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ON THE COVER: Team USA by Ray Swords & Michael Wetzel ©2003

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Spyglass Entertainment is producing "Balls of Fury," which they describe as: "Hysterical comedy about a washed-up ping pong champion who must reclaim his skills after being recruited by the government to go undercover and bust a crime lord who hosts an annual ping pong tournament on his exotic island in which all the losers are executed. Written by Tom Lennon & Ben Garant (The State) with Steve Carr (Dr. Doolittle II, Next Friday) attached to direct."

www.spyglassentertainment.com/movies/indexes/develop.html

San Diego TTC Honored

By Neil Smyth

On January 31, 2003, the SDTTA Board of Directors met for a traditional inaugural dinner. This year, upon hearing a handful of USATT representatives would be in town for an Olympic Committee meeting, the club invited USATT President Sheri Pittman, USA Athlete Rep Eric Owens, USATT Vice President Barney Reed Sr. (and wife Kathy Reed) and USATT Executive Director Clark Mitchell to attend our dinner. All current SDTTA Board members were in attendance: Kamran Azimzadeh (President), Art Pintado (1st Vice President), Greg Turner (2nd Vice President), Neil Smyth (Treasurer) and wife Jan, Pam Ramsey (Secretary), Gary Hranek (Executive Director) and Behnam Kazemi (Public Relations).

During an introductory speech, Sheri surprised us all by awarding a plaque representing the 2002 Presidents Award to the San Diego Table Tennis Association in recognition of our outstanding promotion and leadership of the sport in the San Diego community. Sheri stated that she would like to use the SDTTA as a model club in America and appreciated our efforts in the activities and events we continuously provide. Neil stated that all 365+ members of the SDTTA are honored by this award and by being such a great club. "We are lucky that the City of San Diego has provided us with the best table tennis facility in the country," said SDTTA's Pam Ramsey, "but we also work hard and strive to exceed in all areas and we are honored and humbled by this award."

FRONT: USATT President Sheri Pittman & SDTTA President Kamran Azimzadeh
BACK: SDTTA Board of Director & USATT Representatives include Behnam Kazemi, Greg Turner, Pam Ramsey, Art Pintado, Gary Hranek, Kathy Reed, Barney Reed, Eric Owens, Neil & Jan Smyth.
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**Tournament Info**
Referee: Terry Bell
Venue: University of Delaware, Carpenter Sports Building in Newark, Delaware. Wood floors and good lighting. Entry Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by FRIDAY, May 30, 2003. Entries postmarked late will either be accepted with a $20 late fee, or be rejected, based on available space.
Check-in: Starts on Saturday, June 14, 2003 at 8AM at the venue. Participants are required to check-in 30 minutes prior to their first event.
Ratings: Ratings from the March/April issue of USATT Magazine will be used.
Airports: Philadelphia International Airport, 50 minutes, or by train.
Official Tournament Hotel: Sleep Inn 302-453-1700 630 S. College Avenue Newark, DE 19713 Mention North American Table Tennis for special $65 rate.

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**EVENT** | **DATE** | **TIME** | **COST** | **CHAMPION** | **FINALIST SEMIS 8's** | **QUARTERS** | **8's**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | Open Singles RR | Sat 10:30 AM | $30 | $1,000 | $600 | $300 | $150 | $50
2 | Women's RR | Sat 1:30 PM | $25 | $200 | $100
3 | Under 22 Men's RR | Sun 10:00 AM | $20 | $80 | $40
4 | Under 22 Women's RR | Sun 10:00 AM | $20 | $80 | $40
5 | U18 Boys RR | Sat 9:00 AM | $20 | $40 | $20
6 | U18 Girls RR | Sat 9:00 AM | $20 | $40 | $20
7 | U16 Boys RR | Sun 1:00 PM | $18 | A | A
8 | U16 Girls RR | Sun 1:00 PM | $18 | A | A
9 | U13 Boys RR | Sat 12:00 PM | $18 | A | A
10 | U13 Girls RR | Sat 12:00 PM | $18 | A | A
11 | U10 Boys RR | Sun 11:30 AM | $18 | A | A
12 | U10 Girls RR | Sun 11:30 AM | $18 | A | A
13 | Over 40 RR | Sun 10:00 AM | $20 | $110 | $55
14 | Over 50 RR | Sat 9:00 AM | $20 | $70 | $35
15 | Over 60 RR | Sat 1:00 PM | $20 | $40 | $20
16 | U2500 SE | Sat 9:00 AM | $20 | $130 | $65
17 | U2375 RR | Sat 6:30 PM | $20 | $110 | $55
18 | U2250 RR | Sat 12:00 PM | $20 | $90 | $45
19 | U2125 RR | Sun 11:30 AM | $20 | $70 | $35
20 | U2000 RR | Sat 3:00 PM | $18 | A | A
21 | U1850 RR | Sun 2:30 PM | $18 | A | A
22 | U1700 RR | Sun 10:00 AM | $18 | A | A
23 | U1550 RR | Sat 3:00 PM | $16 | A | A
24 | U1400 RR | Sat 10:30 AM | $16 | A | A
25 | U1250 RR | Sat 6:00 PM | $16 | A | A
26 | U1100 RR | Sat 1:30 PM | $16 | A | A
27 | U950 RR | Sat 9:00 AM | $16 | A | A
28 | U800/Novice RR | Sat 4:30 PM | $16 | A | A
29 | U4200 Doubles SE | Sun 9:00 AM | $10/ea | $80 | $40
30 | U3200 Doubles SE | Sun 9:00 AM | $10/ea | $60 | $30

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Eastern Open
Tournament Info
Referee: Terry Bell
Venue: Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ at the Werblin Recreation Center. Wood floors and excellent lighting.
Entry Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by FRIDAY, July 25, 2003. Entries postmarked late will either be accepted with a $20 late fee, or be rejected, based on available space.
Check-in: Starts on Saturday, August 9, 2003 at 8AM at the venue. Participants are required to check-in 30 minutes prior to their first event.
Ratings: Ratings from the July/August issue of USATT Magazine will be used.
Airport: Newark International Airport.
Official Tournament Hotel:
Sierra Suites 732-235-1000
410 S. Randolphville Road
Piscataway, NJ 08854
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Western Open
Tournament Info
Referee: Azmy Ibrahim
Venue: City Beach Fremont at 4020 Technology Place in Fremont, CA. Taraflex flooring and excellent lighting.
Entry Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by FRIDAY, August 15, 2003. Entries postmarked late will either be accepted with a $20 late fee, or be rejected, based on available space.
Check-in: Starts on Saturday, August 30, 2003 at 8AM at the venue. Participants are required to check-in 30 minutes prior to their first event.
Ratings: Ratings from the July/August issue of USATT Magazine will be used.
Airport: San Jose, Oakland, & San Francisco International Airports.
Official Tournament Hotel:
Fremont Marriott 510-413-3700
46100 Landing Parkway
Fremont, CA 94538
Mention North American Table Tennis for special $59 rate.

Matthew J. Mured Memorial Open
Tournament Info
Referee: Terry Bell
Venue: Hagerstown Community College, 11400 Robinwood Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21742 at the Athletic, Recreation, and Community Center (ARCC). Wood floors and excellent lighting.
Entry Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by FRIDAY, September 5, 2003. Entries postmarked late will either be accepted with a $20 late fee, or be rejected, based on available space.
Check-in: Starts on Saturday, September 20, 2003 at 8AM at the venue. Participants are required to check-in 30 minutes prior to their first event.
Ratings: Ratings from the July/August issue of USATT Magazine will be used.
Official Tournament Hotel:
Four Points by Sheraton Hagerstown 301-790-3010
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4) ____________ 5) ____________ 6) ____________
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Congratulations to all of USATT’s Pan American and national team members. The team trials went great thanks to the able supervisory skills of Richard McAfee and a cast of dozens. There was a great volunteer spirit apparent throughout the event. It was especially uplifting to attend the trials in light of the ongoing challenges facing USATT. Making lemonade out of lemons is the theme of this issue’s “association primer series.”

Executive Director Clark Mitchell tendered his resignation, effective April 7. Choosing to forego relocating to Colorado Springs, he expressed his desire to remain in the San Diego area and continue to focus on establishing a table tennis center in conjunction with the USOC’s Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista. USATT wishes him success both for our sake and his own.

The development of a training center would be a win-win proposition for all involved. A couple of years ago, USATT established an Olympic Training Center Committee, chaired by Barney Reed, Sr. The primary mission of that committee is to establish a national training center in conjunction with the USOC’s Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista. The stars are aligning well to add fresh momentum toward the fruition of that committee’s work.

Former world champion Stellan Bengtsson, for decades a renowned coach, has already publicly stated in an interview posted on the ITTF’s website that he intends to move to the U.S. Stellan is married to former U.S. Team Member, Angie Rosal. Now that their twin sons are finishing up high school, Stellan and Angie have decided that now is the time to make this life change. I welcome Angie’s return and hope that his coaching skills will help develop our elite table tennis athletes. The sudden vacancy in the ED post created a new opportunity. On April 4, the Board voted to promote our long-time National Women’s Coach Doru Gheorghe to the Executive Director position. Before coming to the United States, Doru held the Secretary General post of Romania’s Table Tennis Association for seven years. That job is similar to our Executive Director’s position.

The promotion of Doru is part of a mutual agreement between USATT and Bob Allhouse to terminate the Oakbrook Training Center contract. Expressing his high regard for Doru, Bob presented the Board with a proposal. In short, for a settlement of $10,000, Bob agreed to terminate the contract should USATT decide to offer the position to Doru, with a 3-year guarantee. The Oakbrook contract otherwise was set to expire on December 31, 2004, carrying $100,000 in encumbered expenses to USATT.

This arrangement will save USATT approximately $85,000 over the next two years. At our May Board meeting, the Board will allocate the balance of the funds saved this fiscal year. The formal termination agreement contains a release from future litigation, bringing to closure any seed of doubt about potential lawsuits stemming from the entire venture, which will save USATT an additional unknown financial variable. On behalf of USATT, I want to express my sincere appreciation to Bob Allhouse for fashioning a win-win resolution to this matter.

Doru is relocating to Colorado Springs immediately. His presence at our headquarters office will enable USATT to react swiftly to recommendations contained in the report from the USOC’s Membership & Credential Committee. The report has been delayed due to the USOC’s recent focus on its own re-structuring issues. Contrary to rumors, no National Governing Body can lose its credentials during their meeting with the Memberships & Credential Committee. As we were told, the Committee would surely find areas to critique. The Committee issues a timeframe to the NGB for it to fully address compliance issues brought to the association’s attention. To remain in good standing as the USOC’s designated national governing body for our sport, USATT will expeditiously address the concerns shared with us.

Although a great percentage of staff time is allocated to interacting with the USOC and documenting our compliance according to their guidelines, USATT also remains a membership-oriented national association. To address your primary issues, which often revolve around having up-to-date ratings, USATT has decided to outsource the task to NATT. The transition over to Richard Lee and his team will already be underway by the time you receive this magazine. USATT is simultaneously raising ratings fees $1 (the first such increase in over a decade) in order to cover its associated costs. We are confident that this new arrangement will result in a win-win solution for everyone and will free the staff to focus on other important association objectives.

When I recently attended the USOC’s NGB Council meeting, I had the opportunity to visit with our staff. Despite the many challenges facing them, they are doing their best to advance the interests of our association. I thank them for their dedication. Over the years, USATT has committed itself to the delivery of numerous membership services—two huge tournaments, tournament sanctions, coaching certification, various programs, an outstanding bi-monthly publication, online information as well as live coverage of events such as the team trials, etc.

There is a fine line that our employees are asked to walk as the Board and membership press for the advancement of our association while they also handle their daily tasks. I can best illustrate their struggle by relaying a mathematical concept. If every member felt that for their membership fee they were entitled to, say, an hour of staff’s time a year, that would add up to approximately 8,000 hours of staff time. Divide that by 2,000 hours of work per employee per year and you get 4 full-time employees just to interact directly with the membership, leaving no time at all to perform their other duties. That is the approximate size of our staff. I ask the indulgence of every member to consider this mathematical reality before you contact headquarters.

In the long run, it’s in the best interests of everyone if the Board sets the priorities for the Executive Director, who works with the staff towards accomplishing those objectives. It is vital for the staff to be able to concentrate on delivering work-product that lifts up the entire association rather than apply band-aids to achieve piecemeal results. Please understand that the entire membership, including you, will benefit greatly in the long run if everyone can exercise a heightened degree of forbearance.

Added to the many issues already on the plate is our foremost concern for everyone’s safety and security. In this time of war, USATT has been advised by the USOC to adopt a policy addressing this issue. The USOC has its own security department and is aware of our upcoming trip to the world championships in Paris. Of course, every player and official has sacrificed much and worked hard to attain their credentials, but we must always take all necessary precautions to ensure that we keep a realistic perspective.

Besides USATT’s team and others in the travel party, I want to acknowledge and thank the many volunteers who work tirelessly on behalf of USATT at the international level. I have renominated, and the Board has confirmed, USATT’s candidates to the ITTF: Tim Bogdan (Media), Aly Salam (Umpires & Referees), Azmy Ibrahim (Rules) and Dr. Michael Scott (Sports Medicine). In addition, USATT has nominated Richard McAfee to the ITTF Nominating Committee. Tim Bogdan and Aly Salam were approved as USATT’s delegates to the Annual General Meeting. I am USATT’s candidate for the reserved women’s seat on the ITTF Executive Committee. Aly Salam will take over from me as the Continental Vice President for the rest of the quadrennium.
Elite Athlete Committee Report

By USA Women's Coach Doru Gheorghe

1. On December 21, 2002, the Elite Athlete Committee held its annual meeting at the Nationals in order to decide, among other agenda items, the budget for the year 2003. After five hours of discussions and debates, the following decisions were made regarding the activities that will be budgeted for 2003:

   - Pan Am/World Team Trials $9,500
   - Cadet training camp before NA Championships $5,000
   - North American Championships $14,040
   - World Championships $26,575
   - World Cadet Challenge $7,550
   - All Star Series (USA Pro Tour) $21,000
   - Insurance and Stipend for 4th players on the US team $7,000
   - Junior World Championships $26,939

2. On January 21, the Pan Am/World Team Selection Procedure was submitted to the Board of Directors. The Pan Am/World Team Trials followed in Atlanta, GA to determine the members of the teams who will participate in the Pan Am Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and the World Championships in Paris, France.

3. The 2004 Olympic Selection Procedure was submitted to the Board of Directors for approval on March 10, 2003. After the Board's approval the Procedure will be submitted to the USOC for approval. As soon as the Procedure is approved by the USOC, information regarding the 2004 Olympic Team selection will be posted on the USATT web page. Hopefully this information will be on the web page no later than the beginning of June, 2003.

4. All the preparations for the North American cadet camp are over and everybody is ready to start training. Eight cadet national team girls and eight cadet national team boys representing the U.S. will train along with their counterparts from Canada for three days in San Diego on April 2-4, 2003. The Elite Athlete Committee will cover all the expenses for four boys, four girls, four coaches, and the camp's entry fee for the rest of the contingent.

5. The North American Championships will follow the NA cadet camp at the same venue. The Elite Athlete Committee will cover all the expenses for 16 players (eight junior and eight cadet boys and girls) and four coaches for the participation in the Championships. Winners of the Men's and Women's Open will qualify to play in the Men's and Women's World Cup. The winning junior boys' and girls' teams will represent North America in the World Junior Championships to be held in Chile. Two cadet boys and cadet girls each from Canada and the United States will represent North America in the World Cadet Challenge to be held in Malaysia.

6. The preparations for participation in the World Championships in Paris, France are in progress and we are waiting to find out who will qualify for the World Team in order to send in the Nominal entries. The Elite Athlete Committee will cover all the expenses for four men and four women to participate in the Worlds. The fifth player on each team (men and women) may participate provided that he/she funds his/her own way.

7. Former Olympic silver medallist and reigning National Men's Champion Ilija Lupulesku expressed, in January 2003, his wish to represent the U.S. in the upcoming 2003 Pan Am Games. The USOC and USATT took the necessary official steps in accomplishing his wish by asking the Yugoslavia Olympic Committee for a release letter, and the ITTF and PASO (Pan Am Sports Organization) for their approval. On March 7, 2003 the USOC received the final approval from PASO, and so Ilija Lupulesku is eligible to represent the U.S. in the 2003 Pan Am Games. In accordance with ITTF rules Ilija Lupulesku is not eligible to represent the U.S. in the Worlds until after 3 years have passed from the last representation of his former country, Yugoslavia, which was in 2002.

News Flash!

Doru Gheorghe is the new Executive Director.
See President's Report on facing page.
The USA Table Tennis Board of Directors has approved, by a 10-1 vote, a contract for North American Table Tennis (NATT) to take over the USATT ratings.

Over the past three years, at the request of USATT Board members, NATT has been working to develop software that would solve many of the problems with the current ratings software, while improving current features. Many of the long delays processing ratings with the current software have been due to problems with the software, in particular its inability to process tournaments out of order. This meant that one late tournament could hold up the entire process. It also meant that when mistakes were found, fixing them was extremely time-consuming as changes had to be done manually – not only with the players directly involved, but those who played those players, and so on. Often it simply wasn’t possible; other times it was done, again holding up the ratings process. There were a number of other problems with the current software, which in recent years had grown increasingly out of date. Much of the work had to be done by hand, which the new software does automatically.

Some of the advantages of NATT doing the ratings include:

- **Ratings will be much more up-to-date.** Currently, ratings are often lagging over two months behind. NATT guarantees that all tournaments submitted electronically will be processed within three days; those submitted on paper will be processed within 10 days. Directors will be required to submit results within two weeks. Depending on how soon and in what format directors submit results, ratings from tournaments will generally be up within one to three weeks, a huge improvement on the current situation. A major reason for NATT’s ability to do ratings more quickly as their software will process tournaments out of sequence (which the current system will not do), so a late tournament will not hold up others. When a late one comes in, it is put in the system, and all follow-up tournaments are re-rated by the computer in seconds. (The ratings from a tournament are not finalized, of course, until all previous tournaments have come in and been processed.)

- **Faster processing of ratings with fewer mistakes.** In the current system, much of the processing has to be done almost manually, as the computer has to be told what to do, step by step, and the results checked. In the new system, each step is automated, so a tournament can be processed much more rapidly. Equally important to members, the software brings unlikely or incorrectly inputted results to the attention of the processor so they can be checked, rather than processing incorrect data, as often happens.

- **Ability to make corrections quickly and efficiently.** In the current system, corrections had to be made by hand, and this was not only extremely time-consuming, but often impossible due to the cascading number of matches to be reprocessed. The new system allows a correction to be made, and all following tournaments are automatically re-rated in seconds.

- **Faster rating histories.** Those who browse the rating histories will find that results will come up much more rapidly under the new system. This is because results will not have to be compiled from scratch as in the current system. Information will be stored in a database and only pertinent information will be loaded based on the search criteria.

- **More up-to-date ratings for tournament seeding and eligibility purposes.** This speaks for itself.

---

### Rating Fees Increased for First Time in Over a Decade

**By Larry Hodges**

The USA Table Tennis Board of Directors has approved, by a 9-2 vote, to increase ratings fees from $3 to $4 for four-star tournament and below, the first increase since at least 1987, 16 years ago. They also increased the rating fee for larger tournaments from $5 to $6, the first increase for this since 1992, 11 years ago. The increases will take effect on May 5, 2003. A tournament that had already been sanctioned and already printed entry forms may be given an exemption from the rating fee increase. (Directors should contact their sanctioning officials.)

The rating increases, long overdue based on inflation alone, will help pay for the improved rating service in the new contract with North American Table Tennis (NATT), which will be handling USATT ratings.

- **More sorting options.** In the current system, you can do sorts only by rating, state, name and top 25 players. Many have asked for more options, but in the current system, it was very difficult to set up additional options. In the new system, this will be much simpler, and numerous sorting options will be set up.

- **Expert programmers in charge of system.** NATT has three computer experts on staff - all table tennis players – so problems or software fixes can be handled rapidly.

There will be a transition period as the ratings are transferred to NATT, which will begin processing tournaments in about a month. The other features will go up over the next one to three months. The new software itself has been tested repeatedly over the past year.

There are no planned changes in the rating process itself. Other than the fact that ratings will be more up-to-date, and the other new features listed above, members may not notice the change.

New information for submitting results will be sent to tournament directors in due course; until they have received new directions, results should be submitted as before.

USATT Treasurer Tong Lee said that it costs at least $8,000 more to outsource the ratings to NATT than to process them in-house. However, the additional expense will improve membership service by providing a more efficient system and more up-to-date ratings. To help cover the incremental cost, USATT is raising the rating fees for the first time in over a decade. (See related article.)

North American Table Tennis, which currently runs major tournaments all over the country, is looking forward to taking over ratings processing. According to Richard Lee, President of NATT, “We are very excited to be doing the ratings – but our goal really is to make USATT members more excited, knowing that when they play a tournament, they will see their new ratings in a reasonable time, tournament after tournament, every single time.”

---

**CORRECTIONS**

In “The Teams at the Teams,” page 45 of the Jan/Feb issue, it named one of the teams as “The Oranges of Space Seeds.” That should have been “The Oranges of Speed Seeds,” which was, of course, a play on Charles Darwin’s... you figure it out.

On page 27 of the March/April issue, the result was incorrect for the U3200 Teams Final at the Killerspin Open. First place was Tyrone Petty/John D. Petty. Second place was Xin Bu/Jin Lu.
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**An Official’s View**

By “Dr. Azmy”

In the last article I promised to expand on the issue of the standards for umpires. Actually there are three parts to the evaluation of umpires. These are: a) before the match, b) during the match, and c) after the match.

