crowd and Fan became a willing sparring partner, (3,4,6,2,4) in a match that ended with three smash and lob points. The personable Li won a laugh from the crowd when a deadly flat smash between Mike’s hip and his elbow, and forces him to hit the ball as he moves away from it rather than towards it. Unable to take full advantage of his power and placed off-balance by this tactic, Mike bows out 5-2 (11,7,7,6,9,9,9).

**Michael Oyebode vs. Tahl Leibovitz**

Tahl is living the dream, fresh off his upset victory over Musa, but Musa’s roommate for the weekend applied the smelling salts. in continued proof of his dominance. “David’s spin is devastating!” another chimed in, “It actually climbs right up David’s racket. You can see it!”

Both men dream of holding the title and the big check when the best of nine match is concluded, but it is the workmanlike no-nonsense Fan who makes his dream a reality, (5,8,4,7,5), in continued proof of his dominance. “David’s game requires constant practice,” one 2300 player tells me. “That pips-out block is the hardest shot to make and the angle, the timing… it goes so easily.” “Fan’s spin is devastating!” another chimed in, “It actually climbs right up David’s racket. You can see it!”

What I saw was two men I greatly admire for their skill and their sportsmanship, doing their best to beat the other, and shaking hands like gentlemen at the end. Congratulations are due. Congratulations are due to Fan for his victory, to David for his valiant effort. Congratulations are due to all the players who attended and competed, to all the coaches who train the athletes and all the parents and spouses who indulge our dreams as we move forward on the 2002 STIGA North American Tour.

Today, the Sonny Werblin Recreation Center at Rutgers University is just a room. But for two days it was our Hall of Dreams. For NATT, Table Tennis Pioneers, STIGA, and the USATT members who support the Tour, that Dream was a solid reality. We have built it, and you have come.

**Mens’ Singles-Final: Fan Yi Yong d. David Zhuang, 5,8,4,7,5; SF: Fan d. Michael Oyebode, 11,7,7,6,9; Chun d. Attila Turbok, 7,7,5,3,4,2; QF: Fan d. Li Yuxiang, 3,4,6,2,4; Chun d. Atanda Musa, def; Turbok d. Shao Yu, 4,7,8,4,5,3; Oyebode d. Tahl Leibovitz, 9,7,8,3,3.**

**Women’s Singles:** 1st Renata Pelachova; 2nd Donna Sakai.

**Under 22 Men:** Ignacio Cabrera d. Pierre-Luc Hinse, 5,8,5,9,9,8.

**Under 21 Men:** Ignacio Cabrera d. Pierre-Luc Hinse, 7,6,9,7.

**Under 18 Women:** 1st Felicia Chiu; 2nd Karen Ma.

**Under 16 RR:** Fan Lin d. Eric Finkelstein, 5,6,6,5,5.

**Under 13 RR:** Joseph Wang d. Taiyee Chien, 9,6,9,7.

**Under 10 Boys:** 1st Vincent Ning; 2nd Wesley Fang.

**Over 40:** Keith Evans d. Li Yuxiang, 8,7,9,8,7,5.

**Over 50:** Parvis Mojaverian d. Oleg Zaleskiy, 7,4,10,7,5.

**Over 60:** George Brathwaite d. Mike Kuklakis, 6,8,3,4,4.

**U2500:** Shao Yu d. Tahl Leibovitz, 10,4,7,9,6,7.

**U2375:** Vyacheslav Akselrod d. Michael Reff, 11,7,9,9,7,6.

**U2250:** Howard Lamb d. Pan Lin, 6,6,9,7,18.

**U2125:** Ed Watts d. David Llewellyn, 7,8,5,4,5,3.

**U2000:** Douglas Liddell d. Lincon Efron, 5,8,4,5,3.

**U1800:** Vyacheslav Akselrod d. Michael Reff, 13,8,8,7.

**U1700:** Ashutosh Doshi d. Raymond Chiu, 6,6,6,7.

**U1550:** Rick Martin d. Eric Lathrop, 7,10,8,5.

**U1400:** Steven Chiu d. Anatoely Gershburg, 6,7,9,8,6.

**U1250:** David Wong d. Taiyee Chien, 7,6,9,8.

**U1100:** Hari Seshadri d. Steve Krieger, 9,8,6,9,7.

**U950:** Vincent Ning d. Michel Reff, 5,7,6,9,6.

**U800:** Thomas Nyguen d. James Skoufis, 9,7,8,9.

**U750:** Mojaverian/Mike Kuklakis, 6,8,4,7,6,9.

**U600:** George Brathwaite d. Mike Kuklakis, 6,8,3,4,4.

**U550:** Purvis Mojaverian d. Oleg Zaleskiy, 7,4,10,7,5.

**U500:** Parvis Mojaverian d. Oleg Zaleskiy, 7,4,10,7,5.

**U400:** Georger Brathwaite d. Michael Kuklakis, 6,8,3,4,4.

**U3200:** Shao Yu d. Tahl Leibovitz, 10,4,7,9,6,7.

**U2250:** Howard Lamb d. Pan Lin, 6,6,9,7,18.

**U2125:** Ed Watts d. David Llewellyn, 7,8,5,4,5,3.

**U2000:** Douglas Liddell d. Lincon Efron, 5,8,4,5,3.

**U1800:** Vyacheslav Akselrod d. Michael Reff, 13,8,8,7.

**U1700:** Ashutosh Doshi d. Raymond Chiu, 6,6,6,7.

**U1550:** Rick Martin d. Eric Lathrop, 7,10,8,5.

**U1400:** Steven Chiu d. Anatoely Gershburg, 6,7,9,8,6.

**U1250:** David Wong d. Taiyee Chien, 7,6,9,8.

**U1100:** Hari Seshadri d. Steve Krieger, 9,8,6,9,7.

**U950:** Vincent Ning d. Michel Reff, 5,7,6,9,6.

**U800:** Thomas Nyguen d. James Skoufis, 9,7,8,9.

**U750:** Mojaverian/Mike Kuklakis, 6,8,4,7,6,9.

**U600:** George Brathwaite d. Mike Kuklakis, 6,8,3,4,4.
The Macy Block Open was held for the 10th consecutive year at the Greentree Racquet Club on August 17-18. Macy Block, an avid supporter, sponsored the tournament as he has so many in the past 30 years. Macy and his former company SUN TV have promoted table tennis tournaments in Ohio (Buckeye Open, Newark Open) and Pennsylvania (Sun TV Open and Macy Block Open) which have kept the sport alive and well in this area of the country. Thank you, Macy Block.

The tournament drew only 152 players, compared to our all-time high of 238. Small, but still a nice turnout. Some outstanding players in the tournament rated events were:

- Michael O’Bricki - rated only 349, he won Under 1200 and placed second in Under 1000. He’s a junior and has improved rapidly under the coaching of Gary Livingston.
- James Hawkins - won Under 1875 as well as over 60 in a 3-way tie with Robert Burke and Neil Myers.
- Mark Nordby - won Under 2250, and lost 4-2 to Idi Lewis in the semifinals of Under 2500.
- Idi Lewis - played well with a runner-up finish in Under 2375, and first in Under 2500 over Gbenga Ogundimu.

The real star of the tournament was Mark Hazinski. Mark won five events: Open, Open Doubles, Under 2650, Under 22 and Under 18. His prize money total was a tidy $1,410.

Mark had been slumping somewhat since his great wins over Fan Yi Yong and Eric Owens at the Buckeye Open in March. It was good to see him back in form and playing confidently again.

