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SASA DRINIC Wins the Buckeye Open
CHETAN BABOOR Wins the Quaker City Open
FIVE USA PLAYERS Qualify for Singles at the Olympics
CHINA Sweeps the World Team Championships
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- Operation Manual

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ON THE COVER:
California Open Champion Fan Yi Yong by Kingston Gee ©2004

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4 USA Table Tennis Magazine • May/June 2004
Jan-Ove Waldner Olympic Winner, 6-times World Champion, 11-times European Champion, 7-times Top 12 Winner, Twice World Cup Winner

Jörgen Persson 5-times World Champion, 9-times European Champion, Top 12 Winner, World Cup Winner

Chuen Chi-Yuan ITTF Pro Tour Final winner 2002, World Ranking no. 4 (March 2003)

Alexij Smirnov Vice European Champion men's double 2003 World Ranking no. 11 (July 2003)

Torben Wnek Vice European Champion men's singles and Team event 2003

Mikael Appelgren 4-times World Champion, 8 times European Champion, Twice Top 12 Winner, World Cup Winner

Adrian Crisan Romanian Single's Champion 2001, 2002


Laura Negrisoli European Team Champion with Italy 2003

Martin Bratenov Vice WITC Team Champion with Belgium 2001


The Belgium National Men's Team Vice World Champion 2001, Twice European League winner

Russian National Ladies' and Men's Teams

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Call for Nominations for Board of Directors
By Ross Brown, Chairman, Nominating & Elections Committee

This year, the term of office will expire for the President, Mrs. Sheri Pittman; the Secretary, Mr. Tim Boggan; and two Vice-Presidents at large, Mr. Bob Fox and Mr. Robert Mayer. USATT will conduct its regular election to fill these posts. Ballots will be mailed out in the first week of September to all adult (at least 18 years of age as of August 1, 2004) USATT members. In order to be counted, ballots must be returned to the USATT offices in Colorado Springs by the close of the business day on Friday, October 8.

There are several ways by which an individual may be placed upon the ballot. (1) An individual may be an incumbent eligible for and desirous of running for another term; (2) an individual may be submitted by the Nominating & Elections Committee and approved by at least one Board Member; (3) an individual may be added by majority vote of the Board; or (4) an individual may be added through petition.

Any incumbent eligible for and desirous of running for re-election gets an automatic berth. The Nominating & Elections Committee will select two names to submit to the Board. In general, one of these will be the incumbent. The opposing candidate will be chosen by the Committee. At least one Board Member must second this candidate, or the Committee must submit an alternate. You are welcome to volunteer to be considered. You may nominate a friend. You may nominate an enemy. In order to be considered, all candidates must sign a statement that they are eligible and willing to serve. The statement will include a pledge to uphold the USATT Constitution and By-Laws. The Committee’s selections must be submitted to the Board in June, so it will be very difficult to include in considerations any name not brought to the Committee before May 10.

The Board itself may add one more candidate for each position to be elected, by majority vote. You can gain a berth on the ballot by petition. Nomination requires at least 150 signatures of adult USATT members. The Committee will provide the requisite forms to anyone who requests them.

The names of all those seeking a position on the Board can be brought to me via e-mail, the preferred option: ross@rossb.net; fax: (706-354-8950); or mail to Ross Brown, Nominating & Elections Committee, 145 Autumnwood Ave., Athens, GA 30606.

2004 Junior Olympics and Junior Nationals
Des Moines, IA • July 30-Aug. 1, 2004 • By Alan Williams

There’s not much doubt about the best event in America for Junior Table Tennis players, it’s the AAU Junior Olympics! The Junior Olympics are an annual competition, landing in a different U.S. city each year. This year the 38th edition of this sports festival is taking place in Des Moines, Iowa. The Table Tennis events are being played on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, July 30-Aug. 1 at Bowling High School. The Junior Nationals and Junior Teams are held in conjunction with the Junior Olympics, so you get three for the price of one!!

The Junior Olympics award medals in dozens of sports, and receive lots of media coverage. It’s an enormous undertaking, and is efficiently and professionally run.

Table Tennis participation has been growing over the past four years, and that’s something that the Amateur Athletic Union notices. There are several qualities that make the event optimal for youngster. All competition is organized by age and by AAU affiliation. I’ve rarely seen players have as much fun as they do at this event, meeting and competing with players of their own age and impressing all the kids from other sports that wander through the venue. While a victory and a Gold Medal in these games is a real resume-builder, and the competition is earnest and hard-fought, bruised feelings and disputes are few and far between.

The focus here is completely on the Juniors. (Age events are from Under 10 to Under 22.) NATT provides the tournament operations, so everything is well organized. Ask the players who have played the Junior Olympics in the past and they will share with you their positive past experiences! Entry deadline is Tuesday, July 13, 2004. For complete entry information, visit this web site: www.aauirogames.org/tabletennis.html.

USATT League Watch
Sponsored by Paddle Palace and Stiga • www.usatt.org/league • By USATT League Director Larry Hodges

Below are the current stats on the USATT League, which now has leagues in about 40 states. Take a trip to www.usatt.org/league, explore the pages, and join – or start! – a league!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sept. 1</th>
<th>Oct. 1</th>
<th>Nov. 1</th>
<th>Dec. 1</th>
<th>Jan. 1</th>
<th>Feb. 1</th>
<th>Mar. 1</th>
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<td>Active Leagues</td>
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<td>33</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League Participants</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>1233</td>
<td>1425</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League Matches</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>1213</td>
<td>4118</td>
<td>6787</td>
<td>8363</td>
<td>9911</td>
<td>13,696</td>
<td>17,298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now that the Meiklejohn Quaker City Open is past, we have had many questions about Bill Meiklejohn and his interest in table tennis. As you know, he is also the main sponsor of the upcoming Meiklejohn National Senior Championships in Laguna Woods, CA, June 3-6, 2004.

Back in the days we remember as the “nostalgic” 1930’s, Bill was lettering in five sports at Peekskill New York Military School—baseball, basketball, tennis, swimming and lacrosse. In 1938, he entered the University of Pennsylvania, of which he still thinks of lovingly, and where stands the “Bill and Louise Meiklejohn Sports Complex.” You see, when Bill’s dad decided that the U.S. Post Office was too slow delivering the mail and packages (back when postage was 3 cents for a first-class letter!), he came up with the idea of starting his own delivery system with a friend. His company has now grown to be called UPS, and Bill loves to share his good fortune with local hospitals, his alma mater, and table tennis, which at one time he was an outstanding player. Unfortunately, an old sports injury has curtailed his table tennis participation of late, so he is now challenging Ernest Hemingway as a deep-sea fisher. In 1999, Bill and his wife, Louise, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, and everyone at the California Hall of Fame dinner toasted their happiness and sang Happy Birthday for his then 80th birthday.

If you would like to compete in the upcoming Meiklejohn Senior Championships in Laguna Woods this June, and you have not yet sent in your entry form, hurry up! The tournament director, Ray Kunze (949-583-1695) is anticipating 300 players this time! Ray mentioned that a new trend has become apparent: more and more players with higher ratings (2000 and up) have been entering the competitions. However, he would like to also encourage those who are “recreational players” to participate in rating events from Under 1100 to Under 1900. The tournament schedule is very flexible, so that the older players will not become too tired and will not need to play so many events on the same day.

With the larger senior tournament in Philadelphia in March, the beginning of a Senior Circuit is being developed around the country, which could also develop around the world. So keep your paddle ready!

Corrections

In the previous issue, page 35, in the Nationals photo gallery, there is a photo of Colleen Lee that is labeled as Stephanie Shih.

In the previous issue, page 9, there is a short article about Nottingham Trent University setting a record for the “longest rally,” with a rally of 5 hours, 8 minutes and 22 seconds. However, we’ve since learned that this was in error—the record was set, and is still held by, Rich DeWitt and Richard Bowling, who rallied for 10 hours and 9 minutes on July 26, 1983, as noted in the 1984 Guinness World Record Book.

In the previous issue, page 50, the photo of Under 2000 Hardbat Champion Scott Gordon was incorrectly captioned as “Steve Gordon.”

In the Jan/Feb 2004 issue, page 65, in the Millcreek Open results, the scores of the Under 1100 event were listed incorrectly. The proper score was Dan Barnes d. Berl Stein, 7,9,7.
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Western Open
Tournament Info
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 20, 2004.
Check-in: Starts on Saturday, September 4, 2004 at 8AM.
Ratings: Ratings from the July/August issue of the 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 Table Tennis for $75 rate.

Additional Tour Info:
Proof of Membership: All participants must be able to show proof of current membership with USATT or an ITTF recognized body. Membership can be renewed or purchased at the event.
Office Tournament Equipment: Stiga Equipment, and orange 40mm 3 star balls.
Refunds: After the entry deadline, no refunds.
Policies: Players may not enter two events with identical start times. Events can be cancelled or combined at the discretion of the tournament committee. No prizes will be awarded for splits, dumps, default losses or no-shows. Play will be conducted under ITTF rules and NATT policies. All decisions of the referee are final.
Entry Deadline: Entries must be postmarked 15 days prior to the 1st day of the tournament. Entries postmarked late will either be accepted with a $20 late fee, or be rejected, based on available space.
Check-in: Participants are required to check-in 30 minutes prior to their first event.

Eastern Open
Tournament Info
Venue: Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ at the Werblin Recreation Center. Wood floors and excellent lighting.
Entry Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by FRIDAY, July 9, 2004.
Check-in: Starts on Saturday, July 24, 2004 at 8AM.
Ratings: Ratings from the July/August issue of the USATT Magazine will be used.
Airport: Newark International Airport
Official Tournament Hotel: Sierras Suites
732-235-1000
410 S. Randolphville Road
Piscataway, NJ 08854
Mention Table Tennis for $69 rate.

Register Online: www.natabletennis.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tournament Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stiga Open</td>
<td>6/12-13</td>
<td>5/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Open</td>
<td>7/24-25</td>
<td>7/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew J. Murad Memorial Open</td>
<td>8/21-22</td>
<td>8/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Open</td>
<td>9/4-5</td>
<td>8/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One stop down, four more to go!

**Event Staff:**
Richard Lee, Fong Hsu, Wendy Troy, Alan Williams, Jose Palmar, and Mary Palmar.

**Stiga Open**
**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 28, 2004.  
**Check-in:** Starts on Saturday, June 12, 2004 at 8AM.  
**Ratings:** Ratings from the May/June issue of the USATT Magazine will be used.  
**Airport:** Philadelphia Int’l Airport (50 min away) or by train  
**Official Tournament Hotel:**  
Sleep Inn  
302-453-1700  
630 S. College Avenue  
Newark, DE 19713

**Matthew J. Murad Memorial Open**
**Tournament Info**
**Referee:** Terry Bell  
**Venue:** Discovery Sports Center, 18031 Central Park Circle, Boyds, MD 20841. Rubber floors and excellent lighting.  
**Entry Deadline:** Entries must be postmarked by FRIDAY, August 6, 2004.  
**Check-in:** Starts on Saturday, August 21, 2004 at 8AM.  
**Ratings:** Ratings from the July/August issue of the USATT Magazine will be used.  
**Airport:** Dulles, Reagan National and BWI Airports  
**Official Tournament Hotel:**  
Gaithersburg Marriott Washingtonian Center  
800-228-9290  
9751 Washingtonian Boulevard  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
Mention Table Tennis for $75 rate.
Interview with Jasna Reed

USA Women's Singles & Doubles, Mixed Doubles Champion
By Larry Hodges

Age: Not telling!
Height/weight: 5'7", 117lbs
Coaches: Fikret Fazlic, Davorin Kvesic, Zlatko Novakovic (longest and most influential), Bela Sel, Doru Gheorghe
Blade: Tibhar
FH rubber: Sriver FX 2.1
BH rubber: Sriver FX 2.1
Glue: Tibhar - Rapid

Major Titles
- 1988 Olympic Bronze Medal – Women's Doubles (Seoul)
- 1988 European gold – Mixed Doubles with Ilija Lupulesku (Paris)
- 1991 two Gold's – Women's Singles & Doubles at Mediterranean Games (Athens)
- 1991 two Gold's – Women's Singles & Doubles at Balkan Games
- 1992 European gold – Women's Doubles with Gordana Perkovic (Stuttgart)
- A number of 2nd and 3rd places in Singles in International Tournaments (German Open, Romanian Open, Bulgarian Open, U.S. Open, etc.)
- A number of 1st and 3rd places in Mixed and Women's Doubles in International Tournaments (Hungarian Open, German Open, Romanian Open, Bulgarian Open, French Open, Austrian Open, etc.)
- Member, 2000 & 2004 USA Olympic Team (#1 at 2004 USA and North American Trials)
- Member, USA National Team, 2000 to present
- 2001 North American Champion – Women's Doubles
- 2001 & 2002 USA National Champion – Women's Doubles
- 2003 Gold Medal – Pan-American Games – Women's Doubles
- 2003 USA National Women's Singles & Doubles, Mixed Doubles Champion
- 1992 Olympic Bronze Medal – Women's Doubles (Seoul)
- 1992 European gold – Mixed Doubles with Ilija Lupulesku (Paris)
- 1991 two Gold's – Women's Singles & Doubles at Mediterranean Games (Athens)
- 1991 two Gold's – Women's Singles & Doubles at Balkan Games
- 1992 European gold – Women's Doubles with Gordana Perkovic (Stuttgart)
- A number of 2nd and 3rd places in Singles in International Tournaments (German Open, Romanian Open, Bulgarian Open, U.S. Open, etc.)
- A number of 1st and 3rd places in Mixed and Women's Doubles in International Tournaments (Hungarian Open, German Open, Romanian Open, Bulgarian Open, French Open, Austrian Open, etc.)
- Member, 2000 & 2004 USA Olympic Team (#1 at 2004 USA and North American Trials)
- Member, USA National Team, 2000 to present
- 2001 North American Champion – Women's Doubles
- 2001 & 2002 USA National Champion – Women's Doubles
- 2003 Gold Medal – Pan-American Games – Women's Doubles
- 2003 USA National Women's Singles & Doubles, Mixed Doubles Champion

What is your table tennis situation right now? Where do you play, are you sponsored, etc.?

Since leaving Killerspin (working for them) in April 2003, I have been playing for a club in Germany and playing several Pro Tour events. This, and the commitments for the U.S. Team, are great preparation for the Olympics.

Thanks to Guenther Schroeder at American Table Tennis, who got me some real equipment just before the Nationals – rubber that I was actually able to play with – I was able to win there.

You swept the “Big Three” at the USA Nationals (women’s singles, doubles and mixed doubles). How did you prepare for that tournament?

Last fall, playing in the German Club and the German, Danish and Swedish Opens, I began playing better. I went up about 40 places in the world (to about 115) and was having success playing for my club. Because I am an experienced player, I prefer to play more matches and have less training prior to important events.

I knew that Gao was not playing and thus my chances were much better than normal. I still thought though that I wouldn’t win because of all the problems I had with my former sponsor just before the tournament. In just a matter of a week – and while traveling – I had to replace all clothing and to obtain new equipment on my own. I’m glad in the end that it worked out for me, and for Lupi (finishing the final with my racket!).

What was the most difficult title or match at the Nationals?

For me, every match is the same. I approach every match as though it was the final at the worlds.

I know you don’t want to give away any “secrets,” but in general, when you play rival Tawny Banh (who you played in the women’s singles final at the Nationals), what tactics do you use? How do you play her?

I divide the table into 54 regular triangles along the table bias. Intensive computer analysis created by excessive DVD watching projects that not more than 5 triangles intersect each shot. As I take my backswing, I approximate the value of my opponent’s stock holdings, find the square root, and play accordingly. (Ha, ha!).

More seriously, I really don’t have any special tactics against anyone. I am not that kind of player to analyze everything the way most people do. I go and play, and just feel it. I guess I am able to make instant decisions, while playing games. You cannot ever totally predict what an opponent has for you this time, so you better be ready to have quick answers right there at the table. That is the only philosophy I go by. If I really care about winning a match, than I fight like an animal, and I am 200% with my head in the game. When I lose focus I am in trouble. How I see it is all in my head, and my approach!

In general, how do you prepare for major tournaments such as the USA Nationals, Team Trials and the Worlds?

I yell at Bob [Allhouse]. I am not kidding. I do tend to yell at people before important events, because I am stressed. I was doing that even at an early age. These years I am not doing any serious preparations, I just go to tournaments or matches and I transform into “Gladiator”!

How is it different in the U.S. compared to Europe and Croatia?

Bob is not there, so I yell at Frank [the manager of her German team].

Other players in Europe play twice a day, and before the Worlds or Olympics they have even more training camps. They have lots of physical work too. This year in Europe was for me not a big difference in practice than here, since I am not obligated to practice with my club, and anyway I have the basics in my game, so if I play many matches and tournaments, I still tend to improve my condition and game. That shouldn’t be an example for our kids; they need lots of practice, as I had long ago.

What do you like to do outside table tennis? Hobbies, sports, etc.

This year, I am constantly traveling in Europe to matches, or back and forth to the U.S. for trials and tournaments. So, I get to watch lots of movies on the planes. I am a movie and TV freak. Many things can interest me, but not so many keep my attention, or stay fun for a long time.

Continued on page 18
USA Table Tennis
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President’s Report

By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

One of the primary responsibilities of the USATT president is to serve as the official representative of our organization. Over the past several years I have described many of USATT’s interactions with the USOC. In this issue’s “association primer series,” I will discuss what meetings and functions I attended at the World Championships.

Women’s Working Group (WWG)

As the ITTF’s North American representative to this group, I attended two meetings, and the half-day Women’s Forum. In response to IOC targets, this ITTF working group is creating strategies to develop and oversee initiatives to increase the quality and quantity of women’s participation as athletes, coaches, tournament officials and volunteer leaders. We created preliminary objectives and a plan to meet them. If you are interested in working on these initiatives for USATT, please contact me.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

I attended the AGM as USATT’s delegate. Besides delegates from national associations, the ITTF Executive Committee Members, Continental Vice Presidents and Committee Chairs attend this meeting. The ITTF circulates reports by the officers and committee chairs in advance. The reports are formally accepted by the ITTF at this meeting. Propositions and other matters requiring votes are also taken up.

During the service rule proposal, Koji Kimura (Japan), with paddle in hand, demonstrated how the proposed “simplified” language would actually create a whole new set of interpretation difficulties. A working group will recommend a revised rule that will be easier to interpret and apply.

The other important vote was the awarding of the 2007 World Championships. Zagreb, Croatia was the winner over Sweden by a roughly 2-1 margin. USATT had submitted a bid in cooperation with Killerspin, the City of Chicago, and the State of Illinois. I explained to the body that as we were in the process of working on the bid, we decided to strengthen our mutual cooperation first by entering into a sponsorship and licensing agreement for the 2004, 2005 and 2006 U.S. Opens/ITTF Pro Tours. As a result of that extensive agreement, we decided to postpone our bid until next year for the 2008 World Team Championships.

The ITTF also introduced its comprehensive new book entitled ITTF Coaching Manual. This manual is especially helpful for training new coaches and community-level instructors.

ITTF Development Meeting

This meeting was run by Glenn Tepper, ITTF’s Development Manager. Continental Development Officers and the ITTF Technical Development Officer Roman Plese also presented reports. The ITTF funds a development officer in every continent except North America. It was therefore, a great opportunity to learn about promotional and coaching efforts taking place throughout the world.

ITTF Board of Directors Meeting

The ITTF Board of Directors consists of the Executive Committee Members, Continental Vice Presidents, Continental Representatives and Co-Opted Committee Chairs. I attended this meeting because ITTF President Adham Sharaa, North American Continental Vice President Aly Salam and I had mutually agreed that I would resume the North American Continental Vice Presidency. Aly formally requested approval for the change, which was granted. I thank Aly for his many contributions.

The most riveting discussion that took place concerned the decision to phase-in a ban of toxic adhesives for the benefit of our sport’s athletes.

North American Table Tennis Union Meeting

USATT and Canadian Table Tennis Association representatives met. (Bermuda and Greenland, the other two NATTU countries, did not attend the World Championships.) Our executive directors will bear the primary responsibility of overseeing compliance with our Continental Agreement. We will also register as an entity and open a bank account in order to handle NATTU funds. Compared to the other highly active continental unions, NATTU is just beginning.

Ceremonies and Celebrations

The Arabian hospitality shown by Qatar was exceptional. I congratulate and thank the Qatar Table Tennis Association for a job well done. Both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies featured state-of-the-art light shows and pyrotechnics. I also attended a special dinner engagement hosted by the QTTA.

Informal Meetings

Every day I took advantage of the multiple opportunities to meet with other leaders and to benefit from their wisdom and experience.

I thank the Americans in attendance that, depending on their function at the time, cheered for our team or just lent their supportive presence. Most especially, I thank the USATT national team, coaches and team leader. Everyone gave their best effort and cooperated well. Virtually every team we competed against consisted of full-time professional athletes. USATT is working hard to move toward that model.

As our association continues to evolve, there are greater needs for resources. Thanks to our dedicated staff, tournament officials, and USATT’s volunteers at all levels who are stepping forward to help! There are still many opportunities to participate. Doru and I encourage you to contact us if you are interested in lending your talents or underwriting USATT initiatives.

Executive Director’s Report

By Teodor “Doru” Gheorghe

I would like to start my report by announcing that the U.S. Open/ITTF Pro Tour will be held in Chicago, at Navy Pier, June 30-July 4. The official hotel is the Marriott Hotel. Information is available at the 2004 U.S. Open home page, linked to www.usatt.org.

Because there have been various rumors regarding the U.S. Open, let me clarify some issues:

- USATT is the organizer of the U.S. Open/ITTF Pro Tour, and is entirely responsible for running these events.
- Killerspin is the Title Sponsor, and will be in charge of sponsorship management and TV Production of the U.S. Open/ITTF Pro Tour. It also has the exclusive right to distribute event-related media it has produced for domestic USA broadcast and sales.
- North American Table Tennis (NATT) was hired by USATT to help with registration, scheduling and public relations to increase the number of entrants, draws and all logistics related to the U.S. Open.
- Butterfly is the table sponsor, Nittaku the ball sponsor, and Table Tennis Pioneers/Stiga/Aska the clothing sponsor of the U.S. National Teams.
- I would like to encourage everyone to participate in this tournament and enter before the deadline. Because it is an ITTF Pro Tour event, we will not allow any entries after the deadline.
- I would like to thank all of you who contributed to the Floor Mat fundraising program, and I hope more of you will make donations in the future to improve our playing conditions at the 2004 Nationals. As of this writing, $4925 has been raised. Each dollar you donate will make a difference.

From February 14-22, 2004, our junior boys’ and girls’ teams participated in an ITTF training camp in Koping, Sweden and in the Swedish Junior Open, in Orebro. There are more tournaments scheduled for this year for our National Junior and Cadet teams.

USATT is in the process of hiring a Technical/High Performance Director who will be in charge of coaching development, working with National team coaches, and other assigned tasks.

Administrative Coordinator Chris McCartney left USATT on March 8 to move to New York State and join her family. USATT would like to thank her for the great job she did, and wish her all the best. I would like to welcome aboard Joyce Grooms as our New Administrative Coordinator.

New Committee Chairs were appointed and approved by the board: Morris Jackson chairs the Training Center Committee, and Ross Brown the Nomination and Election Committee. Members of these and other committees will be in place soon. All these committees will help USATT in implementing the USATT Developmental Strategic Plan.