The purpose of the evaluations is to help umpires improve themselves, and to prepare them to rise to the level of the ITTF World Championships – the Olympics, World Championships, Pro Tours, etc.

The Umpires and Referees Committee is in charge of training evaluators. Their role is to evaluate umpires who attended the seminars and passed the written exams given by the UR Committee. The role of the evaluators is to help and guide the umpires to move to higher levels, i.e. the blue and green levels. The evaluator will sit with the umpire whom he/she has evaluated and discuss the positive as well as the negative points with him/her. Evaluations will take place at the beginning of and again during the tournament.

It was found out that this process leads to great improvement. It is expected that those who improve will be recommended to higher levels. Future selection for the ITTF World Championships will be taken from those umpires who have successfully completed the process.

Last time I covered the first part of the process, “Pre Match.” This time I will cover the second part.

**During Match**

1. **Clear and audible voice:** In the past some umpires did not bother announcing the introduction for every match, especially in the first rounds. It is now essential for the umpire to introduce the match, stating the event, the round, and the number of games for the match, and the names of the players. It also important that the umpire announces which player won the toss and who will serve first. Some umpires ignore that part, especially when there is no crowd attending. However, the umpire should announce all these details for the sake of the players, regardless of the presence or absence of an audience.

2. **Calling the score:** The emphasis here is on the timing and accuracy. The score has to be announced immediately at the end of the rally. Some delay is acceptable if the crowd is cheering loudly. Of course one expects that the umpire will be always announcing the right score. My advice is to sit before the match and watch another match and practice announcing the score in a low voice, especially if this is your first match of the day.

3. **Correct use of hand signals:** Several printouts are for illustrating the hand signals for umpires. It is expected that the proper hand signals will be used. Hand signals are very important when there are many tables going on at the same time and people are cheering and there is a lot of noise in the arena. However, if an umpire is serving alone and he has a scoreboard in front of him, hand signals for the score are not essential. But hand signals have to be used to indicate the change of the service.

4. **Correct announcement of server and service change:** It is accepted these days that the name of the server is announced at the beginning of each game, and a hand signal is sufficient to indicate the change of the service.

5. **Application of the service laws:** The correctness of the service has to be observed from the first point of the game, regardless of the level of the event or the age of the players.

6. **Timing of actual play:** Attention has to be given to the phrase “actual play.” Excessive toweling, wasting time fetching the ball, time between rallies, and timeouts should not be counted as actual time of play.

7. **Use of scoring devices:** An umpire may be required to use a scoreboard if umpiring alone or working as an assistant umpire. Adequate numbers have to be presented to indicate the correct meaning. Before and after the match nothing should be posted on the board. Only the small numbers will indicate the presence of the players when they arrive. After the announcements are made for the match and at the beginning of the game the zeros will be there to start the counts. It is also advisable that between games the score will stay as it is for a while. When changing the score between games it is advisable to clear the board completely and then place the correct score of games, etc.

8. **Monitoring for any coaching behavior:** Observing coaching has to start before the match by asking the players to identify their coaches. Coaches are assigned for the whole match. Players cannot change coaches during the match. Many tournaments are trying to place the coaches on one side. That will make it easy for umpires to watch them. However, when there is an assistant umpire, both the umpires can agree about a system to get the attention of the other if they see illegal coaching.

9. **Rackets are left at the table:** Between games rackets have to be left at the table.

10. **Correct use of cards:** Yellow cards are for warning, after that it is yellow and red or red. Red card can be used from the beginning, in the case of unauthorized coaching or abusive behavior.

11. **Good posture:** We touched on that last time, but during the game the umpire is expected to be alert, sitting straight, and leaning slightly forward in chair.

12. **Correct and accurate interrupting calls:** It is the responsibility of the umpire to call immediately what he sees as an interrupting call, i.e. net, edge, side, let, or fault.

Let me conclude by saying that the wise umpire should umpire each match, regardless of its level, as if he/she is umpiring the final match of the World Championship. It is important for umpires to understand that the goal of URC is to establish a uniformity of all umpires when they are umpiring from the first to the last point of the match and of the tournament.

**USATT PROFESSIONAL COACHES PRIMER**

USATT has been creating and/or putting online various “Primers” and other manuals to help coaches, clubs and other table tennis organizers. (Hard copies are available from USATT Headquarters.) The latest is the Professional Table Tennis Coaches Primer, which is primarily about the professional side of coaching – how to get students and keep them, how to set up and attract students for classes, how to maximize income, etc. This Primer and other materials are online at the USATT Club Programs page at www.usatt.org/club_programs. Online materials there include:

- USATT Professional Table Tennis Coaches Primer
- USATT Junior Training Primer
- USATT Beginning Class Primer
- Explanation of the upcoming USATT League
- USATT Instructor’s Guide
- USATT Tournament Guide
- USATT Club Handbook
- USATT Sample Club Bylaws

Dear USATT friends,

I would like to apologize for slapping Ashu Jain at the World/Pan Am Team. The slap was done in the heat of the moment when I did not have a clear head. Certain things that were said after the match fested inside me for a few minutes and then came out in an inappropriate physical way. In retrospect, no physical contact should ever be made no matter what, and it shall not happen again. In 14 years with USATT, I have never had this type of un sportsmanlike behavior and I assure you that it will never happen again. I hope my apology will be accepted. I will also send apologies to tournament referee Aly Salam, tournament director Richard McAfee, and Ashu Jain. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Shashin Shodhan
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Dear Editor,

Over ten years ago, when I retired, I needed an exercise program and decided that it should be Table Tennis, which my family and I have enjoyed for many years. I felt that this would be a good way that I could improve my health and it would be doing something that I really enjoy. This was a very good decision for me. And I have made many great friends and have had lots of wonderful experiences as a result of this. And I think table tennis players are some of the best people you can meet.

When I decided to join the USATT I asked a good friend, who had been a member for many years, about the organization. He told me about the benefits and said it was well worthwhile. He then added that, unfortunately, the national organization seemed to always have problems and they were always fighting among themselves. He asked me what the problems were. His answer was most significant (as I have thought about this over the years). He said “I DON’T KNOW WHAT THE PROBLEMS ARE, BUT THEY ARE JUST ALWAYS FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES.”

More than ten years have gone by, and the situation still seems to be similar, and most of us still don’t fully know what the problems are, we just know there is still contention going on. This may be because there are a lot of rumors, misinformation, contradictions, and especially a lack of good information. So for what it is worth (and since I am charging nothing for this, that may be what it is worth) I would like to give my suggestions for improving USATT.

FIRST, I would like to suggest that there be greater TRANSPARENCY. This means that any and all information, within reason, that can be made fully available, should be made available. This would include advertising ahead of time all Board Meetings and making them more fully open to any who want to attend. Then the FULL minutes of these Board Meetings should be made available, on your Internet site, and/or in your magazine or in other ways, so the membership can easily have this information. (The last Board minutes on the Internet are very abbreviated minutes of November 2001.) [Editor’s note: these and all minutes/motions/votes since that time are now online at the USATT home page, although this doesn’t excuse their lateness.] Possibly taping the minutes would avoid some problems about what was, or what was not said. Along with this, FULL FINANCIAL INFORMATION should be disclosed in a similar way. This would include annual financial reports (balance sheets and profit and loss statements and other information) given in a clear way, with adequate detail so that the membership can easily see where income comes from, what the expenses are, etc. (If this idea is adopted, then it would be good to publish the last five years for comparison and to bring us up to speed.) At the very least the annual audited financial statements should be made fully available; and also proposed and approved budgets.

My SECOND recommendation is that there needs to be a STRONG COMPETENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR who is allowed to RUN THE ORGANIZATION. He should be one with the required skills but with no “special interests or agendas.” The Board of Directors should set the broad policies and direction for the organization, but not be managing the office or the staff; and should give the Executive Director the power and support he needs to really run the organization. Then when Board members change, there is still a strong organization with continuity. It appears that in the past, this has not always been done. In some organizations, the Board of Directors do not do enough to oversee what the organization is doing. But in our case it appears that the Board is doing much in trying to manage what the salaried people are doing.

My THIRD and last recommendation is that there needs to be a VERY STRONG CODE OF ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY that is STRICTLY FOLLOWED. The Bylaws listed on the web states that “the Board of Directors shall adopt and enforce a written code of conduct.” But this written code of conduct is not listed there. It should be listed and widely publicized, to make it easier to be STRICTLY FOLLOWED. It seems that corruption and dishonesty are getting worse all the time and are found almost everywhere, both in the United States and throughout the world. I am not saying that any of this has taken place in the USATT, but such a strong code needs to be in place and enforced. For the past SIX DAYS IN A ROW I have read in the newspaper about ethical problems AGAIN with the USOC and particularly with Lloyd Ward, the head of the USOC. [Editor’s Note: Ward has since resigned.] It would be a real tragedy if such things filtered into USATT.

The elections are over and the office has been re-staffed. Now is a great time to get these things done. And I am sure the great majority of the membership would say, “YES, LET’S GET THIS DONE.” The USATT is a great organization and hopefully these suggestions could help make it even better.

Respectfully submitted,
Grant Misbach
Provo, Utah
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• Butterfly-sponsored full-time coach

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• Former Head Coach for the Guangxi Province of China
• Chinese National Team, 1976-83
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COACH LARRY HODGES
• Author of Table Tennis: Steps to Success
• USATT's Developmental Coach of the Year, 2002
• Director/Manager/Coach at Resident Training Program for Table Tennis at Olympic Training Center, 1985-89
• Many-time U.S. Junior Team Coach
• Certified by USATT as a National Coach
• USATT Coaching Chairman, 1991-95
• Former full-time coach

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The Dallas-Fort Worth Table Tennis Club
By William E. (Bill) Drissel

Donna Chen and James Rautis founded the Dallas-Fort Worth TT Club in 1996 with 20 members. Donna has been U.S. Over 40 Women's Champion several times, a USATT certified coach and a Dallas city contract instructor at Campbell Green Recreation Center. James has been coaching for twenty years and has been a national finalist four times in singles and doubles. Starting in 1998, more coaches joined Donna and James: Robert Bryant Jr. and Le Thay Thio. Coach Francis Guidace joined in 1999 and Nelson Ramos in 2002.

The club puts on at least three tournaments a year: the Summer Round Robin and Teams in May, the Fall Round Robin and Teams in November and the Chinese Double Ten in September. These tournaments are noted for their slick organization and excellent playing conditions.

USA Iron Man Competition
Who Played the Most Matches?
Stats available only since 1994, USATT rated matches only
Compiled by Stephen Good; article by Larry Hodges

Julian Waters of Maryland won the 2002 Ironman Competition, playing an incredible (and record) 347 tournament singles matches! Along the way, he won 45 events, and was runner-up 19 times. (This includes five doubles wins, with doubles and hardbat not counted among the 347.) Dragging along his trusty Spintech blades and rubber, he played 27 USATT sanctioned tournaments, the bulk of them Maryland Giant RR and Circuit tournaments. He was also the 2002 MDTTA $1000 MD Circuit points winner. 45-year-old Julian started at a 600 level playing at the Maryland TT Center in Gaithersburg 10 years ago, and since then took many lessons with Jack Huang and Cheng Yinhua. In 2001, at age 44, he reached his goal of breaking 2000 in the ratings. In 2002 he often played over 20 matches a day, outlasting younger competitors. On one Sunday he played 23 and went 22-1!

Annual Iron Man Winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Matches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Julian Waters</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Trevor Runyan</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Miller</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Michael Branch</td>
<td>MD</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>John Oros</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Sean Lonergan</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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FREEDOM TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL
**They Said It...**
**By Larry Hodges**

Britney Spears wants to duel Christina Aguilera - on a ping-pong table. According to the British tabloid *The Sun*, the two used to play each other all the time while working on “The Mickey Mouse Club,” and now Spears wants to renew the rivalry. -From *The Salt Lake Tribune*, Jan. 5, 2003. Contributed by John Jarema.

“We estimated that there were about 13 balls vertically. That’s how we came up with that number.” -Thomas Sweetman, of Clover, SC, explaining how he and his wife won a 2003 Volkswagen Super Beetle by coming closest to guessing the number of ping-pong balls that filled one. (They also counted the number of balls across the top, and how deep the balls were in the car.) Sweetman was off by 6, guessing 17,160; the correct answer was 17,166. The South Carolina Educational Lottery organized the contest. Contributed by John Jarema.

“I think trying to return a shot by one of those Japanese professional ping-pong players would be mighty hard to do.” -Former Cincinnati Reds baseball pitcher Rob Dibble, on March 4 on ESPN Radio, when asked about the loughe.Sting. Cincinnati Reds pitcher Rob Dibble, on March 4 on ESPN Radio, when asked about the "smashing or looping" of a table tennis shot.

“Denver is ‘good, real good’ at ping-pong. So, while we in the audience out front think he is going through some emotional knothole backstage during intermission, he is not. He is probably playing ping-pong.” -It is the one vice of the tour.” -Dan Fiala, the production manager, of preparations for a John Denver concert. A table is shipped to each site for each concert. From the archives of the St. Paul Dispatch, April 23, 1976. Contributed by John Jarema.

**Sponge is Important!**
**By Larry Hodges**

A hardbat (that’s a racket with no sponge!) player posted on the newsgroup rec.sport.table-tennis that, “Sponge is terrible. Everybody knows that.” I responded that sponge was, in fact, important, and could not be replaced by the pimpled rubber on that writer’s paddle – and here’s why:

- You can’t clean a counter with pimpled rubber.  
- You can’t pimpled rubber off a friend.  
- Pimpled rubber baths hurt and leave abrasions on the skin.  
- You can’t cleanse the oceans with pimpled rubbers.  
- You can’t dress up Tim Allen as Santa Clause with pimpled rubber padding.  
- PimpledRubberBob SquarePants just doesn’t have the same ring.
- Polo vaulting onto pimpled rubber hurts like heck.  
- Pimpled rubber cake tastes like rubber.  
- A child with a mind like a pimpled rubber will probably be in trouble.  
- You can’t develop a complex brain from a pimpledrubberioblast  
- Sponge flies can’t survive off of pimpled rubber – they live off of fresh-water sponges.  
- You can’t do public experiments in perception, phenomenology and desire at www.pimpledrubber.org – you need www.sponge.org. (Look it up!)

“We have a running ping-pong tournament on these tours. We set up backstage and everybody plays. Everyone brings his own paddle.” “Can’t get enough of seeing Olympic events like badminton and table tennis? You’ll get your chance in 2004.” “The extra time in 2004 will enable NBC to telecast some more obscure sports that rarely get attention, such as table tennis and badminton.” -The opening and closing sentences in an Associated Press article on Feb. 5, 2003, about NBC’s plan to roughly double 2004 Olympic coverage to 806 hours. Contributed by John Schneider.

“Denver is ‘good, real good’ at ping-pong. So, while we in the audience out front think he is going through some emotional knothole backstage during intermission, he is not. He is probably playing ping-pong.” -It is the one vice of the tour.” -Dan Fiala, the production manager, of preparations for a John Denver concert. A table is shipped to each site for each concert. From the archives of the St. Paul Dispatch, April 23, 1976. Contributed by John Jarema.

Tip of the Month: **What Exactly is Fishing?**
**By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach**

If you read most books on table tennis, it’s a good bet that you’ll read about all sorts of table tennis terms – forehands, backhands, loops, blocks, chops, etc. – but rarely will you come across the term “fishing.” That’s because it’s not a common type of rally at the beginning levels, although it gets more common at the higher levels. But what exactly is it?

Think of fishing as halfway between lobbing and counter or looping. It’s basically a defensive shot, with topspin, done from off the table, but not thrown up as high in the air as a lob. Typically, it’ll go a few feet over the net, and land deep on the table. It can be done on the forehand or backhand. A very defensive “fish” has light topspin, and is basically a low lob (i.e. half lob, half counter). A better “fish” has more topspin (i.e. half lob, half loop). At the higher levels, sometimes it’s hard to tell the difference between a soft loop from off the table, or an aggressive “fish”!

The shot is done when the opponent is smashing or looping, and you are forced off the table. It’s not as defensive as a lob, and can often keep you in the point. It does take some mobility, although good anticipation can make up for much of that.

The stroke itself is a cross between a normal drive and a loop. You start with the racket below the ball, and just meet it with some upward motion to create topspin. Contact can vary from almost straight on (like a normal drive) to grazing the ball (like a loop). The only difference in the stroke between a fish and a lob is that you hit much more upward on a lob.

So … next time someone asks where you’re going, and you’re embarrassed to say you’re off to play ping-pong … say you’re off fishing!
The Forehand Loop and Recovery

Photo Sequence of Feng Lim ("Coach Flash"), care of www.expp.net

1. When backswing finishes, the shoulder line is vertical to baseline.
2. Using (powerful) legs to assist hip rotation. Upper body is rotating at a very high speed. (Upper body is blurred)
3-4. Shoulder starts to turn.
5. During ball contact, contract forearm to give extra speed & spin.
6-8. Fluent follow-through motion.
9-11. Loose shoulder, return upper arm close to upper body.
12-13. Prepare backswing, NOTE: See how close upper arm is to the body, minimizing the backswing radius for quicker balance.
In Memoriam
Zarko Dolinar (1927-2003)
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

Dr. Zarko Dolinar — who died Mar. 7, at 82, from prostate cancer — was often heard to say, in his definitive way, “Everything’s in the genes.” If so, he must have had some good ones, for in the mid-1950’s he would be one of the world’s best players — in 1954, with Vilim Harangozo, he became the World Doubles Champion; in 1955 he was World Singles runner-up to Toshiaki Tanaka.

“What a loss,” lamented Marty Reisman, whose win over Zarko at the ’49 World’s didn’t diminish for a moment his awe of the man. “He had such an aura about him,” said Marty. “You felt an overwhelming presence — there was table tennis magic in him.”

I wish, like Marty, I’d had the fun of seeing Zarko in action. But at least the English Table Tennis magazine gives us a late ’40’s snapshot of him: “...large young Yugoslav, wielding an enormous top-sider wooden-clacker but with deadly affect, attacking with penholder grip and chopping with orthodox grip! Incongruously clad in tiny shorts and a green celluloid cap, he looked...” well, inimitable.

He was a gentleman, this 1955 Yugoslav “Sportsman of the Year” — and yet one of a kind. On the non-playing side of his racket he had a skull and crossbones, accompanied by the signatures of his world-class victims, or, rather, as Reisman puts it, his heroes, for he revered the players. Revered humanity, really, as his near unmatchable collection of autographs of well-known personages from politicians to pop artists would attest. There is something intriguing about the way a famous person writes his (her) name — Zarko’s collection will surely last for all time.

In 1954 in Swaythling Cup play, Zarko had beaten World #3 Ivan Andreadis. So before he and Dick Miles went on court for Singles play, Dolinar, now playing with sponge, said drollly, “You might as well sign now, Dickie.” But Miles beat him, and after the match kidded back, “Zarko, you want to sign my racket?”

Both Miles and Reisman stressed Zarko’s warmth, his humor. And I echo them, for, years later, when Dolinar was the ITTF’s Sport Science Committee Chair, I had occasion to have some late night drinks with him and others who’d gathered round. Then because I found Zarko so personable, and so persistent, I managed to stay awake long enough to edit his late night Committee Report due in the morning.

As we finally finished, I felt anew the imprint of his individuality, saw, on a page sure to be read by others, his name writ large — an autograph, as it were, for the International World of Table Tennis to cherish.

In Memoriam
Pat Crowley (1935?-2003)
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

I am Ramsey e-mailed me that fellow Californian Pat Crowley died of stomach cancer on Feb. 25, 2003. I remember — it was the year she’d married and become Pat Hodgins — how supportive she’d been, as part of our entourage at the 77 Birmingham, England World’s, of our U.S. Men’s and Women’s Teams and how her cheers in concert with others helped our Teams advance to the Championship Division — a dream we zealously pursued in these days. Devotion to a cause, an ideal, a personal goal occupied much of Pat’s life — and not just in the world of table tennis.

She started playing as a youth, and by 1950 was good enough to win the Pacific Coast Junior Girls Championship. But then another call came and she became a nurse at the Children’s Hospital in Hollywood.

Twenty years later she’d returned to the Sport with a passion. From 1972 through 1984 I don’t think she missed a U.S. Open or Closed. In 1974 she won the U.S. Open Women’s A Doubles with Monica Rosal. In fact, in her career she won 5 U.S. Open or Closed Championships. Indeed, she had such determination, such focus for what she wanted, that she was one of those players who always seemed to come away from a major tournament with a trophy. From the mid-’70’s to the mid-’80’s, she was the perennial Over 40 Women’s finalist — a remarkable 8 times in the Open, 6 times in the Closed — with USATT Hall of Famer Yvonne Kronlage as her arch-rival.

But abruptly in 1985 she disappeared from our little sphere, went elsewhere — into a different kind of combative world, one of hopes...and prayers. Surprising some, she became a nun: “Bond unknown to me/Was given, that I should be...A dedicated spirit.”

But then she always was.

In Memoriam
Marge Walden
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

Marge Walden, a tireless worker for Canadian table tennis, who gave over 60 years of national and international service to the Sport, died Feb. 12, 2003. The USATT adds its regrets to those the Canadians have received from all over the world.

Through the late 1940’s and early 1950’s, Marge was Publicity Chair for the Ontario TTA, and especially for their annual showcase tournament, the end-of summer Canadian National Exhibition tournament in Toronto. By 1956 Marge had succeeded the popular Perc McLeod as President of the Ontario Association — a post she held for perhaps 10 years. During this time the good vibes Marge always fostered between the U.S. and Canada continued.