Randy Seemiller, back playing again after at least a decade of inactivity, played well in the Open, defeating 2500 rated Paul David 4-3 in the quarters in a minor upset. Rick then met old nemesis, yours truly, Dan Seemiller in the semis and lost 4-0. Randy Seemiller also played well, winning $3 000 prize money.

In the final of Open singles, with the winner taking home $1,000 and the runner-up $500, Mark won 4-1 over Dan. The first two games were close, and the match was even at 1-1 when Mark got hot winning games three and four at a comfortable 5 & 6. The 5th game was tight as Seemiller led 9-8 but lost 11-9.

Also, C.J. Williams of Frostburg, MD was given an award for "A Lifetime of Service to the Sport." Congratulations C.J.……you deserve it!

Open Singles - Final: Mark Hazinski d. Dan Seemiller, 4-1; SF: Hazinski d. Ashu Jain, 4-0; D. Seemiller d. Rick Seemiller, 4-0.

Open Doubles - Final: Dan Seemiller/Mark Hazinski d. Ashu Jain/Gbenga Ogundimu, 4-2.

Open Singles - Final: Mark Hazinski d. Samson Dubina, 4-0.

Over 60: 1st James Hawkins; 2nd Robert Burke; 3rd Neil Myers.

Over 50: Changping Duan d. Viber Williams, 3-0.

Over 40: Dan Seemiller d. Randy Seemiller, split.

Under 22: Mark Hazinski d. Samson Dubina, 4-0.

Under 18: Mark Hazinski d. Sivraj Muralkrishnan, 3-1.


U2500 - Final: Idi Lewis d. Gbenga Ogundimu, 4-1.

U2000 - Final: Lewis d. Mark Nordby; Ogundimu d. Randy Seemiller, ns.


U2250: Mark Nordby d. Nazruddin Asgarali, 3-0.

U2125: Mike Leshinski d. Ken Roskos, 3-0.


U1750: James Hawkins d. Paul Yost, 3-1.

U1625: Amando Dubina d. Josh Knicely, 3-1.

U1625: Marilkanth Anantharaman d. Bob Bowland, 3-1.

U1500: Dave Markiewicz d. Chris Malis, 3-1.

U1350: Robert DeWitt d. Robert Young, 3-1.


U1000: Mike Hill d. Michael O’Bricki, 3-0.

U1000 Doubles: Andy Cochran/Chris Leach d. Robert Burke/Viber Williams, 3-0.

U3500 Doubles: Tim Malis/Idi Lewis d. James Hamilton/David Hanna, 3-0.

Top Prize Money Winners

1. Mark Hazinski $1410
2. Dan Seemiller $800
3. Ashu Jain $400
4. Idi Lewis $360
5. Randy Seemiller $325
6. Rick Seemiller $300
7. Rich Burnside $275
8. Gbenga Ogundimu $250
9. Paul David $200
10. Samson Dubina $190
11. James Hawkins $160
12. Mark Nordby $150
**4-STAR SPIN MANIA OPEN**
Woodbury, NY • Sept. 6-8, 2002

Open Singles – Final: David Zhuang d. Stefan Feth, 6,5,-6,5,-9; SF: Zhuan d. Atanda Musa, -5,-4,11,10,8,4,8; Feth d. Fan YI Yong 7,3,7,-11,9,2,-7; QF: Zhuang d. Michael Oyebode, -9,-10,9,7,10; Musa d. Li Yuxiang 11,11,-10,9,-4; Feth d. Michael Hyatt, 7,9,13; Fan d. Wang Chen -9,10,-9,7,10.

Open Doubles: Atanda Musa/Michael Oyebode d. Lily Ying/Wang Chen, -8,-9,10,7,7; SF: Ying/Wang d. Paul David/Shao Yu 7,9,7; Over 40: Atanda Musa, Li Yuxiang, 9,8,-9,9,8; SF: Li d. Keith Evans, 8,-6,6,9.

**FAIRFIELD JUNE OPEN**
Fairfield, CA • June 8, 2002


**FAIRFIELD JULY OPEN**
Fairfield, CA • July 27, 2002


**DAVEN JUNE OPEN**
Daven, MI • June 22, 2002


**DAC JUNE OPEN**
Davison, MI • June 22, 2002


**AUGUST GIANT ROUND ROBIN**
Clayton, MO • Aug. 20-21, 2002

Open A: 1st Vikrajeet Singh; 2nd David Peradotto; 3rd Jim Keep; 4th Paul Liu. Open B: 1st Gene Miron; 2nd Mike Manahan; 3rd Charles Sherman; 4th Teymour Sepahbodi.

**SHOW-ME STATE GAMES**
Columbia, MO • July 27-28, 2002

Open: 1st Aleksander Kheyfets; 2nd Mark Nordby; 3rd Ben George; 4th Steve Cates. Open Teams: 1st Snake Pit TTC (John Wetzler & Eric Eisle; 2nd Penn State (Hank McCoullum & Hanegi Lee); 3rd Phylle Procrastinarists (Lennox Douglas & Don Garlanger); 4th Offenders (Rich Devitt & Don Feltenberger); 5th Somerset (Larry Baty & Chris Lehman); 6th Spidermen (Marvin Plevinsky, Gerald Reid & Herbert Hodges III).

Class A: 1st New York (Antwaan Davis, Ed Mordecai & David Falcom); 2nd Underdogs (Daiso T. Ton & Xiangzong Chen); 3rd Nanticoke TTC (Chip Sax & Andrew Phillips). Class B: 1st Legal Eagles (Frank Roth, David Dickson Jr. & Ron Albright); 2nd NY Skinheads (Guy McLean & John VanDeursen); 3rd Manlev (Murali Manohar & George Levin).

Class C: 1st RR (Richard Dalton & Rizwan Butt); 2nd Creative Strokes (Fred Bomberger, Bill Kohut & Chris Bos); 3rd Newark II (Miguel Santiago & TseShawn Barnes). Class D: 1st Royal Duo (Gary Kennedy & Sam Werner); 2nd Speedsters (John Vrabel & Anthony Falcone); 3rd Newark III (Omar Mace & Roger Brown). Sportsfest Unrated: 1st Excelsior Sports Foundation (India).

**SPRINGFIELD OPEN**
Springfield, MO • June 22, 2002


**ST. LOUIS GATEWAY OPEN**
Clayton, MO • July 20-21, 2002

Open - Final: Tai Long Tey d. Mark Nordby; SF: Tey d. Chiam Lim Soon, 10,-6,5,8,7; Nordby d. Goran Panic; QF: Tey d. Vladimir Altman, 4,9,5,6,11; Soon d. Jason Miller, 10,4,6,12; Panic d. Alex Kheyfuts, 8,-5,7,2,10; Nordby d. Gene Szeto, 10,5,3,7.

Open Doubles: 1st Tai Long Tey/Soon Chiam Lim by default.


**SPORTSFEST VI 2-PERSON TEAMS**
Allentown, PA • July 14, 2002

Open Teams: 1st Snake Pit TTC (John Wetzler & Eric Eisle); 2nd Penn State (Hank McCoullum & Hanegi Lee); 3rd Phylle Procrastinarists (Lennox Douglas & Don Garlanger); 4th Offenders (Rich Devitt & Don Feltenberger); 5th Somerset (Larry Baty & Chris Lehman); 6th Spidermen (Marvin Plevinsky, Gerald Reid & Herbert Hodges III).

Class A: 1st New York (Antwaan Davis, Ed Mordecai & David Falcom); 2nd Underdogs (Daiso T. Ton & Xiangzong Chen); 3rd Nanticoke TTC (Chip Sax & Andrew Phillips).