The USATT Online Forum is up and running, and I invite you to support it by visiting it often and participating in table tennis discussions. If you have any questions related to USATT business, please feel free to ask on the forum (linked to www.usatt.org), or as always you may email me at ed@usatt.org.
Fiscal Year 2003 Financial Report

In fiscal year 2003, the USATT continued to make progress in strengthening its financial position and increase reserves. Revenues totaled $1,038,256 and expenses were $914,635, resulting in a surplus of $123,621. Net total assets, defined as total assets less total liabilities increased from $171,222 to $294,843 during the year. The combined profit of $53,000 compared to a loss of $14,000 the previous year represents a turnaround of over $67,000. The results of the Nationals were particularly encouraging as they were achieved even with the additional expense of outsourcing certain tournament functions to North American Table Tennis (Note: USATT did not pay NATT for outsourced work for the U.S. Open). A major reason for the profitability of the Open was because we skipped the ITTF Pro Tour. Other reasons for profitability were that we maintained a watchful eye on expenses and increased sponsorship revenue and entry fees. Rating fees increased by over 50% even though the regular rating fee was increased by 33% (from $3 to $4), but only after May 5, 2003. This shows that, an increase in rating fee notwithstanding, there was a substantial increase in tournament participation from more players and/or players were more active in tournaments. In any case, this is significant for our equipment sponsors – if there are more players and more tournament participation, more equipment must be used. Our sponsors must be selling more and should be willing and able to re-invest some of their profits in sponsorship money to the USATT in the future.

We put $200,000 in an interesting-bearing savings account. This could be done because of the improved cash flow position of the Association, and this amount was not needed for day-to-day operations. We also opened a brokerage account to park over $1,000 worth of Microsoft shares that were donated by a USATT member.

The early termination of the Oakbrook contract in early April reduced the expenses for the Oakbrook Training Center and its mandated coach by over $25,000. All these savings were redirected to the Elite Athlete Committee budget and resulted in more money for our athletes.

For more financial details, please view USATT 2003 tax return, IRS Form 990, that will be posted in May at www.usatt.org.

Looking Ahead

Despite two successive outstanding fiscal years, the Board of Directors will continue with its policy to run the Association on a surplus budget and to build up reserves. The 2004 Budget projects a surplus of $50,000. The Board of Directors, together with the Executive Director and his staff, is working on and looking at new programs to generate new sources of revenue and doing old things more professionally. We have brought back the ITTF Pro Tour because it is a popular membership benefit, but we are budgeting a surplus for the U.S. Open/ITTF Pro Tour.
Continued from page 14

What are your table tennis goals?

Realistic or bogus ones? Ok, I want to get another Olympic Medal. I am kind of disappointed that since my first Olympics, I (and my partner, Gordana Perkovic) are still the only non-Asian women with Olympic medals, so I guess if no one else wants it, then I should try it once again!!! Another thing is that I cannot see myself outside of table tennis. It is just so different, the lifestyle of people who are not so serious involved in some sport, and it is not easy to let go of something you identify yourself with. Who knows where and how I will end up! Those who know me well know that they can expect just about anything from me! That is the real Jasna – almost everything is possible.

What are your non-table tennis goals?

Four years ago, I told you that I wanted to become a teacher (Social Studies), and boom, it happened (2002). Because this is an Olympic year I am a professional table tennis player only. I am not sure yet what to do next season, but it is very possible that I might play one more year in Europe. It is fun for me, but financially it is better to teach again.

At the worlds Tawny, Jackie and I were joking all the time how Tawny Barsh is going to open a flower shop and Jackie Lee a cookie factory. My job will be to organize the flowers and cookies (They were messing with me because when we roomed together I had to have everything just in the right place, and I would even put their things in order).

An Official’s View

The Topic of the Hour: The Service Rule
By “Dr. Azmy”

Before I get to the issue at hand, I would like to cover a question that has been sent to me by an umpire who was just playing at a tournament. The question was, “I am an International Umpire and was participating in a tournament as a player. Can I interfere in a game and try to ask players to correct their serves or other mistakes violating the rules of the sport?”

It reminds me of the situation when an umpire is sitting watching a match in a tournament and suddenly the ball touches the net or the edge of the table, and the umpire finds himself almost jumping from his chair to say a net or an edge, etc. Or when a player is watching his best friend playing, and he moves with every shot his friend is hitting.

The answer is simply NO, as a player you are just a player like every other player in the tournament. You perform only your role. However, you can help if asked by the tournament Referee, Director, or Manager to help by umpiring during the tournament. I also have to add, you should umpire only the matches you are asked to umpire. However, if you are asked to keep an eye on all the tables at the tournament, which sometimes is the case in small tournaments, only then may you interfere and correct the play.

Now back to the topic at hand, the service rule. I have just returned from the World Team Championships at Doha, Qatar, after serving as a deputy referee. I have to say it was a very strong, successful, well-organized tournament. Qatar is a rich country and they did their best to show their generosity and friendship to all the players, coaches, umpires, officials, volunteers, delegates, spectators, etc. China dominated the play at the tournament with high level, superb performances. The level of play was high caliber. Most matches stretched to five games with many deuces in the fifth game.

Only one hitch kept rocking the harmony of the tournament and that was the new addition to the service rule: the removal of the free arm from the area between the server’s body and the posts of the net. On one hand it seemed that some players and coaches, from some countries, did not hear about the new rule. Some knew about it but did not feel it necessary. And some kept asking about the reason for the rule, especially when it was clear the server’s arm did not hide the ball from the receiver.

On the other hand, the umpires were under the gun. The tournament was preceded by a two-day workshop to train evaluators how to evaluate umpires objectively. Knowing that they were being observed and graded while umpiring, the umpires felt obliged to enforce the rule.

The result was a lot of conflict between some players and coaches, and the umpires. It took a lot of courtesy and convincing to some, and a lot of yellow and red cards to others.

The question is: Where to go from here? I have to say the umpires are facing a difficult situation. Many of them sympathize with the players, because they may agree with some of their points of view. But they have to enforce the rules for the sake of fairness to those players who are adhering to the rules. One has to look to it this way, we as umpires and officials have duties and responsibilities. Our duties as umpires are to enforce the rules, and that is what we have pledged when we accepted to serve at the tournaments these days. But as umpires and officials we have a greater responsibility to help the sport to grow and succeed and move to higher levels of harmony and cooperation between players, coaches, umpires, officials, etc. With that in mind we can raise our voices to suggest possible changes that may help the sport.

Voices have been raised enough in the ITTF Rules Committee to propose some positive change. It seems that other officials and committees have also raised their concerns. It is my understanding that Adham Sharara, the President of the ITTF, has announced that there will be a committee formed of officials, umpires, players, coaches, and some representatives from other committees, for the purpose of studying the service rules and come to a simpler and more applicable proposal to help alleviate the problem.

Any funny or interesting stories or experiences you’ve had in your years in table tennis?

Buy my upcoming book, I can’t tell much more about it at the moment! Every day with me is another bizarre story!

Would you say that you and Lupi are the happiest, most friendly “former married couple” ever? What is your relationship with him these days, besides the dominant mixed doubles team in the U.S.?

The 2000 Olympics was the first time we talked after the divorce in ’97. We got along great ever since. I’m also good friends with his wife (Zuza) and daughter (Leona) and visit them whenever I am in Chicago. His family is very nice to me.

What’s your advice for up-and-coming players?

Don’t forget the triangles! No need to practice, but keep watching those DVD’s!

The USATT Rules/Officials Committee is proposing a modified version, and this may be the time for its adoption. In fact, passing the proposal to many delegates and officials of other associations, and discussing it at the Rules Committee meetings, has gained some approvals. The following is the text of the proposal:

“During the serve, no part of the server’s body or his partner’s will be above or between the ball (and its extended horizontal line), resting on his flat hand, and his end line of the table.”

Justification

1. This will guarantee the visibility of the ball to his opponent, umpires, and audiences (except those sitting behind the players).
2. The end line has been a focal point during the serve for years, as the ball has to be behind and above the end line.
3. It is easy for players to understand and apply.
4. It will give the player the flexibility to serve forehand as well as backhand serves.
5. It will create conformity to the rule on both sides of the table. As it is now, when we have only one umpire, a serve can be legal on one side of the table but could be ruled illegal on the other side of the table, because the umpire cannot see it.
6. It is easier for the umpire to apply, and see the ball all the time, regardless if he is working alone or with an assistant umpire.
7. The eyes of the umpires are already watching the end line to see that the ball has to be behind and above it.
8. It avoids all the confusion and misinterpretation of the rule regarding the triangle and the space above it.
9. Finally, the rule will stand on its own merit, like all other rules, regardless of who sees it and who does not.

We hope that this proposal or a similar simple one will be adopted by the ITTF in the near future. I also want to remind the umpires that we as umpires have to apply the rules as they stand at this time, regardless of our personal opinions.
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The Nation of College Table Tennis Players
By Tzu-Wei Lin, Public Relations Director, NCTTA

Last year, there was a player from Johns Hopkins University that went undefeated without dropping a single set at the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA) Nationals, held at the University of Pennsylvania.

His name was Sean Michael Lonergan and probably wasn’t your typical college student—he’s rated 2471. Neither would Eric Owens, from Texas Wesleyan University and boasting a USATT rating of 2559, he “typical.”

What are college table tennis players then? Don’t get me wrong though, because Eric Owens is a college table tennis player, he is not typical because he is one of the model college table tennis players. Every league in any sport has its star players, but who are the people that form the backbone of this “nation of college table tennis players?”

An accurate sample of them consists of the field of collegiate teams marching towards this year’s Nationals, held at City Beach facility, Fremont, CA on April 10-11, 2004.

Now that the snowstorm has settled, this year’s Stiga/Table Tennis Pioneers NCTTA Nationals has begun opening its arms to the respective division champions throughout the NCTTA. The list of schools includes some of the usual suspects like defending champions University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), Columbia University, and the University of Florida (UF), but also features new teams like Auburn University from Alabama, University of Southern Mississippi (USM) from the newly formed Dixie Division.

Last year’s host, University of Pennsylvania, came through by ending Johns Hopkins University 5-yr reign of the Mid-Atlantic Division, thus coming into this with a lot of momentum. These schools and several others will join host Stanford University to contend for the title of national collegiate champions.

College table tennis players have a variety of interests, but a large number of them pursue a degree in an engineering field. UIUC’s team features four engineers of Asian ethnicity, with their MVP Yinyi Yao being a 21-year-old mechanical engineer student. They don’t sound particularly ambitious, however, as “they are just looking for a reason to go to California,” says UIUC member Yu Cheung. But on the other hand, a slew of Stanford players are highly ambitious. They have two economics majors that want to make money by going into investment banking. Stanford’s Chun Kai Wong wants to be a CEO in the future, while fellow teammate Tim Chuch is already making a fortune off playing poker. There are also students on both ends too, like Kwei Cheng Chang from Wesleyan University (New England), who is pursuing a studio art and physics major.

And their hobbies? “Hobbies?? What are hobbies?? Ph.D. students don’t have time for that!” says Virginia Polytech’s Seemant Teotia. That may be the case for his team, where four out of five are Ph.D. candidates. Some do spend their talents in other interests besides table tennis though. Morgan Tang of Auburn is an incredibly talented karaoke singer, and teammate Zhou Yi is nicknamed “Desperado” in the infamous PC first-person shooter of Counterstrike.

While table tennis is an individual sport, NCTTA emphasizes the team competition aspect, and thus team camaraderie is a crucial element for college table tennis players. Jason Liem of UF explains that “several of us have become very good friends from meeting and playing together at the club these past few years. As a result, the club is really secondary in our relationships since we socialize outside of the club all the time. Now we’re friends who happen to play TT rather than people who only socialize with each other when we’re at the club.” The college environment also helps promote this type of relationship.

College table tennis players, on average, aren’t those poised to become world-level players as they pursue careers in other fields. However, they do come in the sport extremely talented and the competition does rival national tournaments in the U.S.

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| EXPENSES                    |
| ELITE PROGRAMS              | 181,325 |
| ELITE COACHING PROG         | 33,025  |
| COACHING DEVELOPMENT        | 9,800   |
| GRASSROOTS DEV PROG         | 7,000   |
| OFFICIALS                   | 3,500   |
| U.S. OPEN                   | 199,800 |
| U.S. NATIONALS              | 100,250 |
| U.S. PARALYMPICS            | 8,000   |
| MEMBER SERVICES             | 154,280 |
| MAGAZINE/WEBSITE            | 124,800 |
| MARKETING                   | 5,000   |
| HEADQUARTERS                | 244,945 |
| BOARD OF DIRECTORS          | 25,000  |
| COMMITTEES                  | 8,880   |
| TOTAL EXPENSES              | 1,105,605|

| BUDGET SURPLUS              | 50,000  |
| [Note - see Treasurer’s Report, page 17.] |
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To All Tournament Directors,

As many of you already know, the Rules/Officials Committee added a new level of Referee to their hierarchy. That level is referred to as a Certified Referee (CR). One of the reasons this new level was added was in response to a long-standing weakness in how tournaments are sanctioned and conducted.

Tournament sanctioning guidelines have always required a Regional Umpire (RU), or higher level umpire, to serve as Tournament Referee (TR). But in reality, many tournaments were allowed to obtain sanction with only a Club Umpire (CU) if a Regional or higher Umpire was unavailable to serve as the TR.

What the Rules/Officials Committee saw was that CU’s are tested primarily on what the current regulations are in regards to the rules used in the conduct of an official match. They are not tested on how a tournament is properly conducted – making draws, seeding, breaking round robin ties, etc. Of course, this vital information has to have since a TR is responsible not only for making sure the rules of the game are followed, but also that the tournament itself is conducted in a manner that is fair to all players.

Hence, the Rules/Officials Committee decided to add testing for CR’s in response to the need for a lower-than-Regional-level umpire to serve as TR. A CR must first be at least a CU and then pass a CR written test and submit a sample draw following correct procedures. This would ensure that a CR has shown competence for both umpiring a match AND the proper procedures for conducting a tournament.

The Rules/Officials Committee started implementing new requirements for a TR starting at the beginning of the year. The new regulation is that a TR must be a RU (or higher) or a CR, which is a much easier certification to obtain. Unfortunately, many Tournament Directors (TD) were unaware of this change and were unprepared for Tournament Coordinators (including myself) to deny sanction based on the new requirements.

This led to some animosity by a few TD’s who felt pressured by the new rule. This pressure was produced by the fact that there are still far too few Regional or higher Umpires and/or CR’s to service all sanctioned tournaments. After some negotiations with the Rules/Officials Committee, there has been a compromise reached on the implementation of the new regulation.

For the remainder of 2004, this will be how the new regulation will be enforced:

For 0-star tournaments, tournament coordinators will be allowed to sanction tournaments that list a Club Umpire as TR, as long as the TD has attempted to obtain a more qualified referee and is unsuccessful in this search (same as before).

For 1-star or higher tournaments, a RU or higher, or a CR will be required. If there is less than 3 months between the requested date of the tournament and first notice of the new requirement, then a “first-time” waiver of the regulation will be permitted. Let this message serve as your first notice, if I haven’t already informed you previously.

Starting 1/1/05, ALL tournaments will need to abide by the new regulation and there will be no waivers permitted. A CU will no longer be allowed to serve as TR.

Therefore, I encourage all TD’s to find one or more people in your club to become CR’s or obtain at least a RU certification. I would estimate that almost everyone receiving this message would be able to pass the CU and CR tests with a little studying.

To find out more about this new regulation, and/or how to take the tests, please contact the chairman of the Rules/Officials Committee, Wendell Dillon. Here is his contact info:

Wendell Dillon
662 Dorsey Circle • Lilburn GA 30047
pong35@mindspring.com • 770-923-5110

I hope this message adequately and clearly conveys the reasoning for the new regulation and the timetable for its implementation.

Sincerely,
Larry Thoman, USATT Tournament Coordinator for the Southeast Region (TN, MS, AL, GA, NC, SC, FL)

Dear Editor,

I have played and supported Table Tennis for almost 60 years, but it all seemed worthwhile when I saw the story and the photos in the USA Table Tennis Magazine article about the Pacific Rim Open in Portland, OR, Oct. 25-26, 2003.

I know that Mark Kobernick wrote the story, but I feel you had something to do with the spectacular presentation of my support of the tournament, along with Stiga.

I was also pleased that Biba Golic was the star of the event, winning the $1000 prize for women’s singles. Jim Scott and I put that prize money so high to encourage more women player to come from all around the country. I encouraged Biba all through the semis and final by saying “dobro,” which means good in Croatian. I like to feel that she won $1000 of my total contribution of $2550.

I had to enter an assisted living complex recently, but I’m going to continue paying USATT memberships for new players so they become USATT members and receive your wonderful magazine. I am also giving my new outdoor table to the complex so I can play and watch others play. I’ve challenged all who play that I can defeat them while sitting in a wheelchair!

Thanks again,
Bob Viducich, Portland, OR

Dear ESPN Staff Member,

I am writing to thank and commend ESPN for its excellent coverage and showing of the Killerspin Extreme Table Tennis Championships held in Chicago in December 2003.

I have been involved in table tennis as a player, official, administrator, and club owner for over 50 years, and the camera work by ESPN on this event is the best I have ever seen on American television. The instant replay in slow motion from several camera locations was outstanding, as was the exciting and instructive color commentary by Dan Seemiller.

I look forward to seeing all the rest of the scheduled programs on this event throughout February and early March and hope that ESPN’s experience with Killerspin will encourage you to again soon become involved in sponsoring, filming, and showing table tennis at the professional level to the American viewing public.

Sincerely,
Dick Evans,
ITTF International Umpire
USATT Hall of Fame Board Member,
and Asst. Manager for Table Tennis, Atlanta ‘96 Olympic Games

Dear Editor,

It is with great concern and regret that I have learned that the 2004 U.S. National Championships next December is scheduled to play on the almost unplayable, slippery floor in Hall S2 of the Las Vegas Convention Center.

This letter is a call to the USATT Executive Director, USATT President, USATT Board of Directors and the playing membership of the USATT to persuade, through negotiation and correspondence, the Las Vegas Convention Center to do what is necessary to improve the playability of the floor in Hall S2.

Failing in this effort, I would urge the USATT governing body to look for another Las Vegas venue for the 2004 U.S. National Championships. The membership should start now with letters to the above with copies to the Director of the Las Vegas Convention Center, Paradise Rd. Las Vegas, NV 89104.

Sincerely,
Dick Evans, Hillshoro, WV

Pagliaro Turns 85

Lou Pagliaro, World semifinalist, and 4-time U.S. National Champion, turns 85 on May 5th. He has 7 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren, including twin boys. How about, not dropping each of them a card, but remembering Louie? He was always a class act. Here's his address: Lou Pagliaro, 400 Little Clove Road, Staten Island, N.Y. 10305.
They Said It...
By Larry Hodges
Contactmusic.com revealed recently that [Hayden] Christensen [Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader in Star Wars I & II] asks to have a ping pong table on a film set when he's working so that he can practice between takes. The actor was a talented player before he started acting full time, and he enjoys challenging people to games. "I'm competitive," he says. "When we were making Shattered Glass, we had a ping pong table on the set, and in between every shot [actor] Peter Sarsgaard and my brother Tove would rush back to the ping pong table, and we'd have an ongoing tally like 43-32." He adds, "Even when my brother and I go home we have a ping pong table there. At Christmas time we'll keep a tally, and it'll get up to like 150-139." -From Star Wars Insider, issue 74, page 22.

"John is the type of guy who, if you play him in Ping-Pong, air hockey, or racquetball, he has to win—or you stay and you play him the whole night." -Denver Broncos head coach Mike Shanahan from his book "Think Like a Champion" about his Super Bowl MVP quarterback John Elway. Contributed by Shashin Shoddhan.

"Jamie (Lee Curtis) and I had so much fun making that movie. I can't think of one thing, because we always had so much fun! We always played Ping-Pong on the set. We had Ping-Pong tournaments. Jamie was really good. One of the guys won a trophy, a table and bunch of other stuff. It was really funny." -Actress Lindsay Lohan in a recent interview for the online News Sentinel.

Dan Seemiller's Summer Table Tennis Camps
South Bend, Indiana

When: June 21-25 and July 19-23
Cost: $245 per camp week ($75 deposit required)
Head Coach: Dan Seemiller, 5-time U.S. Men's Singles Champion
Assistant Coach: Mark Nordby

Send form and check to:
Dan Seemiller
P.O. Box 608
New Carlisle, IN 46552

For more information contact:
vseemiller@earthlink.net or (574) 654-7476

Reasonable hotel rates nearby
Juniors may apply for free lodging

Coach Dan

It was March 1, 1958 ... on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing. Go, Spartans!!

I had just successfully defended my National Intercollegiate title by beating Western Michigan's Ali Hossein Doust, ostensibly the former four-time champion of Iran. I had barely enough time to catch a train back to Chicago, and then Madison, where I was a Senior at the University of Wisconsin. Go, Badgers!!

However, one of the officials asked me if I had time to meet a figure skater, who was training for the Olympics, and take some pictures. Pictures?!! Alright! I was certainly not camera shy!

We walked across the campus to the ice arena where I was introduced to one of the most drop dead gorgeous girls I'd ever seen ... 1956 Olympic silver medalist Carol Heiss. We sat for a while. She congratulated me on my win ... and I stared! Even though she was still a teenager, it was obvious she could have stopped skating and gone directly to Hollywood! But what could I possibly do to prolong this meeting? I really had to get back to school. I mean, classes are classes, and the faculty had little use for my table tennis excuses. Regrettfully, I said goodbye and good luck. She proceeded to win five straight U.S. Opens and the 1960 Olympic games!!

So ... why am I writing about a brief encounter over 45 years ago? Recently I was at a figure skating competition near Chicago and there she was ... Carol Heiss Jenkins, now the supreme figure skating coach in America, married to Hayes Alan Jenkins, the 1956 Olympic Champion.

I approached her and timidly began to reintroduce myself and was about to remind her of our 1958 meeting when she exclaimed, "My God, you're the Ping-Pong player!!" Unbelievable! She remembered me! Should I have stayed in East Lansing for another day or so?

Oh yeah ... I missed the train!...
Even as a rather young boy, Eric didn’t like to lose. One morning at a Long Island tournament when he was about 9 he lost a match to another kid, and was obviously quite upset about it. After a while, Sally, Scott and I couldn’t find him. Just then a State Trooper comes in—he’s got Eric. “This kid yours?” he asks. Yes, we say, puzzled but relieved. Where was he? “Walking down the highway going home.” Home! That was 20 miles away—and he couldn’t possibly have known the way, could he?

Eric, at 10, 11, 12, wins three L.I. Closed Parent-Child Doubles with me.

The 1974 U.S. Open U-11 Singles is the first of over 20 U.S. Open and Closed National Championships Eric will win in Junior play. The following summer he and Scott enroll in a Danny Seemiller Training Camp. For 20 years he and Scott and Danny and Danny’s brother Ricky will be friendly rivals.

Eric, 11, flies off by himself to the Houston U.S. Open. Is to be met by a stranger, Jack “Buddy” Melamed. Unless the password “Mr. McGillicuddy” is given, Eric’s not to go with anyone regardless of what he or she says. Mr. McGillicuddy is Eric’s imaginary persona who, with wrap-around scarf, occasionally visits me in Eric’s absence.