In 1967 Marge, then Secretary of the Canadian Table Tennis Association, won the Perc McLeod Award for “outstanding effort to promote and develop the sport.” She so identified with, was so proud of, Canada’s contribution to the Sport, and her own “place” in it, that by the early ’70’s she was the CTFA Historian. For decades she was as diligent a recorder as her good friend and counterpart U.S. Historian, Leah “Miss Ping” Neuberger. Indeed, she and Leah could easily compare China notes, for they both shared the 1971 “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” experience of Canton, Beijing, Shanghai.

As the Canadian National Tournament Chair and liaison with CNE organizers and sponsors she praised the 25-year sponsorship of Bulova Watches and the People’s Credit Jewellers. The rose bowl for the CNE Women’s Open Trophy featured a table tennis player molded after Marge herself.

In the last 20 years, I’ve had occasion to exchange pleasantries with Marge at many elite tournaments. As late as the May, 2000 World Veteran’s Championships, I continued to admire Marge for her late-life energy, her vitality. There in Vancouver, a woman called the organizers and wanted to know if Marge Walden might possibly still be on the table tennis scene. But in contact with Marge, the woman identified herself, and said, “Do you know who this is?” “Sure,” said Marge, “we used to work together in the 1940’s.” Sixty years ago.

How nice it is to be remembered.
In Memoriam
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

In 1944 Gordon Barclay, who'd just turned a precocious 12, had been the U.S. Open Under 15 Boys' runner-up to Richard Leviton, a student, like Gordy, of the authoritarian South Bend coach, the legendary John Varga. Then, in 1945, no sooner than his photo, in tandem with Varga's, appeared on the cover of the March, 1945 issue of the USTTA's Table Tennis Topics, Barclay would beat Leviton for the 1945 Boys' Championship. "His temperament, winning or losing," said the magazine, "is a pleasure to behold, and he seems to have that rare quality of playing his game and fighting all the time no matter who he plays." Gordon Barclay, then, was the Sport's All-American boy - "everyone's favorite champion - he's that well loved!"

After Gordy won the Boys' again at the 1946 New York City U.S. Open, James A. Burchard, the covering reporter for the World Telegram, quoted renowned table tennis and tennis coach Bill Price as saying that, "Nobody his age can touch him." And, Price adds, "He's also a darn good quarterback on a high school team, playing against 200-pounders, and excels at baseball and basketball." Former 3-time U.S. Men's Champ Lou Pagliaro, on losing a game in the Men's to the young teenager, told Burchard that Barclay has a great "fighting spirit" and will be "unbeatable in two or three years."

But Gordy was never to win another U.S. Championship. Three straight Junior runner-ups he had - in 1947 to Marty Reisman; in 1948 to Morris Chait; and in 1949 to Wally Gundlach. In 1950, Gordy represented the U.S. at the English Open where he had a good win over Dennis Miller, the 1946 English Junior Champion.

Gordy's best Men's ranking was U.S. #9, but this was because for a succession of years he was always beaten in the 8ths of the National's by U.S. Champions - Miles, Schiff, Leach, Somsel.

Varga would go on, in his no-nonsense way, to produce more young U.S. Champions. But, as Barclay said, "We both feared and revered John. As a disciplinarian, he could be as hard as nails." Literally. No hammer grip allowed. Revert on trying to hit a backhand in, and your thumb would be punctured by the nail John had driven into your racket. To keep you on your toes he'd put tacks in your shoes. Gordy felt there was "very little love between John and his students, but a lot of respect." Years later, on coming out of that respiratory arrest coma, suffering brain damage, surviving but struggling with his afflictions, Barclay told a local reporter, "I cry sometimes now and I never did that before. I laugh sometimes, too, and I never did that much before, either."

Gordy became a high school English teacher and coach; also a scoutmaster, and for 40 years played other sports than table tennis - fast-pitch softball, tennis, golf. In 1995 he wrote a well-received article for the North American Championships Program that had an accompanying photo of movie star John Wayne, holding not a gun at the ready but a superimposed table tennis racket. Gordy puns on Wayne's (1976) western "The Shootist," perhaps his best movie, shot when he was in his late 60's, and directed by, of all people, the sometime California table tennis Champion of the 1930's and '40's, Don Siegel. The story is about a gunfighter who's dying of cancer, and Gordy, also in his 60's, as if anticipating his own near fatal respiratory arrest from which he cannot recover, carries through the analogy of "The Shootist" - the table tennis gunslinger or shotmaker that he himself once was:

"...Always the shootist must commit, plan, prepare, and perform. The shootist fires at one who is returning the fire. There is a testing of the speed of which a man's muscles are capable. Yet the shootist must be mentally unflustered by an urge to hurry, or to be nervous, or to court destruction by errant reads, strokes, or assumptions. The shootist is a special species...God did not make all shootists equal...but what greater lesson is there, but to face another and not be in awe, and face the test of doing one's best. Unlike the shootists in Boot Hill, the shootists are never vanquished...."

Nor in the last years of his struggling, lonely, painful life was Gordy. Unvanquished, he used his Lifeline to the very end.

Gordon Barclay
By Dale McColley

Our great friend, Gordon Barclay, passed away on January 30th - just two weeks shy of his 71st birthday. Gordy for years was bothered by asthma problems. I remember that many, many years ago Carl Culp, another old friend, gave Gordy the name "Wheezer." The asthma progressed to the point that, on September 11, 1996, he had a severe asthma attack. He had the presence of mind to dial 911, and then collapsed. They rushed him to the hospital and were successful in reviving him, however not without brain damage. At that time he was placed in Healthwin Hospital in South Bend and was later transferred to a therapy unit. They thought he would not be able to walk again - but they didn't know his fighting heart! Later, and after much therapy, he was able to walk around with a walker and eventually returned home.

Gordy’s father, mother, and sister were all deceased. While he lived alone, he was not without companionship. Gordy owned an Alaskan Malamute he named “Bianca.” It was a beautiful animal and was a great help in keeping him occupied.

At all times Gordy wore a Lifeline around his neck. There were a couple of occasions where he had used the Lifeline and was picked up by ambulance and taken to the hospital. He survived on those occasions. But on January 30th, he used it again. Before the ambulance arrived, he had collapsed on the floor. The ambulance attendant said that while they arrived, his dog, Bianca, was drapped across his body - whimpering. Bianca continued to whimper as they took Gordy out. Sadly, this time it was too late. The time of death was 6:43 p.m.

GOD love him!
It's certainly rare for an artist of such world-wide renown as Gustav Rehberger to be, in Bobby Gusikoff’s words, not only “a kind and gentle man,” but “an avid t.t. player and fan.” Gus, who died in 1995, had dash - in his younger days he was a track and field athlete, so he was always very aware of bodies in motion.

And, yes, he could play table tennis. At the 1942 Detroit National’s, Rehberger went 19 in the 5th with Philly’s Izzy Bellis who’d been seeded #1 at the ’39 National’s. For the 1942-43 season he was ranked U.S. #23.

By 1944 two of his murals were hanging in Chicago’s Union Station, and his paintings were being exhibited in London's National Gallery. His work, which he enjoyed doing while addictively listening to Beethoven, was featured in such prominent magazines as Collier’s, Coronet, and Esquire (the July, 1949 issue would call him the “Hemingway of Painters”). He was always winning prizes; around this time, for example, he was singled out “for the Most Creative Painting” in the “national Audobon Artists Exhibit held in New York.” In 1949 he designed the U.S. Open Program.

About the time Rehberger won the 1953 N.Y. State Senior’s, Pauline Robinson called him “The Rembrandt of Horses” - though of course kinetic energy also races through his table tennis players. After he did the illustrations for Dick Miles’s The Game of Table Tennis (1968), he created for the 1972 U.S. Open perhaps the centerpiece of his acclaimed table tennis drawings - “Miss Table Tennis.” Thanks to Bobby Gusikoff, who owns these drawings, and who remains in touch with Gus’s widow Pam, viewers are able to see this rare table tennis art.
Training Opportunity at the Butterfly Dohjo

The Tamasu Company (manufacturer of Butterfly equipment), is offering four U.S. Juniors, between the ages of 12 and 18, an opportunity for nearly one month of advanced and intensive training, July 7-28th, at its Dohjo center in Tokyo, Japan. It is part of their desire to strengthen the cooperative relationship between Tamasu and USA Table Tennis, and to contribute in helping develop U.S. elite junior athletes. Selected participants have to pay their own airfare, meals, and a quarter of the accompanying coach's expense during the training period. To be eligible, you must be users of Butterfly equipment. Deadline to apply is May 16th, 2003. For more information, please contact Bill Lui, Chair of the Elite Athlete Committee (wclui@aol.com) or Debbie Moya (programs@usatt.org) 719-866-4583.

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USA Pan Am and World Team Trials

Atlanta, GA • March 19-22, 2003

Note – for complete and extensive round-by-round coverage of the Trials, see www.usatt.org/events/2003_team_trials, or see link under “news” at www.usatt.org.

Women’s USA Team Trials

By Larry Hodges

The top four women in the USA Women’s Trials would make the Pan Am Team. The top five women would make the U.S. World Team, with the provision that the fifth spot is an optional non-funded spot.

Round One

- Chang Jun Gao d. Jackie Lee, 5,4,2,3
- Tawny Banh d. Amanda Dubina, 4,5,4,4
- Virginia Sung d. Judy Hugh, 6,7,4,5
- Lily Yip d. Moji Kuye, 4,1,8,4
- Jasna Reed d. Priscilla Umel, 7,6,5,6
- Simone Yang d. Whitney Ping, def.

The story of the morning was 16-year-old Whitney Ping’s flight problems. Whitney Ping, who was supposed to come in the night before, is still stuck in Denver, where an incredible seven feet of snow (!) has fallen, essentially closing down the state. Seven feet – that’s nine inches taller than the 6’3” Mark Hazinski, the tallest player here at the Trials! So she was defaulted in her match against Simone Yang. (Whitney is from Oregon, but had flown to Denver on her way to Atlanta.)

The problem was that in the Competition Rules for the tournament in the Athlete and Officials Guide, it stated, “For round robins, if any player defaults a match, including withdrawal due to injury, none of his/her matches will count.” This meant that even if she were to arrive for the next round, she was out of the Trials.

Jasna Reed put together a petition from the players asking the officials to reconsider this rule, and all 11 women signed it. The tournament committee met, and ruled that Whitney would be allowed to play her matches when she arrived, but only for rating – her results would not count toward the Trials, and she would be ineligible to make the team. Whitney, who was recently the #1 junior in the country and finished #1 at the recent USA Junior Trials, was seeded eighth here.

Ironically, Tawny Banh, the second seed, was almost in the same situation. She had a flight through Denver as well, but was late for the flight, and so was switched to a flight going through San Francisco – otherwise, she too would most likely be out of the competition.
Final Twelve Results

Note: Neither “Final Twelve” has 12 players because: Whitney Ping was stuck in Denver airport due to weather conditions and so did not arrive in time to compete in the Women’s Trials; Priscilla Umel was default out of the Women’s Trials for inappropriate and foul language; Shashin Shodhan was default out of the Men’s Trials for slapping a player. By the Trials rules, none of the matches with players who did not default count, so their results were removed. At the time of the defaults, Umel was 0-3 (lost to Reed, 7,6,5,6; lost to Kuye, 3,7,-5,-7,-9,7; lost to Dubina, 9,7,-5,2,-7,9,6), Shodhan 2-3 (d. Tran, 11,-8,6,-9,12,8; d. Wang, 11,14,7,-8,11,3; lost to Owens, 8,9,-9,8,8,4; lost to Pace, -4,35,5,-4,4,4; lost to Jain, 12,14,9,9).

Women

1st Chang Jun Gao d. Simone Yang, 4,7,4,3
Virginia Sung d. Jackie Lee, 9,8,-8,2,7,6
Jasna Reed d. Judy Hugh, 9,7,7,10
Tawny Banh d. Moji Kuye, 0,3,5,3
Amanda Dubina d. Priscilla Umel, 9,7,-5,2,7,-9,6

The two best matches this round were Jackie Lee versus Virginia Sung and Amanda Dubina versus Priscilla Umel. Lee attacked very hard into Sung’s chopping, but Sung was just too steady, and Lee too erratic on some high chops.

The best match of the round – played on table one – was Amanda Dubina versus hometown favorite Priscilla Umel. Dubina is a strong looper on both wings, and there were many long rallies where she’d loop over and over to Umel’s steady blocks (short pops on the backhand). Dubina started out winning relatively easily, but Umel took off and won the third and fourth games easily. Dubina went up 3-2, but behind 9-10 in the sixth, missed a loop – and so into the seventh they went. Dubina dominated that game, winning 11-6.

Round Three

• Chang Jun Gao d. Virginia Sung, 10,3,1,3
• Lily Yip d. Simone Yang, -6,3,-5,5,8
• Jasna Reed d. Jackie Lee, 2,6,5,9
• Judy Hugh d. Amanda Dubina, 5,9,5,5,4
• Moji Kuye d. Priscilla Umel, -3,7,5,7,7,-9,7

Priscilla Umel would have received a default from Whitney Ping in their scheduled match this morning, and wouldn’t have played a match until 2:45 PM, showed up in the morning wearing “inappropriate attire.” (A tracksuit with the word “Hotter” on the backside.) When asked to change, she refused and had words with the referee, and was default out of the tournament for “inappropriate and foul language.” Her results (as well as Ping’s) will not count in the Trials. Since Umel was 0-3, this will not greatly affect the results.

The big match this round was Lily Yip’s win over Simone Yang. “My mom hasn’t beaten her since at least 2000,” Adam Hugh, Yip’s son, said. Yip agreed, and said, “I was more comfortable, used my forehand more, and played like I was younger. I felt like I could move better.” The interesting thing about this match was that none of the first five games were close – all were 11-6 or worse. Yang was the steady one, willing to rally as long as it took. Yip was the hit or miss player, and when her shots missed – in games 1 and 3 – she lost badly. When they hit – in games 2, 4 and 5 – she won easily. In game 6, some hit, some didn’t – but from 8-all, they hit, and she won 11-8.

Round Four

• Chang Jun Gao d. Lily Yip, 6,4,6,10
• Jasna Reed d. Virginia Sung, 5,9,9,5
• Tawny Banh d. Simone Yang, 6,4,6,-8,6
• Jackie Lee d. Amanda Dubina, 7,6,3,9
• Judy Hugh d. Moji Kuye, 6,9,8,7

The rest of the results this round were rather one-sided. Gao and Reed both won their fourth consecutive 4-0 match, and among those losing, only Simone Yang won a game. Best match to watch was the smooth looping of Jasna Reed versus the smooth chopping of Virginia Sung, but Reed won all of the close points in winning 5,9,9,5.

Round Five

• Chang Jun Gao d. Jasna Reed, 2,8,-14,9,-3,5
• Tawny Banh d. Lily Yip, 5,5,11,-9,12,-10,5
• Jackie Lee d. Moji Kuye, 4,6,7
• Virginia Sung d. Amanda Dubina, 7,6,7,2

Chang Jun Gao and Jasna Reed had a lot of fun in their “match,” but mostly played exhibition. Much of the match was a backhand-backhand exhibition, with Gao blocking and Jasna ripping backhand after backhand in an attempt to go through it. In between there was lobbing, chopping, and forehand-forehand exhibition points. Both knew they were pretty comfortably on the Team.

The big match this round was Tawny Banh versus Lily Yip. Banh has always had trouble with Yip, since she’s about the only woman who plays at her pace. While Gao or Reed can return her shots, only Yip returns as fast as Banh hits them. Banh said it leads to a very nerve-wracking match. “I have to just stay focused, stay calm, and play my game,” she said. The rallies were mostly ferocious backhand to backhand rallies, or Yip smashing, or Banhlooping
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forelands to Yip’s quick blocking. The two trade the first two games at 5. In the third, Yip’s up 10-9, but Banh wins, 13-11. In the fourth, Yip’s up 8-4, but Banh races back, scoring five in a row to lead 9-8. Yip calls a time-out — and scores the next three to win. The fifth became the “pivotal” game. Yip leads 9-7, and has games points at 11-10 and 12-11. But after all the deuces, with both attacking all-out, Banh wins 14-12 to lead 3-2 in games. But the two continue to trade games, as Yip leads the sixth 10-9, and wins 12-10 in a series of backhand exchanges at the end. Into the seventh — and the trend of trading games continues. Banh leads 3-0, then at 5-4 runs off four in a row, and wins the match. 5-11,-9,12,-10,5.

Round Six
- Chang Jun Gao d. Amanda Dubina, 5,3,3,4
- Jasna Reed d. Moji Kuye, 3,3,6,5
- Jackie Lee d. Simone Yang, 12,7,7,-5,6
- Lily Yip d. Judy Hugh, 7,5,2,5

The big event this round: the arrival of Whitney Ping! She had been stuck in Denver airport due to the seven-foot snowfall. She had finally gotten a flight out two days late, and since her results would not count in the Trials, and she had already missed six of her 11 matches, she wasn’t going to waste other’s time by playing. Ironically, Whitney had arrived ... but her luggage had not!

The most interesting match this round was the mother-daughter match of Lily Yip versus Judy Hugh — as far as anyone could remember, the first such match between a mother and daughter ever in a USA Team Trial. Both were trying to make the U.S. Team, and the other was in the way. “Lily played like it was the Final of the Worlds!” said Lupulesku of the match. But that’s the only way to show Judy what it takes to win at this extremely high level among extremely competitive players. Match to the pips-out penhold hitting Yip over the shakehand inverted all-around player Judy, 7,5,2,5.

The “Big” match of the round was Simone Yang versus Jackie Lee. This was a match between the current (for the past two Trials) U.S. Team Member Yang versus up-and-coming Lee. Yang is a steady counterdriver, who’s quite willing to let the opponent attack, and out-steady them. Jackie has a very aggressive, close to the table style, with strong opening loops, and follow-up hitting or countering. Lee pulled out the first at 12, and the next two easily, both at 7. Yang got back into it in the fourth, but it was too late — Lee was hot in the fifth, and won the match. 12,7,5,5,5,

Round Seven
- Tawny Banh d. Judy Hugh, 4,5,-14,4,2
- Moji Kuye d. Amanda Dubina, -11,2,6,5,8
- Lily Yip d. Jackie Lee, 8,-7,15,-16,5,5
- Simone Yang d. Virginia Sung, 8,6,8,10

Lily Yip and Jackie Lee play extremely fast rallies, so the points rarely lasted more than 2-3 shots at most. The two split the first two games. In the third, Lee led 11-10, 13-12, 14-13 and 15-14 — but Yip led 10-9, 12-11, and most importantly, 16-15 and, with a point-winning jab-block to Lee’s forehand, 17-15. But this was a “short” game, compared to game four. This time. Yip led 12-11, 15-14 and 16-15 — but Lee led 10-9, 11-10, 13-12, 14-13, 17-16, and most importantly, when Yip serve and looped off, 18-16. These are 11-point games! Yip goes on to win in seven.

Simone Yang knows how to play choppers. Against Virginia Sung, she’d play long, steady rallies, with lots of high-arcing loops, willing to play steady until she had an easy one — and then very efficiently kill it. Near the end, Sung became more aggressive, especially when serving. In the fourth, down 7-10, Sung came back, scoring twice in a row by serving and attacking at 8-10. At 10-all, Yang played a long, steady rally, with a number of soft loops, until Sung finally looped one off. Yang immediately called a timeout, “to rest.” she said later. When she returned, Sung served the same inside-out forehand serve that she’d used effectively earlier. Yang spun it up — and Sung smashed off. Match to Yang, 8,6,8,10.

Round Eight
- Chang Jun Gao d. Judy Hugh, 3,9,5,7
- Simone Yang d. Amanda Dubina, 5,4,6,3
- Tawny Banh d. Virginia Sung, 4,12,9,8
- Jasna Reed d. Lily Yip, 8,-5,7,7,7

There were two interesting matches this round: Tawny Banh versus Virginia Sung, and Jasna Reed versus Lily Yip. Judy Hugh versus Gao was also interesting, since we see a glimpse of the what might be some very serious matches in a few years — but that’s in the future.

Banh won the first easily against Sung, and led 10-7 in the second. Sung became a bit more aggressive at the end, and she tied it at 10-all. Banh had leads of 11-10 and 12-11 before a great rally at 13-12, with Banh looping very hard over and over, and Sung finally chopping one off, 14-12. The last two games were actually the best, because by this time, Sung’s chopping was really warmed up, and she was chopping just about everything back, even Banh’s smashes. But Banh was also a bit looser now, after winning the first two, and she also was playing better. Match to Banh, 4,12,9,8. On how she plays a chopper like Sung, Banh said, “Just be patient. Some points I rush and make mistakes. When you play a chopper, you have to take your time.” With this win, and her head-to-head wins over Yip and Yang, Banh has locked up her spot on the U.S. team.

Reed and Yip was a seesaw match, with the momentum constantly changing, and either player sometimes running off a string of points. In general, Reed’s backhand often dominated, but other times Yip’s quick backhand and forehand smash dominated. Reed went up 2-1 in games. In the fourth, Yip led 7-3, but Reed scored 8 in a row to win. In the fifth, it was 7-11, but Yip scored four in a row to win. The sixth was all Reed, who led 7-1 on her way to

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an 11-7 win. With this win, she almost locks up her spot on the U.S. team - all she needs to clinch is one more win in her three upcoming matches against Amanda Dubina, Simone Yang or Tawny Banh. After the match, Reed said, "Lily is the hardest to play - I always have trouble playing that style. It’s scarier than playing Gao, since Lily goes for so many shots. If she gets a 2-0 lead in a game, then anything can happen in a game to 11.