Class B: 1st Legal Eagles (Frank Roth, David Dickson Jr. & Ron Albright); 2nd NY Skinheads (Guy McLean & John VanDeursen); 3rd Manlev (Murali Manohar & George Levin).

Class C: 1st RR (Richard Dalton & Rizwan Butt); 2nd Creative Strokes (Fred Bomberger, Bill Kohut & Chris Bos); 3rd Newark II (Miguel Santiago & TseShawn Barnes).

Class D: 1st Royal Duo (Gary Kennedy & Sam Werner); 2nd Speedsters (John Vrabel & Anthony Falcone); 3rd Newark III (Omar Mace & Roger Brown).

Sportsfest Unrated: 1st Excelsior Sports Foundation (India).

**AROUND THE USA!**
USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • November/December 2002
MTTCC OPEN
Seattle, WA • June 22, 2002
Open: 1st Fan Yi Yong; 2nd Enoch Yu.
Mixed Doubles: 1st Fan Yi Yong/Aisil Kawamoto; 2nd Enoch Yu/Wayne Yu.

Open Consolation: 1st Jerry Li; 2nd John Czebe.
2nd Vladimir Arutyunov/Halina Shashyna.
2nd Enoch Yiu/Wayne Yiu.
Open: 1st Fan Yi Yong; 2nd Enoch Yiu.
June 22, 2002
Seattle, WA
TALLGRASS PRAIRIE OPEN
Overland Park, KS • Aug. 10, 2002
Class A: 1st Jay Chen; 2nd David Narvaez.
Class B: 1st Eric Austria; 2nd Ralph Stadelman.
Class C: 1st Stanley Stoodley; 2nd Sam Li.
Class D: 1st Vladimir Kantor; 2nd Vladimir Obrosov.
Class E: 1st Yahui Jin; 2nd Terry Pente Cost.

SOUTHBEND OPEN
South Bend, IN • Aug. 3, 2002
Open: 1st Mark Nordsby d. Brian Bartley, 4-0.
U2300: Mark Nordsby d. Don Angeles, 4-0.

MTTC OPEN
Greensboro, NC • June 1, 2002
Class A: 1st Billy Collier; 2nd Michael Yip.
Class B: 1st Roscoe Whitefield; 2nd Chris O'Brien.

LINDA MARYLAND CIRCUIT
Eldersburg, MD • Sept. 14, 2002
Open: 1st Dwight Rowe; 2nd Wayne Powell.
U3000 Doubles: 1st Ron (George) Williams/Sohil Charania; 2nd Julian Waters/Sam Drazin; 3rd Jesse Wasserman.

FOXY VALLEY OPEN
Aurora, IL • Aug. 17, 2002
Open: 1st Jason Miller; 2nd Junduo Zhao; 3rd Antonio Gutierrez; 4th Zack Pan.
U1300: 1st Dwight Rowe; 2nd Wayne Powell.
U1500: 1st Scott Lane; 2nd Charles Collins; 3rd Spencer Lane.

PENSACOLA SUMMER OPEN
Pensacola, FL • June 8, 2002
Open: 1st Rafael Mendez; 2nd Olmo Zavala; 3rd Jorge Zavala; 4th Jiang Gu.
Class A: 1st Vimal Vijaykumar; 2nd Joseph Mozur.
Class B: 1st Hung Ho; 2nd Johnny Billy.
Class C: 1st Steve Sebastian; 2nd Mark Richterman.
Class D: 1st Serge Poncim; 2nd J.J. Jordan.
Class E: 1st Adam Hirsch; 2nd Melvin Coulon.

PIEDMONT OPEN
Greensboro, NC • Aug. 10, 2002
Open: 1st D.J. Slette; 2nd Greg Cox; 3rd Tony Provenzano; 4th Cory McElveen.
Class A: 1st Dean Kapasalakis; 2nd Edward Tian.
Class B: 1st James Shelfon; 2nd Sam Magitman.

MARYLAND CIRCUIT
Eldersburg, MD • Sept. 14, 2002
Open: 1st Dwight Rowe; 2nd Wayne Powell.
U3000 Doubles: 1st Ron (George) Williams/Sohil Charania; 2nd Julian Waters/Sam Drazin; 3rd Jesse Wasserman.

PENSACOLA SUMMER OPEN
Pensacola, FL • June 8, 2002
Open: 1st Rafael Mendez; 2nd Olmo Zavala; 3rd Jorge Zavala; 4th Jiang Gu.
Class A: 1st Vimal Vijaykumar; 2nd Joseph Mozur.
Class B: 1st Hung Ho; 2nd Johnny Billy.
Class C: 1st Steve Sebastian; 2nd Mark Richterman.
Class D: 1st Serge Poncim; 2nd J.J. Jordan.
Class E: 1st Adam Hirsch; 2nd Melvin Coulon.

PIEDMONT OPEN
Greensboro, NC • July 13, 2002
Open: 1st Joey Hu; 2nd Li Zuo; 3rd Tony Banjoko; 4th Bill Neely.
Class A: 1st Adam Forsythe; 2nd Billy Collier.
Class B: 1st Cory McElveen; 2nd Edward Levy.
Class C: 1st Michael Yip; 2nd Brian Horton.
U1500: 1st Mary Rutherford; 2nd David Mackenzie.

FLORIDA STATE CLOSED
Orlando, FL • Aug. 31, 2002
Open: 1st Errol Lattios; 2nd Jose Duarte; 3-4: Bin Hai Chu & Donovan James.
U1950: 1st Phuong Tran; 2nd Evgeniy Puzyreu.
U1800: 1st Evgeniy Puzyreu; 2nd Anton Stivelb.
U1650: 1st Sam Phan; 2nd Steve Carlson.
U1500: 1st Philip Sweiting; 2nd Alex Risteviski.
U1300: 1st Dwight Rowe; 2nd Wayne Powell.

FOX VALLEY OPEN
Aurora, IL • Aug. 17, 2002
Open: 1st Jason Miller; 2nd Junduo Zhao; 3rd Antonio Gutierrez; 4th Zack Pan.
Class A: 1st Shelby Lane; 2nd Charles Collins; 3rd Scott Lane, Arthur Grundy Jr.
Class BBB: 1st Carlos Villanueva Jr.; 2nd James Norris $50; 3-4: Paul Holliger $30, Sang Hee An.
Class BB: 1st Alice Tym; 2nd Robert McNeil; 3-4: Travis Beach, Sam Geno.
Class B: 1st Billy Straw; 2nd Robert Jordan; 3rd Emma Veliz; 4th Eric Hopkinsnity; 5th Spencer Lane.

II ANNUAL DECATUR OPEN
Decatur, Alabama • Aug. 17, 2002
Open: 1st Tai Long
Tey $250 and gold table tennis tie tack from Jimmy Smith Jeweler of Decatur; 2nd Keith Evans $125; 3-4: Bok Nam Kim, Soon Chian Lim
$50; 5-8: Luck Sourinthon, Ernesto Kawamoto, Terry Hamilton, Richard McAfee $30.
Class A: 1st Tommy Dailey; 2nd Justin Davis; 3-4: Dinh Le, Carl Lewis.
Class B: 1st Shelby Lane; 2nd Charles Collins; 3-4: Scott Lane, Arthur Grundy Jr.
Class BBB: 1st Carlos Villanueva Jr.; 2nd James Norris $50; 3-4: Paul Holliger $30, Sang Hee An.
Class BB: 1st Alice Tym; 2nd Robert McNeil; 3-4: Travis Beach, Sam Geno.
Class B: 1st Billy Straw; 2nd Robert Jordan; 3rd Emma Veliz; 4th Eric Hopkinsnity; 5th Spencer Lane.