Eric’s 13—he, Scott (15), and Mike Lardon (16) win the 1976 Junior U.S. Open Team Championships (USOTC’s).

At the 1976 Caesars Palace Closed, Eric wins the U-13’s, and in the 15’s is runner-up to Rutledge Barry. An aging Joe Louis presents the trophies.

At the 1977 U.S. Open, Eric wins his 2nd Open U-13’s and from Rutledge the 2nd of four U.S. Open U-15’s he’ll win. However, he loses the U-17 final to Scott in 5. Is filmed for NBC’s Junior Hall of Fame.

The Bowie Martin-sponsored Butterfly Boys, leading 4-2 in matches, almost won the 1977 Men’s USOTC’s from the Seemiller brothers. Fourteen-year-old Eric had beaten Ricky and had upset Danny for the first time. Since both Scott and Rutledge had taken out Randy, that’s all Eric had to do too. But for whatever reason he lost to him, then Rutledge went down to Danny, and Scott to Ricky. During the Eric-Randy match, a Detroit Free Press photographercrept up close to the table, and drew Eric’s wrath. “You’ve got some [adverb missing] nerve,” he said to her. “What do you think you’re doing? We’re playing a Championship match here for hundreds of dollars.” My friend Chuck Burns in the stands thought the would-be little professional’s indignation a hoot. Eric’s 31-2 record earned him the MVP award.

At the ’78 U.S. Open, in the Junior Doubles final, Eric and Scott beat Sweden’s Jens Fekle/Lars Stener from 20-14 match point down in the 5th. It was a great joy to me whenever I’d see the brothers, so competitive with one another, team cooperatively.

At the Toronto CNE that fall Eric wins the U-15’s, U-17’s, and the U-21’s as well. No surprise he’s also a member of the winning U.S. Men’s Team, for he’s now in over the table with his forcing backhand.

Eric will be on three winning USOTC teams. The first is in 1978—with Eric, Roger Sverdlik, Dave Phillip, Scott, and me—over the Seemillers.

Eric wins the 1978 U.S. Open. At 15, he’s the youngest Men’s Champion ever. Topics reporter Sverdlik praises Eric for his superb table control. By now he also has a strong forehand. Danny, before playing Eric in the final, had not, in the 3 years of this Championship, lost so much as a game. He later said of his loss, “[It was] like a sword...[had gone] into me. I was unbelievably hurt. When [up 16-10] I lost that first game to Eric, I thought, ‘I wish he’d let me win.’ I thought, ‘If I just keep looping the ball, he’ll miss. I know now of course that was just “nonsense” thinking.’"

Fifteen-year-old Eric makes the U.S. Team to the Pyongyang, North Korea World’s. A photo of a hotel there I have become memorable because, as U.S. Team member Sverdlik hastened late one night to wake me, Eric, in his innocence, had gotten drunk and sick there, but was o.k. and sleeping it off.
In June, ‘79 in Kingston, Jamaica, Eric beat Jamaican National Ernie Virgo 21-0. “Don’t do it!” our savvy Jamaican friend Fuarnado Roberts kept yelling to Eric. “Don’t do it!” But the crowd loved it. In the hotel elevator Eric runs into ITTF President Roy Evans who says something mildly critical of this shutout. Eric, not in the least intimidated, says, “I thought I played pretty well.”

In addition to winning the U-17’s and U-21’s at the ‘79 Closed, Eric also wins his first and only Mixed Doubles Championship—with Kasia Dawidowicz Gaca.

Eric and Danny, with the help of Ray Guillen and their much revered U.S. Team Captain/Coach Housshang Bosorgzadeh, win the 1980 U.S. Open Team event.

Two weeks after Eric’s 17th birthday, he finishes 8th in the Hong Kong World Cup—and is given 17 U.S. $100 bills.

Eric loses to Danny in the final of the 1980 Closed. This was the one where the infamous so-called Boggen Penalty Point Rule came in. On the one-table final, Eric yells out, “My concentration is terrible!” The umpire penalizes him a point. The Sports Sanitation Rule—very unpopular.

Encouraged by my friend Nisse Sandberg, founder/president of the Stockholm Angby Club, Eric wins the 12-country 1981 Scandinavian Junior Championships—is undefeated in Team’s and Singles. Jorgen Persson, Erik Lindh, and Jonny Akesson are some of the stars in the field.

At the ‘81 U.S. Open, Eric and Danny are again in the final of the Open Team event. Earlier, they were down 2-0, then won the Doubles 30-28 in the deciding 3rd—after which Danny downed Kim Wan, and Eric, Kim Ki Tack. Of course they lost to China’s Cai Zhenhua, Li Zhenshi, and Xie Siike. Eric, however, did win the U-21’s from next year’s European Champion Mikael Appelgren.

That fall Eric leaves for Sweden to play #1 for Nisse’s Angby Club. This is a wonderful opportunity for him, for in addition to playing League matches, and getting countless bars of chocolate from the Mommar Marabon Chocolate Factory for every match he wins, he can repeatedly go to tournaments. He goes for 3 days to the Swedish National Team Training Camp. At one point, after 48 sprints in succession, he said his feet looked “all white and eaten away.”

Back at Angby, he said, “My left leg felt like it had been blown away by shrapnel and I had a wooden one there instead.”

I’m very proud of Eric that he made the most of his Swedish experience. He wins the Norwegian Grand Prix, and also the Kimura Grand Prix—over future European Champ Ulf Bengtsson. In the semi’s of the Stockholm Grand Prix, against Jonas Berner, Eric was down 20-14 match point in the 2nd and won it down 13-5 in the third and won it. He lost the final to World #24 Lindh, 19 in the deciding 3rd.

For winning the Pripps Sports Cup tournament, Eric receives the prize of a wolfskin. When he sheaths himself in it he becomes a scary predator...an American Werewolf in Stockholm.

Actually he himself was, if not scared made uneasy by the apartment Angby provided him. Turns out the last tenant had committed suicide there, and occasionally Eric said he’d look at the dangling wire to the light and think, Is that where he did it? Where he hung himself? He spent three months there before he said he had to get out. Went to stay with Lars Stener’s family who were a big help to him. That first year he was 24-4 in Swedish League play.

Eric returns to the U.S. for Will and Liz Hornyak’s 1981 Duneland Open, and wins the $1,000 1st prize—beats Danny.

In every issue of Topics, from Nov., 1981 through Dec., 1988—for 7 straight years—Eric would be the #1 rated player in the U.S. But again he loses the final of the U.S. Closed—this time in 5 to brother Scott. I kept peeking at this match from a distance, keeping my nose out of it. I was vacillating back and forth as to who I wanted to see win, especially when Eric refused to buckle and won the 4th at deuce to tie the match. But eventually I was pleased to see Scott win, for I felt this might be his once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be the U.S. Champion. Anyway, I was very tense and cried afterwards when the historical importance of the match fully hit me.

Returning abroad, Eric, in getting to the quarter’s of both the 1982 English and German Opens, beat a bevy of world-class players, including the Japanese National Champion Abe, and former World Champion Jonny Akesson.

Cheered on by Fuarnado Roberts, Eric then wins the Kingston Jamaica Love Bird Invitational, knocking off among others, Kosanovic and Grubbs. After that, he finishes 4th in the had-to-quality-for-it Norwich Union Grand Prix Masters—downs, among others, Orlowski and Pansky. In the semi’s, in a torrid foot stamp match, every stroke of every point resounding throughout the building, he loses to World #13 Park Lee Flee. In the play-off for 3rd, Eric went down in 5 to Appelgren, but wins $1800.

At the ‘82 Seoul Open, attended by 40 countries, Eric distinguishes himself, beats Japan’s Saito, Erik Lindh, 5-time German Champion George Boehm, and gets to the final where he loses to European Open finalist Jan-Ove Waldner, 19, 21, 19. Some aficionado in Seoul calls Eric “the best anti-player in the world outside China.”

Back at Angby in a Swedish League match he beats European Junior Mixed Champion Jorgen Persson 19 in the 3rd. At the 8-man Danish Invitational he beats Waldner.

Eric loses the Closed to another world-class best-anti candidate, Danny; 19 in the 5th. Eric had won the opener 21-9, then, up 20-15 in the 2nd, lost 7 in a row. Up 19-16 in the 5th he was dancing all around. He said later, “I guess maybe with victory so near I was trying to psych myself up. And probably I was just trying to give Danny back what he’d been giving me. You know we’re each trying to screw each other up out there. Anyway, let him do what he wants—but his 10-step runs, his leaps, his fist-thrusts, his yells can distract you if you let them.

The crowd loves it—but unless you can give it back it can be intimidating.” This was perhaps Eric’s toughest loss ever, and, right or wrong, I
didn’t try to comfort him, just let him handle it alone. I don’t know to this day if it was the right, fatherly thing to do. I don’t seem to be like most fathers.

Win the U.S. National’s or not, these are Eric’s best years. He collects $1500 at the Middlesbrough England Invitational.

At the ’83 Tokyo World’s, Eric wins 17 straight Team and Individual matches—beat that year’s World Men’s Doubles Champion Zoran Kalinich, former World Mixed Doubles Champion Jacques Secretin, and Hungary’s Zolt Kriston, among others, before being eliminated in the 8th’s by China’s Guo Yuehua, the eventual winner. Eric is ranked World #18—the highest ranking for a U.S. player since Dick Miles made the semi’s 45 years ago.

And now perhaps Eric’s finest achievement, he wins the 1983 U.S. Open—over ‘82 U.S. Open Champ Kosanovic in the semi’s, and Engelbert Huging, the 1978 German National Champion, in the final, deuce in the 5th (after losing the 3rd and 4th games at 19 and in the 5th going precariously from 17-14 up to 19-17 down). He thus becomes the only native-born player to win the U.S. Open in almost 40 years.

Eric had beaten Danny and Kosanovic to qualify for the World Cup, and in Barbados he again finishes 7th, beating world #15 Dragutin Surbek. Earns $2300.

Now he begins his three-year stint in the German Bundesliga, playing #1 for Bad Hamm. For the first half season, he’s 12-6—beats 4-time German National Champion Peter Stellwag, 4-time German National runner-up, Ralf Wosik, 4-time German National Champion Wilfried Lieck, and the Swedes Applegren, Lindh, and Stefan Bengtsson. At the Hungarian Open he beats Karakasevic and Gergely before losing to China’s Cheng Yinghua.

But again at the U.S. Closed Eric loses to Danny, 17 and 21. After this loss, Eric said in an interview, “I really don’t play in that many tournaments—and the best training for me is actually tournament play.” Most players in the States would say Eric really does play quite a bit when he’s abroad. From Feb. through May, 1984, besides continuing his full schedule of league matches, he played in 10 tournaments in such disparate places as Czechoslovakia, Israel, India, and Brazil.

At the ’84 Closed, Eric beat Danny for the Singles title.

Given an excellent sponsorship contract from Schildkraut, Eric, in the fall of 1984, switches to a new Bundesliga Club, Steinhausen, and immediately feels pressure as the #1 player in his season’s opener against the strong English player Desmond Douglas. But though Eric almost lost in his debut, he didn’t, and the Steinhausen crowd was very appreciative of their new “U.S.-Boy.” After his two-year stay there was over, years later they’d invite him back for a reunion, and he’d return and wow them with “Ich bin ein Steinhagener.”

Of course I hasten to say that almost all of these players Eric beat he would also lose to during his seasons of league or circuit play. But it certainly made play interesting to have such a variety of world-class opponents—beat Klampar one day, lose to Ulf Carlsson the next. The Mar., 1985 issue of Sports Illustrated had a 5-page feature article on Eric, covering him both in Germany and at home, by Sports writer Jaime Diaz.

That spring Eric won small tournaments in France, the Netherlands, and Sweden, then came to the 1985 U.S. Open where he again lost to Cheng Yinghua.

However, at the World Cup that followed, he beat Waldner and the 1985 World Champion Jialiang Jialiang.

At the ’85 Closed, Eric, up match point, was upset in the semi’s by Jimmy Butler, and though Eric went on to win the Israeli Open in Tel Aviv (where he underwent quite an interrogation from Israeli security), perhaps the desire to accelerate his game was waning. How long could he come through like this? After Eric had lost to Danny in the ’83 Closed, he’d told an interviewer, “It’s tough to be just a #1 player. So much traveling. So much training. So many matches. When I play well in international tournaments it all seems so exciting to me—but then after maybe a 10-hour drive back and my body seems vulnerable and sometimes I even get sick, then I begin thinking T.T. is not enough, that I need to do something else.”

In Aug. of ’86 he gave himself a 23rd birthday present—the $4,000 1st prize at the Indiana Masters Championship. He beat Danny, and the Canadian Internationals Horatio Pintea and Joe Ng.

It was also a going away present, for that fall he enrolled at the C.W. Post campus of Long Island University and would graduate four years later. Eric didn’t play in the ’86 Closed, or try out for the ’87 U.S. World or Olympic Teams, or play in the 1987 U.S. Open. But he did play sporadically, and after a while he came out of retirement as if with purpose. He won the ’88 CNE, then came runner-up in the U.S. Closed to Sean O’Neill with whom he shared his one and only Men’s Doubles title.

In 1989 he wins the Atlantic City Open—beats O’Neill and Pintea. Then plays at the World’s, the Open, and at the Closed where his record is 9-2—good for 3rd.

In 1990 at the North American Championships he beats Jimmy Butler in the semi’s before losing to Sean in the final.

In 1991 he made the U.S. World Team for the 6th and last time. In Chiba, Japan, Eric could still play—lost to former World Champion Gaten 23-21 in the 3rd, and beat China’s Ding Yi 19 in the 3rd. At the ‘91 U.S. Open, he surprised the #2 seed, China’s Chen Longcan. Eric thought Chen played without much spirit, though—“he kept playing to my backhand strength.”

By fall of 1991, Eric’s working steadily as a letter carrier for the Post Office and thereafter would play only rarely... for fun—which usually wasn’t because he still expected much more from himself than mere social play.
Club of the Month: Northern Kentucky Table Tennis Club

The Northern Kentucky Table Tennis Club is one of only four clubs in the entire state of Kentucky. Formed in February 2003, the club has already hosted one tournament and has a two-star tournament planned for March 6, 2004.

Formed as a collaborative effort of George Thompson, George Kent, and Greg Thompson, the club began a mere 10 months ago at the Newport, Kentucky branch of the Boys’ and Girls’ Club of Greater Cincinnati. When a change in summer hours would have closed the club, it found a new permanent home at the Campbell County branch (located in Fort Thomas, Kentucky) of the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati. Starting with four tables in a smaller room at the YMCA, the club was soon moved to the main basketball court after adding two new tables in September for the club’s first tournament.

The club now boasts six Donic Persson 25 tables and nets and 25 Donic and Tibhar barriers for tournament quality play every Saturday afternoon. The YMCA facility is air conditioned in the summer and heated in the winter and features a recently refinished wood floor. Above all, the YMCA staff has been extremely accommodating to all the needs of the club.

Among the greatest assets of the club are the players themselves. With a regular attendance of more than a dozen players every Saturday (and sometimes as many as two dozen), the club has established a strong player base from Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati.

Two members are now Certified Club Coaches, including club President George Thompson, and Vice President George Kent. Other regulars to the club include Nicholas Snider, the highest rated player in Greater Cincinnati, and Alicia Burnett, quickly becoming one of the highest rated young players in the country.

Located only 15 minutes from the Cincinnati Table Tennis Club, many players have the opportunity to play at both locations. As a result, both clubs are careful to never schedule conflicting playing times or tournaments and have recently helped with each other’s tournaments. The spirit of cooperation between the two clubs has made both even more successful!

Moving forward, the club offers annual memberships, which will include access to a table tennis training video library that is being formed. A two-star tournament in March should draw players from throughout the states of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. Plus, the club has just received Federal status from the I.R.S. as a 501(c)(3) non-profit public foundation. The club has already received financial support from Fifth Third Bank, and will continue to seek additional corporate sponsors.

For the latest info about club activities and schedules, please visit the club web site at www.nktt.org, or email Club President George Thompson at traderdad@hotmail.com.

TIP OF THE MONTH: MAY
How to Serve An Ace
By Carl Danner

With the right technique, you can set out to ace your opponent and sometimes pull it off.

It starts with a service motion you use frequently. Usually (for a righty serving to a righty), it’s a forehand serve from your backhand corner hit cross-court to your opponent’s backhand. Make your normal toss. While the ball is in the air, make a quick fake of your usual service swing. Then, change directions and hit a low, fast serve deep in the opposite direction (in this case, down the line).

You can work on this skill in ways that will help your serving in general. A deep fast serve (try it flat, or with a little sidespin) is useful and worth developing for its own sake. The key to the ace is the quick fake, which you have to “sell” convincingly so your opponent starts to move to that side to play a return. If he even leans, and your serve is quick, you’ll probably win the point even without an ace.

Regardless of your ace count, it always helps to practice specific serves, and to keep your opponent off balance through varying your service tempo and pattern.

TIP OF THE MONTH: JUNE
The Self-Defense Smash
By Carl Danner

High spinnny loops are often difficult to return, and their slow pace gives your opponent time to get positioned for the next shot. You can feel yourself losing control of a match as a result.

Sometimes a radical change of tactics will help. Pick out a couple of slow loops and try smashing them with your forehand. Make sure to move your feet, get your elbow up, and keep it simple by aiming for the middle of the table. You may be surprised at how easy this shot can be, and the shock of it to your opponent will probably win the point outright.

Making even a few of these smashes can change the whole dynamic of the match by taking your opponent out of her consistent looping comfort zone. You don’t need to go crazy either, to create an impact; just let her see what’s possible. Sometimes the best defense is an unexpected taste of offense.
USATT League

Come join the USATT League (sponsored by Stiga and Paddle Palace), a nationwide singles league. Started last September, it has almost 2000 active members in 90 leagues in 40 states. Over 17,000 rated league matches have taken place so far, most of them this year. It's a great program for your club, or anywhere else there are tables and players. You can browse the list of leagues for one in your area, or start one up yourself in just a few minutes. See the stats in "League Watch" on page 9!

USATT League of the Month: Long Beach Table Tennis League

By Bill Hillier

Founded in 1933, the LBTTTC has had its ups and downs but in recent years it has developed into a good, steady Club. When an Executive Committee was formed several years ago, the Club became more dynamic and grew in popularity. Non-sanctioned tournaments and a monthly handicap tournament provided most of the action along with the free play. Members of the Executive Committee recognized, however, a growing demand for an ongoing program where members could meet and compete regularly.

Mr. Bob Chew, Tournament Director, heard about the USATT League Program last October and told President Winston Ngai about this; both loved the program and knew that it would work very well for the Club. The free league membership, the ratings software, and the suggested match format offered convenience and flexibility with the promise of much fun. Without a second thought the "Long Beach Table Tennis Club League" was immediately registered. A five member League Committee was formed with Bob Chew as the League Director and we were ready to go.

The first league entitled "Winter League 2003" kicked off on November 15, 2003. It met every Saturday thereafter and ended December 27. As many as 12 tables were used an average of 80 matches were played each session. To make the League more interesting, the top 4 finishers in each of the six rating groups qualified for the final playoffs with the top two in each rating group receiving trophies. An awards ceremony and a free party followed the finals. Members were very excited about the League play.

The Winter League was a great success as indicated by the comments of participants and their eagerness to sign up for a second league. The Spring League started January 31, 2004 with 64 members at the beginning. Since then the number of participants has grown to 81, of which 30 are not USATT members but soon will be. The Club has received numerous phone calls and e-mails from individuals wanting to become members and play in the League. It is amazing to see so many players with different ethnic backgrounds, ages (9 to 75), and abilities competing. An 11-year-old champion can be an older champion from a different country or a wheelchair player holding up his end of the table, happy over his rating improvement. Two young members recently qualified for the National Cadet Boys Team. One player travels over 70 miles from Oxnard just to participate in the League.

USATT Home Page

The USATT home page was recently redesigned and modernized. Come visit it and see the sleek and modernized designed. Here are some of the pages you'll find:

- Tips of the Week – every week since November, 1999!
- USATT Coaches
- USATT Officials (umpires & referees)
- Ratings and Rating Histories
- Collegiate
- Juniors
- Disabled
- Hardbat
- Elite Athletes
- Fun & Games
- New to Table Tennis
- Glossary of Common Terms
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Club Listing
- Club Programs & Club Handbook
- USATT League Page
- Tournament Listing
- Tournament Directors page & Tournament Guide
- Primers on Beginning Classes, Junior Training and Professional Coaches
- Instructor's Guide to Table Tennis
- News Archives
- Rules, including "Stump the Ump," "Rules Quiz," and "Unofficial Basement Rules."
- Sponsors
- Equipment & Equipment Dealers listings
- Champions Listing
- USATT Hall of Fame listing, with profiles on 85 of the 104 inductees
- Historical articles
- Table Tennis Museum
- About USATT
- USATT Bylaws & Standing Rules
- USATT Strategic Plan
- USATT Meeting Minutes & Votes
- USATT Online Magazine
- USATT Board of Directors, Staff and Committee Listings

The Long Beach Table Tennis Club League has a bright future and the League Committee will continue to bring forth new elements to keep the League interesting and appealing to new and potential members. It is the Club's policy to offer free membership to junior players, ages 9 to 17, because these players represent the future of the sport. The club plays four days a week at Jefferson Middle School in Long Beach at the intersection of 7th and Grand Avenue. For more info, see www.longbeachttc.org
Are you tired of your robot producing the same type of spin over and over again, to randomly selected locations on the table? The Amicus 3000 allows you to program a ball to your specific speed, spin, and placement settings. Above is an example of a simple four ball pattern that the Amicus 3000 is capable of producing. Your programmed shots can be saved into the robot’s memory. The Butterfly Amicus 3000 is an exciting table tennis robot, offering a wide range of capabilities for beginners through professionals. There is virtually no limit to the types of standard drills and advanced games related drills that can be practiced on the Amicus; including drills to develop basic strokes & switching skills; footwork drills; and drills where players require random ball placement and or random ball types.

Customer is responsible for all customs and duties on orders shipped outside the US.
For the top division, a sort of modified double elimination format (called a “page” system) was used. The top twelve teams were put into two groups of six. The winners of the two groups played, with the winner advancing to the final. The two runner-ups played, with the loser eliminated and finishing fourth. The winner of the match between the two runner-ups then played the loser of the match between the two group winners (a “semifinal”). The winner of this match then played the final against the winner of the match between the group winners. (The same format was used to decide 5-8 and 9-12 in the first division.)

Got that?

Photos by Gerry Chua ©2004
Men's Teams

Division A: 1st China, 5-0; 2nd Korea R., 4-1; 3rd Austria, 3-2; 4th Italy, 2-3; 5th France, 1-4; 6th Japan, 0-5.
Division B: 1st Germany, 5-0; 2nd Sweden, 3-2; 3rd Hong Kong, 2-3; 4th China Taipei, 2-3; 5th Belgium, 2-3; 6th Russia, 1-4.