**Round Nine**

- Jasna Reed d. Tawny Banh, 9-10,3,3,8
- Jackie Lee d. Judy Hugh, -9,5,8,2,3
- Lily Yip d. Amanda Dubina, 7,11,10,4
- Simone Yang d. Moji Kuye, 4,2,5,6

The main match this round was the long-awaited Banh-Reed match, the #2 and #3 seeds. Banh was rated higher coming in, but Reed had the winning record between the two of them - Reed, the vintage European-style all-around player, and Banh, a vintage Asian shakehand style, close to the table with short pips on the backhand. The key points were in the first two games. In the first, Reed led 9-7 and 10-9, and won on a net. In the second, Reed was again up 9-7 and 10-9, but this time lost, 10-12. The last point of this game was the point of the match - why does this happen so often? Banh was all over the court, looping forehands at full power but further back than normal; Reed was at the table, backhand killing each of them. It took six loops before Reed finally missed, with Banh looping each of her smashes back until them. However, from there on it was all Reed, who wins the next two at 3 & 3. In the fifth, it’s 8-11, all 11-8 for Reed.

**Round Eleven**

- Chang Jun Gao d. Tawny Banh, -4,-6,8,2,9,7
- Jasna Reed d. Amanda Dubina, 4,9,3,6
- Simone Yang d. Judy Hugh, 8,7,9,7
- Virginia Sung d. Moji Kuye, 4,4,6,11

The “big” match here was Gao versus Banh - but it wasn’t really “BIG” since both already clinched spots on the team - they were playing for position: 1st $2750, 2nd $2500, 3rd $2250, 4th $1500. (All receive insurance as well.) It started out looking like a possible upset, with Banh - attacking viciously, helped by some timely nets & edges - raced to an 11-4 win in the first. In the second, Banh continued her all-out attack and went up 2-0 in games, often starting out going to Gao’s backhand, and finishing the point to the forehand. (If you open to Gao’s forehand, she may smash, so it’s risky.) The two continued to play close to 7-7 in the third. At that point, Gao finally pulled away, 9-7,11-8. The fourth was all Gao (7-9, 11-2). The fifth, from 5-5, Gao went up 10-7; Banh pulled to 10-9 before putting Gao’s serve in the net. The sixth was also close most of the way, to 6-6. Gao pulled off a nice backhand chop block against Banh’s hard backhand, and Banh hit it into the net. Banh tied it at 7-7, but Gao won the last four and the match, -4,-6,8,2,9,7.

Jasna Reed, Simone Yang and Virginia Sung all won 4-0. Reed (7-1), along with Gao (8-0) and Banh (6-2), have already clinched their spots on the team. Yang, Sung, and Jackie Lee are all at 4-4, and are in contention for the final spot, with Lily Yip (5-3) in the lead with one round to go. In the final round, Yip will play Sung; Lee will play Banh; and Yang will play Reed. Lee and Yang have the difficult task of upsetting the #2 and #3 seeds to have a chance to make the team. If they do not, then the final spot on the team will be the winner of the Yip-Sung match. (If Sung wins, she and Yip will both be 5-4, but Sung gets the final spot since she won head-to-head.)

Most interesting scenario: Virginia Sung defeats Lily Yip; Simone Yang defeats Jasna Reed; and Jackie Lee defeats Tawny Banh. Then there would be a four-way tie between Sung, Yip, Yang and Lee!

When Lee won the first game against Banh, the possibilities opened up. In the second, Lee went up 4-0, and it became a strong possibility. But in this streaky match, anything could happen, and Banh scored 9 of the next 10 points to lead 9-5. Of course, Lee then scored the next four, 9-9! Banh went up 10-9, 11-10, 12-11 and 14-13 before finally winning 15-13. Lee had her chance - up 13-12. Lee was still in it - but Banh quickly shut the door, winning the match at 7-13,3,8,4.

With Lee and Yang eliminated from contention for the fourth spot, whoever won between Lily Yip (5-3) and Virginia Sung (4-4) would get that spot. It was a match-up of pipson penhold Yip versus the chopping and pick-hitting Virginia Sung, who uses short pips on the backhand for both chopping and hitting. It was a long battle, and after the match, several spectators said it was the best match of the tournament. Yip rarely ended the points quickly - she would loop with her pips, over and over and even off somewhat high balls, which were often "traps" by Sung - either heavy backspin, or no-spin balls that looked heavy. Sung's defense, however, was superb. Sung won the first at 7, and led 10-8 in the second - but couldn't hold on, serving into the front side of the table to lose it 13-11. (Yip had each ad in deuce.) Sung won the third at 9, and could have been up 3-0, but was still up 2-1. The fourth was mostly Yip from 5-5 to 11-7. The sixth was Yip's turn for a heartbreaker, as she led 7-3, but lost 11-9. However, the sixth was all Yip, 11-3.

So the final spot of the U.S. Women's Team came down to the final, seventh game. But Yip continued her sixth-game serge, and went up 4-0 on her way to winning 11-4. Sung tried throwing in attacks, and even pulled off a spectacular counterloop winner, but the match and the fourth spot on the Team went to Yip, -7,11,-9,7,9,3,4.

The fifth spot on the World Team wasn't funded, but usually the player goes. For this position, there was a 3-way tie between Simone Yang, Jackie Lee and Virginia Sung. Yang had won over Sung; Sung over Lee; Lee over Yang. When it went to games among themselves, it was Yang first at 5-4 (55.6%), Lee second at 6-5 (54.5%), and Sung third at 4-6 (40%). So Simone Yang will most likely go to the Worlds as the fifth member.

Congratulations to Chang Jun Gao, Jasna Reed, Tawny Banh and Simone Yang!
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Men's USA Team Trials

By Larry Hodges

The top four men in the USA Men's Trials would make the Pan Am Team. The top five men would make the U.S. World Team, with two provisions: first, the fifth spot is an optional non-funded spot; and second, the top seed in the Trials, Ilija Lupulesku, is not eligible for the World Team since he played on the Yugoslavian team over the past three years.

The top ten men were seeded to the Final Twelve, which would be played as a complete round robin over four days. For the final two spots, there was a Qualifier. (See separate article on this.)

Round One

- Ilija Lupulesku d. Darko Rop, 6,5,4,3
- Mark Hazinski d. Adam Hugh, -9,-9,-8,4,8,7,8
- Ashu Jain d. Brian Pace, -7,9,10,10,3
- David Zhuang d. Jiachen Wang, 3,4,3,9
- Eric Owens d. Shashin Shodhan, 8,9,-8,8,4
- Khoa Nguyen d. De Tran, 8,9,-6,-12,9

The best match here was, by far, the Hazinski-Hugh match, a battle of the two highest rated juniors in the country. It was a match-up of Adam's all-around attack and ball control, versus Hazinski's powerful two-winged looping game. Hugh, "Choing!" every point he won, won the first three games. In the third game, Hazinski had led 8-6, and the two played the point of the match, with Hugh lobbing a series of balls from the barriers until Hazinski missed – and Hugh scored the last five in a row this game to win 11-8 and go up 3-0. In the fourth, Hazinski dominated, winning 11-4. In the next three games, Hugh mostly led halfway, but each time Hazinski pulled off a run:

- In game five, Hugh led 7-5, but Hazinski scored four in a row to win, 11-8.
- In game six, Hugh led 5-4, but Hazinski scored five in a row, 11-7.
- In game seven, the score was 5-5, but Hazinski scored five in a row, and won 11-8. (Hazinski had led 5-2, with Hugh scoring three in a row to tie it.)

After the match, Hazinski said, "For the first half of the match, I was too tentative, keeping the ball in instead to swing more."

Khoa also had problems with De Tran. The two were former practice partners before De Tran moved to New York, where he is an MD. The match was full of spectacular counterlooping rallies, but ultimately Nguyen had too much power. This match would later become quite important.

Of other interest was Ilija Lupulesku's win over Darko Rop – not because it was close, but because the two had been teammates on the Yugoslavian team in the 1980s.

Round Two

- Ilija Lupulesku d. Ashu Jain, -8,5,3,7,4
- Mark Hazinski d. Darko Rop, 8,6,-9,-9,6,3
- Khoa Nguyen d. Brian Pace, 5,8,6,-11,7
- Adam Hugh d. Eric Owens, -4,-7,7,8,9
- David Zhuang d. De Tran, 3,-9,6,3,8
- Shashin Shodhan d. Jiachen Wang, 11,14,7,-8,11,3

The huge upset this round was 15-year-old Adam Hugh's win over Eric Owens, -4,-7,7,8,9. Hugh, who had led Hazinski in the previous round 3-0 before losing, led 3-1 this time. Owens led 9-7 in the fifth, but Hugh won the next four, looping in Owens' serve at 9-9, and Owens missing a serve & backhand kill to end it. The key to the match? When Owens served short or dropped Hugh's serve short, Hugh would attack it off the bounce, usually with his backhand wide to Owens' backhand. If Owens went long, Hugh would loop, again usually wide to the backhand. However, he went to the wide forehand enough to keep Owens from using his forehand from his backhand corner too often, and his shots, especially off short balls, were quick and aggressive enough that Owens – normally a big forehand looper – was basically a backhand player the entire match. When Owens did get the attack, Hugh turned into a wall with his quick and angled blocking.

Mark Hazinski seemed to be coasting against Darko Rop after winning the first two at 8 & 6, but Rop's lefty loops began to wear him down, and Rop won the next two at 9. But Hazinski's power dominated the last two games as he won, 8,6,-9,-9,6,3.

Round Three

- Ilija Lupulesku d. Mark Hazinski, -8,6,-9,-10,9,8,10
- Eric Owens d. Darko Rop, -8,-8,8,3,9,6
- Khoa Nguyen d. Ashu Jain, 7,3,-6,11,4
- David Zhuang d. Brian Pace, 3,6,6,5,8
- Adam Hugh d. Jiachen Wang, 4,12,-6,9,10,3
- Shashin Shodhan d. De Tran, 11,8,-6,6,-9,12,8
The Lupulesku-Hazinski match was the match of the tournament – and we’re only three (out of 11) rounds in! They had been practice partners for several months in Chicago, and so were used to each other’s games. Many points started out with “Lupi” looping first, Hazinski counterlooping, and after a few counterloops, Lupi would often be off the table fishing balls back with topspin. Hazinski would rip ball after ball until one of them would miss, or the two of them would just rip loops back and forth until one missed. Normally, few can both stop Lupi’s opening attack and then get past his defense, but Hazinski was able to do so in this match. The counterlooping points were possibly the best ever between two U.S. citizens.

The two split the first two games. It sometimes seems as if no matter how hard and how well angled Hazinski loops, Lupi is able to glide into position and spin it back. However, there’s a limit to how many balls even he could return off the powerful Hazinski — who wins the third, 11-9. In the fourth, Lupi was up 9-7 and 10-9, but Hazinski ran off three to win. The USA’s top junior player (he turns 18 on April 20), was on the verge of knocking off the top seed. And he’d get closer still! In the fifth, after Lupi went up 7-5, Hazinski scored four in a row to lead 9-7 — only to lose four in a row. In the sixth, Hazinski leads 7-6, and then it’s 8-all — but Lupi runs off three in a row.

In the seventh, Hazinski leads 10-6, quadruple match point. And then...

- Lupi rips a backhand loop kill off the bounce, 10-7
- Lupi wins a counterlooping exchange, 10-8
- Lupi spins one up, Hazinski backhand kills it off, 10-9
- Lupi spins one up, Hazinski forehand loop kills it off
- Lupi spins one up, Hazinski’s fast serve deep & spinny, Hazinski loops off, 10-11
- Lupi again loops, to Hazinski’s wide backhand, Hazinski misses an off-balance off-the-bounce counterloop, 10-12!

Match to Lupulesku, -8,6,-9,-10,9,10, and the top-seeded Lupulesku has survived but there will be future repeats of this match, with the result unknown.

The umpire for the match, Grady Gordon, told me that there was a point halfway through the seventh game where Hazinski had mis-hit the ball on the table, and Lupulesku had missed. Gordon had awarded the point to Hazinski, with no protest from Lupulesk, but Hazinski walked over to Gordon, and told him it was a double-hit, and so it became Lupulesku’s point. That was the game where Hazinski had four match points, so this probably decided the match.

“T aint focused well enough going into the match,” Lupulesk said afterward. “I’ve never had so much trouble with him in practice. The backhand loop at 6-10 was a lucky shot. But when it hit, I knew that if I could just get to 8-10, I could win.”

Eric Owens had great trouble of his own this round, losing the first two games to fellow Texan Darko Rop, back after a long absence from tournaments. The lefty Rop kept spinning ball after ball at Owens, who would either be locked up on the backhand, or get caught trying to counterloop. He won the next two, but the fifth game was 9-9 — but Owens got a net to lead 10-9, and Rop popped up a ball the next rally. Owens won the sixth easily, and the match, -8,-8,3,9,6. “I wasn’t mentally ready those first two games,” Owens said.

Round Four
- Mark Hazinski d. Eric Owens, 1,6,6,9
- David Zhuang d. Ashu Jain, -9,3,10,4,8
- Ilja Lupulesku d. Khao Nguyen, 6,7,4,-9,3
- Darko Rop d. Jiachen Wang, 3,-9,8,4,5
- Brian Pace d. Shashin Shodhan, 4,5-,-5,4,4
- De Tran d. Adam Hugh, 6,9,4,-7,-6,6,5

Hazinski completely dominated his match with Owens, looping almost at will, and blocking Owens’ loops back effortlessly. “My looping and blocking felt good,” Hazinski verified.

De Tran started out strong against Adam Hugh, winning the first two, but Hugh came back, winning the next three. Whoever attacked first won most of the points, even though both usually returned the other’s first attack — but the first attacker had the initiative, and both were excellent at continuous attacks. In the last two games, Tran had the attack more often. Tran said, “Adam won those three games by returning my serves short. So I started playing closer to the table so I could attack those balls.” This match would later have a huge impact on the team — and would, in fact, cost Hugh a spot on the team while putting Tran on the team.
Round Five
- Ilija Lupulesku d. Eric Owens, 10,8,7,9
- David Zhuang d. Khoa Nguyen, 4,-7,9,9,-9,9
- Mark Hazinski d. Jiachen Wang, 9,13,8,-7,7,6
- De Tran d. Darko Rop, -13,7,2,-5,9,8
- Adam Hugh d. Brian Pace, 8,3,9,-9,-10,9
- Ashu Jain d. Shashin Shodhan, 12,14,9,9

Lupulesku and Owens had a great counterlooping battle, but Lupi’s countering and fishing are simply too much. Every game was competitive, but every time a game was close, Lupi would run off whatever points were needed to win. Match to Lupi, 10,8,7,9.

Zhuang and Nguyen always have great matches. Nguyen has the most picture-perfect form in the U.S., and he’s one of the best pure athletes. But his shots are sometimes too predictable, and Zhuang always seems to find a way to win, especially the close ones. In this match, they split the first two games. The next four were all 11-9 — but Zhuang won three of them to win the match, 4,-7,9,9,-9,9. In one game, Nguyen led 9-5, but Zhuang won six in a row.

Tran won the counterlooping battle of the lefties against Rop, 13,7,2,-5,9,8, in a match that would turn out to be of great importance.

Controversy
The match that would lead to the Trials’ main controversy was Ashu Jain vs. Shashin Shodhan. The match itself was not the cause of the controversy. Jain won four straight close games, possibly leading to the tense situation that would follow. In the first, Jain led 10-7, and after Shodhan had a 11-10 game point, won 14-12. In the second, Shodhan led 10-8, 11-10 and 13-12, but Jain pulled it out, 14-12. The next two were close all the way, with Jain winning them both 11-9 in the end. The two had had words both before and after the match, and after the match, Shodhan refused to shake Jain’s hand.

A few minutes later, Jain was sitting on the sidelines talking with others when Shodhan came by and listened briefly. He suddenly stepped in and slapped Jain in the face. Jain refrained from turning it into a brawl, but Shodhan was immediately defaulted by the referee from the tournament. Jain, after discussion with others, decided to press charges, and the police were called. The police came in and questioned both, and took down the names of witnesses.

The implications of the default are that Shodhan’s matches no longer count, just as Priscilla Umel’s no longer counted when she was defaulted after three rounds. Shodhan had played five matches: he had won against De Tran and Jiachen Wang (both of whom now had that loss off their record); and he had losses to three players who would no longer have this win on their record: Eric Owens, Brian Pace, and ironically, Ashu Jain. The win over De Tran that no longer counted would have growing importance later on.

Round Six
- Ilija Lupulesku d. Jiachen Wang, 6,3,6,8
- Eric Owens d. De Tran, 9,-9,7,9,8,-9,5
- Khoa Nguyen d. Adam Hugh, 9,9,9,6,9
- Darko Rop d. Ashu Jain, -10,-9,7,6,9,7
- Mark Hazinski d. Brian Pace, 10,17,9,5

Eric Owens had another scare in his USA Team hopes, losing the first two games to the lefty always-spinning De Tran. Owens wins the
next three (although the middle game was close at 9). In the sixth, Tran leads 10-6, but Owens wins three in a row. Tran calls a highly successful timeout: as soon as they return to the table, Owens serves off! So it’s into the seventh. But the seventh is all Owens, 6-1,8-5,11-5. “He’s so much faster than me, I don’t know how I went seven games with him,” said Tran, all smiles after the match.

Round Seven
- David Zhuang d. Adam Hugh, 6,7,4,-9,6
- De Tran d. Jiachen Wang, 5,7,12,8
- Eric Owens d. Brian Pace, 8,5,7,6
- Mark Hazinski d. Ashu Jain, 9,6,7,7
- Darko Rop d. Khoa Nguyen, 6,9,-6,6,-7,2

The “Big” match this round was Darko Rop’s upset of Khoa Nguyen, which could open the door to the team to Rop or others. Rop just keeps playing better and better as the tournament moves along. Nguyen may be the smoothest looper in the U.S., but Rop may be the hardest-working one, as he races around the court looping from both wings, but mostly with the forehand. For a big man like him (6’1”), it’s surprising how much ground he can cover, and how fast he can twist his body to loop forehand. He doesn’t have the graceful form of Nguyen, but he is looping (and blocking with surprising consistency) with such workmanlike efficiency that, after his long layoff and return to table tennis 18 months ago, and he sometimes seems even better than before. In this match, he dominated on serve & receive, and seemed able to loop or counterloop anything, from both wings. Nguyen often seemed caught off guard when his best loops kept coming back just as strong as when he looped them, and the lefty Rop looped balls from all over the court to wide angles. In the last game, Rop led 4-1, then at 4-2 ran off the last seven points. Match to Rop, 6,9,-6,6,-7,2.

Round Eight
- Ilia Lupulesku d. Adam Hugh, 11,8,4,3
- De Tran d. Brian Pace, -8,3,10,4,6
- Jiachen Wang d. Ashu Jain, -3,3,-9,4,-8,7,5
- David Zhuang d. Mark Hazinski, 9,10,6,8
- Eric Owens d. Khoa Nguyen, 8,-6,9,4,6

Eric Owens and Khoa Nguyen both play similar games – very athletic, fast-on-their-feet looping from both wings, with big forehands. However, Owens won the battle of serve & receive here, and got the first attack in first more often. But it was a streaky match. Owens was down 10-1 in the second, and then got 6 before losing. Match to Owens, 8,-6,9,4,6. This improved Owens’ record to 4-3, and back in the running for the team. Nguyen dropped to 4-4, still in contention.

David Zhuang and Mark Hazinski was a match many were waiting to see, Hazinski is playing extremely well this tournament. However, the experienced Zhuang constantly changed the pace on his blocks, keeping Hazinski off balance. Hazinski had his changes, especially up 10-9 in the second, but Zhuang won, 9,10,6,8, improving his record to 7-0. Hazinski dropped to 6-2.

Brian Pace is having trouble winning close games, and his record in games that are 11-9 or closer is 3-9. Once again he had his chances against De Tran – 1-1 in games, and up 10-9 in the third – but from there on Tran dominated, winning three in a row here, and the last two games at 4 and 6. Tran can take complete control of a match with his constant looping from both wings, and when he loops his backhand off the bounce, it’s often unreturnable.

Round Nine
- Ilia Lupulesku d. Brian Pace, 8,-8,6,3,3
- De Tran d. Ashu Jain, -7,6,9,-6,6,8
- Darko Rop d. Adam Hugh, 3,5,9,-7,9
- Jiachen Wang d. Khoa Nguyen, 10,10,9,6
- Eric Owens d. David Zhuang, -8,-6,3,10,9,8,8

There were two wild matches this round: the upset of Nguyen by Wang, and the wild Zhuang-Owens match.

Round Ten

Round Eleven
- Darko Rop d. Khoa Nguyen, 9,10,6,8
- Jiachen Wang d. Ashu Jain, -3,3,-9,4,-8,7,5

It may come as a surprise to many, but new USA Team Member De Tran, seeded #10 at the Trials and rated 2503, is the man you want as an opponent if you have a medical emergency. De Tran may do his best to kill you on the table, but he’ll do whatever it takes to keep you alive away from it.

De, 31, is a lefty shakhand who loops from both sides. He’s also a medical doctor, a general practitioner with a medical practice at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in New York City. With a final record of 5-5 in the Trials, he’s the “surprise” member of the U.S. Team, getting the fourth spot with wins over Ashu Jain, Darko Rop, Brian Pace, Adam Hugh and Jiachen Wang. He also went seven games with Eric Owens.

De came to San Jose, California, in 1985 when he was 15 from his native Vietnam. He didn’t speak a word of English, and he estimates he was about 1900-2000 level at the time. He has since improved to 2500+, and received his MD in 2000.

Due to medical school, he almost didn’t have time for table tennis, but he was inspired by David Zhuang to continue.

De wasn’t the only doctor at the USA Team Trials: If you do have a medical emergency while playing table tennis, it’s best to do it while playing De, and with Dr. Grady Gordon as the umpire. Grady, 76, from Waco, Texas, was a general surgeon before retiring five years ago. He is also the current U.S. Over 75 National Champion, and Runner-up in Over 70 to Marty Reisman.