STIGA CARY FALL OPEN
Cary, NC • Sept. 14, 2002
Class A: 1st Sean O'Neile; 2nd Nigel Christoph; 3rd Gregg Robertson; 4th Jim McQueen.
Class B: 1st Joey Drolet; 2nd Mitch Forst; 3rd Ron Drolet; 4th Rick Mundy.
Class C: 1st Dariusz Czarnocki; 2nd Charles Williams.
Class D: 1st Joe Zhou; 2nd Tom Manley.
**$90,000 KOREAN ITTF PRO TOUR**

Kang Nuan, Korea - Sept 5-9, 2002

Men's Singles - Final: Werner Schlager (AUT) d. Timo Boll (GER), 7-5, 7-3, 14-12, 3-0; SF: Schrager d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 5-4, 12-10, 14-12, 3-0; QF: Boll d. Donn Heister (NED), 10-4, 9-7, 9-11, 11-5.

Women's Singles - Final: Wang Liqin (CHN) d. Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE), 4-7, -8, 11; SF: Li d. Chen Jie (CHN), 11-2, 11-3, 11-6, 9-11, 11-4; QF: Waldner d. Wang Liqin (CHN), 11-5, 4-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-3.


$85,000 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Singapore - Aug 30 - Sept 1, 2002

In the preliminaries, USA’s Chang Jun Gao (world #3) upset Tamara Boros of Croatia (world #9) in the preliminaries, USA’s Chang Jun Gao (world #3) upset Tamara Boros of Croatia (world #9), but in a three-way tie with Boros and Li Nan of China (world #5), she came in third and didn’t advance. See Group B.

**Final:**
- Zhang Yining (CHN) d. Li Nan (CHN), 9-8, 3-4: Tie Aya Umemura (JPN), 8-6, 4-9, 9-5; Stef d. Kim Bo Bok (KOR), 8, 4, 10; Konishi d. Li Jia Wei (SIN), 9-6, 10-9; Steff d. Kim Kyung Ah (KOR), 4-7, 9-5, 4-7; Fujinuma d. Nicole Struse (GER), 6, 7, 5; Wang d. Reiko Hiura (JPN), 10-9, 9-2, 8, 5.
- Zhang d. Lin Ling, 11-9, 8, 3; QF: Li d. Kim Hyon Hui (PRK), 11-9, 10-8, 13, 9; Lin d. Tamara Bors (CRO), 7, 9, 6, 5; Tie d. Niu Jiangfeng (CHN), 10-6, 9, 10, 10.
- Women's Doubles - Final: Zhang Yining (CHN) d. Li Nan (CHN), 9-8, 3-4; Tie Yana (CHN) d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 7-5, 4, 11, 9; Boll d. Fredrik Hakansson/Peter Karlsson (SWE), 8, 3-4, 9-7, 6.

**$180,000 CHINA-INTERNATIONAL TEAM MATCH**

Wuhan, China - August 14, 2002

China d. Internationals, 4-1

- Group A: 1st Zhang Yining (CHN) d. Li Jia Wei, 2-6, 4, 6, 3, 6, 6, 3, 6; 2nd Zhang d. Lin Ling, 4-9, 6, 6, 6, 3, 6, 3, 6; 3rd Lin Ling d. Li Jia Wei, 11-6, 9, 3, 6, 6, 3, 6.
- Group B: 1st Li Nan (CHN), 6-2, 4, 6, 3, 6, 3, 6, 3; 2nd Li Jia Wei d. Zhang Yining, 6-4, 6, 6, 3, 6, 3, 6; 3rd Zhang d. Lin Ling, 6-2, 4, 6, 3, 6, 3, 6.

Belgium's Jean-Michel Saive won the only match for the Internationals.
USATT's Coaching Tour in Northern New England

By Doug Haynes

Northern New England might not seem a hotbed of table tennis. I doubt you can find a single player from this area in the magazine's lists of top 15 players in any age category. But due to the development of dynamic clubs in the region, interest in table tennis is expanding rapidly. New Hampshire and Vermont now rank third and fourth nationally in the percentage of USATT members relative to the total population (see www.mdttc.com).

There have, however, been serious constraints on the development of our players. Most of the juniors in this area practice in rather isolated circumstances without coaches or other players of their age, and they often reach a plateau in the 1700-2000 level after they become the top players in their home clubs. A few juniors have met this situation by traveling to clinics in Maryland, New Jersey and Indiana. At the same time, our clubs have tried from time to time to bring in coaches like Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Barney Reed, Sr. and Liang Liung for summer clinics. But these few instances have hardly been sufficient to satisfy the most highly motivated juniors or adults.

Thus when we first heard about the USATT's coaching tour with Doru Gheorghe, the U.S. Women's coach, we thought that the program seemed a perfect fit with our area. We just needed to provide a space, participants, and sufficient financing to cover the coach's hotel and local transport expenses. For our players, the clinic would cost a fraction of what it would cost to travel out of the region or to hire a coach to come in on our own.

We needed to do a summer clinic, since interested juniors were too dispersed over the region to try anything after school. After much searching for summertime space, we found the Rosa Tyson gym in South Strafford, Vermont. This was a unique location for table tennis, a converted New England church with stained glass windows and traditional steeple in an idyllic village setting.

The newly formed Upper Valley Table Tennis Club and the Windsor Vermont Stiga Table Tennis Club co-sponsored our program. Within a short time of sending it off, we heard from Debbie Moya, the USATT Programs Director, that Coach "Doru" (as we came to know him) would be giving us a clinic from July 13-17. We moved quickly from this point, bringing together players, tables and finally the coach in a frenzied period of activity.

The players came from 13 different towns and six different clubs in Vermont, New Hampshire, New York and Massachusetts. They possessed a variety of playing levels, from 450 to 1900. Included were promising juniors 12 and under (Hao Yang, Anisa Mohammed and Frank Huang), older juniors with some experience in tournaments (Tom Haynes, Mike Caplan and Tim Aikey), two college-aged players (Ron Choy and Ken Cameron) and five highly motivated seniors. Most of the junior players stayed in our home for four nights.

Coach Doru devised a plan that suited this diverse collection of players superbly. An article on the Rhode Island clinic in the May/June magazine gives a good idea of the program, so I won't repeat the details. From the first day he tried to get us to stop using long pushes to return serves, focusing on trying drop shots, tips and loops. Many of the players had never attempted a flip before, but by the end of the week, we were all integrating this shot into our games. All the players worked hard on looping, including three juniors who had never looped before.

Doru was a stern taskmaster, and worked us hard from beginning to end with 5-6 hours a day of footwork drills and stroke practice. He moved from table to table, critiquing the performance of every player. All the players came to prize highly any words of praise! The culmination of the clinic came on the fifth day with multiball practice. Everyone got to work on a stroke or footwork drill as Doru fed them hundreds of balls.

Though Doru cautioned against too high expectations of immediate improvement, many of the participants had visibly raised the levels of their games. In the session after the clinic, one young player beat another older junior (a non-participant) for the first time. We somewhat rashly promised Doru that the participants in the clinic would improve an average of 200 points in the next year and we plan to give him updates on our progress!

We want to thank Coach Doru for coming to teach us and doing such an excellent job, Debbie Moya for the work of coordinating the clinic, Dana Adams for providing some tables, Danya Budiman for serving as a hitting partner for some of the juniors, and Jim Sweeney and the Strafford Athletic Association for arranging the use of the gym. We especially want to encourage the USATT to keep this great program going. We recommend it highly to other areas with high interest but without high-quality local coaches. Indeed, the USATT may see an application from us again in the near future!
We believe you have an excellent understanding of how to play against the penholder style. Can you share with us your experiences?