Division Champions Playoff
China d. Germany, 3-0
- Ma Lin (CHN) d. Timo Boll (GER), 7-9, 8-7
- Wang Hao (CHN) d. Zoltan Fejer-Konerth (GER), 7-9, 3
- Wang Liqin (CHN) d. Jorg Roskopf (GER), 5-6, 9

Division Runner-ups Playoff
Korea R. d. Sweden, 3-0
- Ryu Seung Min (KOR) d. Jens Lundqvist (SWE), 6-8, 9-5
- Kim Tae Soo (KOR) d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), 8-7, 9
- Joo Se Hyuk (KOR) d. Peter Karlsson (SWE), 9-8, 6, 6

Semifinal Playoff
Germany d. Republic of Korea, 3-1
- Timo Boll (GER) d. Joo Se Hyuk (KOR), 9-12, 3-12
- Ryu Seung Min (KOR) d. Zoltan Fejer-Konerth (GER), -6,10, -8,9, 7
- Jorg Roskopf (GER) d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), -12,9, 7-10, 6
- Timo Boll (GER) d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 9,4, 7

Final
China d. Germany, 3-1
- Wang Hao (CHN) d. Timo Boll (GER), 7,11, 2
- Ma Lin (CHN) d. Christian Suss (GER), 5-8, 8, 7
- Wang Liqin (CHN) d. Zoltan Fejer-Konerth (GER), 5-8, 10, 7

Women's Teams

Group A: 1st China, 5-0; 2nd Korea R., 4-1; 3rd Russia, 2-3; 4th Germany, 2-3; 5th Singapore, 2-3; 6th Chinese Taipei, 0-5.
Group B: 1st Japan, 4-1; 2nd Hong Kong, 4-1; 3rd Romania, 3-2; 4th Hungary, 2-3; 5th Italy, 2-3; 6th Belarus, 0-5.

Division Champions Playoff
China d. Japan, 3-2
- Wang Nan (CHN) d. Aya Umemura (JPN), 3,8, -6, 6, 10
- Zhang Yining (CHN) d. Ai Fukuhara (JPN), 5,4, 7
- Ai Fujinuma (JPN) d. Li Ju (CHN), 3, 6, 7, 4
- Aya Umemura (JPN) d. Zhang Yining (CHN), 9-5, 3, 9, 11
- Wang Nan (CHN) d. Ai Fukuhara (JPN), 5, 8, 7

Division Runner-ups Playoff
Hong Kong d. Republic of Korea, 3-2
- Kim Kyung Ah (KOR) d. Lau Sui Fei (HKG), 7, 11, 12
- Tie Yana (HKG) d. Lee Eun Sil (KOR), 9, 5, 4
- Zhang Rui (HKG) d. Suk Eun Mi (KOR), 7, 5, 11, 9
- Kim Kyung Ah (KOR) d. Tie Yana (HKG), 6, 11, 9, 8
- Lau Sui Fei (HKG) d. Lee Eun Sil (KOR), 7, 8, 11

Semifinal Playoff
Hong Kong d. Japan, 3-0
- Lau Sui Fei (HKG) d. Aya Umemura (JPN), 7, 7, 10
- Tie Yana (HKG) d. Ai Fukuhara (JPN), 6, 7, 8
- Zhang Rui (HKG) d. Ai Fujinuma (JPN), 10, 4, 7

Final
China d. Hong Kong, 3-0
- Zhang Yining (CHN) d. Tie Yana (HKG), 10-9, 8, 10
- Wang Nan (CHN) d. Lau Sui Fei (HKG), 9-7, 6, 9, 6
- Guo Yue (CHN) d. Zhang Rui (HKG), -10, 4, 9, 7
The Nittaku ball, universally regarded as the best in the world, is also the official ball of the U.S. Nationals and U.S. Open and most international competitions.

Combo Special Price includes Blade+2 Sheets Nittaku Rubber

**THE MORISTO SERIES**

Feel the difference! Tension stays inside the rubber as if speed glue were applied. Top sheet and sponge have superior elasticity. Ball goes deep into the rubber when attacking, then springs powerfully. Outstanding spin speed control. When speed gluing, surface is stretched, giving more tension for increased speed, power, control.

**MORISTO**

Speed: 9.1 / Spin: 9.4 / Sponge: 1.6, 2.0, 2.2
Reg price: $31.95 Item: RNMO

**MORISTO 2000**

Speed: 9.3 / Spin: 9.4 / Sponge: 2.0, 2.2
Reg price: $31.95 Item: RNMO2

**MORISTO FG**

Same top sheet as Moristo + special new sponge to give more speed, as if speed glue is already applied. Great for 40mm ball!

Speed: 9.2 / Spin: 9.4 / Sponge: 2.0, 2.2
Reg price: $31.95 Item: RNMOF

**MORISTO OF**

Amazing Feeling! Ball goes deep into the sponge for a great spring effect, but combined with the slower speed it simultaneously provides a "hang effect" with excellent control.

Speed: 9.0 / Spin: 9.6 / Sponge: 1.6, 2.0
Reg price: $31.95 Item: RNM0F

OFFICIAL BALL of the 2004 World Championships in Doha, Qatar and the 2005 World Championships in Shanghai, China

Offers expire 7/5/04

SPECIAL COMBO OFFER

Place your order for the Tube Aluminum, Tube Offensive or Clipper CR Stiga Combo Special and take an additional 5% OFF!

When you mention this ad!

LIMITED TIME ONLY! Orders must be placed between April 1 and May 15, 2004

While supplies last.

**OUTSTANDING 3-STAR BALL**

High quality 3-star 40mm ball, exceeding the highest standards for ITTF approval. Label on ball says "Japan".

GET AN INCREDIBLY SPECIAL PRICE IF YOU ORDER BY THE GROSS (12 dozen balls) only $155.50 [white or orange] Item: BN4C

**STIGA**

The Tube Aluminum is the fastest of the Stiga Tube blades. The micro-channels are filled with aluminum alloys. The result is a blade for speed demons looking for the fastest blade, without sacrificing on the "STIGA feeling".

Speed: OFF+ Handle: FL(lg), FL(sm), AN, ST
Wgt: 85 gm
Plies: 7 (5W/2K)
Blade only $74.95 Item: SSSTALU

**Clipper CR**

This is the famous Clipper blade with the outstanding CR and WRB system. Increased speed with maintained touch due to the CR system, and lighter weight with balance due to the WRB system.

Speed: OFF+ Handle: FL(lg), FL(sm), AN, ST
Wgt: 87 gm
Plies: 7W
Blade only $74.95 Item: SSCLC

**Tube Offensive**

The micro-channels are filled with an extremely hard wood. A blade that Stiga has always strived to produce; incredible speed and wonderful feeling in the same blade.

Speed: OFF+ Handle: FL(lg), FL(sm), AN, ST
Wgt: 85 gm
Plies: 5W
Blade only $59.95 Item: STTOF

**STMage**

This is the latest entry in the quest for the perfect blade! 7 ply wood gives very solid feel.

Speed: OFF Handle: FL, ST
Wgt: 82 gm
Plies: 7
Blade only $59.95 Item: SNL0

**Nittaku Lonbaldia-7**

Nittaku's latest entry in the quest for the perfect blade! 7 ply wood gives very solid feel.

Speed: OFF Handle: FL, ST
Wgt: 85 gm
Plies: 7 (5W/2K)
Blade only $62.95 Item: SNKVT

**Nittaku KVT**

Eric Owens' Choice! An outstanding 7-ply blade - 5 plies of wood and 2 plies of Kevlar®. Kevlar® provides plenty of bounce for a fast offensive game, while providing an invincible impact-absorbing quality of feeling. "Super Core System" features a handle center of a sponge-like material, providing impact absorption, light weight, and spectacular feeling.

Speed: OFF+ Handle: FL(lg), FL(sm), AN, ST
Wgt: 85 gm
Plies: 7 (5W/2K)
Blade only $62.95 Item: SNKVT

**NEW**

**COMBO SPECIAL**

$89.95 Item: XSSNLO

**Nittaku Lonbaldia-7**

Nittaku's latest entry in the quest for the perfect blade! 7 ply wood gives very solid feel.

Light and fast for a stable offensive attack!

Speed: OFF Handle: FL, ST
Wgt: 82 gm
Plies: 7
Blade only $59.95 Item: SNL0

**OUTSTANDING 3-STAR BALL**

High quality 3-star 40mm ball, exceeding the highest standards for ITTF approval. Label on ball says "Japan".

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Light and fast for a stable offensive attack!

Speed: OFF Handle: FL, ST
Wgt: 82 gm
Plies: 7
Blade only $59.95 Item: SNL0
**Juic Scramble 21**

**Ultima**

Juic Ultima sponge is combined with the Scramble 21 topsheet. Increases exponentially the bounce rate of the rubber as well as the ball feeling at impact.

**Speed** 9.5/Spin 9.1

**Sponge** 2.0 to 2.5

**Price** $26.95

**Item** RJSCTU

**Juic Scramble EX Ultima**

Double-High Tension sponge adds an extra Ultima dimension, giving explosive rotation and speed.

**Speed** 9.5/Spin 9.1

**Sponge** 2.0 to 2.5

**Reg. Price** $26.95

**Item** RJSCTC

**Juic Thermal Double Case 3** $11.95

These great thermal cases are the most padded paddle-shaped case on the market. Side zip for easy removal. Holds 2 racquets. Great quality nylon, 3-ball pocket on outside. Royal blue, black, or red. Reg $14.95 Item: C15T

**Juic Thermal Single Case 3** $9.95

Same as Double but for 1 racquet. Reg $11.50 Item: C12T

---

**Joomla Combo Specials**

Include blade + 2 sheets Joola rubber [Add $5 per sheet if choosing Fakir rubber]

**Rosskopf Carbon**

Ultimate Sweet Spot!

The carbon layers enlarge the sweet spot and therefore control the high speed characteristics of the rare and very expensive cypress veneers. The result is an offensive blade with extreme acceleration but almost unbelievable control.

**Speed** Off+ Handle FL, ANL, ST

**Wgt** 87 gm

**Sponge** 3W, 2T

**Blade only** $72.95

**Item** SORC

**Combi Special**

**Joomla K5**

The next innovation in RAG-Technology!

The extremely absorbent, elastic "honeycomb" placed in the grip causes the bat to immediately lose its original form right after contact with the ball - this provides an enormous backstroke effect, which increases control and speed by far. Moreover, this proved RAG-Technology (RoundAboutGrip) of the K-Line provides a sensor-optimized transmission between hand and grasp, the guarantee for a sensitive play even in most extreme situations!

**Speed** Off+ Handle FL, ANL, ST

**Wgt** 82 gm

**Sponge** 5W

**Blade only** $49.95

**Item** SOKS

**Combi Special**

**Joola Rossi Plus Glue**

Thin speed glue for the highest speed. For aggressive offensive players. ITTF approved. All JOOLA glues are free from aromatic substances and radicals, and the polishing of the pimples permits the use of sponge up to a thickness of 2.6 mm! Super feeling and more direct contact with the ball. Speed: 8-9.5/Spin: 8-9.0

**Reg** $29.95

**Item** ROMA

**Terminator** $29.95

Highly elastic, grippy, soft, thick sponge. More space inside sponge offsets spin loss of 40mm ball at higher ball speeds. Shorter pimples, thinner rubber surface, and the position of the pimples permits the use of sponge up to a thickness of 2.6 mm! Super feeling and more direct contact with the ball. Speed: 8-9.5/Spin: 8-9.0

**Reg** $34.95

**Item** Roter

**Mambo** $24.95

Extremely soft, only 35 degree hardness, extreme flexibility of rubber surface, and absolute feeling and maximum click when freshly glued. Made in Japan. Tension in the rubber is at maximum permitted levels, without increasing weight - the result is a super-flexible rubber. Sheer joy of playing that can be heard and felt!

**Speed** 8.5/Spin: 9.2

**Reg** $29.95

**Item** ROMA

**Joola Combi Specials**

- **$98.95**
  - **Item**: XSJAC
  - **Blade Only** $78.95
  - **Reg**: $28.95

- **$98.95**
  - **Item**: XSJAT
  - **Blade Only** $78.95
  - **Reg**: $28.95

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**Paddle Palace: North American Distributor for Juic Products**

Offers expire 7/5/04
### Men's Results

1. China  
2. Germany  
3. Korea R.  
4. Sweden  
5. Hong Kong  
6. Austria  
7. Chinese Taipei  
8. Italy  
9. France  
10. Belgium  
11. Russia  
12. Japan  
13. Czech Republic  
14. Norway  
15. Denmark  
16. Belarus  
17. Romania  
18. Spain  
19. Poland  
20. Greece  
21. Hungary  
22. Serbia & Montenegro  
23. Croatia  
24. Netherlands  
25. Brazil  
26. Slovenia  
27. Nigeria  
28. India  
29. Israel  
30. Slovenia  
31. Egypt  
32. Canada  
33. Ukraine  
34. Portugal  
35. USA  
36. Bulgaria  
37. Australia  
38. Iran  
39. Turkey  
40. Wales  
41. Indonesia  
42. Thailand  
43. Saudi Arabia  
44. Finland  
45. Switzerland  
46. New Zealand  
47. Chile  
48. Estonia  
49. Kuwait  
50. Malaysia  
51. Latvia  
52. Armenia  
53. Tunisia  
54. Ireland  
55. New Zealand  
56. Armenia  
57. Ireland  
58. Pakistan  
59. Qatar  
60. Jordan  
61. Luxemburg  
62. Iceland  
63. San Marino  
64. Macao  
65. Barbados  
66. Lebanon  
67. Malta  
68. Uzbekistan  
69. Cyprus  
70. Yemen  
71. Liechtenstein  
72. Azerbaijan  
73. Kenya  
74. Nepal  
75. Tajikistan  
76. Morocco  
77. Kosovo  
78. Algeria  
79. Bahrain  
80. Libya  
81. Jordan  
82. Indonesia  
83. Austria  
84. Saudi Arabia  
85. Turkey  
86. Australia  
87. Albania  
88. Singapore  
89. Belarus  
90. Chinese Taipei  
91. Latvia  
92. Lithuania  
93. Slovenia  
94. India  
95. China  
96. Finland  
97. Malaysia  
98. China  
99. Ukraine  
100. Russia  

### Women's Results

1. China  
2. Hong Kong  
3. Japan  
4. Korea R.  
5. Romania  
6. Germany  
7. Russia  
8. Hungary  
9. Italy  
10. Singapore  
11. Belarus  
12. Chinese Taipei  
13. Croatia  
14. Czech Republic  
15. Ukraine  
16. Slovakia  
17. Serbia & Montenegro  
18. USA  
19. Thailand  
20. France  
21. Belgium  
22. Australia  
23. Lithuania  
24. New Zealand  
25. India  
26. Spain  
27. Greece  
28. Slovenia  
29. Sweden  
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31. Malaysia  
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33. Canada  
34. Austria  
35. Nigeria  
36. Chile  
37. England  
38. Moldova  
39. Indonesia  
40. Luxembourg  
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42. Turkey  
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**Arnold Classic Table Tennis Championships**

**Columbus, OH • March 7, 2004**

By Charles Hill, Chairman, Arnold Classic Table Tennis

Arnold in action. See sinister man on left - the bad guy from “Total Recall”?

Arnold tries out the big paddle. Note all the security. That's Scott Preiss he's playing. (Look closely at Scott's racket - yes, it's got a hole in it.)

On March 7, 2004, the first annual Arnold Classic Table Tennis Championship took place in Columbus, Ohio at the Arnold Classic at the beautiful Greater Columbus Convention Center. The Classic has mostly bodybuilders and fitness models in demos and competition. There are hundreds of vendors that sell and give away their fitness foods, supplements and sportswear to a crowd of 80,000 paying visitors over three days. Other sports such as martial arts, gymnastics, dance, cheerleading and running are displayed. This was obviously a huge opportunity to showcase table tennis too.

This table tennis event began when I received a request from Classic Productions and Arnold Schwarzenegger to quickly put together a table tennis show and competition this year in lieu of next, which was the original plan. I had about three weeks to make this happen. I quickly rallied the troops across the midwest and out to Scott Preiss in Colorado. The result was beyond our expectations. It was a huge success!

Our mission was to showcase table tennis because table tennis is an Olympic sport and this is an Olympic year. I had to provide a competition and I had to give the people a show. I wanted to attract as many new interests to our sport as possible and entertain the players that already love our sport. “Great” Scott Preiss provided outstanding support to the project. Scott’s wonderful personality and athletic ability entertained thousands of visitors. Scott joked with the crowd and handed out what seemed like hundreds of rackets, balls and gifts to the large crowd. Scott was a hit with non-playing visitors and all levels of players.

There was a tournament going on in conjunction with Scott’s presentation. Scott was so amazing that several high level players had to stop play and watch Scott’s antics. He had something entertaining for everybody. It was a joy to see him work the crowd and present our beloved sport in a positive light. Scott is the Curly Neal (original Globe Trotter) of table tennis. Scott also chatted, entertained and had photos taken with Arnold Schwarzenegger. Scott played some points with Arnold. Arnold was very pleased!

The Arnold Classic Champion this year is Olu Ayangade, Olu was the 4th seed in a field of 10 current and former Ohio state champions. He upset the field with blazing backhands and smooth forehand winners. His two-winged attack was too much for all of us to handle. Congratulations Olu!!

Roger Dickson entertained hundreds of eager kids and some adults with his Newgy robot. The kids love the robot. Most had never seen a table tennis robot.

This event was made possible because of our wonderful sponsors. Here’s a big “THANK YOU” to Jim Lorimer’s Classic Productions, Escalade Sports, Newgy Table Tennis Equipment, Buckeye Open Table Tennis Association, Feddersen Table Tennis Club, Newark Table Tennis Club, and the Cleveland Table Tennis Club.

Look for The Arnold Classic Extreme Table Tennis Championships next year! It will be table tennis on a grand scale, a world-class championship. The world’s absolute best players will compete for the largest cash awards ever in the United States.
COMBO SPECIALS include 2 sheets Tibhar rubber. Save up to $50! Add 5th sheet for Torpedo, Grass Devil or Grass D.TecS

**THE IV SERIES: EUROPE’S FAVORITE BLADES!**

**YOUR CHOICE of IV SERIES COMBO SPECIAL**

**$86.95**

- IV-T: Offensive High Speed + Acceleration + stability! Made from exceptional combo of plywood and soft fast Apycus wood. Speed: OFF+ Handle: FL, ST, AN Wgt: 89 gm Piles: 6 Blade only $41.95 Item: STIVT

- IV-L: Exceptional Ball Feeling! Perfect for allround players and varid attacking players who want control. Speed: ALL Handle: FL, ST, AN Wgt: 85 gm Piles: 5 Blade only $45.95 Item: STIVL

**$86.95**

- IV-S: Extraordinary Feeling for spin-oriented gamer! Soft and fast and adaptive to your style of play. Speed: OFF Handle: FL, ST, AN Wgt: 85 gm Piles: 5 Blade only $45.95 Item: STIVS

**$26.95**

- Rapid X-Press

*The product of research based on TIBHAR'S best-selling rubber "RAPID" and developed with assistance of Vladimir Samsonov. It has explosive and spin-friendly surface, but also makes half-distance strokes easier and more powerful. The combination of the new rubber surface with a new and relatively hard sponge gives this rubber great power and very good sound when speed gluing. Speed: 9.5/Spin: 9.5 Sponge: 1.6/1.8/2.0, Max Reg price $29.95 Item: XTRAX*

**$26.95**

- Tibhar Rapid Clean

*World-class speed glue. Super fast and gentle to your rubber. 250 ml can w/brush. Reg $13.95 Item: GTRC 1 liter refill can. Reg $33.95 Item: GTTRL*

**$9.95**

- Tibhar Rub Clean

*250 ml! Excellent rubber cleaner in a non-aerosol pump spray bottle so it can be sent air shipment. Reverts your rubber back to its best spin and grip. Reg $11.95 Item: ETRU*

**$9.95**

- Tibhar Mini Paddle

*Measures 4" x 6 1/2". Print-sized blade replica, all wood, no rubber. Blue on front, red on back. Reg $5.95 Item: MTMINI*

**$26.95**

- Power 40

*Power + Precision! Unbelievable power results from 7-ply construction and a new shorter grip which shifts the center of gravity forward. But, you won’t sacrifice control. This fast, offensive blade has perfect control and precision when hitting passive shots like blocking or pushing. Definite point making ability with aggressive shots. Speed: OFF Handle: FL, AN, ST Wgt: 83 gm Piles: 4 Blade only $45.95 Item: STPO*

**$75**

- Standard Schwarz

*Allround rubber. Great for touch, keeping the ball in play, wearing the opponent down with your allround tenacity. Execute pushes, drives, and blocks with finesse. Speed: 6.6/Spin: 6.6 Sponge: 1.5 Price: $17.95 Item: RSTA*

**$11.95**

- Tibhar Mini Paddle

*Measures 4'' x 6 1/2''/ 6''. Pint-sized blade replica, all wood, no rubber. Blue on front, red on back. Reg $5.95 Item: MTMINI*

1-800-547-5891
paddlepalace.com

We will match our competitors' prices!
Let's see now... Which Robo-Pong 540 Model Are You Going to Choose?

ONLY

$229.00

Order Robo-Pong 540 and add Pong-Pal Ball Catch Net II and 48 Robo-Balls for only $70.00 (SAVE $63)

Eric Owens
U.S. Men's Singles Champion

Get Info, Tips & Training Advice in the

Newgy Coaching Forum

www.newgy.com

Building Tomorrow's Champions
Should I Choose?

ONLY $359.00

Robo-Pong 1040
get 48 Robo-Balls
FREE ($33 VALUE)

SPECIALS GOOD THRU
June 30, 2004

ONLY
$695.00

Order Robo-Pong 2040
and get 96 Robo-Balls
FREE ($56 VALUE)

...or

ROBO-PONG

The next step up is this great robot for intermediate and tournament level players. Includes all features of Robo-Pong 540 plus oscillation and more powerful speed/frequency controls. Bucket Extender expands ball capacity for longer continuous play. Ball Catch Net II captures your returns and enables manual recycling of the balls. Add optional Ball Catch Net II for manual recycling of your returns.

Robo-Pong 1040 can be quickly and easily upgraded anytime into a Robo-Pong 2040 Robot with the Recycling Net Upgrade Kit for only $379.00.

OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES FOR ROBO-PONG

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<th>ACCESSORY</th>
<th>540</th>
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<td>RP 540 Upgrade Kit</td>
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<td>Side Nets (for BCNII)</td>
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USA Women

By USA Women’s Coach Teodor Gheorghe

Before the World Championships, the Women’s and Men’s Team went to Romania for a joint training camp with the Romanian Team. We arrived in Romania on February 23, and left on February 28 for Doha, Qatar. The camp was good with many sparring partners, and good practice conditions with two sessions/day.

We arrived in Doha on February 29 in the morning, and had to wait a couple of hours till our rooms were ready.

The World Championships were run smoothly on a beautiful site and the hotel was situated on the seashore.

The USA Women’s Team, composed of Gao Jun, Jasna Reed, Tawny Banh, Jackie Lee and Lily Yip, was drawn into Group C (Division One), together with the Czech Republic, Belgium, Ukraine, New Zealand and Thailand. We played one match/day, starting March 1 against New Zealand. We won 3-0, with Gao defeating S. Shu, 5-2, 4, Jasna defeating K. Li, 1-7, 7-4, 10-8, and Tawny defeating H. Squire, 9-2, 3.