The big upset this round was Jiachen Wang’s 4-0 (10,10,9,6) win over many-time U.S. Team Member and #4 seed Khoa Nguyen, essentially ending Nguyen’s chances for making the U.S. team. Nguyen led 10-8 in the first, and 10-9 in the second, but Wang won both 12-10 – winning the second one on an edge ball. Wang won the next two at 9 & 6. Both are very athletic loopers, but Nguyen has more experience and a stronger backhand. “I dropped his serve short and forced backhand-backhand rallies on his serve,” said Wang. He had had to play a number of matches in the Qualifier to reach the Final Twelve, and said he was totally exhausted in most of his matches – but in this match, he had had a spurt of energy. After starting off by losing his first six matches (seven, if you include the no-longer-counting match with Shodhan), he had now won two in a row – and looked like a different player than the one who had started out so poorly.

David Zhuang versus Eric Owens may have been the wildest match of the Trials. But it took four games for a match to break out. Zhuang easily won the first three at 8,6,3, and Zhuang was looking better and better each game. Most of the fourth was close – but you could see that the "old" Owens was back, not the Owens who had already been upset three times. Owens goes up 10-7 in the fourth, wins 12-10. From about here on, the points are almost uniformly fantastic, with both players' reflexes as mind-boggling as the counterlooping rallies of Lupulesku-Pace. (“It was like he could read my mind,” Owens said afterwards of Zhuang's blocking.) In the fifth, Zhuang goes up 9-6, but Owens scores five in a row. In the sixth, Owens grabbed a small lead from the start and held it. So, this match that didn’t start out as a real match, was suddenly a seven-gamer.

Zhuang starts out fast, goes up 3-0, 5-1, 7-4. The next six points are all highlight reel points. Owens went on an absolute all-out forehand looping blitz, covering the whole table with his forehand no matter how wide Zhuang blocked the ball – and Zhuang wasn’t missing either. But six points later, the score has gone from 7-4 to 7-10, and even a time-out by Zhuang at 7-8 couldn’t stop it. Finally, up 10-7, Owens finally misses a point -- but only one as he wins the match, -8,-6,3,10,9,8,8.
Round Ten
- David Zhuang d. Ilija Lupulesku, 10,9,7,5
- Eric Owens d. Jiachen Wang, 2,9,7,3,7
- Brian Pace d. Darko Rop, -7,8,6,-7,11,6,8
- Adam Hugh d. Ashu Jain, 5,-7,9,8,7
- Mark Hazinski d. De Tran, 10,7,-11,4,12

This was the meeting of the top two seeds, the lefty spinning Lupulesku versus the pips-out penhold blocking & hitting Zhuang. Most favored Lupulesku, but Zhuang had won the last time out. This time, Lupi took a 10-7 lead in the first - but Zhuang scored five in a row to win, with Lupi’s backhand erratic at the end, and Zhuang playing right into it, like a favored Lupulesku, but Zhuang had won the last time out. This time, Lupi

Lupulesku versus the pips-out penhold blocking & hitting Zhuang. Most favored the next two. The last two were all Zhuang who wins the match, 10,9,7,5.

Eric Owens clinched a spot on both the World and Pan Am Teams with a win over Wang, 2,-9,7,3,7, to go to 6-3, after a 1-3 start.

The match that may have had the most impact was Brian Pace’s win over Darko Rop. Pace hadn’t been playing well, and hadn’t won a match. That trend almost continued, as Rop won the first two, and goes up 3-1 in games. In the fifth, Pace goes up 9-5, then it’s 9-8, 10-8 – 10-11! Pace looks slightly tentative on some of his shots, and they miss, while Rop keeps putting pressure on him with steady loops and blocks. At deuce, Pace is up 11-10 and 12-11, and rips a winning counterloop to win. He then runs away with the sixth, so it’s on to the seventh. Pace jumps to a 5-0 lead, but soon it’s 7-7. The Pace goes up 10-7, and wins 11-8 with a tremendous loop which Rop can’t counterloop. Match to Pace, -7,-8,6,-7,11,6,8. The loss drops Rop to 4-5, but he has already clinched at least a 3-way tie for the fourth and fifth spots on the U.S. Team.

There are a number of possibilities left, but the most interesting is that IF Tran loses in the final round (he’s playing Lupulesku), and IF Rop wins (over Zhuang) and IF Nguyen wins (over Hazinski), then Tran, Rop and Nguyen would all be 5-5. If this were to happen, then among the three of them, Tran defeated Rop, Rop defeated Nguyen, Nguyen defeated Tran – and all three matches were 4-2, so they are each 6-6 in games, and it would go to points in the matches between themselves. (1st Rop: 109-107; 2nd Tran: 119-117; 3rd Nguyen: 110-114; Rop wins 50.46% over Tran, 50.42%)

De Tran could have clinched his spot, but Mark Hazinski continued his run, going to 7-2 and clinching the third spot on the U.S. Team with a win over Tran, 10,7,-11,4,12.

Round Eleven
- Ilija Lupulesku d. De Tran, -8,2,4,5,3
- Brian Pace d. Jiachen Wang, 6,-7,7,-10,-6,7,6
- David Zhuang d. Darko Rop, 6,8,11,6
- Mark Hazinski d. Khao Nguyen, -10,5,6,-8,6,1
- Eric Owens d. Ashu Jain, 12,9,12,8

There were three “BIG” matches this round, which would decide the U.S. Team: Lupulesku vs. Tran, Zhuang vs. Rop, and Hazinski vs. Nguyen. At the start of this round, here was the situation:

The Eight Scenarios (after round 10)

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<td>Tran</td>
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So, this is what actually happened:
For those of you who didn’t think the “Tran d. Lupulesku” scenarios were realistic, Tran wins the first, 11-8. But perhaps Tran looked at the scenarios and realized this one just wasn’t in the cards. Match to Lupulesku, -8,2,4,5,3, 44-14 in the last four games. So the scenarios were cut in half.

Zhuang had fantastic rallies, but Rop just didn’t have enough pure power to go past Zhuang’s side-to-side blocking, and while he battled hard, it was Zhuang, 6,8,11,6. So now we were down to two scenarios (#7 and #8 above), depending on the Nguyen-Hazinski match, the match that looked most competitive, and the last match to finish. As you can see from above, things were wide open, with all three still in the running for one of the spots. In fact, if Nguyen were to win, he’d not only be going to the worlds, but De Tran, one of his old practice partners (before he got an MD and started medical practice in New York City) would be fifth - and who was coaching Nguyen this match but Dr. De Tran himself! Ironically, Tran was now a lock for one of the positions, but if Nguyen - who Tran was coaching, remember - wins, Tran’s fifth; if Nguyen loses, then Tran’s the funded fourth player!

Hazinski leads 10-7 in the first – but Nguyen scores five in a row to win, the last one when Hazinski serves into the net. (And someone immediately asked me if Hazinski was dumping, since his spot was secure, and this would put Nguyen on the team instead of Rop - but Hazinski showed otherwise.) Hazinski dominates the next two games, and Nguyen takes the fourth to tie it up. From there on, it’s all Hazinski, 11-6 in the fifth, and 11-1 in the sixth.

Congratulations to David Zhuang, Ilija Lupulesku, Mark Hazinski, Eric Owens, De Tran and Darko Rop!

USA Team Trials Conclusion by Larry Hodges

And so another USA Team Trials comes to an end. There were so many “what ifs” - so much of the standings came down to one match or one game. For example, USA #1 Under 16 player Adam Hugh lost in seven to De Tran (from up 3-2) - if he wins just one of those four 11-point games he lost, he’s fourth on the World Team! (If he beat anyone else, he gets the unfunded fifth spot, but would go for sure.) And U.S. #1 Under 18 Girl Jackie Lee misses out on the fifth spot on the team by a single game.

One of the biggest “what ifs,” one that fortunately didn’t happen, is that due to the wording of the Trials rules, if a player, even in the final round, were to default (due to injury, bad behavior, or for any other reason), all of his/her matches would no longer count, meaning that a player who had presumably made the U.S. team could suddenly not make the team, since a player dropping out could change the order of finish. Steps are apparently being made to fix this rule. Right up until the last minute.

The veterans won this time – the average age of the 11 players making the USA Team is 32.8, with only Hazinski, 17, under 27. But the performance of the next generation showed that they are on the way – but it’s the veterans’ turn this time.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2003
USA Men’s Team Trials Qualifier
By Larry Hedges

A total of 17 players tried out in the USA Team Trials Men’s Qualifier for the final two spots in the Final Twelve. (The top ten seeded players were seeded to the Final Twelve.) The format was four round robin groups, with the top two advancing to single elimination. The two finalists in this stage would advance to the Final Twelve. As it would turn out, one of the top ten (Razvan Cretu) didn’t show, so a third qualifier was added to the Final Twelve, which was decided by a playoff between the two losing semifinalists in the Qualifier.

GROUP ONE

1st Lee McCool, 3-0 (d. Nordby, 5,5,5,10,-7,-9,11; d. Chui, 9,7,5,7; d. McLeod, -5,9,0,7,7); 2nd Lim Ming Chui, 2-1 (d. Nordby, 7,-6,10,-7,13,7; d. McLeod, 7,2,9,-5,6); 3rd Mark Nordby, 1-2 (d. McLeod, 8,8,-6,-6,5,10,2); 4th Casey McLeod, 0-3.

With top-seeded Tahl Leibovitz (2481) not showing, the group became wide open. Former USA Team Member Lim Ming Chui (2189), the oldest player here at 35 (and whose son, Chi-Sun, was top-seeded in group two), advanced with an upset over second seeded Mark Nordby (2283) in a classic match-up of pips-out penholder (Chui) and two-winged spinner (Nordby).

GROUP TWO

1st Chi-Sun Chui, 4-0 (d. Shodhan, 17,9,9,-8,10; d. Lynch, -11,6;-7,3,5,7; d. Dubina, 0,5,-8,-6,9,11; d. Levy, 1,9,1,4); 2nd Shashin Shodhan, 3-1 (d. Lynch, -9,12,13,8,-9,8; d. Dubina, 3,12,10,-6,7,5; d. Levy, 4,4,3,6); 3rd Samson Dubina, 2-2 (d. Lynch, 5,14,7,8; d. Levy, 3,4,2,8); 4th Jared Lynch, 1-3 (d. Levy, 5,5,7,3); 5th Edward Levy, 0-4.

Top-Seeded Chi-Sun Chui (2449) went 4-0, but struggled in three of his matches, including being down 10-8 and 11-10 match point to Samson Dubina (this after Chui won the first 11-0). Shashin Shodhan also struggled with Dubina and Jared Lynch, but advanced after winning close battles with both.

GROUP THREE

1st De Tran, 3-0 (d. Roberts, -3,4,-7,7,2,3; d. Hamilton, 10,-10,-9,9,8,4; d. Hodges, 5,5,6,6); 2nd Russell Hamilton, 1-2 (d. Hodges, -1,10,3,-7,8,10); 3rd Larry Hodges, 1-2 (d. Roberts, 9,10,15,7,-7,8); 4th Courtney Roberts, 1-2 (d. Hamilton, -8,-5,7,10,12,6,8).

This was the group of the wild one. De Tran easily came in first, going 3-0. Russell Hamilton (2272) won the first three games against Texas Wesleyan teammate Courtney Roberts (the group’s top seed) and had a match point in the fourth, and two more in the fifth, but couldn’t pull it off, with the key point a lobbing point Roberts won at 11-all in the fifth — so Roberts pulled off the comeback of the Qualifier. Hamilton then won deuce in the sixth over Larry Hodges (this writer). Hodges (2247) turned things upside-down by upsetting Roberts (2428). In the three-way tie for the second spot, Hamilton (7-6) edged out Hodges (6-7) by a game, who edged out Roberts (6-7) by a game for third. (Ties are decided by results among those tied.)

GROUP FOUR

1st Sean O’Neill, 3-0 (d. Wang, 8,10,10,-11,11; d. Malek, 6,10,4,7; d. Uml, 9,3,10,7); 2nd Jiachen Wang, 2-1 (d. Malek, -7,4,7,8,5; d. Uml, 9,11,9,5); 3rd David Uml, Jr., 1-2 (d. Malek, -11,8,9,-7,7); 4th Auria Malek, 0-3.

Sean O’Neill won the group relatively easily at 3-0, although he had to pull off a series of close ones against second-seeded Jiachen Wang (2424), another of the Texas Wesleyan team. Wang also advanced relatively easily at 2-1.

QUARTERFINALS

The four quarterfinal matches were rather straightforward:

- Sean O’Neill d. Russell Hamilton, -3,-7,4,5,7
- Shashin Shodhan d. Lee McCool, 7,6,7,-8,8
- De Tran d. Lim Ming Chui, 5,4,8,4
- Jiachen “David” Wang d. Chi-Sun Chui, 6,7,6,7

SEMIFINALS

These were two of the wildest matches seen. Both were tightly contested, went the full distance, and in both cases, the eventual winner was down match point in the sixth game multiple times, and came back to win the seventh rather easily.

Shashin Shodhan d. Sean O’Neill, 7,-9,-11,-16,-7,12,4

Books could be written about a match like this, or the other semifinal. Both played straight topspin games, with O’Neill mostly looping...
forehand, blocking backhands, while Shodhan was more of a two-winged attacker. Shodhan's backhand, especially his punch-block, combined with loops from both sides, was his strength. O'Neill's strength was finding ways to set up his forehand loop, his "bread & butter" shot. Both players favored backhand serves, and both seemed to serve long too often. One interesting tactic was O'Neill's use of a backhand sidespin block to deaden the ball and change the pace.

O'Neill was up 3-2 in games, and in the sixth led 6-1, and had match points at 10-8 and 11-10, but Shashin comes back to win and advance.

De Tran d. Jiachen "David" Wang, 5-10, 10-8, 8-6, 10,6

These two were among the most athletic players in the Qualifier, and the points were spectacular counterlooping points. At various times, it looked like Wang was about to take it – and he had two match points in the sixth game against the lefty Dr. De Tran.

THIRD-PLACE PLAYOFF
Jiachen "David" Wang d. Sean O'Neill, 7-13, 9,7-9,7

O'Neill isn't as fast as he was when he was training full time, but he can still move around, and Wang is probably the fastest player in the Trials. Wang's ability to counterloop against almost anything was almost scary. Few can match O'Neill in power when he gets hold of one, but Wang was often able to counterloop or block them back.

After the match, 21-year-old Wang said, "Before the match began, I didn't think I could win because I was so tired from my seven-game match with De Tran. But Coach Ping told me that Sean was just as tired, since he also had to go seven games in his match, and he's much older than I am. He said that I wouldn't have many opportunities like this again. Also, Coach Lilleroos had had us practice when we were very tired to improve our focus when we were tired, and it helped."

O'Neill was obviously disappointed in his not advancing, especially since he had lost so many close games, even when up game point, especially his three match points on Shodhan. He said, "Things that used to work for me at 10-8 weren't there in these matches. Also, my shot selection at 10-8 was poor."

FINAL TWELVE

Advancing from the Qualifier were Shashin Shodhan, De Tran and Jiachen "David" Wang. They would join the other nine qualifiers: Ilaja Lupulesku, David Zhuang, Eric Owens, Khoa Nguyen, Mark Hazinski, Ashu Jain, Brian Pace, Darko Rop and Adam Hugh.

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
Compiled by John Schneider

BELGIUM

Philippe Saive upset his brother Jean-Michel Saive

MS Final: Philippe Saive d. Jean-Michel Saive, 4-3; SF: J-M Saive d. Thierry Cabrera 4-1; J-M Saive d. Martin Bratanov 4-3.

Note: World #63 Philippe Saive upset his brother, world #11 Jean-Michel.

WS Final: Cecile Ozer d. Els Billen 4-1.

GERMANY

MS Final: Timo Boll d. Zoltan Fejer-Konnerth, 8-6, 8,9,3; SF: Boll d. Torben Wosik 4-0; Fejer-Konnerth d. Joerg Rosskopf 4-1.

WS Final: Olga Nemes d. Nicole Struse, 8-10, 8,8,10, 8-6; SF: Struse d. Nadine Bollemeier 4-0; Nemes d. Jessica Gobel 4-2.

FRANCE

MS Final: Patrick Chila d. Damien Eloi, 10,9-8,8,8,7; SF: Chila d. Armand Phung, 3-11,3-5,7-5,10; Eloi d. Eric Varin, 6-7,5,5,8.

Note: Jean-Patrice Gatien and Christophe Legout both lost in the round of 16.

WS Final: Anne Boileau d. Agathe Costes, 10-7, 9-8,7,3.

NETHERLANDS

MS Final: Danny Heister d. Trinko Keen, 4,1-1,8,15,3-7,10.

WS Final: Melissa Muller d. Diana Stuiver-Bakker, 3,4,5,6.

DENMARK

MS Final: Martin Monrad d. Finn Tugwell 4-2; SF: Monrad d. Allan Bentsen 4-2; Tugwell d. Torben Rasmussen 4-0.

Note: Michael Maze didn't play.

WS Final: Pia Finnemann d. Mie Skov Pedersen 4-3.

AUSTRIA

MS Final: Werner Schlager d. Chen Weixing 4-3; SF: Schlager d. Kostadin Lengrov 4-2; Chen d. Illehr Eren 4-0.

WS Final: Judit Herczig d. Katerina Wolf 4-0.

Note: Herczig defeated top seed Liu Jia 4-0 in the quarterfinals.

NORWAY

MS Final: Geir Erlandsen d. Istvan Moldovan, 7,6,8,9.

WS Final: Mona Fallgren d. Lil Kristin Wennerg, 7-12,8,7,8,9.

SWEDEN

MS Final: Mattias Stenberg d. Magnus Wahlgren, 7,11,5,8; SF: Stenberg d. Peter Nilsson 4-1; Wahlgren d. Mikael Zoogling 4-1.

Note: Jan-Ove Walder, Jorgen Persson and Peter Karlsson didn't play. Jens Lundqvist lost 2-4 to Stenberg in the quarterfinals. Fredrick Hakansson lost 3-4 to Peter Andersson in the round of 16. Mikael Appelgren and Erik Lindh also lost in the round of 16.

WS Final: Carina Jonsson d. Susanne Jonsson 4-0; SF: C. Jonsson d. Sandra Johansson 4-2; S. Jonsson d. Marie Olsson 4-2.

Note: Carina and Susanne Jonsson are sisters.

POLAND

MS Final: Lucjan Blaszczysz d. Daniel Gorak, 3,8,9-7,9.


Note: It was Lucjan Blaszczysz's 8th Polish Championships. In the final he played Daniel Gorak, the 2001 European Junior Champion. Blaszczysz and Tomasz Krzyszewski won doubles.

CZECH REPUBLIC

MS Final: Josef Plachy d. Richard Vyborny, 8-10, 7-8,4-9.

Note: Last year's finalists, Petr Korbel and Marek Klaske, both lost in the round of 16.

WS Final: Alena Vachovcova d. Iveta Vacenovska, 5,5,8,3,5-9,3.

ENGLAND

MS Final: Alan Cooke d. Andrew Baggaley, 9-6,8-5,8,8,8; SF: Cooke d. Bradley Billington, 5,6,7,11; Baggaley d. Terry Young, 7-13,7,4,4.

Note: Cooke, three weeks shy of his 37th birthday, became the oldest England men's singles champion when he regained the title he last held in 1996.


Note: Top seed Nicola Deaton lost in the second round.

IRELAND

MS Final: Jason Sugrue d. Conor Nolan, 10,10,8.

Note: Defending champion Andrew Dennison lost to Nolan in the quarterfinals.

WS Final: Jing YuGaod. Michelle McGreavy, 13,8,4.

SCOTLAND

MS Champion: Gavin Rumgay d. Stuart Crawford.

WS Champion: Nicola Bentley d. Claire Bentley.

Note: Nicola and Claire Bentley are sisters.

WALES

MS Final: Adam Robertson d. Ryan Jenkins, 6,9-,12,9.

WS Final: Bethan Dauntton d. Siwan Davies, 2,2,4.
CROATIAN ITTF PRO TOUR

Zagreb, CRO · Jan. 23-26, 2003

Men's Singles – Final: Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) d. Alexei Smirnov (RUS), 7,9,9,4; SF: Samsonov d. Lucjan Blaszczyk (POL), 9,8,4,6,6,11,-5,8; Smirnov d. Werner Schlager (AUT), 8,4,9,8; QF: Samsonov d. Fredrik Hakansson (SWE), 10,7,4,12,6; Blaszczyk d. Bojan Tokic (SLO), 5,12,6,14,3; Schlager d. Jens Lundqvist (SWE), 10,7,9,9,5; Smirnov d. Kalimkis Kreanga (GRE), 9,12,4,10,-11,6.

8ths: Schlager d. Aleksandar Karakasevic (YUG), 6,5,10,7; Lundqvist d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 9,9,8,9,11,8; Smirnov d. Allan Bentsen (DEN), 10,8,10,11,-4,7; Kreanga d. Tomasz Krzeszewski (POL), 9,9,-3,11,-7,9; Blaszczyk d. Zoran Primorac (CRO), 15,-7,10,9,8; Tokic d. Feder Kuzmin (RUS), 7,-8,9,7,3; Hakansson d. Peter Karlsson (SWE), 2,12,-9,9,7,-11,8; Samsonov d. Thomas Keinath (GER), 9,5,9,7,6,8.