Kong: Penholders in general have weaker backhands, although the Chinese are different than the foreign players in this respect. Our players have added the reverse backhand loop to their skills, and that certainly has helped them initiate attacks on the backhand side. Also, the Chinese penholders are strong in third-ball attacks, and they are more "venomous" with their attacks. They are weaker in rallying, but have very refined first-three-ball skills. Most penholders are in Asia, and players from countries like Korea tend to be one-sided loopers, and have relatively greater weakness on their backhand side.

How does your strategy differ when you play Ma Lin, compared to playing Kim Taek Soo or Chiang Peng-Lung?

There are definite differences. I play Ma Lin a lot, and we are very familiar with each other. The Chinese players use different sponges, and they are a little more awkward for me to play against. Chiang is also quite different from Kim. Chiang has good blocks, and is not the one-sided inverted looper that Kim is. Kim blocks and smashes with his backhand, but his main weapon is the forehand. So everyone is a little different. In general, players like Chiang do not have the rallying abilities of the shakehanders, and their ability to initiate attacks or create spins on their backhand is weaker.

When you play Chiang, where do you place your shots?

It depends, and usually against penholders we attack the forehand side and then the backhand because they are strong in stepping around from their backhand position, and they are relatively weaker on their wide forehand side. That means their power is a little weaker from their forehand side. If you can return shot to his backhand, you have the advantage. Of course it depends on actual conditions. If you cannot stop their attacks from their forehand side, you would be under pressure.

I feel that when you play against players like Ma Lin, you usually flip with your backhand, and follow that with a backhand counter or quick loop. You are very quick with that backhand shot, and when the opponent forced a step-around shot, that would not be a high-quality one. Then you would seize control of the point by attacking their forehand or counter-looping their weaker loops.

In general, if I could do that, then it would be great. But your opponent will definitely try to limit you and not let you play your strategy; he would not want to get into a rallying stage, and instead try to use his first-three-ball skills to control you. In a match, we are always trying to control and limit each other. In the rallying phase, the shakehand style is a little stronger, but you need to be able to return serves well to get there. To control penholders you need to return serves with varied placements; this limits the power and the usage of the penholders' third-ball attacks, and much improves your chances. But if you cannot do that, then you may not be able to play the rallying game.

I remember one time when you played Ma Lin, he would step around as soon as you flipped the ball, and not wait for your backhand counter. Was that a breakthrough for him?

Yes, that's because he is familiar with my style, and can predict my placements and spin variations. So he could start moving earlier. Against less familiar opponents, he would need to be a little more conservative until he feels things out.

I feel that Ma Lin's step-around forehand loops down the line poses a greater threat to you, is that correct?

Strong loops down the line are a threat to everyone. Kim Taek Soo also does that a lot. In general, penholders have greater ability to step around and loop from the backhand position.

Ma seems to avoid your backhand, and instead attacks down the line a lot.

That depends on the quality of my returns. If I handle my forehand side well, he would choose other lines of attack, for example to my middle or backhand. In general penholders now loop down the line more frequently, including from the forehand side, because that poses a bigger threat.

How do you control your backhand down-the-line shots?

Primarily it is in the wrist, and then it is the waist. You have to shift your weight also. If you only use your hand, you will not have consistency.

Among amateurs, shakehanders often push deep to the penholders' backhand, or serve deep to their backhand...

In high-level competition that won't work. Because players now can step around and attack so well, it is foolish to push deep to their backhand. It is best to flip the ball to reduce the power of their attacks, and then try to get to the rallying phase.

Tip of the Month:
Assume You Will Have To Move
By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach

Most players look to see where their opponent hits the ball before deciding if they have to move or not. You'll be much faster if you assume you will have to move, and prepare to move as your opponent is hitting the ball. This will save you the time it would take to make the decision to move — instead, all you need to do is decide where to move. Since you should be moving to nearly every ball — how often does the opponent just happen to hit the ball exactly in the center of your forehand or backhand pocket? — how fast you are able to do this makes a big difference. Assume you will have to move to every ball and you'll get a much faster start.
McAfee’s Robot Mechanics

A s a full-time coach, I am always looking for new “fun” ways to teach Table Tennis. This is especially true when working with a group of students where trying to keep everyone involved and constantly moving can be difficult. While I always incorporate my Newgy Robot into my group training sessions, recently I have discovered a new and very exciting variation on a proven concept, “Robot Circuit Training.”

Circuit Training can be loosely defined as a set of exercises that a person executes one right after the other. This set of exercises is constructed around a common theme, such as, strength training, aerobic training, or skills training. Using this approach, I first create a Robot Training Circle by setting up four Newgy Robots on tables in a cross formation with the Robots creating a circle in the middle of the cross (see pictures). I then divide my lesson plan in 20-minute themed sections with each robot setup to help teach one section of the theme. Students then continuously move from one robot station to another working on this central theme. One of the great benefits of this setup is that the coach is free to move about and assist the students.

Here is an example of Robot Circuit Training using the theme of, “Forehand Loop against Underspin.”

- **Robot 1** - sends a deep underspin ball to the middle of the table - player executes continuous forehand loops.
- **Robot 2** – sends a deep underspin ball to the player’s backhand side - player executes two backhand pushes, then steps round to execute one forehand loop, then repeats sequence.
- **Robot 3** - sends random deep underspin balls to the middle half of the table - player executes forehand loops with proper footwork.
- **Robot 4** - with the ball frequency turned down low, the robot sends deep random balls to the middle half of the table – player practices executing a third-ball attack by first serving a chop serve and then looping the robot’s ball. With a minimum of practice, you can time this sequence to produce a very game-like experience.

By Richard McAfee
Director, Newgy Coaching System

The purpose of this series of articles will be to shed some light on the many possibilities and advantages of Robot Training. If you do not have a robot, the same effect can be produced through the use of multiball drills with coaches or practice partners.

This type of training keeps a group of up to 12 students constantly on the move and working hard. The dynamics of having a group moving around a Training Circle of four Robots is very visually exciting and a great deal of fun. Even more important, this type of training is very effective, providing far more repetitions of each drill in a shorter amount of time than other more traditional approaches. This is also a great tool in developing junior programs. You will find creating a Robot Circle to be a kid magnet.

Now with cheaper robots on the market, this type of training program is much more affordable. If your club is looking for an exciting way to conduct group training, I would strongly suggest you try Robot Circuit Training.
### TOP MEN

| 1. | WA 2761 | Fan, Yi Yong |
| 2. | IL 2738 | Lupulesku, Ilija |
| 3. | MD 2713 | Cheng, Yinhua |
| 4. | NJ 2712 | Zhuang, David |
| 5. | TX 2707 | Owens, Eric |
| 6. | CA 2877 | Turbok, Attila |
| 7. | TX 2826 | Butler, Jim |
| 8. | NY 2807 | Racz, Dezso |
| 9. | NY 2803 | Musa, Atanda |
| 10. | CA 2539 | Nguyen, Khoa |

### TOP WOMEN

| 1. | NY 2507 | Wang, Chen |
| 2. | CA 2459 | Barh, Tawni |
| 3. | TX 2409 | Reed, Jasna |
| 4. | NJ 2390 | Yip, Lily |
| 5. | NY 2362 | Pelucchio, Renata |
| 6. | OR 2239 | Yang, Simone |
| 7. | NY 2393 | Sings, Virginia Wei-Ni |
| 8. | CA 2234 | Moseley, Kibibi lone |
| 9. | CA 2245 | Lee, Jacqueline |
| 10. | OR 2237 | Ping, Whitney |

### National Ratings List

The USATT National Ratings List is presented by Paddle Palace. We will match any price worldwide! Everything for the Table Tennis Player!