The second match was against Belgium, which has a new Chinese player that plays very well. Gao started against I. Sallagrts and she won easily, 1-4, 4. Jasna next played against Li Yun Fei. She started very well, winning the first two games 11-9, 11-8, but then Li Yun started to move Jasna around and not miss easy shots, and Li won the next three games at 6, 3, 9. Tawny defeated C. Ozor at 7-5, 9. Gao lost the next match against Li Yun Fei, 6, 15-7, who didn’t have any problem with Gao’s pips, and moved very well all over the table. In the second game Gao started very well, leading 5-1, but Li catch up at 6-6, and the game went head to head till 15-all when Li hit an edge, and then Gao missed a forehand. At 2-2, Jasna played J. Sallagrts, and she started off with no confidence, losing the first game at 10. She won the next three games at 9, 1, 8.

On March 4, we played against a Ukraine team with three choppers. Gao played first against K. Komwong and lost, 3-10, 3. Next, Jasna played T. Sorochynska and won the first game 12-10, lost the second 11-9, won the third 11-8 and lost the fourth 11-9. The Ukraine player was very consistent, with a strong forehand smash, and being tall, she covered the table very well. In the fifth, Sorochynska started off very well, leading 5-0, with Jasna missing a couple of easy shots. Jasna came back and caught up at 8-8, and Jasna managed to return the fifth on corner. Sorochynska fell on one knee and managed to return the fifth on the table with a very weird stroke and Gao missed the next shot. At 10-9, Gao hit a forehand net-ticker that went long, and she lost the game 11-9, and the match 3-2.

At 2-2, Jasna played K. Komwong. Jasna couldn’t read any of the chops and she lost 8, 7, 5.

We played Thailand on March 5, the team that beat the Czech Republic 3-1.

Gao defeated A. Muangsuk, 4, 5, 8. Jasna played the second match against K. Komwong and lost, 7, 6, 4. In the third match Tawny won against S. Rattanaprayoon, 10, 5, 10.5. At 2-1 for USA, Gao played Komwong. She started well, winning the first game 11-7, but couldn’t focus the next two and lost them, 11-5, 11-9. She won the fourth 11-2, but lost the fifth 11-6. Next, Jasna played Muangsuk, with the team match all tied up at 2-2. Jasna won the first two games and lost the second two at 8 and 4. In the fifth, Jasna started well, leading all the way till 10-8 match point. Muangsuk won the next two points with two forehand cross-court smashes to reach deuce in the fifth. At 12-12, Muangsuk missed Jasna’s serve. Next point Muangsuk missed a forehand, and Jasna has won the game and match, 14-12, and USA won the team match, 3-2.

The last match of the group was against the Czech Republic. Gao played first against Vachovcova and won easily, 11, 1, 6. Jasna played the second match against Strbikova. She started very well in the first game, leading 9-5, but lost 12-14. She won the second 11-7, but then lost the next two at 2 and 7. Tawny next lost to Dobesova, 8, 12, 8, 5. Gao won her match against Strbikova, 7-7, 8-3. Jasna played at 2-2 against Vachovcova. She lost the first two games badly, 11-6, 11-3, but pulled out the third, 13-11 ... but lost the fourth, 12-10.

We finished in third place in the group with a 3-2 record. In the playoff for positions 17-18 we played against Serbia and Montenegro. Gao played against A. Erdelj and won at 6, 8, 5. Next match Tawny played S. Erdelj and she won the first two games 13-11, 11-9 ... but then lost next three, 11-9, 11-9, 11-8. Jasna next played G. Fehlr, a junior girl that played very quick and much faster than Jasna. Jasna lost, 7, 10, 7, 2. Next match Gao defeated S. Erdelj easily, 4, 6, 6. Tawny played A. Erdelj at 2-2. She started off very well, winning the first two games 11-4, 11-9, but lost the next three, 11-9, 11-9, 11-3. USA lost 3-2 and we finished 18th.

The USA Women improved their world ranking two places (at the last Worlds, USA finished 20th). I believe we could have had better results but
The girls had a hard time concentrating during the championships. Tawny and Jasna came after two important Trials (the U.S. and North American Olympic Singles Trials) and their peak was at those Trials. Gao is having trouble concentrating during matches, which could be a consequence of long-time training (in China) and playing without adequate rest.

The main goal of our National Team is to do well at the Olympic Games in August, and we will have enough time to get ready mentally and physically. The National Team has another two camps and the U.S. Open between now and the Olympic Games.

**USA Women's Results**

**USA d. New Zealand, 3-0**
- Gao Jun (USA) d. S. Shu (NZL), 5,2,4
- Jasna Reed (USA) d. K. Li (NZL), -7,-7,-4,10,8
- Tawny Banh (USA) d. H. Squire (NZL), 9,2,1

**USA d. Belgium, 3-2**
- Gao Jun (USA) d. L. Sallagts (BEL), 1,4,4
- Li Yun Fei (BEL) d. Jasna Reed (USA), -9,-8,6,3,9
- Tawny Banh (USA) d. C. Ozer (BEL), 7,5,9
- Li Yun Fei (BEL) d. Gao Jun (USA), 6,1,5,7
- Jasna Reed (USA) d. L. Sallagts (BEL), -10,1,8

**USA d. Russia, 3-0**
- Gao Jun (USA) d. O. Kovtun (UKR), 3,10,3
- T. Sorochnyńska (UKR) d. Jasna Reed (USA), -10,9,-8,9,10
- Tawny Banh (USA) d. O. Shvets (UKR), -4,-7,8,12,5
- T. Sorochnyńska (UKR) d. Gao Jun (USA), 6,13,8,-7,9
- O. Kovtun (UKR) d. Jasna Reed (USA), 8,7,5

**USA d. Thailand, 3-2**
- Gao Jun (USA) d. A. Muangsuk (THA), 4,5,8
- N. Komwong (THA) d. Jasna Reed (USA), 7,6,4
- Tawny Banh (USA) d. S. Rattanaprayoon (THA), 10,5,-10,5
- N. Komwong (THA) d. Gao Jun (USA), -7,9,-2,6
- Jasna Reed (USA) d. A. Muungsuk (THA), 5,10,-8,4,12

**USA d. Netherlands, 3-2**
- Gao Jun (USA) d. A. Muangsuk (THA), 4,5,8
- N. Komwong (THA) d. Jasna Reed (USA), 7,6,4
- Tawny Banh (USA) d. C. Ozer (BEL), 9,5,9,5,4
- O. Kovtun (UKR) d. Jasna Reed (USA), -10,9,1,8
- T. Sorochynska (UKR) d. Gao Jun (USA), -10,-9,-8,9,10

**USA d. Ukraine, 3-2**
- Gao Jun (USA) d. O. Kovtun (UKR), 3,10,3
- T. Sorochnyńska (UKR) d. Jasna Reed (USA), -10,9,-8,9,10
- Tawny Banh (USA) d. C. Ozer (BEL), 7,5,9
- O. Kovtun (UKR) d. Jasna Reed (USA), 8,7,5
- Jasna Reed (USA) d. A. Muangsuk (THA), 5,10,-8,4,12

USA Men's Team in their Stiga uniforms, L-R: Adam Hugh, Han Xiao, David Zhuang, Mark Hazinski, Khoa Nguyen, Coach Dan Seemiller

**USA Men**

**By USA Men's Coach Dan Seemiller**

Our trip to the World Team Championships in Doha, Qatar started with five days of training with the Romanian National Team. The camp was held at the national training center about one hour from Bucharest. Doru Gheorghe, USATT Executive Director and Women’s coach, made the arrangements. The practice was at a high level as Crisan Cioti, Filimon, Badea and Steff were our team’s training partners. The trip also helped us adjust to the 8-hour time difference. It is so hard to sleep the first few days, as your body clock needs time to straighten out.

We arrived in Doha on February 29 and our Men’s Team was moved up from Division 3 to Division 2, which means we would compete for positions 25-36. The team (David Zhuang, Khoa Nguyen, Mark Hazinski, Han Xiao and Adam Hugh) would take on Brazil, Nigeria, Canada, Ukraine and Israel. We started off against Nigeria. Nigeria has Segun Toriola, who is ranked #91 in the World, so this is a difficult match. Team matches are best 3 out of 5 games and the first team to win three matches wins the tie. David Zhuang is first up against Kazeem Nosiru and he wins the first 11-4. David’s serves are excellent and Nosiru struggles to make quality returns.

In game two it’s much closer at 9-all, when the Nigerian rips two forehands past Zhuang. In the third game, Nosiru’s loop is on and he wins easily 11-4 to go up 2-1. David is blocking too much and needs to be more aggressive, but this is his first match and it’s hard to get started. In game four David steps it up and attacks everything and wins 11-1, and continues in the fifth 11-5, as USA leads 1 match to 0.

Khoa Nguyen is up next against Segun Toriola. Segun plays in the Netherlands league and is an elite player. Khoa, who played so well at the Olympic trials in Vancouver two weeks earlier, is unable to return serve well and is beaten quite easily at 5,3,9. Khoa has the shots but lacks experience at this level (his last World’s was 1995) and his reading of spin and shots but lacks experience at this level (his last World’s was 1995) and his reading of spin and returns of serve weakness will show up throughout the tourney. The match is tied 1-1.

Mark Hazinski plays the #3 spot against Peter Akinlabi. “Haz” is usually a slow starter and you can’t afford that in these short three out of five matches. He’s quickly down 2-0, as...
Haz is trying to do too much on the return of serve. Haz wins game three, 11-6, and is starting to play better but he can’t stay with Akinlabi as he wins game four, 11-7. Nigeria leads 2-1.

Next up, our #1, David vs. #1 Segun Toriola. David, who is playing spectacular table tennis, wins games one and two, 5 & 8. Toriola doesn’t like David’s pips game and D.Z. is blocking everything and smashing with accuracy. In game three, David leads 10-6 quadruple match point, he’s on the verge of a great win, but Segun scores five in a row to lead 11-10. Segun serves and Dave pops it up but gets a reprieve as Toriola tries to loop it too hard, 11-11. David smacks in a couple winners and wins the match and the team match is all square, 2-2. A great win for D.Z. as Toriola would not lose another match in our division.

The deciding fifth match has Kazeem versus Nguyen and it’s no match as Khoa just can’t get going. He loses three straight, 4,5,8. Kazeem Nosiru is definitely a quality player, but Khoa just didn’t have it in this match. All the Nigerian players have a tough, low backhand serve and Khoa just couldn’t handle it effectively.

We only played one match per day. On Tuesday, March 2 we played the top seeds in our group, Brazil. Again, we drew the ABC order and David would lead us off against Thiago Monteiro. David, who “is” a quick starter, has Monteiro off balance right away and wins games one and two easily at 6 & 5. Thiago, who was a silver medalist in the singles at this year’s Pan Am’s, fights back and narrowly wins games three & four, both 11-9. But, just as he did in his first match against Nigeria, David ups his record to 3-0 as he wins the fifth with ease, 11-4. Thiago has a powerful forehand loop but David’s blocking was amazing. USA leads 1-0.

Against Brazil, I went with a line-up change – just the order – and put Haz in the second spot with Khoa in the third. Haz starts well against the veteran Hoyama and leads game one 10-8, but he can’t close the deal as the Brazilian wins it 12-10. In game two Haz is on fire as he cruises to an 11-5 win. (Oh, if Haz had only won that first game......) In game three, they are even up till 8-all. Haz leads 9-8, 10-9 and 11-10. At 10-9 for Haz, Hoyama calls a time out. My instruction to Haz (Hoyama has the serve) was to flip soft to the backhand. He said the serve was high and the forehand looked open. Arghh!!! Bad decision making can cost you. Haz is still in need of more experience to win these close games as he loses game four, 11-9. USA 1 – Brazil 1.

Our morale is low. We should have won this tie 3-0. Now David has to play the talented Hoyama. David leads game one, 10-8, but he also can’t win the close one; 13-11 for the South American. David wins game two, 11-6, and leads 5-1 in the third and then loses concentration and the match 3-1. This loss costs us any chance we had to win the group.

Next up is Canada and of course Johnny Huang. Johnny hasn’t played in Canada’s first two ties and he won’t in their next three (including a playoff match). He’s in the line-up against our team. You either play or you don’t but it’s clear our neighbor wants to stick it to us. They win 3-1 with only David winning 3-0 against Fazzil Kassam. Huang wins his two, 3-0 over Khoa and David, and Haz plays his worst match of the tournament against Bence Csaba. We are now 0-3.

Next up is Ukraine and I contemplate putting in Adam and Han. I decide against it because we must beat Ukraine or we will finish last in the group. Ukraine is also 0-3.

David starts off against Aleksandr Didukh, their #2 player. For the first time in the tournament David’s timing is off. He loses the important first game 12-10, and never finds any rhythm. Didukh plays well as he wins 3-0. There are no easy matches at this level. Khoa is up next, against Ivan Katkov, and though Khoa plays better, he loses 3-1 and is never really in the match.

In the third match, Mark Hazinski wins the first two games but loses games three and four at 5 & 4. Haz, down 7-4 in game five, comes through 13-11 and our team stays alive. Ukraine 2 – USA 1. David is back as he easily downs their #1 player 3-0. It’s Khoa in the fifth against Didukh, who beat David 3-0. He also beats Khoa 3-0, and we’ve lost our fourth tie in a row, 3-2.

In our last match against Israel, Han Xiao and Adam Hugh will both make their World’s debut. Han (17), Adam (16) and Mark Hazinski (18) will play. This may be the youngest line-up in the tournament and is definitely the future for USA Table Tennis.

Han is first up against Izak Abramov who earlier in the tournament defeated Hugo Hoyama, Brazil’s #1. Han starts well to win the first at deuce, 12-10. Abramov quickly comes back to win games two and three at 6 & 7. Han is playing well with quick loops off the bounce as he dominates game four, 11-6. In game five, it’s Han’s down 5-2 but he comes back to have two match points at 10-9 and 11-10. At 10-9, Abramov serves long but Han is not ready to loop and pushes back an easy one. At 11-10, Han misses a makeable forehand counterloop, and he loses the match 14-12 in the fifth.

Mark Hazinski is up next and he plays the match of the tournament as he controls Israel’s #1, Yaniv Sharon, 3-0. Haz likes to play lefties and Sharon can’t return his serve or control Haz’s power-looping game. USA 1 – Israel 1.

Adam Hugh is up next against Oshel Paniel and quickly Adam wins the first at 6 and is 10-all in the second. He loses the deuce game and it’s one apiece. Adam starts to play too soft and Paniel uses the momentum from game two to win this third game easily, 11-3. Again in game four Paniel asserts control and leads 9-6. Adam, though, is a great fighter as he scores five in a row to tie up the match 2-2. In game five, Paniel again plays well and Adam can’t stay with him, 11-7. If Adam could have won that second game........... Israel 2 – USA 1.

Han is up next against the experienced Sharon and as well as he played against Abramov earlier, there could be hope. However, Han does not play well and Sharon does. It’s an easy 3-0 win for the Israelis. Israel wins 3-1.

**USA Men’s Results**

**Nigeria d. USA, 3-2**
- David Zhuang (USA) d. K. Nosiru (NGR), 4-9, 4-1, 15
- S. Toriola (NGR) d. Khoa Nguyen (USA), 5,3,9
- P. Akinlabi (NGR) d. Mark Hazinski (USA), 8-6, 6-7
- David Zhuang (USA) d. S. Toriola (NGR), 5,8, 11
- K. Nosiru (NGR) d. Khoa Nguyen (USA), 4,5,8

**Brazil d. USA, 3-1**
- David Zhuang (USA) d. F. Monteiro (BRA), 6-5, 9-7, 9-4
- H. Hoyama (BRA) d. Mark Hazinski (USA), 11, 6-11, 9
- R. Yamanamoto (BRA) d. Khoa Nguyen (USA), 9,12-9
- H. Hoyama (BRA) d. David Zhuang (USA), 11-6, 7-5

**Canada d. USA, 3-1**
- J. Huang (CAN) d. Khoa Nguyen (USA), 49,5
- David Zhuang (USA) d. E. Kassam (CAN), 3,7,8
- B. Csaba (CAN) d. Mark Hazinski (USA), 4,5,8
- J. Huang (CAN) d. David Zhuang (USA), 10,9,8

**Ukraine d. USA, 3-2**
- O. Didukh (UKR) d. David Zhuang (USA), 10,7,9
- K. Katkov (UKR) d. Khoa Nguyen (USA), 7,8,9
- Mark Hazinski (USA) d. E. Pryscphela (UKR), 10,7,5,4,11
- David Zhuang (USA) d. L. Katkov (UKR), 11,8,3
- O. Didukh (UKR) d. Khoa Nguyen (USA), 8,7,9

**Israel d. USA, 3-1**
- Abramov (ISR) d. Han Xiao (USA), 10,7,6,6,12
- Mark Hazinski (USA) d. Y. Sharon (ISR), 9,12,8
- O. Paniel (ISR) d. Adam Hugh (USA), 6,10-3,9-7
- Y. Sharon (ISR) d. Han Xiao (USA), 4,5,7

**The Playing Hall**

Photo by Gerry Chua (USA)
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It was a well-run Trials, and a great thanks go to the Canadians and all the staff and officials for making it so. Matches went on time (except for a few times when previous rounds went very long - unavoidable). The playing conditions were excellent. So congratulations to all, especially to the Canadian Association and tournament staff & officials. (Complete listing along with a much longer article that includes a writeup of every match played, is at www.usatt.org/events/2004_na_olympic_singles_trials. Due to the lack of space, matches involving USA players are emphasized here.)

Play was at the Sportsplex at McNell Secondary School, with Joola tables, nets & barriers, and the red Gerflor floors. Two courts were used, normally one for men, one for women. The schedule had the USA players play themselves first, and the Canadians play themselves first, to lower the chances of dumped matches later on (to help a teammate).

USA and Canada held national trials to get down to their final men and women. North America is allotted six Olympic singles spots from these Trials: three men and three women. Since USA's Gao Jun pre-qualified, there are only two spots available for USA women (and only two women are allowed to try out for the U.S.). So there are six men (3 USA, 3 Canadian) trying out for three men's spots, and five women (2 USA, 3 Canadian) trying out for three women's spots.

The referees and umpires made it clear right from the start they would be strict on the service rule, especially the rule about not hiding serves and getting the free arm out of the way during the serve. Right from the start players were getting warnings and service faults - and after a few rounds, the players pretty much adjusted, and few faults were then called. It did get rather ugly, however, in the final match (Khoa Nguyen vs. Bence Csaba) when the crowd was screaming at the umpires for calling faults.

The crowd (at its peak, about 500) was rather partisan, in favor of the hometown Canadians, but that's to be expected. You could keep score by listening to the crowd after each point.

**DAY ONE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

**Round One**

Petra Cada (CAN) d. Marie-Christine Roussy (CAN), 9,4,8,7

Ilija Lupulesku (USA) d. Khoa Nguyen (USA), 6,-7,8,7,-7,9

Superficially, the two play similar. However, the two actually play quite different. Khoa is a conventional all-out two-winged attacker, able to loop a winner off almost anything - except against Lupi, where loop kills are routinely looped or fished back. Lupi has a very efficient attack, not as piercing as Khoa's, but very steady, with more topspin. However, his strengths are his off-table counterlooping and topspin defense (fishing). Many of the rallies featured Khoa ripping "winner" after "winner," with each returned until finally Khoa would miss or Lupi would counterloop a winner.

The two split the first two games, with Khoa getting hot in the second. (Khoa was faulted at 2-2 in the first game for not getting his arm out of the way when he served.) Lupi seemed to coast the next two games. Down 5-6 in the fifth, Khoa called a one-minute timeout - and when he came back, he was on fire, winning five in a row. In the sixth, Lupi coasted to a 10-4 match point lead. Then 10-5... 10-6... 10-7... 10-8... 10-9! Khoa, who had just served and ripped a winner (i.e. one that even Lupi couldn't fish back), served short, Lupi dropped the ball short, and Khoa flip-killed - into the net.

**Round Two**

Johnny Huang (CAN) d. Bence Csaba (CAN), -13,1,-9,7,5,7

Jasna Reed (USA) d. Tawny Banh (USA), 5,4,-8,7,9

Once again we have this classic match-up of contrasting styles. Jasna plays very European style, looping and hitting from both wings with inverted, and often moving off the table. Tawny is more Asian style, with pips on the backhand, playing right up to the table, looping the forehand...
Congrats to the Olympic Singles Qualifiers!

USA Men:
Ilija Lupulesku, Khoa Nguyen

USA Women:
Gao Jun, Jasna Reed, Tawny Banh

Canadian Men:
Johnny Huang

Canadian Women:
Petra Cada

at the top of the bounce, and hitting backhands right off the bounce. It leads to bang-bang rallies. However, Jasna’s looping and backhand hitting this match were unstoppable. Often Tawny’s hardest-hit off-the-bounce backhands were backhand counter-killed by Jasna. When Jasna looped, she controlled the points. There was some excitement right at the end as Jasna led 10-7 – and Tawny got two net-dribblers in a row to get to 10-9 (with Jasna giving a Dean-like primal scream at the second one).

Round Three
Chris Xu (CAN) d. Marie-Christine Roussy (CAN), 10,8,8,4
Khoa Nguyen (USA) d. David Zhuang (USA), 8,6,-7,9,8,10
Khoa won the first, but things started going wrong in the second game, when his serve was faulted on the second point. “No warning?” he asked the umpire. “No warning – the serve was clearly illegal,” replied the umpire. (Khoa’s arm was apparently in front when he served.) David won that game and the next. As the match went on, however, Khoa gradually stopped trying to force his forehand (his strength), and more and more stayed in position, looping steady backhands. The strategy worked, but it was a battle. In the sixth game, Khoa led 5-4, but after David called a timeout, David got three in a row to lead 7-5. Khoa then goes up 8-7 in this see-saw match, mostly by backhand looping over and over and over. When Khoa misses a forehand loop (8-all) David yells, “YAH!!!” (In contrast to Khoa, who throughout the match, when he scores points, says under his breath. “that’s it” (small letters). At 9-all, Khoa loops in David’s serve to get match point #1 (“that’s it!”). But he backhands David’s next serve off, a net-ticker that just goes long (“YAH!!!”). Khoa serve and forehand loops, follows with a backhand loop, and David blocks off (“that’s it”), as Khoa gets match point #2, 11-10. David serve and loops – and Khoa quick blocks a winner to the wide forehand. (“that’s it.”).

Round Four
Bence Csaba (CAN) d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN), 6,-10,6,-9,8,6

Round Five
Ilija Lupulesku (USA) d. David Zhuang (USA), -7,3,8,6,7
David dominated the first two games with his blocking and hitting, but starting in the third game, Lup’s looping took control. Two key comeback-stopping points: Down 8-10 in the fourth, and down 7-10 in the sixth (after being down 3-9), David has Lup lobbing, both times does a drop shot, both times Lup tosses the ball up – and both times David misses the easy smash. In the last two games, Lupus often seemed unstoppable.

Petra Cada (CAN) d. Chris Xu (CAN), 5,-4,5,-4,4,-9,7
At 6-6 in the seventh, the match went expedite – from here on, the players alternate serves, and the server has 13 shots to win the point, or the receiver wins the point. In the end, Petra’s patience and sudden forehand smashes at expedite won out as she outscored Chris 5-1 after expedite was called. As it turned out, this match would be the deciding match for the final spot on the Olympic team.