Men's Doubles – Final: Kalinikos Kreanga/Jorg Rosskopf (GRE/GER) d. Werner Schlager/Karl Jindrak (AUT), -9,9,10,4,3,10; SF: Schlager/Jindrak d. Zoltan Fejer-Konnerth/Tobias Wosik (GER), w/o; Kreanga/Rosskopf d. Fredrik Hakansson/Peter Karlsson (SWE), -6,6,-14,8,12; QF: Schlager/Jindrak d. Aleksandar Karakasevic/Bojan Tokic (YUG/SLO), 4,9,-7,-6,4; Fejer-Konnerth/Wosik d. Allan Bentsen/Zoran Primorac (DEN/CRO), 9,9,3,9; Hakansson/Karlsson d. Jorgen Persson/Sven Leafstrand (SWE), 8,-9,-5,-7,5,10; Kreanga/Rosskopf d. Dzmitry Chumakou/Vladimir Samsonov (BLR), 7,10,-1,12,10.

Women's Singles – Final: Tamara Boros (CRO) d. Viktorija Pavlovic (BLR), -9,8,6,13,6,13, SF: Boros d. Tanja Manfridt Weling (ITA), -7,6,6,8,11,11, Pavlovic d. Tatjana Kostromina (BLR), 8,8,5,5; SF: Boros d. Mouna Das (IND), 7,7,10,7; Viktorija Pavlovic d. Veronika Pavlovich (BLR), 8,6,3,10,8,9, Kostromina d. Tanja Hain-Hoffmann (GER), 9,6,9,7,4; Tan d. Galina Melnik (RUS), 5,8,9,10,5; 8ths: Boros d. Ding Yan (ITA), 10,9,9,2,8, Das d. Ruta Budiena-Garkauskaite (LTU), 8,6,10,6,5,9; Tan d. Tatjana Logatzkaya (BLR), 5,7,6,7; Melnik d. Wang Yu (ITA), 6,6,13,8,10,4,8, Hain-Hoffmann d. Elke Wosik (GER), 4,14,-8,9,4,10; Kostromina d. Wang Chen (USA), 4,4,0,0, Viktorija Pavlovic d. Nicoletta Stefanoia (ITA), 9,-4,8,9,3, Veronika Pavlovic d. Olga Nemes (GER), 10,-8,10,4,7,11.

Women's Doubles – Final: Tatjana Logatzkaya/Veronika Pavlovich (BLR) d. Ding Yan/Wang Chen (ITA/USA), 7,7,9,5,1; SF: Logatzkaya/Pavlovich d. Tanja Hans-Hofmann/Elke Wosik (GER), -9,6,10,7,10,9,9; Ding d. Laura Negri/Anita Monfardini (ITA), 7,7,10,6; QF: Hain-Hoffmann/Wosik d. Mouna Poulimo (IND), 10,7,4,8; Logatzkaya/Pavlovich d. Nicoletta Stefanoia/Wang Yu (ITA), -14,8,8,10,8,2, Negri/Anita Monfardini d. Tatjana Kostromina/Viktorija Pavlovic (BLR), 6,5,8,6,9; Ding/Wang d. Ruta Budiena-Garkauskaite/Galin Melnik (LT/RUS), 6,9,8,5.

QATAR ITTF PRO TOUR

Doha, Qatar · March 3-7, 2003

Men's Singles – Final: Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) d. Alexei Smirnov (RUS), 10,-8,12,10,11,-11,7, SF: Boll d. Werner Schlager (AUT), 4,-5,-7,7,5,4,1; Samsonov d. Michael Maze (GER), 7,10,10,9; QF: Boll d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 5,-10,-9,9,5,11; Schlager d. Patrick Chilla (FRA), 8,-10,12,10,-11,13; Maze d. Alexei Smirnov (RUS), 5,8,-7,7,7, Samsonov d. Danny Heister (NED), 10,8,6,9.

Men's Preliminaries

Group A: 1st Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 1-1 (d. Smirnov, -12,18,7,7,2; 2nd Alexei Smirnov (RUS), 1-1 (d. Persson, 12,10,4,9); 3rd Jorgen Persson (SWE), 1-1 (d. Saive, 13,6,9,7,-7,10).

Group B: 1st Werner Schlager (AUT), 2-0 (d. Eloi, -10,8,8,7,8; d. Heister, 11,7,10,6,7,2; 2nd Danny Heister (NED), 1-1 (d. Eloi, -4,9,8,11,9,2,6); 3rd Damien Eloi (FRA), 0,2.

Group C: 1st Timo Boll (GER), 2-0 (d. Keen, -9,8,8,7,4, d. Maze, 5,-10,-7,7,-10,4,2; 2nd Michael Maze (DEN), 1-1 (d. Keen, -9,-18,9,8,9,3; 3rd Trinko Keen (NED), 0,2.

Group D: 1st Vladimir Samsonov (BLR), 2-0 (d. Chila, 18,6,6,6; d. Rosskopf, -5,4,11,11,5); 2nd Patrick Chilla (FRA), 1-1 (d. Rosskopf, -2,1,10,7,5,7, 3rd Jorg Rosskopf (GER), 0,2.

Women's Preliminaries

Group A: 1st Tamara Boros (CRO), 9,-8,-8,7,7, SF: Schopp d. Kristinna Toth (HUN), 4,-6,7,10,9,9; Boros d. Galina Melnik (RUS), -10,-9,6,3,8; QF: Schopp d. Milka Stefl (CRO), 6,5,9,4,9; Boros d. Olga Nemes (GER), -5,10,7,5,7,9; Toth d. Nicole Struse (GER), -7,3,8,9,7,6, Melnik d. Elke Wosik (GER), 7,9,6,8,8.

Women's Preliminaries

Group A: 1st Tamara Boros (CRO), 2-0 (d. Pavlovic, 6,6,6,6; d. Struse, -10,7,5,7,6,2; 2nd Nicole Struse (GER), 1-1 (d. Pavlovic, 7,7,3,9,8); 3rd Viktorija Pavlovic (BLR), 0,2.

Group B: 1st Michaela Steff (CRO), 2-0 (d. pervic, 12,10,9,9,4); 2nd Alexei Wosik (GER), 1-1 (d. Borschek, 14,8,10,7,9,3); 3rd Csilla Batorfi (HUN), 0,2.

Group C: 1st Kristinna Toth (HUN), 2-0 (d. Dolarova, 19,9,12,9,7, d. Nemes, 8,6,8,4,8, 2nd Olga Nemes (GER), 1-1 (d. Dolarova, 8,6,5,4,6,7,8,3); 3rd Eva Dolarova (SVK), 0,2.

Group D: 1st Galina Melnik (RUS), 2-0 (d. Schopp, 8,9,6,10,10; d. Borschek, 10,5,5,7,12); 2nd Jie Schopp (GER), 1-1 (d. Borschek, 9,7,3,6,6,10,3); 3rd Otilia Borschek (ROM), 0,2.
ARIZONA OPEN
Phoenix, AZ · Feb. 15-16, 2003

Open Singles: 1” Alex Lai 2” David Rubin.
Open Doubles: 1” Leo Lucas/Derrick Cone 2” Gia Lee/Bernard Savitz.
Over 40: 1” Ralph Sladelman/David Rubin 2” Mike Shirley.
Over 50: 1” Ralph Stadelman 2” Bernard Savitz.
Over 60: 1” Barry Meisel 2” John Harrington.
U1600: 1” Keith Chan 2” Ping Fuschino.
U1700: 1” Maudi Abdelinalak 2” Mark Wei.
U1800: 1” Mike Fuschino 2” Morris Leitcher.
U1900: 1” Barry Meisel 2” John Harrington.
All Around Player: 1” Mario Lorene 2” Robert Bryant Jr.

U1250: 1” William Wong 2” Paul Hamra.
U2000: 1” Derrick Cone 2” Mario Lorenz.
U2100: 1” Jiang Gu 2” Ernesto Kawatoto 3” Johnny Provenzano.

HOLIDAY TEAMS CLASSIC
Allentown, PA · Dec. 29, 2002
Open: 1” Tim Connelly 2” Simon Brancik 3” Tony Greensboro NC.
Class C: 1” Chris O’Brien 2” Emantino Zapata.
Class B: 1” Randy Hess 2” Mike Ho.
Class A: 1” Parviz Mojaverian 2” Zbigniew Mastylo.

STIGA WORLD TTC OPEN
Lodi, NJ · Jan. 25-26, 2003
Open: 1” Adam Shug 2” Li Yuexiang 3” Shao Yu 4” David Fernandez.
U2000: 1” Shawn Embleton 2” Pan Lin 3” Sophia Yi 4” Min Xing Guo.
U1000: 1” Sophia Yi 2” Antwan Davis 3” D. King 4” W. Kiesielowski.
U900/Novice: 1” Darryn Grahain 2” Israel Dulhuya.
U2100: 1” Torsten Bocker 2” Julian Waters.
U1200: 1” Jake Carter 2” Charles Hoiner.

MARYLAND CIRCUIT
Eldersburg, MD · Feb. 8-9, 2003
Open: 1” Brian Young 2” Jordan Davis 3” Mark Davis.
Over 50: 1” Jeff Kleinberg 2” Fred Fondor 3” Charles Jackson/Mark Trumbore.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE · May/June 2003
MDTC FEBRUARY OPEN
Gaithersburg, MD - Feb. 1-2, 2003
Open Singles – Final: Nazruddin Asgarali d. Khaleel Asgarali, 26-2, 12-2, 7-5, 6-4, 7-6; SF: A. Asgarali d. John Wetzler, 9-7, 7-5, 12-10; K. Asgarali d. Larry Hodges, 7-9, 11-9, 10; OF: N. Asgarali d. Chao Wang, 9-6, 2-6, 2-6, 6-2, 6-2. Hodges d. Torsten Boeker, 7-5, 10.

U2250 – Final: Lixin Lang d. Georgiy Buryakyn, 8, 7-12; SF: Lang d. Larry Hodges, 7-8, 6-8; Buryakyn d. Joseph Stewart, 8-4, 7-8, 7.

U2100 – Final: Eric Eisley d. Patrick Lui, 4-9, 4; SF: Eisley d. Joseph Stewart, 6-8, 9-4; Lui d. Oscar Ramirez, 11-4, 3.


U1650: Brian Ponzack d. Jian Hua Qi/Gan Ying Dai: 2. Bill Mixed Doubles: 1 €

Over 19: Eric Leventhal, 211(1 Jenni fer Mast: 3" A.J.

Over 22: 1“ Mark Hazinski, 2’d Samson Dubina, 3’d Bill Neely.

Over 60: 1’ Bill Neely; 2’ Al Keselinan.

Over 40: 1v Alan Millett: 2’d Dave Berenson.

U850: 1’ Simon Kreynian; 2’d Samuel Chen.

U1250: P’ Eugene Hunger; 2nd Jay Welch.

12100: 1” Edward Loong; 2”=1ising Kiang Tuan Dai Le: 4”= Luis House.

Open Doubles: Attila Malek/Khaled Zeinelabedin d. Courtney Roberts. 7.6.-9.-8.9.7.

SF: Malek d. Khaled Zeinelabedin, 9,5,-6,5.7; Guo d. Open – Final. Attila Malek d. Hui Lu Guo. -7.6,9,2.4.

U1300: 1  James Tunnifiant; 2”1 Alicia Wei.

U1650: Pt Sty-en (illian: 2’d Tin Nguyen


Class H: P’ Jeffrey Woodward; 2’d Sai f Moliammed.

Class A: 1’ .lean-Philippe Haid: 2”’ Frank Dwelly.

Feb. 9, 2003
Manchester, NH - Feb. 9, 2003

Class E: 1 ‘ Vaibhau Raian: 2”’ Anil Jha.

Class D: 1’ Rajesh Radha,-rislinan: 2’d Eric ()ison.

Class G: P’ Anthony Chau; 2” Michael Vatrvcz.

Class A Doubles: 1 John Smithey/Tommy Reed: 2”2 Judith Cates.

U1200: 1 “ J.D. Pulliam; 2’d Sam Bennett,

U1000: INJ. D. Pulliam: 2’d Kurt Cain,

U 1400: 1 ‘ Charl ie Brooks: 2nd John Falco.

U1800: 1 t Brice Wood; 2’ld Charlie Brown.

U2100: 1” Steve Cates; 2nd Paul Hadfield.

U2250: 1” Donny Flowers/Glen Davis; 2nd Ben Phillips; 3’d Gus Richards.

Class C: 1’ Scott McDonnell; 2” Gus Richards.

Class B: 1’ Scott McDonnell; 2” Gus Richards.

Class A: 1’ Mack Payne; 2” Colin Harris.

Over 40: 1’ Glen Davis; 2” Paul Hadfield.

Over 60: 1’ Lee Morgan; 2” Glenn Volpert.

Over 60/40 Consolation: 1” Ben Phillips; 2’ Gus Richards.

Under 17 Boys’ Singles: 1” Matt McConnell; 2’ Stephen Wahl.

Under 17 Girls’ Singles: 1” Brian Wahl; 2” Tom Zhang.

Under 17 Girls’ Class A Singles: 1” Mary Case; 2” Leanna Talley.

Hardbat Singles: 1” Steve Cates; 2” Paul Hadfield.

U1800: 1’ Glen Davis; 2” Bruce Wood.

U1600: 1’ Bruce Wood; 2” Charlie Brooks.

U1400: 1” Charlie Brooks; 2” John Falco.

U1200: 1” = J.D. Pulliam; 2” Sam Bennett.

U1000: 1” = J.D. Pulliam; 2” Kurt Cain.

Under 17: 1” John Tuken; 2” Ben Taylor.

Class A Doubles: 1” John Smith/’Tommy Reed; 2” Glenn Volpert/’Lee Morgans.

NEW HAMPSHIRE RR OPEN
Manchester, NH - Feb. 9, 2003

Class A: 1’ Jean-Philippe Haid; 2” Frank Dwyer.

Class B: 1’ Alex Chang; 2” Mark Hamilton.

Class C: 1’ Wallace Wong; 2” Denny Conley.

Class D: 1’ Rajesh Radhavrishman; 2” Eric Olson.

Class E: P’ Vaibhau Raian; 2” Anil Jha.

Class F: P’ Anthony Chau; 2” Michael Vatrvcz.

Class G: P’ Adam Desai; 2” Michael Chau.

Class H: P’ Jeffrey Woodward; 2” Sai f Moliammed.

Butterfly Power Pong Open
Davison, MI - Jan. 25, 2003

Open: 1” Ghenga Ogandimu; 2” Scott Endscott.

U2250: 1’ Jim Keep; 2” Ivan Popov.

U1000: 1” Robert Luo; 2” Brian Fowler.

U1950: 1” Jim Keep; 2” Brian Fowler.

U1700: 1” Pavel Suchok; 2” Shu Xue. 6-3.

U1600: 1” David Witt; 2” Shu Xue.

U1500: 1” Tim Vahlekov; 2” Joseph Helfand.

U1350: 1” Pavel Suchok; 2” Andy Korby.

U1250: 1” David Witt; 2” Pavel Suchok.

Lincoln, NE - Jan. 25-26, 2003

Open: 1” Ping Lu; 2” Gay Hendrickson.

U18: 1” Xing Yan; 2” Denis Yashrin.

U2000: 1” Ping Lu; 2” David Racki.

U1750: 1” Xing Yan; 2” David Racki.

U1500: 1” Denis Yashrin; 2” Gary Lehner.

U1250: 1” Eugene Hunger; 2” Jay Welch.

Over 40: 1” Matt Cushing; 2” Larry Petersson.

Over 55: 1” Roger Tranmer; 2” Cliff Metzger.

U3200 Doubles: 1” Gay Hendrickson/Charles Rucker; 2” Terry Pentecost/Larry Petersson.

SOONER STATE GAMES
Del City, OK - Jan. 18, 2003

Open: 1” Heath Wang; 2” Nicholas Aginudic; 3” Greg Gordon; 4” Chau Truong.

Over 19: 1” Skidmore Suzuki; 2” Truong/Lee; 3” Aginudic/Aginudic; 4” Taplin/Kyker.

Over 50: 1’ Ray Pestridge; 2” George Taplin; 2” Jack Hannah; 4” Robert Kyker.

U1750: 1” Dale Boswell; 2” Ray Pestridge.

U1625: 1” Craig Milkowski; 2” James Thompson.

U1500: 1” Craig Milkowski; 2” John Runkner.

U1250: 1” Ping Lu; 2” David Hash. 5-2.

U3400 Doubles: 1” Truong/Hannah; 2” Taplin/Kyker.

U3000 Doubles: 1” Thompson/Hannah; 2” Goodman/Hash.

Cleveland Winter Open
Cleveland, OH - Jan. 18-19, 2003

Open: 1” Mark Hazinski; 2” Samson Dubina; 3” Mark Nordby; 4” Hidetake Takigami.

Elite: 1” Mark Hazinski; 2” Samson Dubina; 3” Mark Nordby; 4” Hidetake Takigami.

Women: 1” Amanda Dubina; 2” Jennifer Mast.

U2350: 1” Samson Dubina; 2” Mark Nordby.

U2100: 1” Sam Steiner; 2” Ivan Mast.

U1950: 1” Amanda Dubina; 2” Michael Mast.

U1700: 1” A.J. Brewer, 2” Vladimir Gispence.

U1600: 1” Sid Stancel; 2” Larry Arnold.

U1350: 1” Kyle Nyeste; 2” Shane Denison.

U1100: 1” Dan Barnes; 2” Simon Kreynan.

U850: 1” Simon Kreynan; 2” Samuel Chen.

Unrated: 1” Lance Irving; 2” Jason Shen.

Over 40: 1” Alan Millert; 2” Dave Berenson.

Over 50: 1” Alan Millert; 2” Valeriy Elnatov.

Over 60: 1” Bill Neely; 2” Al Keselinan.

Over 70: 1” Bill Neely; 2” Neil Myers.

Under 22: 1” Mark Hazinski; 2” Samson Dubina.

Under 19: 1” Eric Leventhal; 2” Jennifer Mast; 3”A.J.

Bremer; 4” Konstantin Katsman.

Mixed Doubles: 1” Han Hu Qi/Gan Ying Dai; 2” Bill Neely/Jan Stanke.

U4400 Doubles: 1” M. Nordby/N. Enz; 2” H.

Takigami/Amar Singh.

U3400 Doubles: 1” C. Sullivan/G. Snow; 2” V. Lopez/ F. Uliano.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2003
The Orlando Winter Open was a success with over 140 entries. Richard McAfee brought his group down from Atlanta and we always enjoy seeing them.

Michael Hyatt was the winner of Championship Singles over Keith Evans from Atlanta. The Final went the full seven games and was very exciting. Let me add that Michael is a very nice guy, as is Keith. Nice to watch two great players with wonderful attitudes!

The big winner of the tournament was Bin Hai Chu, who won three events: Over 40, Over 50, and Elite (Under 2200) Singles. Being over fifty sure hasn’t hurt Bin, he was even in the Final of Class B Doubles.

There were two events with a family final. Women’s Singles was won by Marisol Delzo over her sister, Mirella. In Novice Singles, Tomer Glantz defeated his father, Jerry Glantz, in the Final.

Thanks to everyone who came and made this tournament a big success!


Elite Under 2200: 1st Bin Hai Chu; 2nd Pellumb Haka; 3-4: Chi Chan & Ronald Rigo.

Open Doubles: 1st Keith Evans/Kwaoovi DeSouza; 2nd Michael Hyatt/Errol Lattiosh.

Women’s Singles: 1st Marisol Delzo; 2nd Mirella Delzo; 3rd Gizella Hajduk.

U1950: 1st Raymond Liang; 2nd Lynwood Smith.

U1800: 1st Bruno Ramirez; 2nd Fred Hautsch.

U1650: 1st Frank Valliant; 2nd Kevin Lam.

U1500: 1st Serg Poncin; 2nd Vitali Kniazev.

U1300: 1st Tomer Glantz; 2nd Jerry Glantz.

Over 40: 1st Bin Hai Chu; 2nd Keith Evans.

Over 50: 1st Bin Hai Chu; 2nd Carlos Estrada.

Under 18: 1st Marisol Delzo; 2nd Leonardo Arata.

Under 13: 1st Brian Lam; 2nd Rodrigo Ramirez.

Class B Doubles: 1st Yand/Liang; 2nd L. Leissering/Chu.

The Allentown/Lehigh Valley area Table Tennis Club, in their 30th year, promotes both standing disabled and wheelchair play at club and tournament levels. They will be running an $1800 SportsFest two-person team tournament on July 13. Included are Wheelchair and Standing Disabled divisions, as well as rated divisions.

Regular Players at A/LVaTTC

Back: Norman Haase, former member of U.S. Paralympic team; Fred Kistler, coach; Lenny Perch.

Front: Noga Nir-Kistler, number one wheelchair class five U.S. Paralympic team; David Snyder, number two wheelchair class one U.S. Paralympic team; Elliott Sanchez; Miho Iwakuma.

For additional information, please visit the USADA web site at www.usantidoping.org
$1500 STIGA “CARY CUP” OPEN

Cary, NC • March 15, 2003 • By Larry Hodges

It may have been the best of times; it may have been the worst of times; but it definitely was the most exhausting of times.

That’s what happens in a format where everyone plays 12-14 matches in one day! A number of the players were on their way down to the USA Team Trials in Atlanta, with the Cary Open a nice warm-up for the event, a six-day process with the qualifier rounds to begin on Monday.

Tournament Director Mike Babuin told the gathered players at the start that they anticipated the round robins to finish by 6PM – and when 6PM came about, all that was left was the Final! Playing conditions were excellent, with grippy floors, good lighting, Stiga tables and barriers, and individually barred courts.

110 players played almost continuously all day on 30 tables in this slugfest. 88 of the players started out in 22 groups of 4. All 88 players then advanced to a final round robin of 11 players. Classes A, B, C and D each had two divisions of 11 players (so 22 in each Class), with the winners playing off, and runner-ups playing off for third and fourth. The other 22 players in the tournament played in Class E Singles, with two groups of 11, with crossover matches.