[www.paddlepalace.com](http://www.paddlepalace.com)

### Ratings Questions?

All ratings-related questions should be directed to Felisa Huggins, USATT Headquarters, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. To find out your rating, send a self-addressed, stamped postcard with your name and the date of your last tournament. You may also contact us at 719-866-4583 or by e-mail at ratings@usatt.org.

### Tournaments Processed

This list was compiled on 10/01/02 and includes all tournaments played through 9/8/02. Due to space limitations, only current members who have played since 6/1/02 are included. This document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2002.

### Tournaments Included in Ratings

- Hoosier State Games
- Stiga Open/2002 Stiga NA Tour
- Davison June Open
- Grand Canyon State Games
- Lexington RR Open
- MTTC 2002 Open
- Maryland Giant RR
- Springfield 2-star Open
- Boston TTC June Open
- Fairlloyd June Challenge
- South Florida US Open Warm-up
- Maryland Giant RR
- 2002 U.S. Open/ITTF Pro Tour
- 2002 ITTF World Junior Circuit
- 2002 U.S. Open
- Maryland Circuit
- Piedmont TT Open
- Sportsfest 2-Person Team
- Schaumburg July Open
- Juic Seattle Open
- St Louis Gateway Open
- 2002 Georgia State Games
- Davison July Open
- Fairfield July Open
- 2002 Indianapolis Summer Open
- Boston August Open
- 11th Annual Decatur Open
- Fox Valley Open
- Macy Block Open
- San Francisco Summer Open
- 2 Much Fun!
- Gienview Class + Age Grp
- Maryland Giant RR
- Davison August Giant RR
- Florida State Closed
- California Open
- Spinnmania 2002
- Piedmont TT Open
- Back to School Open
### Doubles Finalists

**OVER 30 MEN**

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**OVER 16 GIRLS**

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**OVER 16 BOYS**

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### Girls Doubles Finalists

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## Women's Doubles Finalists

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**Note:** The table above is a partial list and continues in this manner.
October 26 - Cincinnati Giant RR, Cincinnati, OH. Contact: Mike Lecture, 513-244-6008. mlecture@escortins.com. **

October 26 - Hutchinson 2002 Fall Open, Hutchinson, KS. Contact: Guy Hendrickson, ghendrickson@bortonlc.com. *

October 26 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

October 26 - October Open, Davison, MI. Contact: John Bosika, 635-8153. **

October 26-27 - MATTC October Open, Middletown, PA. Contact: Don Vastine, 717-944-7154 or Steve Gibson, 717-944-6612. **

October 27 - Roanoke Fall Classic, Salem, VA. Contact: Dean Kapalakis, 540-384-6161. dean@rev.net. **

November 2 - Piedmont TT Open, Greensboro, NC. Contact: Doug Paul, 910-769-3222. Pingpong54@aol.com. 0 Star

November 2 - Piedmont TT Open, Canton, OH. Contact: Gary Podis, 330-493-4530. **

November 2-3 - Boston Boston Open, Westfield, NJ. Larry Bavly, 732-654-9009. njttc@juno.com. **

November 2-3 - High Desert Open, Victorville, CA. Contact: Blake Hoard, 760-962-8846, blake@iwon.com. **

November 2-3 - Canton Giant RR, Canton, OH. Contact: Gary Podis, 330-493-4530. **

November 6-7 - Potomac Open, Potomac, MD. Contact: Lixin Lang, 301-963-1009. lixin_lang@excite.com. **

November 6-7 - Potomac Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 732-654-9009. njttc@juno.com. **

November 9 - Atlanta Open Giant RR, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Wendell Dillon, 770-923-5110. pong35@mindspring.com. *

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

November 9-10 - Stiga Pacific Rim Open, Portland, OR. Contact: Jim Scott, 503-261-2872. mdtan@optionline.net. **

November 9-10 - Stiga World Open, Las Vegas, NV. Contact: USATT, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. Phone: 719-866-4583. admin@usatt.org. *****

December 7 - Piedmont TT Open, Greensboro, NC. Contact: Doug Paul, 910-769-3222. Pingpong54@aol.com. 0 Star

December 7 - Atlanta Fall Open, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Warren Moon, 404-284-6030. wamoon@mindspring.com. *

December 7 - Boston TTC December Open, Medford, MA. Contact: David Marcus, 617-492-4317. davidmarcus@alum.mit.edu. **

December 8 - Boston TTC December Open, Medford, MA. Contact: David Marcus, 617-492-4317. davidmarcus@alum.mit.edu. **


December 14-16 - SJTG December Open, Westfield, NJ. Larry Bavly, 732-654-9009. njttc@juno.com. **

December 16-17 - Potomac Open, Potomac, MD. Contact: Lixin Lang, 301-963-1009. lixin_lang@excite.com. **

December 18-21 - 2002 USA Table Tennis National Championships, Las Vegas, NV. Contact: USATT, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. Phone: 719-866-4583. admin@usatt.org. *****

December 27-29 - 2002 Killerspin Open, Chicago, IL. Contact: NATT, 301-738-8250. info@nattletennis.com. ****

December 29 - Holiday Classic 2 Person Team Open, Allentown, PA. Contact: Fred Kistler, 610-797-6637. lvatte@yahoo.com. **

December 29 - Holiday Classic 2 Person Team Open, Allentown, PA. Contact: Fred Kistler, 610-797-6637. lvatte@yahoo.com. **


July 13 - Allentown ‘Sportsfest’ 2 Person Team, Allentown, PA. Contact: Fred Kistler, 610-797-6637. lvatte@yahoo.com. **
On July 9, four U.S. junior team members arrived in Tokyo, Japan after a twelve-hour flight, and anxiously awaited our bus ride to the Dohjo. We had heard from other people before the trip that it was a great trip so we were excited. Though a little jetlagged, we boarded the shuttle bus that would take us to where we would spend the next three weeks training. So began our visit to Japan, for myself (from Maryland), Wendy Eav and Sergy Gutkin of California, and John Leach of Colorado.

We owe a great thank you to USATT Treasurer Tong Lee, who initiated and negotiated the trip; to USATT's Debbie Moya (Program Director), Dave Roberts (Elite Athlete Committee Chair), and Sheri Pittman (USATT President); to Chris Burner of Martin Kilpatrick; and to the sponsor, Tamasu Company (Butterfly), for making this trip a reality.

Once we arrived at the Dohjo, the Butterfly workers greeted us. They were very polite and showed us around. Later that evening, Ms. Konishi, our main translator and coordinator, treated us to dinner at Denny's. She taught us a little Japanese, at least enough to introduce ourselves the next day. After dinner, she led us to the apartment where we would be staying during the trip. Wendy and Martha Leach (John’s mom) and I stayed in one room while John and Sergy stayed with two people from Chile, Juan Salamonka and Marcos Manos. The apartments included a full bathroom, and even a kitchen and refrigerator. We were very pleased. That night we slept soundly, awaiting our first day of training. Many of us had heard stories about the training and were anxious to start the next morning.

When we woke up, Butterfly had a few surprises waiting for us. First, we used all the Japanese we knew to introduce ourselves to the workers there. Then, we did the morning exercises with them before going downstairs to get fitted with our new Butterfly clothes and other generous gifts from Butterfly. We didn't know it yet, but we were to receive many gifts from them — more on that shortly. Later, we went back upstairs to begin the first of many days of training.

It was then that we met Yoshi. Before the trip we had heard what a great coach he was. The training proved this to be true. During the training sessions (9-12 AM and 2-5 PM), he pushed us to our limit. He mostly focused on basic skills, footwork and practice matches. We worked hard to keep up with him. His multi-ball training was especially difficult. After the first week, we all noticed substantial improvement.