Round Six
Johnny Huang (CAN) d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN), 8,1,8,13

Round Seven
David Zhuang (USA) d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN), -6,7,9,7,6,4
Prad used the same inside-out forehand serve he’d used against Johnny Huang, and early on his forehand seemed invincible. Prad went up 8-0 in the first. Up 10-2, he won 11-6. From here on, it was a battle. David didn’t let Prad tee off with his forehand so much after the first game, and often had Prad off the table defensively spinning (and always watching for David’s sudden drop shots), but Prad’s ability to stay in the points, and find chances to rip forehands, kept him in the match. Prad won game three with a high, soft, spinny loop that David blocked off (in disbelief), and won when David pushed off. But David began to dominate in game four, winning the next two games easily.

Tawny Banh (USA) d. Marie-Christine Roussy (CAN),10,6,10,9
Three of the four games were close, and every rally was vicious ... but Tawny’s stronger forehand looping won in the end. Some of the backhand-backhand rallies, however, were ferocious.
Photos by Gerrv Chua ©

Round Eight
Johnny Huang (CAN) d. Khoa Nguyen (USA), 5-8, 8-6, 7
Khoa had upset Johnny the last time they'd played, but few in the stands realized this. For the first four games, it was dead even; after that, Johnny's sheer speed began to dominate as he'd force Khoa off the table more and more, inevitably leading to a Johnny kill. Some of the points had to be seen to be believed; there was a point at 8-9 in the second (Khoa leading) where Khoa looped in the serve, Johnny smashed it, and without either player backing off, Khoa continued to loop, Johnny to smash, over and over, until finally Johnny missed one.

Jasna Reed (USA) d. Chris Xu (CAN), 3-8, 3-8
It's obvious Jasna knows how to play choppers. Against Chris, she basically alternated looping and pushing, rarely pushing or looping twice in a row, and kept working for that slightly high ball that she'd efficiently smash. She rarely gave Chris a chance to score, bringing her in and out, never over-attacking, never getting too passive (and letting Chris attack). She mostly high ball that she'd efficiently smash. She rarely twice in a row, and kept working for that slightly high ball that she'd efficiently smash.

Round Nine
Iljia Lupulesku (USA) d. Bence Csaba (CAN), 7-3, 6-9
Lupi's topspin fishing was at its best here as he fished Bence down over and over - in fact, it seemed like he was off the table over half the time, running down (successfully) almost everything Bence could throw at him. The Lefty Lupi could do no wrong this match as he picked Bence's game to pieces, both with topspin defense and by sudden looping attacks to the wide forehand that caught Bence over and over. When off the table topspin fishing, he's mixing the spins up - light to heavy topspins, sometimes no-spin - and Bence was caught by this over and over. In fairness to Bence, Lupi developed his game in Europe where almost everyone plays like Bence, while Bence rarely gets to play someone who plays such topspin defense as Lupi's. (Pradi is close, but not quite the same.)

Jasna was able to attack almost at will during this match - usually opening with a backhand loop - but it took her many shots to get past Marie's blocking. Many of the rallies were backhand-backhand, with Jasna pressing the attack, Marie backhand jab-blocking (and sometimes forearm hitting) with her Seemiller grip. In the last game, up 10-6, Jasna seemed to let up, playing lackadaisical, and lost three in a row before serve and backhand looping a winner.

Day Two: Sunday, February 15
For Day One, each set of two matches that went out (sometimes one, when the women had a bye) was listed as a "round." On Day Two, with fewer matches, the matches were played one at a time, so they are simply listed in sequence.

Jasna Reed (USA) d. Marie-Christine Roussy (CAN), 9-8, 6-5, 9
Jasna was able to attack almost at will during this match - usually opening with a backhand loop - but it took her many shots to get past Marie's blocking. Many of the rallies were backhand-backhand, with Jasna pressing the attack, Marie backhand jab-blocking (and sometimes forearm hitting) with her Seemiller grip. In the last game, up 10-6, Jasna seemed to let up, playing lackadaisical, and lost three in a row before serve and backhand looping a winner.

Marie uses a unique "Seemiller" grip. Instead of curling the index finger and thumb around the racket, as most players with this grip do, she has both her index finger and thumb on the back of the racket for most shots (curling the index finger around the side of the racket when backhand pushing).

Tawny Bahn (USA) d. Petra Cada (CAN), 5-9, 7-9, 8-12
This was one of the best matches of the Trials. Right from the start, you could see the much shorter but quicker Tawny mostly going after the tall Petra's middle (the playing elbow, the transition between forehand and backhand). Tawny went after Petra's middle with her quick backhand hits (with pips-out sponge) and top-of-the-bounce loops. Petra can be a counterdriving wall from the corners, with a strong attack as well, but Tawny's strategy made this difficult.

Tawny goes up 6-4 in the fifth. Petra slams a ball down and out of the court, and is yellow carded. Tawny wins another, goes up 7-4. But Petra now goes on a run, blocking and countering steadily against Tawny's all-out attack to win four in a row and lead 8-7. Tawny calls a timeout. After the time-out, Petra continues to out-rally Tawny, wins two more in a row to go up 10-7, and wins 11-8. And just like that, instead of a blowout, we have a match on our hands - and the somewhat partisan Canadian crowd is on their feet cheering.

In game six, Petra finds several balls early on to smash, but Tawny starts winning the long rallies, and goes up 7-4. But Petra turns it on, matching Tawny pace for pace for the next few rallies to tie it at 7-all. Then Tawny goes up 9-7, then 9-8, then 10-8 match point on an edge ball. Tawny serve & loops, but Petra blocks it back, and Tawny loops awkwardly off. Petra then wins a backhand-backhand exchange - and it's 10-10 - and the crowd absolutely goes crazy! Petra blocks Tawny out of position and hits a winner to lead 11-10, but Tawny serve and chops to a loop, 11-all. Tawny backhand hits Petra's serve off the end (a net-ticker) to go up 12-11. Petra dominates the next rally; has Tawny off the table, forced to chop - but Tawny counterloops a winner, 12-11. Tawny then wins a furious backhand exchange to lead 13-12, and serves for the match. Tawny serves, and loops a forehand ... and another ... and another ... and another ... and another ... and another ... and another. ... and another ... and another. And finally, after six forehand loops from all over the table, Tawny wins when Petra blocks off.
Johnny Huang (CAN) d. Ilija Lupulesku (USA), 7-11, 4-9, 6-11

This is the match that many have been waiting for — USA #1 versus Canadian #1. Johnny is favored, both with a higher world ranking and, according to conventional wisdom, a style advantage. Lupi’s counterlooping andishing is more effective against a looper, not a pure hitter (shakehands, with short pips on both sides) like Johnny. It’s not really a meaningful match — both players are going to make the Olympic Team at this point. It doesn’t matter. This is the highlight match of the Trials.

The lefty Lupi comes out strong in Game One, looping winners over and over, and leads 10-4. Johnny pulls to 7-10 (winning on a drop shot off Lupi’s lob at 6-10), but pushes Lupi’s serve off the side as Lupi wins game one, 11-7. However, Lupi’s bleeding, has a cut on his right thigh (had he scored it against the table?). There’s a break while medics, with gloved hands, bandage it up, and play continues.

In Game Two, Lupi leads 9-7, then is down 9-10. He serves & loops to deuce it, 10-all, and then backhand loops a winner to get game point, 11-10. But Huang answers by flipping the serve on the edge, and then smashing a ball that hits the net and driblees, unreturnably, over the net, to go up 12-11. Lupi holds up two fingers in disgust — two points on nets & edges. They play a great next point, which Johnny wins with a spectacular stretching, almost leaping-for-the-ball, backhand kill of a Lupi loop to win, 13-11.

The two net/edge points ... instead of Lupi possibly up 2-0, it’s dead even.

Game Three is all Johnny, 11-4, as he sits relentlessly. Lupi plays some great looping points, but too often is off the table fishing and lobbing. Game Four is streaky: Lupi leads 5-10, then is down 10-9. But Lupi serve & loops to deuce it, 10-all, and then backhand loops a winner to get game point, 11-10. At 10-8, they play a spectacular point with Lupi looping, Johnny hitting, with Johnny pulling to 10-9. But Lupi serves & loops to win, 11-9. Game Five is perhaps the most spectacular game — but there’s no way to show that with the ball, backhand kill of a Lupi loop to win, 13-11. The two net/edge points ... instead of Lupi possibly up 2-0, it’s dead even.

Game Six: Can Lupi force the seventh? He goes up 4-1, but then it’s 5-5. Lupi keeps getting the lead, but Johnny ties it 6-6, 7-7. Then Johnny mis-hits a ball that floats back crazily, and Lupi can’t return it. The umpire gives Johnny the point, but Johnny says it hit his foot, is a double-hit — so Lupi gets the point to lead 8-7. (Bravo to Johnny!) Lupi goes up 10-7, serves at 10-8. He serve & loops in the net, then serve & loops, and gets blocked out of position and misses a backhand. Lupi plays a great rally to get another ad, but Huang smashes out of a fast rally to get to 11-All. Then it ends quickly — Lupi pushes a serve into the net, and serve & backhand loops off. Johnny has won the match, but the crowd cheers both for the Match of the Trials.

Khoa Nguyen (USA) d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN), 5,9,8,7

The two play similar two-winged looping games, but Khoa is a bit more relentless on the attack, not backing off the table too much even when counterlooping, while Pradi will back up more. Both favor the forehand, but Pradi probably tries to force it more. Khoa serves with a conventional forehand pendulum serve, while Pradi almost always serves with a reverse forehand pendulum serve (so at contact, his racket is moving away from him).

Khoa fell behind in the first, 2-5 — and then, with a blistering looping attack (and overcoming Pradi’s counterlooping), won nine in a row. In the second, Khoa served at 9-9, and serve and ripped a winner, then won a nice rally by blocking. In the third, Khoa leads 5-2, Pradi takes a timeout, but it doesn’t help. The fourth is all Khoa.

With his win over Pradi, the battle for the Olympic spots are starting to shape up. Huang and Lupulesku have clinched their spots. (Khoa or David could force a tie with Lupi, but he beat them both head to head and so would finish ahead of them.) The battle for the third spot is a three-way battle between Khoa, David Zhuang and Bence Csaba. (This assumes David doesn’t upset Johnny Huang — if he wins, that changes everything.) If Khoa beats Bence, he gets the spot. If he loses, and Bence also beats David, then Bence gets the spot. If David beats Bence, and Bence beats Khoa, it’s a three-way tie that goes to games and possibly points. (Note that Khoa has already beaten David, 4-2.)

David Zhuang (USA) d. Bence Csaba (CAN), 9,7,9,6,7

This is a BIG match, sort of match #2 of the “round robin” for the third and final spot on the Men’s Olympic Team, between these two and Khoa.

They split the first two games. In game three, Bence leads 7-4, then it’s 9-all, David serving — and two points later (with Bence missing a loop kill to an open table to end it), David wins game three, 11-9. Bence clearly loses his temper at missing the final shot, and when the next game starts, is still clearly irritated — and David wins the first two points, the second when Bence goes for a wild, nearly impossible shot. David pulls away with steady blocking and pick-hitting, and some well-chosen (but varied) serves that Bence misses. 11-6. In the last game, David goes up 6-1. Bence pulls off a great backhand loop, David applauds, says, “good shot.” Moments later, it’s 6-4. Then Bence gets a net, 6-5. David calls a time-out. During the timeout, Bence apparently tries to pick up the ball with his foot, but the umpire thinks he’s trying to step on it, and yellow cards him, to Bence’s vigorous protests and the crowd’s boos. After they return, however, it’s all David, 11-7. (At 10-6, Bence loops on the edge, and David walks over to the spot, massage the spot and the crowd’s laughter.)

The Canadian coach, Dejan Papic, was very unhappy with the umpire in this match, claiming that David was not getting his arm out of the way when he served. After the match, he refused to shake David’s hand.

With Khoa’s win over David, and David’s win over Bence, the key upcoming match will be Bence vs. Khoa. Here are the four scenarios:

The Four Scenarios

Khoa d. Bence Csaba
Bence d. Khoa 4-0
Johnny d. David
Bence d. Khoa, but Khoa wins at least one game
Bence d. David, Johnny
David makes team
David makes team

Interestingly, if David upsets Johnny, it makes no difference in the scenarios unless Bence were to beat Khoa 4-0.

Jasna Reed (USA) d. Petra Cada (CAN), 7,9,9,1,7

It’s a pure rallying match, with Petra hitting and counter-hitting. Jasna looping and hitting. Jasna starts to run away with it, winning the first at 7 and leading 9-6 in the second. Petra ties it at 9-all, but Jasna wins the next two, and raises her arm in very happy triumph. However, Petra battles back, and plays like a wall in game three — very hard to score against, and at key points (including the last point) she smashed winners to win, 11-9. Petra’s coach calls a timeout at 1-5 in the fourth game, but it doesn’t help — Jasna is suddenly on fire, winning 11-1. In the fifth, from 5-all, Petra plays careless, makes a series of mistakes, and Jasna wins easily, 11-7.

Jasna, who finished at 4-0, has clinched first place. Tawny (2-1), Petra (finished, at 2-2) and Chris (1-2) are all in the running for the other two spots. The next match — the final match for the women — will decide everything. If Tawny wins, Tawny comes in second (3-1), and Petra third (2-2). If Chris wins, then all three are 2-2, and it goes to games. Below are the five scenarios (with Jasna at 1st):

The Five Scenarios

Tawny d. Chris
Tawny d. Chris 4-0
Tawny d. Chris 4-1
Tawny d. Chris 4-2
Tawny d. Chris 4-3

Tawny Bank (USA) d. Chris Xu (CAN), 4,5,3,5

However, Tawny quickly tore all the scenarios to pieces, absolutely dominating the match and winning easily. She played with both a relentless attack and yet patience, knowing when to push and start her attack over, and she went after Chris’ middle (a chopper’s biggest weakness) over and over — and then did quick winning loops to corners. (Each time she did so, you could see Coach Doru nodding his head.)

For Chris, it was so close — 6-6 in the seventh with Petra Cada the day before, only to lose 7 when expedite was called, or she’d have made the team. As it was, the final spot on the team was decided by that game from 6-6 on.

So the final standings for women, with the top three going to the Olympics (along with USA’s pre-qualified Gao Jun):

1. Jasna Reed (USA), 4-0
2. Tawny Bank (USA), 3-1
3. Petra Cada (CAN), 2-2
4. Chris Xu (CAN), 1-3
5. Marie-Christine Roussy (CAN), 0-4

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Johnny Huang (CAN) d.
David Zhuang (USA), 7-9, 7-4.

This is a match-up of the two pip-out men, both close-to-the-table players who hit and counter-hit—or often smash and counter-smash. This led to the fastest rallies of the tournament. David starts out the first two games fast, leading 5-1 and 5-2, but both times Johnny comes back. In the second game, up 9-8, David is forced off the table, drops his racket and throws the ball back (it misses, barely), as the crowd laughs. The points are great, but Huang wins 4-0.

Ilija Lupulesku (USA) d.
Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN), 10-7, 4-9, 7-1.

This match had no affect on the standings, but it was still a good match. Early on, Lupi had trouble with Pradi’s inside-out forehand serve—as everyone except perhaps Khoa had—but he mostly adjusted. However, Pradi seemed “on” this match, and was relentless both on attack and defense. Down 2-1 in games, and 7-9 in the fourth, Pradi won four in a row to tie it at 2-2. In the fifth, he pulled away to 7-3 (then (despite a timeout at 7-6) lost eight in a row. The sixth was all Lupi, 1-1, as Lupi finished out the match by scoring 19 of the last 20 points.

Khoa Nguyen (USA) d.
Bence Csaba (CAN), 4-4, 10-8, 10-8, 8-6.

And now comes the final match of the Trials, the one that will decide the final player going to the Olympics: Khoa, Bence, or David. All three have a shot. Khoa has to win the match to make the team; Bence has to win 4-0 to make the team; David makes it if Bence wins, but not 4-0. (If Bence wins, there’s a 3-way tie that goes to games, which is why the game score matters in this case.)

Bence comes out ripping, making some rather incredible backhand loops early on, and runs away with game one, 11-4. He’s 1/4 of the way toward making the Olympic Team.

In game two, Khoa goes up 3-0—and the Canadian coach calls a timeout, to the surprise of many. Why is he calling a timeout so early in a match? Because from the Canadian perspective, every game is the last game, as Bence must win 4-0 to make the Olympics. However, the timeout doesn’t pay off as Khoa continues to rip, going up 10-0 and winning 11-4, ending Bence’s chances. (Yes, Khoa got sloppy at the end—it started to look like Bence might get back into it.) So Bence is now eliminated—so it’s between Khoa and David. If Khoa wins, he’s on to the Olympics. If he loses, it’s David. And how hard, deep down, can Bence play at this point?

Pretty hard, as he goes up 7-3 in the third. At 7-4, Bence is faulted, 7-5, then 7-7. It appears the fault has bothered him—he’s playing passive. Then it’s 9-7 Bence, no longer passive. Khoa serve & rips two in a row, 9-7. Khoa backhand spins Bence’s serve, makes the first (Bence misses the block), misses the second, 10-7. Bence makes a loop—the rally is over.
MDTTC January Open
Gaithersburg, MD - Jan 31-Feb. 1, 2004
Open Singles - Final: Han Xiao d. Nazruddin Asgaralli, 5-7, 7-5, 8-5, 9; SF: Xiao d. Michael Shao, 9-13, 4; N. Asgaralli d. John Wetzler, 9-7, 6-4, 9; QF: Xiao d. Martine Olinsky, 8-6, 4; Shao d. Khaled Asgaralli, 11-8, 2, 9; N. Asgaralli d. James Duan, 7-4, 4, 9; Wetzler d. Lixin Lang, 11-7, 9, 10.

Open Consolation: 1’ Mark Metzler, 2015, 2nd Nick Snider.

Cleveland Winter Open
The Masonic Building: Jan 17-18, 2004
Open: 1’ Samson Dubina; 2nd Tak (Cheung) Yip; 3rd Amanda Dubina; 4th Tak (Tommy) Yip.
Elite Over 1700: 1’ Samson Dubina; 2nd Amanda Dubina; 3rd Tak (Tommy) Yip; 4th Tak (Cheung) Yip.
Women: 1’ Svetlana Rose; 2nd Amanda Dubina.
U2350: 1’ Samson Dubina; 2nd A. J. Brewer; 3rd Erik Leventhal.
U1100: 1’ Alex Penkhassov; 2nd Amanda Dubina.
U1850: 1’ Bill Neely; 2nd Tian (Michael) Yao.
U1700: 1’ Roy Dietz; 2nd Randy Bunnett.
U1600: 1’ Steve Zwillling; 2nd Joe Banko.
U1550: 1’ Sandy Sun; 2nd Kevin Luo.
U1000: 1’ Simon Kreymann; 2nd Huixiong Zhang.
U850: 1’ Brian Simcox; 2nd Steve Michiak.
Unrated: 1’ Lawrence Zimmerman; 2nd Alan Sugar; 3rd Bella Antonovskaya; 4th Michael Bailey.

Over 40: George Brewer; 2nd Miekos Balagh.
Over 50: Neil Myers; 2nd Alfred Keselman.
Over 60: 1’ Alfred Keselman; 2nd Sanford Potier.
Over 70: 1’ Bill Neely; 2nd Neil Myers; 3rd Gus Kurz; 4th Don Henderson Sr.
Under 22: 1’ Samson Dubina; 2nd Tak (Cheung) Yip.
Under 18: 1’ A. J. Brewer; 2nd Todd (Cheung) Yip.
Mixed Doubles: 1’ David Berenson & Sandy Sun; 2nd Miklos Balagh & Terry Huey.
U4000: 1’ Tak C. Yip/Tak D. Yip; 2nd Dave Berenson/Hemant Mannati; 3rd Haujan Huang/Jian Hua Qi.
U3400: 1’ Samuel Steiner & Daniel Barnes; 2nd Vernon Lopez & Bill Neely.
U2350: 1’ Samson Dubina; 2nd Amanda Dubina; 3rd Tak (Tommy) Yip; 4th Tak (Cheung) Yip.
Women: 1’ Svetlana Rose; 2nd Amanda Dubina.
U2350: 1’ Samson Dubina; 2nd A. J. Brewer; 3rd Erik Leventhal.
U1200: 1’ Alex Penkhassov; 2nd Amanda Dubina.
U1850: 1’ Bill Neely; 2nd Tian (Michael) Yao.
U1700: 1’ Roy Dietz; 2nd Randy Bunnett.
U1600: 1’ Steve Zwillling; 2nd Joe Banko.
U1550: 1’ Sandy Sun; 2nd Kevin Luo.
U1000: 1’ Simon Kreymann; 2nd Huixiong Zhang.
U850: 1’ Brian Simcox; 2nd Steve Michiak.
Unrated: 1’ Lawrence Zimmerman; 2nd Alan Sugar; 3rd Bella Antonovskaya; 4th Michael Bailey.

Over 40: George Brewer; 2nd Miekos Balagh.
Over 50: Neil Myers; 2nd Alfred Keselman.
Over 60: 1’ Alfred Keselman; 2nd Sanford Potier.
Over 70: 1’ Bill Neely; 2nd Neil Myers; 3rd Gus Kurz; 4th Don Henderson Sr.
Under 22: 1’ Samson Dubina; 2nd Tak (Cheung) Yip.
Under 18: 1’ A. J. Brewer; 2nd Todd (Cheung) Yip.
Mixed Doubles: 1’ David Berenson & Svetlana Rose; 2nd Miklos Balagh & Terry Huey.
U4000: 1’ Tak C. Yip/Tak D. Yip; 2nd Dave Berenson/Hemant Mannati; 3rd Haujan Huang/Jian Hua Qi.
U3400: 1’ Samuel Steiner & Daniel Barnes; 2nd Vernon Lopez & Bill Neely.

New England U2400 Champion
Valeryi Orty
U2400: 1’ Valeryi Orty; 2nd Praveen Patnaik.
U2000: 1’ Shun-Tak Wu; 2nd Kim Bradshaw.
U1600: 1’ John Mei; 2nd Lawrence Selvin.

New England U2200 Runner-up
Praveen Patnaik
U1200: 1’ Anthony Chau; 2nd Mohammad Al-Sabek.
U1200 Juniors: 1’ Anisa Mohammad; 2nd Saif Mohammad.

Arkansas State Championships
Little Rock, Arkansas - Feb. 7, 2004
Open Singles: 1’ Don Jackson; 2nd Andy Bloomom.
Open Doubles: 1’ Paul Hadfield/Don Jackson; 2nd Jim Meredith/Paul Crutchfield.
Women: 1’ Xin Fu; 2’ Cheralynnette.
A Singles: 1’ Paul Hadfield; 2nd Sinivas Raghavan.
B Singles: 1’ Kitti Oudthone; 2nd Terry Huey.
C Singles: 1’ Scott McConnell; 2nd Don Ding.
D Singles: 1’ Scott McConnell; 2nd Don Ding.
Hardbat: 1’ Bob Mahler; 2nd Steve Cates.
Over 40-50: 1’ Glen Davis; 2nd Paul Hadfield.
Over 60: 1’ John Smithie; 2nd Gus Richards.
Over 40-60 Cons.: 1’ Reza Ahrabli; 2nd Ben Phillips.
Under 18: 1’ Don Ding; 2nd Stephen Wals.
Wildcard: 1’ Don Jackson/Jim Meredith.
Class A Doubles: 1’ Bob Mahler/Yujin Ding; 2nd John Smithie/Steve Cates.