Several top players were not able to make it due to, believe it or not, a sinkhole on Interstate 85! Nigel Christopher (2322), Dennis Brown (2127) and George Cooper (2032), all seeded to be in Class A, all were stuck on I-85 and never made it. Another player seeded for Class A was Mark Nordby (2283), who, experimenting with a new paddle, went down to Matt Chando (1809). Said Mark (who was having the worst of times?), after realizing that he was not going to be in Class A, “This was a dream tournament for me, with all the great matches. Now it’s a nightmare. I’ve never felt so sick.” But Mark did get a consolation – he’d go on to dominate and win Class B.

The tournament had four players who, by their ratings, were a class ahead of the rest of the field: Mark Hazinski (2609), Brian Pace (2538), five-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion Dan Seemiller (2508) and also-five-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion Sean O’Neill (2442). Mark, Brian and Dan all made it to the final match to decide who’d win their division and thereby play for the championship. Falling by the wayside was Sean, who lost to Lee McCoil (2248) at 9,9,9,8, and John Wetzler (2286), 6,8,9,7,10. John had Sean 10-8 match point in the fifth, but Sean played two spectacular points to get to deuce. But John followed with two great points of his own to pull it out.

Dan Seemiller and Brian Pace met to decide who would advance from Division One into the Open Final. Brian Pace, who is known for his powerful forehand, had been practicing very hard on his backhand, and was playing it almost as powerfully as his forehand. However, Dan’s ball control and forehand attack often tied him up. (And Dan, who had been practicing a lot recently, was noticeably loop stronger than in recent years, shades of his peak power-looping years in the 1970s.) Dan led 7-4 and 9-7 in the fifth, but Brian tied it at 9-all, with Brian to serve. Dan forehand flipped Brian’s first serve to Brian’s wide forehand – one of the few times in the match he’d gone that way off the serve – and caught Brian, who weakly spun it into the net. Then, with absolute silence as the crowd watched the final point, Brian planned to serve short to Dan’s backhand – but instead served off the edge of his side of the table, so the ball shot off to the side – a missed serve to end it! Match and on to the Final for Dan Seemiller, -9,4,-7,9,9.

On the other half, Mark Hazinski defeated Lee McCoil, Sean O’Neill and John Wetzler, each 3-1, to advance, with McCoil coming in second.

Playoff matches were best of seven. In the playoff for third and fourth, Brian Pace defeated McCoil, 3,-8,8,6,-6,8. Most including McCoil – thought the match was over when Brian went up 3-1, but McCoil was very, very happy to find he was still in it, and pulled out another game before losing. Of crowd-pleasing interest was Brian Pace jumping completely over a barrier, the passageway, and the barrier on the other side of the passageway to fetch a ball! He then did it again on the way back.

The all-Indiana final was between USA Men’s Coach Dan Seemiller, 48, and his student, 17-year-old Mark Hazinski, the U.S.’s top junior player. Dan (who usually uses Sriver sponge, but had switched to the super-fast Bryce for this particular match, feeling he needed more pace on his shots) won the first at 8, but was blitzed the next two games at 3 and 2. As Dan pointed out later, the key point in the match was when he led 9-6 in the fourth – only to lose 14-12. (But Mark, with the serve, had all five ads.) Dan made it to 9-all in the fifth game as well, but Mark won the next two points, the match, the Open, and $500, -8,3,2,12,9. Dan won $350, Brian $250, and Lee $150.

Now, says this writer, who played 13 matches … Let the cramping begin!

Open – Final: Mark Hazinski d. Dan Seemiller, -8,3,2,12,9; 3rd: Brian Pace d. Lee McCoil, 3,-8,8,6,-6,8.

Open Preliminaries

Open Division One: 1st Mark Hazinski, 10-0; 2nd Lee McCoil, 9-1; 3rd John Wetzler, 7-3; 4th Sean O’Neill, 7-3; 5th Jared Lynch, 6-4, 4-6; 6th Jani Kokkonen, 6-4; 7th Gregg Robertshaw, 4-6; 8th Richard DeWitt, 3-7; 9th Joe Griffis, 2-8; 10th Brenda Hye Sock Mun, 1-9; 11th Lokesh Pillai, 0-10.

Open Division Two: 1st Dan Seemiller, 10-0; 2nd Brian Pace, 9-1; 3rd Didi Desouza, 8-2; 4th Larry Hodges, 7-3; 5th Richard Bowling, 5-5; 6th Guillermo Rosales, 5-5; 7th Hiep Tran, 4-6; 8th Jim McQueen, 3-7; 9th Simon Brain, 2-8; 10th Matt Chando, 1-9; 11th Gerald Singleton, 1-9.

Class B: 1st Mark Nordby; 2nd Min Hsu; 3rd Stephen Aube; 4th Al Herr.

Class C: 1st Barry Ratner; 2nd Tony Provenzano; 3rd David Sterling; 4th Lewis Bragg.

Class D: 1st Art Stewart; 2nd Charlie Williams; 1st Alberto Prieto; 4th Tony Armosto.

Class E: 1st Sujith Bhoja; 2nd Dmitri Moundoi; 3rd Ilya Zaverkha; 4th Ton Manly.
### TOP MEN

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### Tournaments Included in Ratings

- **Sacramento Fall Open**
- **Canton Giant RR**
- **Roenoke U1500**
- **Potomac Open**
- **Stiga World November Open**
- **Valley of the Sun**
- **Davison November Open**
- **Fairfield November Open**
- **2002 Wichita Team TT Tournament**
- **Power Pong November Open**
- **Stiga N.A. Teams Championships**
- **W.C. Cleveland Fall Open**
- **Maryland Circuit**
- **Boston TTC December Open**
- **1st NY City Cup Championships**
- **Winter 2002 Giant RR**
- **Mayo Ralph Cup**
- **NJITTC December Open**
- **December Giant RR**
- **2002 US National Championships**
- **Western NY Giant RR**
- **2002 Killerspin Open**
- **Holiday Classic 2 Person Team Open**
- **W.C. Clevne Memorial Open**
- **Piedmont TTC RR Open**
- **Pensacola Winter Open 2003**
- **Maryland Circuit**
- **Sooner State Games**
- **Butterfly Power Pong Open**
- **NJITTC Winter Open**
- **2003 Cleveland Winter Open**
- **Maryland Giant RR**
- **January Open**
- **South Bend Winter Open**
- **Boston TTC January Open**
- **Orlando Winter Open**
- **Stiga World TTC Open**
- **Lincoln Open 2003**
- **Hutchinson 2003 Winter Open**
- **Burke TTC U2550**
- **Piedmont TTC RR Open**
- **2003 MDITTC February Open**
- **TET Festival**
- **New Hampshire RR Open**
- **Maryland Circuit**
- **Star of the North State Games**

### Tournaments Processed

This list was compiled on 4/1/03 and includes all tournaments played through 2/9/03. Ages are as of 4/1/03. Due to space limitations, only current members who have played since 11/15/02 are included. This document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2003.

### Ratings Questions?

All ratings-related questions should be directed to Felisa Huggins, USA Table Tennis 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.
USATT Motions and Votes

Note: Motions, Votes and Minutes of past USATT Board Meetings are online at www.usatt.org/organization/minutes

February 14, 2003

MOTION I. Move that Board members shall rank the four [League] bids [from Killerspin, Newgy, Paddle Palace, and Pioneers] in descending order, 1 to 4 (#1 being the highest), with votes due by 5PM Eastern Time on Friday, February 14. The bid receiving the least number of #1 votes (or two, if there is a tie) shall then be eliminated, and those Board members who ranked an eliminated bid #1 shall have their votes changed so that their #2 ranked bid, if still in the running, shall become #1 in the next round of ranking the bids. This procedure shall be repeated until one bid has a clear majority of the votes sent in. The Executive Director shall then negotiate a contract with the winning bidder, which will be reviewed by a lawyer and then sent to the Board for final approval.

Proposed by George Brathwaite; seconded by Hank McCoullum

Passed: 8-0 for Paddle Palace

[Editor's note: The above motion is for the upcoming USATT League, which starts later this year, you can read about it at the Club Programs page at www.usatt.org/club_programs.]

March 7, 2003

MOTION I. Move to approve USATT ratings service contract with North American Table Tennis Corporation.

Proposed by Hank McCoullum; seconded by Sheri Pittman

Passed: 10-1-1 (For: Sheri Pittman, Jing Wang, Tim Boggan, George Brathwaite, Robert Mayer, Barney D. Reed, Hank McCoullum, Todd Sweeris, Tawny Banh; Against: Jimmy McClure; Not voting: Eric Owens.)

MOTION II. The ratings fee will increase from $3 to $4 for tournaments rated 4-stars and lower, and from $5 to $6 for 5-star events. The new fees will be effective for tournaments held after May 5, 2003.

Proposed by Tong Lee; seconded by Todd Sweeris

Passed: 9-2-1 (For: Sheri Pittman, Tong Lee, Tim Boggan, George Brathwaite, Barney D. Reed, Hank McCoullum, Todd Sweeris, Tawny Banh, Jimmy McClure; Against: Jing Wang, Robert Mayer; Not voting: Barney D. Reed.)
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>June 3</td>
<td>Piedmont TTC RR Open, Greensboro, NC. Contact: Douglas Paul A.</td>
<td>Greensboro, NC</td>
<td>Ralph L. Presley</td>
<td>910-769-3222</td>
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<td>June 2</td>
<td>Scenic City Open, Chattanooga, TN. Contact: Charles Collins</td>
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<td>June 3-4</td>
<td>Long Island Championships, Port Washington, NY. Contact: L. Tisone</td>
<td>Port Washington, NY</td>
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<td>June 3-4</td>
<td>Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlone</td>
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<td>410-489-7291</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>1st Annual Centl FL Spring TT Open, Lakeland, FL. Contact: Wondell Newton L. 407-631-4736. <a href="mailto:Tablettennis@email.midflorida.com">Tablettennis@email.midflorida.com</a></td>
<td>Lakeland, FL</td>
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<td>910-769-3222</td>
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<td>June 10</td>
<td>6th Annual MD Medalion championship, Frostburg, MD. Contact: James C. Williams, 301-689-9941. <a href="mailto:Cjwms@minspring.com">Cjwms@minspring.com</a></td>
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<td>Cary Open Giant RR Jamboree, Apex, NC. Contact: James McQueen, Jr.</td>
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<td>June 21-22</td>
<td>Austin Open, Austin, TX. Contact: John R. Miller</td>
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<td>June 28-29</td>
<td>US Open Warm Up Tournament, Coral Springs, FL. Contact: Teresa Terranova, 954-963-0204.</td>
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<td>July 6-7</td>
<td>U.S. Open. Ft Lauderdale, FL. Contact: USATT, 719-866-4583. Admin/usatt.org. **</td>
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<td>Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlone</td>
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<td>July 13</td>
<td>Allentown ‘Sportsfest’ 2 Person Match, Allentown, PA. Contact: Fred Kolster, 610-797-6637. <a href="mailto:Lvate@Yahoo.com">Lvate@Yahoo.com</a>. **</td>
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<td>August 1</td>
<td>2003 Junior Olympics and Junior Nationals, Detroit, MI. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. <a href="mailto:Info@natabletennis.com">Info@natabletennis.com</a></td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
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<td>August 2</td>
<td>Piedmont TTC RR Open, Greensboro, NC. Contact: Douglas Paul</td>
<td>Greensboro, NC</td>
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<td>910-769-3222</td>
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<td>August 3</td>
<td>Keystone State Games, N. Hanover, PA. Contact: Robert Cogley, Jr.</td>
<td>N. Hanover, PA</td>
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<td>717-898-8688</td>
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<td>August 4</td>
<td>Eastern Open on the 2003 Stiga NA Tour. Piscataway, NJ. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. <a href="mailto:Info@natabletennis.com">Info@natabletennis.com</a></td>
<td>Piscataway, NJ</td>
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<td>August 10</td>
<td>Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlone</td>
<td>Eldersburg, MD</td>
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<td>410-489-7291</td>
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<td>August 16</td>
<td>Cary Open Giant RR Jamboree, Apex, NC. Contact: James McQueen, Jr.</td>
<td>Apex, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 23</td>
<td>Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlone</td>
<td>Eldersburg, MD</td>
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<td>August 23-24</td>
<td>Macy Block Open, Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: Daniel Seemiller, 574-654-7476.</td>
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<td>August 30-31</td>
<td>Florida State Closed, Orlando, FL. Contact: Olga Soltesz, 407-830-4009.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>Biggest Little Reno-Sparks TT Tour., Reno, NV. Contact: Carlos Ortegon, 775-826-8221. <a href="mailto:Cjwms@email.midflorida.com">Cjwms@email.midflorida.com</a></td>
<td>Reno, NV</td>
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<td>Eldersburg, MD</td>
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<td>September 20-21</td>
<td>Matthew J. Murad Memorial Open, Hagerstown, MD. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. <a href="mailto:Info@natabletennis.com">Info@natabletennis.com</a></td>
<td>Hagerstown, MD</td>
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<td>Apex, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 27</td>
<td>Texas Teams, Austin, TX. Contact: John Miller, 512-258-3731. <a href="mailto:John@balconessoftware.com">John@balconessoftware.com</a>.</td>
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<td>October 4</td>
<td>Piedmont TTC RR Open, Greensboro, NC. Contact: Douglas Paul</td>
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<td>Eldersburg, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6-10</td>
<td>Huntman World Senior Games, St. George, UT. Contact: Grant Misbach, 801-373-8009. <a href="mailto:Ltw@infowest.com">Ltw@infowest.com</a>.</td>
<td>St. George, UT</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 11-12</td>
<td>MD TCTC Fall Open, Greensburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 910-964-8622. <a href="mailto:WeiXiao21@hotmail.com">WeiXiao21@hotmail.com</a>.</td>
<td>Greensburg, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 11-12</td>
<td>So Cal Open, San Diego, CA. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. <a href="mailto:Info@natabletennis.com">Info@natabletennis.com</a>.</td>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18-19</td>
<td>Three Cities Fall Open Double RR, Richland, WA. Kirby Parker, <a href="mailto:Sltforsl@owt.com">Sltforsl@owt.com</a>.</td>
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<td>October 25</td>
<td>Cary Open Giant RR Jamboree, Apex, NC. Contact: James McQueen, Jr.</td>
<td>Apex, NC</td>
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<td>November 8-9</td>
<td>Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlone</td>
<td>Eldersburg, MD</td>
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<td>December 6</td>
<td>Piedmont TTC RR Open, Greensboro, NC. Contact: Douglas Paul, 910-769-3222.</td>
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<td>December 6-7</td>
<td>Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlone, 410-489-7291.</td>
<td>Eldersburg, MD</td>
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Come to see the new exiting GEWO line and our SPECIALS at the US Open.
The annual ACUI College Championships were held in conjunction with the both the Quaker City Open and the National College Table Tennis Association Championships at the Pottruck Recreation Center at the University of Pennsylvania. The event, run by North American Table Tennis (NATT) with 75 players, started and finished on the Friday before the Quaker City Open and NCTTA Teams.

It was pre-ordained, just like last year, that Texas Wesleyan College would dominate in men's singles – after all, they had the top three seeds in Eric Owens (2620), Courtney Roberts (2402) and Russell Hamilton (2272). Hamilton was upset in the quarterfinals by inverted penholder John Mar, -8,9,10.8. Mar plays his backhand almost exclusively with a reverse penhold backhand stroke, something you see more and more on the world-class level, but something you don't see too often in the U.S. yet.

In the semifinals, Roberts also had his troubles with Mar, but won 8,9,8. Owens coasted over Sandeep Mahat, 3,3,3.

In the final, practice partners Owens and Roberts played for the title, with Eric winning the first two easily, and coming back from down 9-4 to win the third 12-10. Owens and Roberts would romp through Men's Doubles, and defeat fellow Texas Wesleyan players Hamilton and Orin Hickerson in the final, 5,8,9.

On the women's side, Michelle Do breezed through the draw, defeating Laura Leach in the semifinals, 5,8,8,5, while former Hungarian Boglarka Masters (who met husband Brian Masters when both played in the Swedish Leagues) was struggling with Marta Batrzyk before coming back to win, 8,3,7,6,5. Coach/husband Brian (himself the 1983 Pan Am Men's Singles Gold Medalist – how many remember that?) said that it's not easy for her to compete with her training regimen of playing about once per year for the past three years. In the final, the first two games were close, but there was nothing she could do to Do to master her, herself a bit rusty, 9,9,5. “The hardest part is studying for finals and still finding time to practice and go to tournaments,” Do said. “That's why I missed the USA Team Trials last week.”

For Masters, it was the third straight year that she'd lost in the final – in 2002, she lost to Jasna Reed; in 2001, she'd lost to Kyna Fong – from up 20-16 match point!

Masters would get some consolation by teaming up with Mar to win Mixed Doubles over Batrzyk and Yongqiang Zhang, -9,5,9,5. Do and partner Ying Xiong would win Women's Doubles over Masters and Liz Wilkes, 7,8,7.

Special thanks goes to sponsor Newgy, to University of Pennsylvania, to ACUI Table Tennis Director Hank McCoullum, and NATT for running the event.

**Men's Singles – Final:** Eric Owens d. Courtney Roberts, 6,4,10; SF: Owens d. Sandeep Mahat, 3,3,3; Roberts d. John Mar, 8,9,8; QF: Owens d. Robert Cuckler, 8,9,9; Mahat d. Puneet Khurma, 10,9,7; Mar d. Russell Hamilton, -8,9,10,8; Roberts d. Chandramouli Shankaren, 9,9,7.

**Men's Doubles:** Eric Owens/Courtney Roberts d. Russell Hamilton/Orin Hickerson, 5,8,9.

**Women's Singles – Final:** Michelle Do d. Boglarka Masters, 9,9,5; SF: Do d. Laura Leach, 5,8,8,5; Masters d. Marta Batrzyk, 8,3,7,6,5.

**Women's Doubles:** Michelle Do/Ying Xiong d. Boglarka Masters/Liz Wilkes, 7,8,7

**Mixed Doubles:** Boglarka Masters/John Mar d. Marta Batrzyk/Yongqiang Zhang, -9,5,9,5.

**Men's Elite Division 1:** Orin Hickerson d. Ernesto Kawamoto, -8,10,8.

**Men's Elite Division 2:** Casey Ching d. Aaron Aboagye, 9,7,9,9.

**Men's Elite Division 3:** Yongqiang Zhang d. Andrew Belinfanti-Knight, 7,9,7.

**Women's Elite Division 1:** Liz Wilkes d. Lillian Fasman, 7,7,4.

**Women's Elite Division 2:** Ting Sun d. Lucy Chen, 4,8,4.
NATIONAL COLLEGE TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Univ. of Illinois Emerges as Champions
Philadelphia, PA · March 30, 2003
By Aik-Ping Ng,
NCTTA Public Relations Director

In a championship tournament of unprecedented intensity, University of Illinois emerged as champions, winning the hotly contested NCTTA Team Championships title for the second year in a row. The event was held at Pottruck Health and Fitness Center in University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, on March 30, 2003, during a weekend of world-class table tennis displays in three separate competitions all at the same location. As the winner, Illinois walked away with the championship trophy and a Robo-Pong system, courtesy of Newgy Industries.

Illinois beat Harvard relatively easily in the final round, 3-0. The first singles match was by far the most competitive. Bob Cuckler of Illinois edged out Silas Xu of Harvard 9,9,9,3. The second and third singles match saw Kai Fischbach and Xidong Xu of Illinois beating their opponents, Bertold Mueller and Boaz Tirosh of Harvard, 3-1 and 3-0, respectively. The road to the Final was rough for both teams as each met stiff resistance from their respective semifinalist opponents. In semifinal one, Harvard beat Indiana 3-2. The last decisive doubles match had to be played, with Mueller and Xu of Harvard edging out Gunduz and Alga of Indiana, 6,11,-10,6. In semifinal two, Illinois beat Johns Hopkins 3-1. The four semifinalist teams were first and second in their respective Groups A and B round robins.

The past year’s NCTTA officers at the NCTTA Final:
Back, L-R: Christian Lilieroos, Texas Division Director, Jason Yoon, Vice-President, Khoi Than, President, Dan Wang, Webmaster, Seemant Teotia, Virginia Division Director
Front, L-R: Aik-Ping Ng, Public Relations Director, Zhiyong Zhou, New York City Division Director, Jack Wu, President, UPenn Table Tennis, Willy Leparulo, Recruitment Director

Semifinals
Harvard University d. Indiana University, 3-2
- Bertold Mueller (HU) d. Gurhan Gunduz (IU), 5,5,5
- Leslie Tam (HU) d. Michael Golde (IU), 7,0,3
- Villy Andreeva (IU) d. Boaz Tirosh (HU), 5,5,9
- Zuchi Alga (IU) d. James Perumpemichilirua (HU), 4,4,10
- Mueller/Silas Xu (HU) d. Gunduz/Alga (IU), 6,6,-11,10,6

University of Illinois d. Johns Hopkins University, 3-1
- Sean Lonergan (JH) d. Bob Cuckler (UI), 7,9,6
- Kai Fischbach (UI) d. Conan Pong (JH), -7,7,7
- Xidong Xu (UI) d. Supratim Ray (JH), 10,7,10
- Yu Cheung Moy (UI) d. Khoi Than (JH), -8,6,9,10

Final
University of Illinois d. Harvard University, 3-0
- Bob Cuckler (UI) d. Silas Xu (HU), -9,9,-9,9,3
- Kai Fischbach (UI) d. Bertold Mueller (HU), -6,8,5,6
- Xidong Xu (UI) d. Boaz Tirosh (HU), 10,7,10

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*Division Champion Northwest Polytechnic University was unable to attend.
In this year’s NCTTA season, divisional champions from 10 divisions around the country converged at University of Pennsylvania to compete in the Team Championships. The 2002-2003 season, which began on October 5 last year, saw the participation of table-tennis teams from 65 colleges, up from 57 in the 2001-2002 season. The universities represented in each division faced their divisional opponents at least twice, with the winner of each division advancing to the Team Championships.