We were training with the Meiji University team and a local high school girls’ team. The people on the Meiji team served as excellent practice partners. They would do drills with us and even feed us multi-ball! However, when we played them in practice matches, they beat us most of the time. But by the end of our trip we could beat a few of them. Turns out the Meiji team had a very big tournament coming up and were training round the clock. Therefore, towards the end of the trip we had added another practice session, 7-9 PM.

We played matches against the girls’ high school team twice. They were a good way to test our improvement because we played them once at the beginning of the trip, and once near the end. They were a very enjoyable bunch and we had a great time. Though great practice partners, they were also great friends. From all this training, our team improved significantly.

We were delighted about receiving gifts from Butterfly. On the first day they gave us enough equipment to please us for the entire trip. But little did we know that they’d shower us with gifts throughout. It was very kind of them to give us so much and we are very thankful to them. To show our appreciation we tried to return the favor by being courteous and training hard.

Even though we were training with the Meiji University team and local high school girls’ teams, the people we trained with were great companions, both on and off the court. We spent a lot of time with them and really got to know each other. They were always happy to have us over and would often invite us to their homes for dinner. On our free days, we would go out to eat at different restaurants or just hang out with each other. We also had the opportunity to visit some of Tokyo's famous attractions, such as Akihabara, Disney Sea, and Asakusa Temple.

After the first week, we all noticed substantial improvement. We were able to keep up with the high-level training and were able to improve our skills significantly. Our training sessions were very intense and challenging, but it was a great experience.

During the trip, we also had the opportunity to participate in several exhibitions. We were honored to take part in these exhibitions during our trip. We were able to showcase our skills and compete against some of the world's best players. It was a great experience and we were able to gain a lot of valuable insights from these exhibitions.

Overall, the trip was a great experience and we were able to improve our skills significantly. We would like to thank Butterfly and Tamasu Company for making this trip possible. We also want to thank everyone at the Dohjo for their hospitality and for making us feel welcome. We had a great time and we are already looking forward to our next trip to Japan.
Later in our trip we were honored to meet two of the world’s top players: Chiang Peng-Lung (Chinese Taipei, world #11, but previously as high as #3) and Petr Korbel (Czechoslovakia, world #25). We were very happy to get to see an exhibition by them. We even got to play practice matches with them. We witnessed something interesting during the exhibition. Perhaps it was a Japanese custom, but we had fun. They had us play rock-paper-scissors with the exhibitor. If you lost or tied the exhibitor, then you lost and sat down. Sadly none of us won anything but the people who did were thrilled. After the exhibition we had the chance to watch Chiang as he did a photo-shoot. Petr also talked to us after the exhibition. Being able to see these exhibitions and meet these famous people was a great honor.

On another occasion we got to meet Ai Fukuhara, Japan’s 13-year-old child star. She even trained with the university team and us. We played some matches with her. Though we all lost, some of us got a game or two. We were amazed at her training schedule and how she does so much in so little time. Nine hours a day of training and school! Wow! We were impressed, not only with her playing but her sportsmanship also.

On July 30, though sad to leave, we departed from the Dojo to return to the U.S. We wished we could have seen how the Meiji team did in their tournament coming up the next week. Before we left, we went to say goodbye to the Meiji team, Yoshi and all the Butterfly workers we had met. We will always miss the sounds of Yoshi’s multi-ball and the laughter of the Meiji team. Our enjoyment there was phenomenal, and if invited again we would all go back. They treated us with respect, generosity and exceptional politeness. We waved good-bye to our friends on the van to the hotel, where we would take a shuttle to the airport. Though glad to be home, we will always miss Tokyo, Japan and the people and the training at the Dojo.

---

**Interview With U.S. Team Member**

**Simone Yang**

By Larry Hodges

*Home City:* Hillsboro, OR

*What are the best titles you have won?*
I played on a junior team that made the finals of the Chinese Junior Championships.

*Where are you from, and where did you grow up?*
I’m from Sichuan Province in China. That’s where I grew up.

*What equipment do you use, and who are your major sponsors?*
Forehand: Butterfly Services; Backhand: Pips 563. I’m not currently sponsored.

*How did you get started in table tennis, and how old were you?*
I went to the Zigong ping-pong school for juniors. I was 9 and a half.

*Who was your coach(s) and club(s) during that time?*
Zhang Yun Xi was my coach.

*Where do you currently play and train?*
Sometimes at home or at a local club at a community center.

*How did you become a top player?*
When I was young I was training every day for about 10 years.

*How would you describe your playing style? Your strengths and weaknesses?*
Close to the table, attacking. My strength is that I can play against a lot of different styles. My weakness is not moving fast enough.

*Were you ever a full-time professional player?*
Yes, in China from around 1976-82.

*How often do you train these days?*
About twice a week.

*What are your major goals in table tennis?*
To play in the Olympics.

*What player in table tennis do you most admire, and why?*
Ma Lin, because he has good touch with the ball, and he can play really fast. He can also beat a lot of players with different styles.

*Can you tell us anything about your winning both Over 30 and Over 40 Women’s Singles at the U.S. Open?*
I was really excited about because this is the first time I’ve won both of these events.

*What is your educational background?*
I went to college for two years.

*What are your interests outside of table tennis? Hobbies, etc.?*
I like to travel, go shopping, work in the garden and listen to music.

*Any advise for up-and-coming players?*
Do smart training.
Connecting Strokes: The Forehand to Backhand Transition of Chaan Chih-Yuan

By Wei Wang, USATT Certified National Coach

Photos by Diego Schnaft ©2002
A n important factor in developing a smooth and effective style is the ability to fluently change from backhand to forehand and vice versa. It is a problematic issue, because it requires the reorientation of the body within a very short time, and unless we do that with the correct footwork, and with perfect balance, we cannot play a long point, which covers all parts of the table.

The ability to do that is what most clearly identifies a good player, more so than the actual quality of his shots. In the next two articles, we’ll take a closer look at how to do that, using Chuan Chih-Yuan from Taiwan as an example. Trained in Beijing, China, Chuan has incorporated many stylistic elements typical for players developed in that team, but it is also clearly visible that he has studied Kong Linghui extensively. Although he can produce great power, his game is more predicated on smart placement than on brute strength. Most of all – Chuan’s game flows.

First we’ll look at the change from forehand to backhand.

Many can rip an awe-inspiring forehand, but if it comes back to their backhand, they are helpless and have to resort to a weak block. To back up a strong forehand with a backhand shot of equal quality, a player must recover to a neutral position very quickly, set up for the following shot and perform it. Of these three items, the recovery is the most critical and the one most often performed incorrectly. The factors to pay attention to are: placement of the feet, position of the hand relative to the body, racket angle and body balance.

Some players tend to keep their feet in the position they were in when the last shot was made, and others prematurely take up a stance favoring what they think will be the following shot. This works well, if the ball happens to go exactly to the right spot – but how often does that happen? In the neutral position, the body is turned roughly 20 degrees right in relation to the end line. After a forehand, for example, the foot position tends to have rotated to the right from neutral, and the right foot is behind the left foot. In recovery, that position must be corrected – not too far, just to neutral. How to do that depends on what shot we are recovering from. If it was – as is the case in this picture series – a forehand opening shot off underspin, we need to buy some space, since the return will likely be fast and long. We need to hop back a little more with the left foot than the right to regain the neutral stance. If we are recovering from a forehand during a rally, we would rather correct the stance by moving the right foot forward, so we don’t give up too much territory and remain close enough to the ball to put pressure on the opponent. In either case the weight must be taken off both feet simultaneously by hopping slightly – not far off the ground, just enough to slide both feet into position at once.