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Northern Kentucky Open

The Northern Kentucky Spring 2004 Round Robin Open was held on March 6, 2004 at the Campbell County YMCA in Fort Thomas, Kentucky. The two-star tournament included 53 players from six states competing in six rating groups for trophies, cash prizes, and rating points, plus over two-dozen door prizes. The tournament featured players ranging in age from six to over sixty years of age. The tournament also featured one of the highest rated under 12 players in the country, A.J. Brewer. Other highly rated players included John Allen (#2 in Kentucky), Don Hamilton (#13 in Ohio), Nick Snider (#18 in Ohio), and Mark Nordby (#7 in Illinois).

Play began at 9:30 AM for the Under 1450 groups and saw tough competition among closely ranked players resulting in a three-way tie for second place in the top group, but the computer broke the tie (from game results), yielding the following results: 1st Simon Waldron, 2nd George L. Thompson, 3rd Bob Smith III, 4th Mike Lecture. In the middle group, a three-way tie for first place was also broken by the computer, yielding the following results: 1st Don Moier, 2nd George Kent, 3rd Cliff Leighty, 4th Mark Ebert. The group also included three first-time tournament players: Ted Jaspers, Scott Strouse, and Ed Ashcraft. The lower Under 1450 group had the only undefeated player in the entire tournament, Aaron Prose winning first place, Barb Curtis second, Aaron's wife Nancy third, and Becky Leighty fourth.

The Over 1450 groups began play at 3:00 PM, and saw countless fantastic matches. The top group was an exhibition in technique with some of the top players from multiple states competing. In the end, Mark Nordby edged out Nick Snider (both with 8-1 records) for first place. Snider took second place, with John Allen and Don Hamilton finishing third and fourth, respectively. The middle group had a clear-cut winner in Robert Ha, with Alan Grambo finishing second, Xin Bu placing third, and Youfang Pan in fourth place. The bottom Over 1450 group was also a tie for first place, with Krishna Dvaker winning the tie, Pezham Shams placing second, Randy Burnett third, and Roger Dickson fourth.

The day was a complete success thanks to the great competitors and sponsors of the tournament. The Cincinnati Table Tennis Club and their President, Mike Lecture, was generous enough to loan three tables and extra barriers to the tournament to help expedite play. Other corporate sponsors included Fifth Third Bank, AmericanTableTennis.com, Paddle Palace, and Dick's Sporting Goods.

Orlando Winter Open

It was rainy and cold (by Florida's standards) the entire weekend of January 31, here in Orlando, which was perfect weather to be indoors playing table tennis. We had a good turnout (over 90 participants) and our friends from Georgia, headed by Richard McAfee, also came down for our annual Winter Open.

Once again, Bin Hai Chu from South Florida was a big winner. He won both senior events, and this time he added Under 2200 to make it three events in which he prevailed. The winner of Championship Singles was Keith Evans of Georgia. Keith made the remark that he thought he was playing a tournament in China, because he had to play four penhold players in a row. Of course, I don't think we could have done that deliberately if we had tried, but it was unusual. The runner-up was Raymond Liang, a fine player who was also runner-up in the Under 2200 event. Another Georgia boy, Ross Brown, won the Under 1950. Unfortunately, Ross had to leave suddenly Saturday night because of an illness in the family and we missed him the rest of the weekend. We also had a player who came all the way from Indiana, Jim Johnson, who won the Under 1300 event.

Thank you to everyone who came out to make this tournament a success. It's always enjoyable to spend time with our table tennis friends.

Open Singles: 1st Keith Evans; 2nd Raymond Liang.
Open Doubles: 1st Evans/Estrada; 2nd Munroe/Thompson.
Women's Singles: 1st Dyoto Strom; 2nd Arlene Pefi.
U2200: 1st Bin Hai Chu; 2nd Raymond Liang.
U1950: 1st Ross Brown; 2nd Joel Reyes.
U1800: 1st Simon Jacobson; 2nd Sam Phan.
U1650: 1st Boyan Porojanov; 2nd Joe Wells.
U1300: 1st Jim Johnson; 2nd Ted Davidson.
Over 40: 1st Bin Hai Chu; 2nd Steve Frederico.
Under 17: 1st David Kirk; 2nd Kaitlyn Reynolds.
Under 12: 1st David Kirk; 2nd Kaitlyn Reynolds.
Under 3600 Doubles: 1st Reyes/Matos; 2nd Chung/Rowe.

Northern Kentucky Champion Mark Nordby (R) serves to Nick Snider in the Final. Photo by Greg Thompson ©2004

Arizona Open

The 2004 Arizona Open had another successful tournament this year. Players from 9 states came to Arizona to enjoy the warmth of the winter weather along with the friendly people and great competition. The Open Doubles proved to be very competitive. Both finalists had to pull out tough semifinal matches to make it to the final. In the final, second-seeded Simen Potaychuk of Tucson took a 3-1 lead over the top seed Vukman Soksic of Phoenix. But Vukman came back strong and won the next two games, 11-8 and 11-4. In the 7th game, Simen started out strong and was able to maintain his lead and win, 11-7.

Open Singles - Final: Simen Potaychuk d. Vukman Soksic 11-9,9-8,8-4,7-5; SF: Potaychuk d. Mitsutoshi Nakada, 9-10,7-5,7-3; Soskic d. Luis Houed, 10-9,4-8,11.
Open Giant RR: Ralph Stadelman & Barry Meisel split.
Class A Giant RR: Mike Fuschino d. Mikhail Chernobelsky, 8-6,8-10,10,2.
Class B Giant RR: Fred Cicero d. Pat Connolly, 4-6,11-5,5-3,8,4.
Over 70: 1st. George Zillman, 2nd Bernhard Schiele.
U1550: Ragar Dax d. Scott Roberts, 4-8,6-3,4-8.
U1350: Mike King d. Fred Cicero, 5-6,10-9,13.
U1150: Ron Thome d. Ron Score, 8-7,7-8,7-8.
U3500 Doubles: Bernard Savitz/Mark DeWitt d. John Harrington/Dan Bryan, 8-4,4-9,8.
U2800 Doubles: Mikhail & Alex Chernobelsky d. Ken & Sam Russel, 8-7,7.

Photo by Wayne Johnson ©2004
United States Anti-Doping Agency

The independent testing agency for Olympic sport in the United States

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

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

For additional information, please visit the USADA web site at www.usantidoping.org

January

(Previous January votes were in previous issue.)

Motion 4: Move to approve the Sponsorship and Licensing Agreement with Killerspin, regarding US Open/ITTF Pro Tour

Motion by Tong Lee, seconded by Sheri Pittman

Motion passed: 12-0-0-1

In Favor: George B, Tawny B, Tim B, Tong L, Robert M, Willy L, Sheri P, Todd S, Bob F, Jimmy McC, Eric O, Jiing W; No Vote: Barney D, Reed

February

Motion 1: Move to appoint Bob Fox as Chair of Elite Athlete Committees

Motion by Sheri Pittman; seconded by Todd Sweens

Motion passed: 9-0-1-3

In Favor: Eric O, Tawny B, Tim B, Tong L, Robert M, Willy L, Sheri P, Todd S, Jimmy McC; Against: None; Abstain: Jiing W; No vote: George B, Bob F, Barney R.

Motion 2: Move to appoint Morris Jackson as Chair of Training Committee

Motion by Sheri Pittman; seconded by Bob Fox

Motion passed: 11-0-0-2

In Favor: George B, Tawny B, Tim B, Tong L, Robert M, Willy L, Sheri P, Todd S, Bob F, Jimmy McC, Eric O; Against: None; Abstain: None; No vote: Barney R, Jiing W.

March

Motion One: Moved to approve the following individuals to serve as members on the Nominating & Elections Committee:

- Juan Escobedo, Los Angeles
- Rick Mueller, Texas
- Simone Yang, Oregon
- Mitchell Waters, Maryland

Motion by Sheri Pittman; seconded by Tawny Banh

Motion passed: 12-0-0-1

In Favor: George B, Tawny B, Tim B, Tong L, Robert M, Willy L, Sheri P, Todd S, Bob F, Jimmy McC, Jiing W, Eric O; Against: None; Abstain: None; No vote: Barney R, Jiing W.

Motion Two: Moved to approve the following individuals to serve as members of the Coaching Committee:

- David Zhuang - USATT Olympic Team Member, Pan Am Champion in 1999
- Mitch Seidenfeld - Former Jamaican Champ and currently an active coach in the Atlanta area.
- Keith Evans - Paralympic champ and national team member. Formerly ACU[ Region 1 Finalist during the 96 Olympic Games and currently an active coach in the Atlanta area.
- Kurt Douty - Several time Massachusetts champ and currently top a New England player and coach. Formerly ACUI Region 1 Finalist during college, earned degree in Recreational Management. Currently an Executive Director for a large metropolitan YMCA operating in the Boston area.

Motion passed: 12-0-0-1

In Favor: George B, Tawny B, Tim B, Tong L, Robert M, Willy L, Sheri P, Todd S, Bob F, Jimmy McC, Jiing W, Eric O; Against: None; Abstain: None; No vote: Barney R.

[Note: John Allen chairs the Coaching Committee.]
Eligible list, contact Tommy Perkins at USATT. Copyright 2004. Tournaments Processed

This list was compiled on 04/01/04 (ages are as of that date) and includes all tournaments received through 03/14/04. Due to space limitations, prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2004.

New Tournaments Included in Ratings

Cary Open Giant RR Jamboree
Central FL Winter Giant RR Open
Grand Canyon State Games
Atlanta Giant Round Robin
Power Ping Open
Boston TTC March Giant RR Open
NJTTTC March Open
Maryland Circuit Jr.
Austin Round Robin
2004 Dixie Open Singles
Northern KY Spring 2004 RR Open
2004 Spin Open
California Open on the 2004 Stiga N.A. T
Rochester NY Giant RR

2004 NAC Winter RR
February Open
2004 CO Civil War A (League)
Irving Round Robin 2004
Columbus Giant RR Open
Schaumburg RR Open
Maryland Giant RR
New Hampshire RR Open
Arizona Open
New England Winter Classic
NJTTTC February Open
Maryland Circuit
Longview TT Tournament
Piedmont TT Open

Sacramento Winter Open
Hutchinson 2004 Winter Open
Arkansas Closed
Orlando Winter Open
2004 MDTTTC Winter Open
January Open
Mississippi Gulf Coast Open
2004 Lincoln Open
Framingham TTC January Open
2004 Star of the North State Games
2004 Florida Open Sunburst Tour. #1
Maryland Giant RR
The 2004 Cleveland Winter Open
NJTTTC January Open
Piedmont TTC January Open

Ratings Questions?
You can now search for all your results online at www.usatt.org. Should you have any ratings-related questions, contact Felisa Huggins, USATT Head-Queers, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. To find out your rating if you cannot access our website, 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.
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**Notes:**
- The table lists players from various states and their cities.
- Zips and counties are provided for each entry.
- The table is sorted alphabetically by state, then by city, and finally by zip code.
May 1 - 2004 Alabama State Championships, Anniston, AL. Contact: Michael Wetzel, 256-974-3275. mikepong@yahoo.com.

May 1 - Front Range Open, Fort Collins, CO. Contact: Michael King, 970-207-1394. mikepong@aoa.com. 0 Star

May 1 - Maine Spring TT Open, Lewiston, ME. Contact: Guy Boise, 207-784-4491. ulsa@localnet.com. 0 Star

May 1 - Piedmont TT Open, Greensboro, NC. Contact: Douglas Paul, 910-769-3222. pingpong54@aol.com. 0 Star

May 1-2 - 5th Garden State Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Lily Yip, 732-248-9712. atlanta96@msn.com. ****

May 1-2 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

May 2 - Spring 2004 Two-person Team Championship, Syracuse, NY. Contact: Michael Halliday, 315-453-0506. mikesyracuse.com. ****

May 8 - Chemeketa Spring Open, Salem, OR. Contact: Dan Hilburn, 503-585-9804. danhilburn@aol.com. *

May 8 - 9th San Diego Team Open, San Diego, CA. Contact: Sungill Kim, 858-513-6596. infinite-loop@cox.net. ****

May 15 - A-B-Q 32, Albuquerque, NM. Contact: Thomas Charles Wintrip, 505-332-5636. wintrip@comcast.net. 0 Star

May 15 - Central FL Spring Giant RR 2004, Lakeland, FL. Raymond Spann, 863-965-0760. rayspann@crmbfinancial.com. ****

May 15 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

May 15 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

May 15 - May 16 - New England Spring Classic, Waltham, MA. Contact: Mozart Francois, 978-466-3486. moruyan@es.com. *

May 15 - The 7th Annual MD Medallion Tournament, Frederick, MD. Contact: James MeQueen Jr., 301-689-9941. cjwms@mindspring.com. ***

May 15-16 - 2004 DFW TT Spring RR, Irving, TX. Contact: James Raulis, 817-274-9699. **

May 15-16 - 40th St. Joseph Valley Open, South Bend, IN. Contact: Daniel R. Seemiller, 574-654-7476. vseemiller@earthlink.net. ****

May 15-16 - Power Pong Open, Fountain Valley, CA. Contact: Vi Bloom, 562-430-9026. halbhoom@dls xtreme.com. **

May 15-16 - Rose City Open, Beaverton, OR. Contact: Ken Ping, 503-645-2182. kunnith@yahoo.com. **

May 16 - Spring Classic Singles & Doubles Open, Allentown, PA. Contact: Fred E. Kistler, 610-797-6607. hvntc@yahoo.com. **

May 22 - Cary Open Giant RR Jamboree, Apex, NC. Contact: James McQueen Jr., 919-787-3788. jmqueen@ncnr.com. 0 Star

May 22 - Schauburg Open, Schaumburg, IL. Contact: Primo Madrigal, 630-837-8053. stc@sbglobal.net. **

May 23 - Framingham TTC May Open, Framingham, MA. Rajeev Sharma, 508-791-0379. framptonn/frameing@com. **

May 23 - 2004 Inaugural Spring Bridport TT Open, Davie, FL. Contact: Carlos Zeller, 954-849-5436. **

May 23 - 2004 New Jersey State Championship, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Babyl, 908-654-9009. babyl@rci.rutgers.edu. **

May 23 - 2004 The 2004 Cleveland Spring Open, Cleveland, OH. Contact: Vincent Turner, 216-268-1798. **

May 30 - Brooklyn May Open, Brooklyn, NY. Contact: Nison Aronov, 718-421-2200. brooklynlyte@yahoo.com. **

June 3 - 4 - Killerspin US Open/ITTF Pro Tour, Chicago, IL. Contact: USATT, 719-866-4583, usatt@usatt.org. **

July 7 - Schaumburg Open, Schaumburg, IL. Contact: Primo Madrigal, 630-837-8053. stc@sbglobal.net. **

July 10 - Piedmont TT Open, Greensboro, NC. Contact: Douglas Paul, 910-769-3222. pingpong54@aol.com. 0 Star

July 10-11 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

July 18 - Brooklyn July Open, Brooklyn, NY. Contact: Nison Aronov, 718-421-2200. brooklynlyte@yahoo.com. **

July 18 - 19 - Arizona Sizzler Open, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Wayne Johnson, 480-755-9976. wjohn@dancris.com. 0 Star

August 1 - 2 - Pacific Coast, Santa Monica, CA. Contact: Blake Heurd, 760-962-8846. blackkiwi@jwom.com. **

August 21 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

August 21-22 - Matthew J. Murad Memorial Open, Boyds, MD. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. info@natabletennis.com. ****

August 28 - Cary Open Giant RR Jamboree, Apex, NC. Contact: James McQueen Jr., 919-787-3788. jmqueen@ncnr.com. 0 Star

August 28 - Texas Teams, Austin, TX. Contact: John Miller, 512-258-3731. **

August 28-29 - Pacific Coast, Santa Monica, CA. Contact: Jo Kidd, 310-452-9515. **
The Stakes: The top three men’s and women’s teams would qualify for the North American Doubles Trials in Atlanta, April 3-4. At the NA Trials, USA and Canada will play off for the two men’s and two women’s spots open for doubles players.

Officiating & Staff: Early on, there were several service faults: Tahl Leibovitz was faulted twice, and Simone Yang once (and possibly others). After that, there were few problems with serves. A special thanks goes to Referee Larry Kesler, and umpires Patrick Collins, Roman Tyniszew, Enman Guan, and Jinhai Wang. Thanks also go to North American Table Tennis and the tournament staff: Tournament and Media Director Alan Williams, USA Team Leader & Elite Committee Chair Bob Fox, and USATT Liaison Tommy Perkins. Thanks also goes to Terry Lee, Associate

Left, top to bottom: David Zhuang/Eric Owens, Ilija Lupulesku/Mark Hazinski, Sean O’Neill & Tahl Leibovitz discuss things, Khao Nguyen/De Tran

Below, top to bottom: Han Xiao/Adam Hugh, Razvan Cretu/Barney J. Reed, Samson Dubina/Mark Snider

Right, top to bottom: Jasna Reed/Whitney Ping, Tanyen Boh/Shimine Yang, “Supermom” Lily Yip and “Superdaughter” Judy Hugh, Michelle Do/ Jackie Lee, doubles partners and Fox news anchors Barbara Wei/Katherine Wu.
Impossible is a Not a Fact,  
It's an Opinion 
Impossible is Nothing  
Impossible is Just a Big Word 
Thrown Around by Small Men  
Who Find its Easier to Live in a World They've Been Given Than to Explore the Power they Have to Change it.

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Director of Communications, DC Parks and Recreation, John Webster, Community Relations and Corporate Development, DC P&R; Neil Albert, Director, DC P&R; and to the managers and staff of Emery Recreation Center, Georgia Ave. NW. The Mayor: Washington D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams made an appearance, and hit with local junior Marcus Jackson, who gave him some tips. ("I’m the Mayor – you have to go easy on me!") the told Marcus.) He then held a press conference, and about a zillion photographers and reporters closed in.

Media: The first thing you notice if you spent some time at the Trials today was all the media coverage. Which media came? How about which didn’t??!! ABC News, NBC News, CBS News, Fox News, News 8, The Sports Network, The Washington Post, and the Hot 99-5 Morning Show were all there.

Women – Day One
There are five teams, with three going to the North American Trials. At the end of the day, the #5 seeds, Katherine Wu (18) and Barbara Wei (15), were out of it at 0-3. They’d only won one game in their four matches (all but seven), but they were at deuce four times (winning one) and lost another 1-9.

Almost out of it were Michelle Do and Jackie Lee at 1-2. They won 4-0 over Wu/Wei, but had lost 0-4 to both Tawny Banh/Simone Yang and to Lily Yip/Judy Hugh. To have any chance of getting back into it, they’d have to win against top-seeded Jasna Reed/Whitney Ping, hope that team also loses to Tawny Banh/Simone Yang, and then hope to win in a tie.

Looking very strong to make the top three were "Super Mom" Lily Yip and "Super Daughter" Judy Hugh. They are only 1-1, but they won 4-0 against Michelle Do/Jackie Lee, their main competition for the #3 spot. They still have to play Tawny Banh/Simone Yang and Katherine Wu/Barbara Wei.

Near locks for the top three were the top two seeded teams, Jasna Reed/Whitney Ping and Tawny Banh/Simone Yang, both at 2-0. However, these two teams have to play each other, and whichever loses that could lose their other match, and end up at 2-2, and possibly lose out in a tie.

Probably the most interesting match of the day for the women was the Jasna Reed/Whitney Ping vs. Lily Yip/Judy Hugh match, with Reed/Ping winning at 9,9,11,12,8,10. Five of the six games were 9 or deuce, with the fifth game a "lopsided" 11-8! Either team could have won this; Yip/Hugh especially had their chances in game four, where they led 10-9, and lost two points near the end on net balls, including one at 10-all. Lily and Judy (along with Sean O’Neill/Tahl Leibovitz) seem to be a good example of a team that seems much better than their seeding, and may be the second strongest team – but tomorrow will tell that story. (A Washington Post reporter, upon hearing that Jasna Reed had played in three Olympics with three different last names (Fazlic, Lupulesku and Reed), should make her next name change to “Pong” – so she and her partner, Whitney Ping, could be known as Ping/Pong!)

In the other women’s matches, one was 4-1 and the rest were 4-0. The only upset was the Yip/Hugh 4-0 over Do/Lee.

Men – Day One
Ohiouos Samson Dubina and Nick Snider saw their nomadic trek to the Olympics come to an end with a 0-4 record for the day. However, not before they throw a "scare" into the two top USA juniors, the somewhat downhearted Han Xiao and Adam Hugh who had lost their first two matches. Xiao/Hugh won the first two, but Dubina/Snider won the next two in squeakers. The juniors (age 17 & 18, USA’s top two junior players) smashed the door shut, however, winning 7,6,10,9,2,4.

While not eliminated, Han and Adam finished the day at 1-3. The real heartbreaker for them was the "blown" match with righty Khoa Nguyen/lefthy De Tran. They split the first four games, and then Han & Adam led 5-1 in the fifth. Khoa & De called a timeout; after returning, they dug the hole even deeper, 6-1. But something happened, and suddenly the score was 6-8 – perhaps somewhere along the way toward losing those seven in a row they should have called a timeout? Instead of 3-2, it was 2-3. In the sixth, at 9-6, they lost four in a row, and the match, 8,10,5,9,7.8, It was a battle of four great topspinners, but in the end Khoa’s and De’s two-winged looping (Khoa with great power, De with relentless downside) came out on top.

Later, I was told that the night before, Khoa and De had considered this match the most "worrisome" match. Han and Adam also had their chances against Zhuang/Owens, leading 10-9 in the first game, and 9-9 in the fifth game, but losing both.

Khoa Nguyen/De Tran won their first two matches (against Xiao/Hugh and Reed/Cretu), and to clinch a top three finish, “only” needed to win against the two “weakest” teams, Dubina/Snider on Saturday, and O’Neill/Leibovitz in the final match on Friday. Unfortunately, Sean O’Neill and Tahl Leibovitz didn’t cooperate, as they pulled off the upset, 6,7,5,8,9,6. Before the match, it was looking like the top three teams were nearly set – but now the gates were wide open again.

Sean O’Neill/Tahl Leibovitz, with their win over Nguyen/Tran, despite their 0-2 start, were still in the running at 1-2. They will have to overcome their loss to Barney Reed/Razvan Cretu (4,11,6,6,6, with a 10-8, 11-0 lead in the second game), and do well in their upcoming matches against Zhuang/Owens, Xiao/Hugh and Dubina/Snider.

Barney J. Reed/Razvan Cretu were not looking happy about their 2-2 record, especially with their close loss to Nguyen/Tran (10,10, 3,6,11,7). They had led 11-10 in the fifth game. You could see the frustration late in the sixth game as Barney slammed his paddle on the table after missing a shot, getting the only yellow card given out today. It was an interesting team – two left-handed loopers. (If they’d split up and gone with righties, there could have been four lefty/righty teams out of the seven teams, instead of just two – Lupulesku/Hazinski and Nguyen/Tran.) Near the end of the day, it looked like they would be eliminated as Nguyen/Tran looked about to nearly clinch the #3 spot – until O’Neill/Leibovitz broke things open again.

However, Reed/Cretu still have to play the #1 team, Lupulesku/Hazinski, and very likely need to win that match and their match with Xiao/Hugh to finish in the top three.