Indeed, NCTTA has witnessed phenomenal growth in the number of member schools and divisions since its inception in 1992. Khoi Than, outgoing NCTTA president who also represented John Hopkins in this year’s tournament, discusses his views about the future of NCTTA, “My hope is for NCTTA to continue this expansion, as this will ensure the organization’s status as a truly national and autonomous association.” Willy Lepalulo, NCTTA Recruitment Director and Florida Division Director, has been working hard to realize this goal. “We are now concentrating on consolidating our efforts to expand into regions that have yet to be represented. Look for NCTTA to be branching out into the Southwest as well as starting a division in Canada!”

One of the major challenges NCTTA is determined to overcome in the years to come is the lack of publicity and attention given to table tennis as a sport in the United States. Presently, table tennis is the most under-represented sport in the collegiate arena and the officers are looking to change that. Zhiyong Zhou, New York City Division Director and captain of the Columbia Team, who came in third in this year’s Group B lineup, says, “We are working hard with the Athletics Department at Columbia to receive more recognition, funding and space accessibility.” Meanwhile, many of the teams are actively recruiting new members, and training them for next year’s season. Jack Wu, president of Univ. of Pennsylvania Table Tennis, who is also the incoming NCTTA vice president, says, “Our club team is very international in composition. The current member count is 30+, and increasing. This is an extremely positive sign of growth of our club.”

The NCTTA 2003-2004 season starts in the fall of this year. Given the rapid expansion of collegiate table tennis to other regions of the country, next year’s season promises to be more exciting and competitive than before. We would like to thank our official corporate sponsors Newgy Industries and Paddle Palace for their continuous support and generous contributions. For the latest information about NCTTA and detailed scores of the tournament, please log on to www.ncta.org. If you would like more information about our organization, or would like to be a sponsor, please e-mail Aik-Ping Ng at publicrelations@ncta.org.

There were 291 players on 34 tables gathered for the Quaker City Open, efficiently run by North American Table Tennis. There were actually over 400 players for the weekend – the ACUI and NCTTA championships were held in conjunction with the Quaker City Open. (See write-ups in this issue.)

Saturday play faced a problem in that the air conditioning wasn’t on, and the gym, with 300 or so people, heated up quickly. College officials at first insisted that it was on, but it obviously either wasn’t turned on, or wasn’t working. So, as one person said, “I get two for the price of one – a tournament and a steam bath.” Fortunately, the air conditioning was on for Sunday, and those who thought they didn’t need warm-ups after the steamy first day were in for a cool awakening.

The huge turnout did mean putting up as many tables as possible, and some didn’t like how close the tables were together. But the alternative was to have fewer tables, and run later into the night. The amazing thing was that, with such a huge number of players, they never fell more than a few minutes behind, other than individual matches that were sometimes delayed because the previous match on the table was still being played.

Visiting New York for two weeks as a guest of the Manhattan Table Tennis Club and owner/sponsor Jerry Wartski was top-seeded Thomas Keinath of Germany, world #76, with a USATT rating of 2839 (from the last two U.S. Opens/ITTF Pro Tours, and the Stiga Open on the Stiga NATT Tour last year). During his stay, he’s joining the Manhattan club’s regular coaches (former Nigerians Atanda Musa and Mike Oyebode, and Wang Chen), as well as training Wang Chen.

Wang (who would win women’s singles over Lily Yip as well as, surprisingly, making the Open final) is now traveling globally to compete in the ITTF Pro Tour, starting with the recent Qatar Open, where she made the final of Women’s Doubles with Ding Yan of Italy. It’s not like Wang is new to the tour – playing for China, she’s a three-time women’s singles winner in the ITTF Pro Tour, winning the Australian and China Pro Tours in 1996, and the 1997 Japan Pro Tour. Ranked #4 in the world in 1998, she was the 1997 Asian Cup Women’s Singles Champion. And now she’s living and playing for USA! Can Wang Chen + Chang Jun Gao (world #3 in 1996, also playing for China) = Olympic Women’s Doubles medal? Or even in singles?

Wang’s not the only one traveling the world – Oyebode plays professionally in the Italian league seven months a year, and plays and coaches at the Manhattan club the other five. There was an interesting experience that showcased a major difference in how top players view tournaments and schedules. All players in NATT tournaments receive personalized player schedules, and are to report to the control desk for their match slips when their match is scheduled. The great majority of players show up on time. Those that don’t are called on the loudspeaker, and nearly all show at that point.

I was helping out at the control desk this tournament, and at 4:30 on Saturday, the final 16 players in the Open were all scheduled to play in their final four groups of four. As I jotted down in my notes, as of 4:37, exactly ... zero had reported to the desk for their matches. Twelve of them were then called on the loudspeaker. (The table for one group of four was still in use from the previous round, so they were not yet called.) Two of them (David Zhuang and Shao Yu) immediately reported. The desk was forced to search down the other ten (and later the other four) one by one to get them to the tables for their matches. One of the desk crew told me in advance this would happen, as it had in past tournaments.

Open Singles

The top twelve players were seeded into the Final Sixteen, which was divided into four groups of four. All other players played in preliminary round robins. The winners of the round robins then advanced to a single elimination stage, with the final four making the Final Sixteen. The top two players in each of these final round robins then advanced to the quarterfinals.

In the Final Sixteen round robins, the most interesting match was 15-year-old Adam Hugh’s seven-game match with Eric Owens. At the USA Team Trials a week before, Adam had upset Eric. As at the team trials, Adam was able to take away much of Eric’s forehand play, and Eric played too much backhand, while Adam was able to attack from both wings. Eric’s forehand attack finally came out in the end. This time around, Eric won the first two games, but Adam won the next three. However, Eric won the last two and the match, 8,4,8,6,9,8,6. (In game six, Eric had led 10-3, but Adam scored five in a row before losing.) Eric would then be upset in a counterlooping battle by Atanda Musa (-8,8,9,4,8) to finish second in the group, thereby getting a more difficult draw. The other groups went mostly as seeded.

The final eight included four players from the New York/New Jersey area (Musa, Shao, Wang and Zhuang). The odds of all four being on the same half of the draw? One in 35 (work it out!), but that’s what happened.

Quarterfinals

Pradeeban Peter-Paul d. Eric Owens, 6,9,12,9,3,10. A relatively straightforward match, although disappointing for the USA crowd that their 2001 Men’s Singles Champion
Scenes from the Quaker City Open

Photos by Csaba Nagy ©2003
just didn’t seem on top of his game. As Brian Pace (who was helping run the tournament but not playing) pointed out, none of the players who had taken part in the USA Team Trials the week before were playing well, either from physical or mental exhaustion.

Thomas Keinath d. Ignacio Cabrera (CAN), 4,3,20,7.9. Except for the 42-point game three, another straightforward match.

Atanda Musa d. Shao Yu, 9,6,8,10,10. Has Musa ever won an easy game when he could make it close? Shao led most of the last two games, and I’m told had a huge lead in one.

Wang Chen d. David Zhuang, -7,-8,9,7,10,-5,10,4. This was the main match this round, lasting far longer than the other three matches – with this writer the umpire for this 80-minute marathon. Most expected to see Zhuang against Keinath in the final, but it wasn’t to be. Pips-out penholder Zhuang (rated 2739 to Wang’s 2507) started out well, hitting and blocking to win the first two with relative ease against shakehander Wang (pips on backhand, looping forehand). Even after losing the next two in this best of nine, he didn’t seem in serious trouble – yet. He won the fifth, and led 9-6 in the sixth – and that’s when things started to fall apart for him. Wang scored four in a row, and went on to win that game 12-10 to even things at 3-3. After Zhuang easily won game seven (11-5), Wang ran away with game eight, 9-3 – or did she? She hung on to win, but once again it was 12-10! She also ran away with the ninth and final game – and this time there was no last-minute comeback, to the glee of the screaming New York contingent. There would be no “David vs. Goliath” final between Zhuang and Keinath.

### Semifinals

Thomas Keinath d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul, 8,9,10,6,8. This match never seemed in doubt, no matter how close the scores were. Pradeeban battled hard, as he always did, and forced Keinath to pull out his “A” game – which he did. While Pradeeban can loop anything, Keinath can loop anything for a winner.

Wang Chen d. Atanda Musa, 7,9,5,5,9,5,6,8. There’s not much to say about this exhibition between these club-mates other than that the points were spectacular but the match wasn’t really contested.

**Final**

Thomas Keinath d. Wang Chen, 5,8,10,3,6,10. And so we have a final between Keinath and the player he is training. As good as Wang is, she was simply outgunned here – was truly David vs. Goliath in this case, with Keinath’s two-winged looping just too powerful. In game three, Wang led 5-0, but couldn’t hold on. The last point told the story of the match: a serve and a backhand rip by the German Goliath (actually, about two inches shorter than Wang) that went by untouched.

### Other Events

Probably having the best tournament of all was 9-year-old A.J. Brewer of Indiana, rated 1173 for the tournament, but actually rated 1499 coming into the tournament. A.J. won Under 10, Under 1100, Under 1250, Under 3200 Doubles (with father George), and made the quarterfinals of Under 1550. Poor Manuel Tan was on the losing end of all three of the rating events, losing the U1100 final 11-9 in the seventh as A.J. played the role of Goliath in some of these events.

54-year-old Parviz Mojaverian won Under 2375, made the final of Over 40 (against Musa – so much for that event!), and split the Over 50 final with George Brathwaite (who would win Over 60 and make the final of Under 4200 Doubles). Parviz, formerly of New Jersey, and then of Pennsylvania, moved to Kansas City last October for job reasons, and has been practicing twice a week with 2000+ Laura Xiao, who until recently turning 14 was one of the three girls battling for the top spot in the USA Under 14 girls’ rankings.

12-year-old Joseph Wang of Maryland won both Under 13 and Under 16. In the latter, he had a wild 8,9,6,9,10,7,12 final with New Jersey’s Alden Fan. Up 3-1 in games and 6-1 in the fifth (and a match point at 10-9), Joseph seemed to have it clinched, instead had to fight off two match points in the seventh to win. Both players had strong backhands and awesome forehands.

16-year-old Han Xiao of Maryland, with his rating down to 2445 after being over 2500 for a while, had a weird tournament. He had one of his worst losses in several years (and so dropped more points), losing to Scott Endicott (2116) deuce in the fifth in the Open preliminaries (and eventually losing out in a three-way tie by a game and so not advancing, as Larry Bavly, with a 3-0 win over Endicott, advanced instead). However, he’d go on to win Under 18 over Adam Hugh, -9,7,8,-10,6,9, SF: Xiao d. Pierre-Luc Hinse, 7,7,7,6,5,9.

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Interview with U.S. Women’s Champion Chang Jun Gao

By Larry Hodges

- 1996-2002 U.S. National Women’s Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles Champion (no mixed doubles event in 2002)
- 1999 Pan Am Games Gold Medallist in Women’s Singles & Teams
- 1996 – Ranked #3 in the World
- 1994 U.S. Open Women’s Singles Champion
- 1992 Olympic Silver Medallist, Women’s Doubles
- 1991 World Champion, Women’s Doubles

Do you have a sponsor?
Butterfly sponsors my table tennis equipment.

What and where are your current table tennis activities overseas?
East China University of Science and Technology Table Tennis Club.

What are your table tennis goals?
Get a medal for the U.S. in the Olympics.

You’ve just swept the Nationals for the seventh straight year. How much longer do you think you can do that?
It depends on my physical condition.

Who and where do you practice with these days, and how often?
I practice with the University Team members, usually 2 hours a day, 4-5 times a week.

How old were you when you started to play, and how did you start?
I started to play when I was 5. My father showed me.

Who were your coaches?
Tang Yingsheng (from 5 to 11), Yao Qiumin (from 11 to 17), Zhang Xielin (from 17 to 20), Zhang Li (from 20 to 22), Hui Jun (from 22 to 24).

How old were you when you became a member of the Chinese team, and how long were you on the team?
I became a member of the Chinese team when I was 17, and left the Chinese team when I was 24.

Why did you move to the U.S.?
Because I got married.

How would you describe your style of play?
Do whatever I can do, just keep the ball on the table.

If there were anything in your game you could improve, what would it be?
More power.

Do you see any players coming up who might challenge you at some point?
There are a number of girls who can challenge me.

Outside of table tennis, what do you like to do? Hobbies, sports, etc?
Watch TV, movies, read books and swim.
6-year-old Aleksander Karakasevic, the son of former Yugoslavian player and coach Milivoj Karakasevic, is somewhat of a landmine for the Chinese National team. While his world ranking (currently #67) may not identify him as a danger to the top players, his record gives them more than a good reason to pay attention. He eliminated Liu Guoliang—then in his prime—in the first round of the 1997 World Championship, and until recently, he had a winning record over World Champion Wang Liqin. He has won multiple Yugoslavian National Championship titles, and as part of Chicago's Killerspin Team, he has won two consecutive U.S. North American Team Championships.

Karakasevic is a hot-tempered player, very inventive, and extremely entertaining to watch. We chose him for this article, because he performs a very clean version of an inside-out serve, a serve that has been gaining in popularity lately. Although he is a left-hander, the technique is so clear that right-handers should have no trouble understanding it. If you have trouble visualizing it, look at the pictures in a mirror and invert “right” and “left” in this article.

The inside-out serve is not a new idea. Years ago, J.O. Waldner suddenly showed up with a version of it—initially not very well evolved, but very soon quite effective. Lefties adopted it early—Jörg Rosskopf, Vasile Florea, and more recently Michael Maze. Then, more and more, righties discovered its usefulness. Werner Schlager probably uses it more often than any other player. Its growing popularity is in spite of its not being an easy or comfortable motion.

New techniques evolve for different reasons. They can emerge purely as a change from conventional techniques, or someone develops them as a solution to a specific problem, or they just become “fashionable,” because top players are using them, so others copy them without really knowing why they’re useful—but they still contribute to their development. I’m sure Waldner found it while playing around looking for new things. For him, it was a change-
The Inside-Out Serve of Aleksander Karakasevic

By Wei Wang, USATT Certified National Coach and Hall of Famer

up in the serve sequence, designed to confuse his opponent. But, since he prefers to attack with his forehand, he never really capitalized on the serve's true value. The reason, and why lefties were ready to embrace it, lies in the direction of its spin.

The serve makes the ball curve in the opposite direction from a conventional forehand sidespin serve—to a left-hander's right, instead of to the left. When it is returned, the sidespin gets inverted, and the ball curves back towards their right—the backhand. This is slight, and yet noticeable. With a few notable exceptions, lefties usually have a well-developed backhand, so this felt very comfortable to them. It gave them a better chance to use their backhand to open up the point.

Notably, the Chinese players stayed away from this serve for a long time. The Chinese “table tennis doctrine” holds the forehand opening shot up as the most important, most powerful, most flexible and therefore most effective attack technique, and their serves were optimized for that. Only recently have we seen some Chinese players experimenting with it, for example Kong Linghui and Wang Liqin, players who have strong backhands and want to use them more.

The effect is somewhat similar to that of a backhand serve. Zoran Primorac and Jörgen Persson have long made good use of the opportunities gained from that sidespin. The advantage of creating it with a forehand serve is that the body's momentum favors following through to a body position that makes the backhand opening shot more comfortable.

Although useful in any match, this serve is most effective against “opposite-handed” players—lefties against righties or vice versa, because the mechanics of returning it from the opposite side produces a slower, more floating ball. Actually, this can initially create problems for the server, because it breaks his habitual rhythm, but once he learns that, he can take a very severe shot off that return.

The serve motion is not so easy to learn, because it conflicts with the motion of conventional serves. For conventional serves we usually raise the hand on the backswing and then swing down across and under the ball. This serve motion requires the elbow to be raised high (3) and then the hand to be thrown sideways (in the opposite direction) and forward into the ball. It is also difficult to keep the contact point legal. If you look carefully, you’ll see that Karakasevic just barely manages to contact in front of the rearmost part of his body (6, 7).

Pay attention to his racket. On the backswing, he angles his wrist down and backward (2). At the beginning of the forward swing (4), the racket points almost straight back—parallel to the end-line, since his stance is lateral. He then brushes right to left and forward across the lower rear part of the ball to produce side-underspin (4–8). During the stroke he rotates his body to the right, steps in with his right foot on contact and then brings his left foot around (10).

If you are just starting to groove serves, you might actually consider starting immediately with this motion—elbow up and hand back—because you can produce both directions of sidespin from that motion and the serve becomes more deceptive that way.

This serve is not for everybody. If you are forehand dominant, or if your backhand is weak, it won’t work as well for you. But if you have a good backhand attack and want to use it more frequently, you’ll find that this serve will give you many more opportunities.

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Khaleel and Michael, along with Pan Lin and Eric Finkelstein (previously profiled), dominated the Under 16 boys’ events at the last Junior Olympics/Junior Nationals. The two won gold in doubles and teams, as well as a handful of silver and bronze medals in the singles events. The two get great competition in Maryland, especially when playing in the Maryland Elite League on Saturdays (see www.mdttc.com), where the players range from 2100 to 2500.

Khaleel has been playing for as long as he can remember. He has been playing ever since he could hold the racket (because his father was a member of the national team for Trinidad and Tobago). He played his first tournament when he was nine years old. He started playing at the Baltimore Table Tennis Club (BTTC) and moved up until he could beat every player there.

Khaleel’s family came to the U.S. when he was five, from Trinidad and Tobago, so Khaleel and his sister would have better college opportunities.

Khaleel’s main coach is his father, Nazruddin “Oscar” Asgarali, who is currently rated 2279, but was probably much better during his more serious playing days on the Trinidad and Tobago team. Khaleel has also recently started taking lessons from Coach Jack Huang at the Maryland Table Tennis Center.

Having a father for a coach can be difficult. Khaleel said that they often don’t see eye to eye, and that they are both stubborn. Sometimes Khaleel doesn’t want to talk about a tough match that he lost, and his dad will bring it up. However, they always find a way to make it work.

Khaleel practices at the BTTC with his dad and with Larry Abass about once a week. During the tournament season, he tries to play four times a week. He also plays in the Maryland Table Tennis Center (MDTTC) Elite League on Saturday mornings twice a month.

Khaleel describes his game as close-to-the-table attack, with a very strong backhand and good rallying game. He’s not a power player, but keeps coming at you with his attack. He says he’s working to improve his loop, and wants to develop more power on his forehand side. He’s also working on his footwork, which he says can never be too strong, and on his serve and return of serve. He says he sometimes doesn’t concentrate hard enough, or gets distracted, and so is also working on the mental side of his game. He said that no world-class table tennis player could have such mental weaknesses.
Michael Shao

Age/DOB: 16/August 25, 1986
Residence: Rockville, MD
Highest Rating: 2193
Current Rating: 2193
Sponsor: None, but is hoping for one!
Club(s): Maryland Table Tennis Center
Potomac Country Table Tennis Club
Equipment: Butterfly Schlager Carbon

Best Titles
- 2002 U.S. Under 16 Boy’s Doubles & Teams Gold Medalist
- 2002 U.S. Junior Nationals Under 16 Boys’ Singles Bronze Medalist
- 2001 U.S. Junior Olympics Under 16 Boys’ Singles Bronze Medalist
- 2001 U.S. Junior Olympics Under 16 Boys’ Singles Silver Medalist
- 2001 U.S. Junior Nationals Under 16 Boys’ Singles Silver Medalist
- 2001 U.S. Under 16 Boy’s Teams & Doubles Gold Medalist

When Michael was nine, the father of another nine-year-old – Han Xiao – told Michael’s dad about Coach Cheng Yinghua, and they decided to give table tennis a try. About a year later he played his first tournament, and got his first rating – 1021. Later, Michael had a great tournament, winning the under 1100 and under 1300 events, and his rating jumped from 1110 to 1564. It was right after his birthday, and he said it was a great birthday present and a big confidence builder. Since that time, his rating has been climbing almost continuously.

Michael was born in China, but came to the U.S. when he was two years old. His dad came to the U.S. to attend graduate school at Virginia Tech. Michael and his mom came to visit, liked the U.S., and decided to stay.

Michael usually plays three to four times a week. He has two private lessons with Coach Cheng each week, as well as a group training session where he plays top players such as Han Xiao, Brian Pace, Sean Lonergan, James Duan, as well as this writer. He usually plays at the Maryland Table Tennis Center and sometimes at the Potomac Table Tennis Club.

Michael is a two-winged looper with great power, both speed and spin. He probably has more pure power than any other junior player in the U.S., and can seemingly rip a winner from either wing anytime with either a loop or a smash. He is working hard with Coach Cheng to develop his footwork and consistency.

Michael told Coach Cheng that his goal was to reach 2400 before he goes to college. Cheng thinks he can do it, but that he will have to work hard. With Michael recently improving to 2193, he is well on pace to reaching this goal and going beyond it. His “secret” goal is to play in the 2008 Olympics at his birthplace, Beijing. He says it may be a long shot, but anything is possible.

Outside of table tennis, his long-term goals are to go to a good college, get a good job, and “get rich.”

He is a big fan of all kinds of sports, but his favorite is basketball, which he both plays and watches. He also loves music, and his friends tell him he should be on American Idol because they say he is a great singer. Outside of sports and music, he says his life is uneventful – except for his brand new Infiniti G35 Sport Coupe! Michael is counting the days until he gets his driver’s license – but by the time you read this, he should have it, and the roads will be his. Could this lead to more practice sessions?
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