The hand position must enable us to play either side with equal ease. Since the contact point for a backhand is closer to the table than that for a forehand, we have less time. The neutral hand position should therefore slightly favor the backhand. In Chuan’s recovery – picture 3 upper row – you see his hand moving in front of his body and the racket angle turning distinctly, although it is not clear yet where the return will go. As you will see in a later picture sequence, he does that even when the following shot is a forehand. Kong Linghui does it even more extremely.

In order to allow the hand to travel across the front of the body smoothly and freely, if required, the upper body must lean slightly forward. The right shoulder is lowered a bit, since either a forehand or a backhand would require that anyway. That is his neutral position. Now, no matter where the next ball is going, he’s ready. A slight set-up hop – not visible in these pictures – finalizes the correct position of the feet to prepare for a backhand, and now the weight transfer to the left for the backhand stroke starts.

It is a bit of a paradox, but, in essence, we must understand that in order for our game to flow, our strokes cannot just flow one into the next. We must separate each stroke with that neutral zone – short as it may be – because it provides our game with a “universal stroke connector.” That way, rather than getting entangled in ourselves when the opponent changes placement, we can respond with authority.
From July 15-27, 2002, I had the great pleasure to conduct an Olympic Solidarity Course in Kingstown, St. Vincent. St. Vincent is located in the West Indies some 1600 miles south of Miami. This was my second trip to the Island, having conducted a course there several years ago, with an article on it in the Nov/Dec 1999 USATT Magazine. The goals for this year’s course included:

- To develop a large core group of interested junior athletes. This group would then become the basis for a continuing junior development program.
- To teach this core junior group the basic strokes, theories, and practice techniques of the game.
- To set up a complete “path of training for every advanced athlete” within the overall plan for the St. Vincent Table Tennis Association.
- To help each intermediate/advanced athlete develop his/her own training program for the coming year.
- To bring all athletes up to date on the recent rule changes in the game along with how these changes have affected styles and training programs. This included the switch to 40mm balls, 11-point games, and the new serve rule.
- To introduce the advanced athletes to the principles found in the book, “Train to Win,” by Michel Gadal.
- To provide education on advanced Robot Training Methods

All training concepts followed the “Pyramid of Success Concept,” found in the Course Training Manual developed by Coach Richard McAfee.

The course was given in two sessions per day. The morning session consisted of an average of 60 juniors. The plan was to use this course as a springboard for a continuing junior development program. The evening session was for intermediate/advanced players, including members of the national team. An average of 20 players per session attended. Mixed among the six hours a day of coaching were television interviews, meetings with government officials, and even a stint on a radio sports talk show. My time on St. Vincent was very busy and put to good use.

I am very happy to report that there has been a good deal of progress in the development of Table Tennis on the Island in between my visits. St. Vincent now has a full-time national coach, Sean Stanley, and he is doing an excellent job. In fact, during my stay, members of the national team left for England to compete in their first Commonwealth Games. This was a major accomplishment for this small association and a sure sign of the progress of the sport within their country.

I believe that the course was very successful. The athletes attending were very enthusiastic and hard working. However, I must mention that without the help of two American Table Tennis Companies, we could not have accomplished nearly as much. Newgy Industries and Martin Kilpatrick (Butterfly) both supplied a large amount of equipment for the course. This included 144 rackets (beginning quality sponge rackets) and two gross of balls from Butterfly, and 120 sheets of rubber (intermediate quality), 30 blades, one gross of balls, two pong pals, and a robot from Newgy. In this part of the world, this equipment is worth its weight in gold – especially the Newgy Robot 2040, which was heavily depended upon to feed balls during the course.

Finally, I need to thank the ITTF for giving me this opportunity to contribute to Olympic Solidarity and Mark Charles, President of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Table Tennis Association for making my stay such a memorable one. Also a special “thank you,” to my assistant coaches, Darison Coombs, Carlton Daniel and Natasha Sherette.

St. Vincent is a beautiful Island, mountainous, full of fruit and spice trees, and most of all warm friendly people. If you get a chance to visit St. Vincent you will find it an Island and a people that you could easily fall in love with.
Yao Xu (pronounced “Yow Shu”), 13, rated 2053, is one of the most decorated players at the Junior Olympics/Junior Nationals in recent years. Over the past five years, he has won 15 gold medals, including eight singles titles and three doubles. In team competition, where he has never lost a singles match, he has led his team to gold four of the past five years. Overall, he is 15-0 in finals—he has never won a silver medal. This year (August, 2002 – see coverage elsewhere in this issue), he swept the Under 14 singles and doubles events for the second year in a row, winning both Junior Olympic and Junior Nationals Under 14 Boys’ Singles, and winning Under 14 Doubles both years as well (with Wei Fan and Trevor Runyan, respectively). He also won a bronze medal this year in Under 16 Boys’ Singles. He is ranked #1 in the U.S. in Under 14 Boys.

Clubs: Maryland Table Tennis Center (MDTTC) and Potomac Country Table Tennis Club (PCTTC)

Equipment: Primorac Carbon blade with Bryce on the forehand and Rein on the backhand.

Who is your coach? What is he like? My coach is Cheng Yinghua. He can be strict at times, but he is an excellent coach, so his advice is always valuable.

How old were you when you started to play, and how did you start? I had my first table tennis lesson with Cheng on July 12, 1997, when I was 8 years old. I have been training with him now for more than five years. My dad likes table tennis and plays regularly at the Potomac Table Tennis Club, another local club. At first he just wanted me to have a try to see whether I would like the sport. In the beginning, I was curious and very interested. I asked lots of questions when taking lessons from Cheng. However, only after I surprisingly swept Under 10 Boys’ Singles at both the 1998 Junior Olympics and Junior Nationals did I become really serious about the sport. To show their support, my parents increased my individual training time from half an hour a week to two hours, and I began to go to Coach Cheng’s table tennis training camps twice a week. Since then playing table tennis has become the most important after-school activity in my life.

Do you have a sponsor? I used to be sponsored by Spintech. Recently I applied for sponsorship by Butterfly since I had been using their equipment for many years.

Who and where do you practice with, and how often? I really don’t have a fixed practice partner. I have been going to the MDTTC for years to attend their table tennis training camps twice a week. I practice and play matches with the other people, mostly juniors, there. I also go to the Potomac Community Center every weekend to play with adult players at my level.

What are your best titles, tournament results or rankings? I won the Joel Farrell Sportsmanship award this year at the Junior Olympics. I feel that it’s much more important than all the other medals, since it has only been awarded to a few players for their excellence.

How would you describe your style of play? I’m a smasher, from both sides. I also block a lot. My backhand, where I have short pips, is my strength. I also have good serves.

What techniques are you working on to improve? Although I smash well, my consistency is not good enough. I am working on it. Also, I need to improve my loop, which is the weakest part of my game.

Outside of table tennis, what do you like to do? Hobbies, sports, school, etc. I like online chatting, but haven’t done much lately. Also, I love to listen to music. I participate in several clubs and after-school activities at school, and am pretty good at math. I’ve won several awards in math competitions. Last year, I was the perfect scorer at the 17th American Mathematics Contest AMC 8.

What are your table tennis goals? For my short-term goals, I’m hoping my rating will go over 2100 by the end of this year. Hopefully, I will be able to keep up with the rest of the people in my age group and some of the ones in the groups above me. Also, I’d like to make the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team.

How about your non-table tennis goals? I hope to go to a top university or college with a scholarship. However, I have not thought about my career path yet as I think it is too early to worry about that.
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