The top two teams were, for obvious reasons: Adam Hugh and Mark Hazinski and David Zhuang/Eric Owens – were coasting along, both 3-0 and both near locks to finish in the top three. Only Xiao/Hugh had gotten a game against Lupulesku/Hazinski, and Zhuang/Owens had won all three of their matches 4-1.

Women – Day Two
The women, since they only had five teams, would only have two rounds today – and two teams could have byes in one round, so it was a short day for them. Most of the women’s matches throughout the Trials tended to be somewhat lopsided. Of the ten matches played, none went seven, one went six, three went five, and the other six were 4-0. There was only one upset – Lily Yip/Judy Hugh over Michelle Do/Jackie Lee the day before.

In the first round, Jasna Reed/Whitney Ping won against Michelle Do/Jackie Lee (8,10,7,3) to go to 3-0, while Tawny Banh/Simone Yang, after some early drama, won against Judy Hugh (8,7,13,3,7). At this point, the top two teams were set, with Reed/Ping and Banh/Yang to play off for first place. Tawny and Simone had an early flight, and with agreement from Reed/Ping, played their match early. (Referee Larry Kesler, who was at lunch at the time during a scheduled break, wasn’t happy about this, since the match was played without a referee present.) Reed/Ping won, 7,10,12,9.

At this point, Yip/Hugh were 1-2, while Lee/Do were 1-3, with a bye in the final round. Even if Yip/Hugh lost and finished at 1-3, they’d win out against Lee/Do since they won head-to-head. That’s what a number of people seemed to think – except that the #3 team of Katherine Wu/Barbara Wei, if they were to win against Yip/Hugh in the final round, would also be 1-3. However, since Yip/Hugh had won 4-0 against Do/Lee (who had also beaten Wu/Wei 4-0), the only way Yip/Hugh would not finish third is, if they lost 0-4. In this case, all three teams would be 1-3 in matches, and 4-4 in games – and it would go to point! So all they had to do was win one game against Wu/Wei.

Match, and third place to Yip/Hugh, 6 (they made it!), 5,7,5. Going to the North American Olympic Women’s Doubles Trials will be Jasna Reed/Whitney Ping, Tawny Banh/Simone Yang, and Lily Yip/Judy Hugh.

Men – Day Two
Early on, the top two seeds clinched their spots as Ilja Lupulesku/Mark Hazinski and David Zhuang/Eric Owens matched to 5-0 records before facing each other in the final round. However, both had bumpy starts today in their 10AM matches. Lupulesku/Hazinski were down 1-2 before defeating Nguyen/Tran at 8,3,12,3,7,2 – but they looked pretty comfortable in the last three games. Zhuang/Owens had a battle with O’Neill/Leibovitz before winning at 7,8,8,4,9,8. With these wins, both teams were 4-0.

Han Xiao/Adam Hugh played the two most exciting matches of the day – a pair of seven-gamers, the only two of the Trials (men’s or women’s, out of a total of 31 matches played),
The first was in the first round today, against Reed/Cretu. Reed/Cretu went up 3-1 in gaines. Leading - Xiao/Hugh go up 5-0, 8-1, 11-4 - and win the They won that game, but lost the fifth.

The first was in the first round today. against Reed/Cretu for third. 4-7, 7-9, 9-7, 9-6, 4-6. But in winning the previous game, Tahl hurt his back, a pinched nerve - he'd been having difficulty with. After a short injury timeout, they came back to the table - and played one point, won by the juniors, 10-9. There was another injury timeout as Sean worked on Tahl's back for over five minutes. Finally, the four got back to the table - and O'Neill/Leibovitz went up 11-10. At 11-all, Sean looped a net ball - but Han counterlooped a net to go up 12-11. Finally, Han absolutely pulverized a backhand loop to win the game, 14-12, and go up 3-2.

Xiao/Hugh went up 5-2 in the sixth, and appeared on their way to winning - but only scored two more points that game. Technically, the two teams are similar in some ways, with each team having a "control" player and a "finishing" player: Tahl and Adam are generally control, Sean and Han the finishers. The points are marked by great counterlooping points. Tahl often changes the pace with soft loops and dead blocks, while Sean goes from steady to putaway mode depending on the shot. Han and Adam mostly attack more straightforward, with Adam's attack conventional loops from both wings and some backhand hits (and great ball control), while Han goes for more shots, with many highlight backhand loop kills. All four have excellent short games, and most rallies start with several short pushes before one finds a point. It was a wild match. With the point of the day in the first game with O'Neill/Leibovitz leading, a fantastic counterlooping point won by the more experienced duo, aged 36 and 28, respectively, to their opponent's combined age of 33. The teams split the first four games, and then the elders were behind 6-9 in the fifth - then 9-11. But in winning the previous game, Tahl hurt his back, a pinched nerve - he'd been having difficulty with. After a short injury timeout, they came back to the table - and played one point, won by the juniors, 10-9. There was another injury timeout as Sean worked on Tahl's back for over five minutes. Finally, the four got back to the table - and O'Neill/Leibovitz went up 11-10. At 11-all, Sean looped a net ball - but Han counterlooped a net to go up 12-11. Finally, Han absolutely pulverized a backhand loop to win the game, 14-12, and go up 3-2.

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A total of 230 players on 37 individually barred courts in 26 events competed for $8500 in prize money at this year's Buckeye Open. The tournament was run on time, and in great playing conditions (other than some unavoidable humidity toward the end of each day). It was held in the Tower Tennis & Fitness Center near Columbus, Ohio.

Open Singles: 8ths

The most interesting match this round was Samson Dubina's (23774) near upset of Canadian Xavier Therien (2485). Both play two-winged looping games, with Xavier a steady looper with good serves, Samson a bit more power but not as consistent. Samson went up 3-1 in games, but lost the last three games, the last one 11-8. Scores were -9,5,-7,-6,1.7,8.

Quarterfinals

None of these matches were particularly close. The main match of interest again involved Xavier – this time as he pulled off a 4,10,-7,9,9 upset of third-seeded Eric Owens (2559). Eric perhaps has new priorities – he told me he was getting straight A's this semester at Texas Wesleyan, including his favorite class, Differential Equations.

Biba Golic (seeded #8 at 2432) gave top-seeded Mark Hazinski (2638) a scare as she won games three and four, but he won at 6,9,-5,-4,6,8. Drinic (seeded #4 at 2557) gave a drenching to just-starting-to-practice-again Razvan Cretu (formerly rated as high as 2645, but currently only 2488, seeded #6), 6,8,6,8. Barney (seeded #2 at 2574) gave an equal drenching to co-tournament director and hoarse-voiced Dan Seemiller (seeded #5 at 2505), 4,6,6,8. Dan wasn’t the only one sick, or at least sounding sick – Barney said he’d almost dropped out the night before with a bad fever.

Seminifals

This was where much of the action was – both of these matches could have been the final. It was also a bad round for top seeds, as the top two seeds in the tournament were both knocked out. Matches here and in the final were best of nine.

Mark Hazinski vs. Sasa Drinic

Drinic basically romped the first two games at 6 & 2. Then things got a bit streaky. At 6-6 in the third, Mark ran off five in a row. Down 5-7 in the fourth, Mark ran off another five in a row to go up 10-7 – only to have Sasa deuce it. Mark won the next point on an edge ball – but Sasa deuced it right back with his own edge ball! But Mark awkwardly blocked a forehand into the net, and flipped off to lose, 11-13. The streakiness continued in the fifth game, where at 4-4, Mark won 6 in a row. In the sixth, it was close all the way, and Mark led 10-9, but Sasa won the last three. In the seventh, at 8-all, Sasa won the last three to win the match, 6,2,-6,11,5,10,8.

“Tie is what I hate it when I keep beating myself!” He did have trouble holding leads, and he often let his emotions show. (In contrast to Canada’s Xavier, who as a poker-faced player there can be, no matter the situation.) After winning the first at 8, Barney led 9-4 in the second – and lost seven in a row, and gave the table a good kick. He won the third at 7 (and so could have been up 1-3). Xavier, who has very good serves and is very good at taking control of the table with his forehand loop – but often without penetrating power – won the fourth at 7. In the fifth, Barney led 10-9 – but misses a counterloop, misses a block, then completely whiffs a forehand loop to lose 10-12 – and shows his disgust by smacking a ball into the balcony of spectators.

But he wins the next two games rather easily, 11-8,11-5, and now leads 4-3. When Barney gets his power-looping and counterlooping game going, he dominates. When Xavier takes control with his serve and steady follow-up forehand loops, he dominates. Xavier doesn’t have great power, but he does have a nice point-winning off-the-bounce counterloop.

In the eighth game it goes to 6-6. Serving up 7-6, Xavier pops his serve up – but Barney misses, and the momentum seems to swing as Xavier runs the game out, 11-7. So it’s into the ninth – and, of course, it goes to 9-9 (with the server completely dominating), with Xavier serving. He serve and rips a forehand winner, 10-9 match point. Then Barney backhands the serve into the net – and the Canadian, seeded #7, has knocked off the #2 seed, -8,9,7,10-8,5,7,9.

Final: Sasa Drinic vs. Xavier Therien

Watching the match with me is USATT Coaching Chair John Allen, who praised Xavier’s serve: “He has a lot of variety.” Xavier’s serve constantly sets up his forehand loop, and he’s also quite willing to serve deep, often catching opponents. Sasa, however, is relentless in his all-out attack from both wings, often looping winners off the bounce.

This match is a contrast in early-game and late-game play. If you take the first half of each game, Xavier dominates; but in the second half, Sasa dominates as he comes from behind game after game. In the first game, down 5-8, he wins 11-9. In the second, down 7-10, he almost comes back, losing at 9. In the third, down 2-5, he wins 11-8. In the fourth, down 6-10 and 11-12, he wins 14-12. (Xavier’s face never changes – you couldn’t tell he’d just blown five game points.) After winning the fifth, 11-8, the two finally switch roles. In the sixth, it’s Sasa up 8-5, then 8-8, then up 10-8 match point. Xavier wins 14-12 (no ads for Sasa). However, in the seventh, up 5-3, Sasa only loses one more point in winning the match (and $1500, to Xavier’s $600) at 9-8,12-8, 12-4. Semifinalists received $300, and quarterfinalists $125.

“Against Xavier,” said Coach Levi, “you have to play a good short game, and then attack first, mostly at the middle.”

Elite Singles: The results of the Open on Saturday were somewhat reversed on Sunday, as this time the final (played best of five, to save time?) was Eric Owens over Barney J. Reed, 4-2,8. In the semifinals, Owens came from behind to take out top-seeded Mark Hazinski – and the scores tell the tale: 9,-9-10,10,10! In the other semifinal, Barney won against Sasa, 5,6,9,9. Sasa had won 4-0 over Xavier in the quarterfinals. Barney was given a wake-up call early on, down 3-0 to Courtney Roberts in the preliminary RR – only one player advancing – but he won the next four. Barney would also go on to win Under 2600.

Barney goes his “revenge” on Xavier in the Under 2600 semifinals, 3-9,6,-7,5,6, while Sasa won against Eric Owens in the other semifinals, 6,9,8,-9,8,9.) For his Elite win, Eric won $350,
to Barney’s $150, with the semifinalists receiving $75, quarterfinalists $50.

“He screamed me,” said $100 Runner-up Dan Seemiller of $250 Winner John Tannehill in Hardbat Singles. The event’s prize money (including $50 for the semifinals, and another $150 total for Under 1900 hardbat) was put up by Berndt Mann, who won $50 of it back by making the semifinals of Open Hardbat.

Players with multiple titles were:

- **Sasa Drinic**, Open Singles & Doubles Champion
- **Dan Seemiller**, Over 50 Champion, Over 40 Co-Champion Hardbat Runner-up, Open Quarterfinalist
- **Randy Seemiller**, Under 2400 Champion, Over 40 Co-Champion
- **Mark Hazinski**, Under 22 Co-Champion, Under 2275 Champion, Open Doubles Champion, Open Elite Semifinalist
- **Petra Sestakova**, Under 2275 Champion, Open Doubles Champion, and Women’s Runner-up

Special thanks for running an excellent tournament goes to equipment supplier Butterfly, to all the volunteers and helpers, and to the tournament staff: Director Steve Slaback, Referee Chris Williams, “Consultant” and desk worker Dan Seemiller, and desk staff Charles Hill, Jason Lacey and Bill Lisboa.

**Open – Final**: Sasa Drinic d. Xavier Therien, 9,-9,12,8,-12,4; SF: Drinic d. Mark Hazinski, 6,2,-6,11,-5,10,8; Therien d. Barney J. Reed, 4,-8,9,-7,10,-8,5,7,9; QF: Drinic d. Razvan Cretu, 6,8,6,6,8; Therien d. Eric Owens, 4,10,-7,9,9; Hazinski d. Biba Golic, 6,9,-5,4,6,8; Reed d. Dan Seemiller, 4,6,6,8; 8ths: Hazinski d. Petra Sestakova, -7,-7,9,3,6,5; Golic d. Randy Seemiller, 6,3,9; Cretu d. Mark Nordby, 5,8,8,3; Drinic d. Courtney Roberts, 9,2,7,-8,9; Owens d. Mimi Bosika, 8,4,9,16; Therien d. Samson Dubina, 9,5,-7,6,1,7,8; D. Seemiller d. Dinko Kranjac, 5,9,13,4,8; Reed d. Idan Levi, 9,6,-7,6,-9,7.

**Elite Singles – Final**: Eric Owens d. Barney J. Reed, 4,2,8; SF: Owens d. Mark Hazinski, 9,-9,10,-10,10,9; Reed d. Sasa Drinic, 5,6,9,9.

**Women’s Singles**: Biba Golic d. Petra Sestakova, 10,7,7,11.

**Open Doubles – Final**: Mark Hazinski/Sasa Drinic d. Barney J. Reed/Razvan Cretu, 3,7,6,8,7; SF: Hazinski/Drinic d. Eric Owens/Dinco Kranjac, 8,6,10,-9,2; Reed/Cretu d. Biba Golic/Courtney Roberts, 8,8,-8,7,6.

**Elite Doubles – Final**: Eric Owens d. Barney J. Reed, 4,2,8; SF: Reed d. Xavier Therien, 3,-9,7,5,6; Drinic d. Eric Owens,-6,9,8,-9,9; QF: Therien d. Razvan Cretu, 9,-5,8,10; Drinic d. Biba Golic, n.s.; Owens d. Courtney Roberts, n.s.; Reed-bye.

**U2400 – Final**: Randy Seemiller d. Shawn Embleton, 3,4,12; SF: Seemiller d. Mark Nordby, 3,9,4,-8,3; Embleton d. Samson Dubina, n.s.

**U2275 – Final**: Petra Sestakova d. Mark Artman, 7,10,9,5; SF: Sestakova d. Scott Endicott, def.; Artman d. Olushola Kashimawo, 3-1.

**U2125 – Final**: Chen Wong d. Thomas Yost, -9,9,-2,9,9; SF: Wong d. Jim Repasy, 3-2; Yost d. D. King, 5,8,8.


**U1875**: Bob Panahazar d. Hement Mantri, 6,-7,5,9,6.

**U1775**: Amer Shaw d. Jan Lie, 5,5,9.

**U1600**: Qiang Lu d. Michael Kaneck, 9,9,6.

**U1525**: David Fossett d. Scott Reif, 6,6,9.

**U1400**: Robert Smith d. Ron Howard, 4,9,5.

**U1300**: Don Moler d. Merle Garrison, 9,-5,9,8.

**U1200**: Mitch Smith d. Russ Forthofer, 7,-9,4,9,15.

**U1100**: David Cook d. Jack Scott, 7,6,8,-8,9.

**U950**: Jonathan Mast d. Chou Yu Lee, 8,-7,9,6.

**Hardbat RR**: 1st John Tannehill, 4,0; 2nd Dan Seemiller, 3-1; 3rd Tadho Inui, 2-2; 4th Berndt Mann, 1-3; 5th Jack Beggin, 0-4.

**Over 50**: Dan Seemiller d. Craig Teegarden, 7,8,6.


The 2004 STIGA North American Tour got off to a rousing start with the California Open. A record number of participants, nearly 300, enrolled in the tournament, eager to compete in the first Tour stop of NATT's fifth season. NATT staff, sponsor/vendor Table Tennis Pioneers, and the local organizing committee were dedicated to rewarding that loyalty with another excellent competition, deserving of its Four Star rating.

City Beach is a full-service venue, with a restaurant, showers, video arcade and a climbing wall, and passersby were troopng through the tournament throughout the weekend. It was Standing Room Only for the Open Singles on Sunday, beginning with the Quarterfinals, and the spectators were rewarded with great play.

Referee Joseph Yick, assisted by Saul Weinstein, Ken Tien and Yelena Karshtedt, reviewed the draws and prepared to officiate over what we knew would be a critical first day of play. With preparations well underway, it came as a shock to hear that City Beach had made an error in their booking calendar, and mistakenly double-booked a portion of the space reserved for the event. Of the 28 tables scheduled for play, 8 would have to be removed for a three-hour period on Saturday, at the very height of play.

Kudos to Tournament Director Fong Hsu, who not only drafted a schedule to account for this unexpected obstacle, but also personally shepherded Round Robin groups and single elimination matches through the bottleneck and out the other side. Players like Peter Chen and Trevor Runyan, who went deep into single elimination in multiple events, were cooperative and patient in the pinch. The result was that by day’s end on Saturday, all but two of the scheduled matches had taken place. Sunday was smooth sailing. NATT co-founders Richard Lee and Wendy Troy could certainly not have been more pleased with the outcome.

Also pleased with the outcomes were players like Biba Golic, a come-from-behind winner against Michelle Do in Women’s Singles, and Auria Malek, an Open Singles Quarterfinalist and winner of the Men’s Under 22 event. A big smile was also evident on the face of Peter Chen, the imperturbable blocker who came second in the Over 50, losing another classic see-saw battle to David Sakai, and second in the Under 2250, falling to the New Jersey looper Pan Lin. It was also a big tournament for Trevor Runyan, runner-up in the Under 22 Men’s, runner-up to Pan Lin in the Under 18 Men’s, and a straight games winner over Sean Lee in the Under 16!

With an expanded amount of prize money available, it was Open Singles that commanded the spotlight, however. Since the newly selected U.S. Team was training overseas, there was a wide open field to challenge the defending California Open Champ and defending STIGA NA Tour Champion, Fan Yi Yong. Coming through the preliminary rounds, qualifiers Yong Ren, Dinko Kranjac, Angela Sun and Hiroiuki Hikawa joined our Top 12 seeds in pursuit of the title.

Group 1 was quickly decided, as Fan did not drop so much as a game in capturing first place. Only Jiachen Wang even briefly challenged Fan, bursting out to a 5-1 lead at one point, but also succumbing in straight games. That left Wang to slug it out with Tuan Le and Yong Ren for the remaining ticket to the Quarterfinals, which he claimed with 4-1 wins over each of them. Tuan Le, whose fighting spirit is an example to others, had to come back from a 3-1 deficit against Ren, winning the last three games to finish third in the group’s most competitive match-up.

Group 2 opened with Shuja Jafar-Ali giving Barney Reed as much competition as he needed, taking the #2 seed all the way to a seventh game. When Paul David posted 4-1 wins over Dinko Kranjac and Shuja, and Reed ousted Dinko in straight games, all that was left on the line was which player would be the top seed. Although Paul David nicked Barney for the first and fifth games, Barney took the top spot 4-2, leaving Paul David knowing he’d be placed into a bracket with Fan. Dinko salvaged his respect by winning in the seventh against Shuja, who despite playing well, came fourth.

Group 3 had the distinction of containing both of the women to reach this stage, the seeded Biba Golic and qualifier Angela Sun. The group began with Shao Yu defeating Kevin Au, 4-1. Shao looked sharper at this tournament than we’ve ever seen him, his forehand being especially notable for power and improved consistency. It showed in his results. Angela Sun entered the court against Biba Golic knowing she needed this match to have a hope. Using her penhold pips-out attack and block, she managed to upset the shaker, 10-7, 14-12, 11. After facing Shao Yu, however, Angela was quickly 1-1 in the group. Biba evened her record as well, out-steadying Kevin Au 4-2 in a closely fought six-ender. So Angela, if she wanted to advance, knew she had to beat the higher-rated Au also, which she managed with a dramatic 13-11 decision in the seventh game. Now the pressure was back on Biba to equal Angela, which she nearly did, losing to Shao Yu in a real crowd-pleaser, 4-9, 8-9, 9-11, 7. So it was onto the Quarters for Shao and Angela.

Group 4 was the one requiring a calculator to decipher. Tahl Leibovitz did his part to keep things simple by going 3-0, defeating Auria Malek and Courtney Roberts 4-0 and holding off a game Hiroiuki Hikawa, 4-3. But when Roberts beat Malek in seven, Malek beat Hikawa in five, and Hikawa defeated Roberts in four, there were three players tied at 1-2 records. Auria’s game record in that trio, 7-5, gave him the up, while Hikawa’s 5-4 placed him third and Roberts, despite his head-to-head win against Malek, was left to round out the group with a fourth-place finish. No one ever said it would be easy, gentlemen!

**Open Singles Quarterfinals**

Fan Yi Yong vs. Auria Malek

What does it take to defeat Fan, the top-rated player in the U.S.? The answer to that question would earn big money on the open market! Fan’s skill set is so great that he presents a major challenge to every opponent, and the first to get a chance at that puzzle was California’s young hopeful, Auria Malek. Prized to play his best, Malek stood in, spider-legged, low and ready against the defending Champ, but was soon shooting wry looks of bemusement and ironic acceptance to his followers as he fell, 7,1,5,8. Fan did give him smashing opportunities in the fourth. They were small consolation as Fan controlled the serve, the serve return, the short game and the attack. Malek was victimized in particular by Fan’s backhand return of serve, which seemingly at will, he could quick-push or flip to either corner for one-shot winners.

Shao Yu vs. Paul David

Paul squandered a 4-point lead in the first game to fall victim, 12-10. After that, he never could seem to get back on track as Shao left no openings. Paul repeatedly played his topspin game to the corners, but Shao was always one shot better, one shot deeper, returning what looked like winners with more power and consistency than I have seen him show before. Fatigue never became a factor as he quickly wrapped things up, 3,7,6.

Tahl Leibovitz vs. Angela Sun

This was a match of worthy opponents! Angela gave Tahl trouble, handball to handball, with punch-blocks that handcuffed her adversary. When Tahl drove a little deeper into that corner, she had more trouble getting the advantage. Leibovitz seemed to be cruising as he led 2-0, by scores of 9 and 4. But Angela became more aggressive, and was able to bring her flat attacking forehand into play to even the match, 10 and 9. Tahl took instruction from his Paralympic Coach, Sean O’Neill, in search of answers, “You have to spin harder, spin harder! When you give her less spin she’s able to drive it forward!” and indeed she had, sending the diminutive New Yorker to the barriers repeatedly. It was no walk in the park, as Tahl hung on to a 4-2 win (8,7) in a match that left both players exhausted.

Barney Reed vs. Jiachen David Wang

Barney looked relaxed and confident against David, perhaps too much so. Despite the 4-0 decision in Reed’s favor, he showed a willingness to let David blow himself out against Barney’s backcourt game. That made for game scores closer than they might have been, as Barney moved forward 8,7,1,11. When he was on the attack, Barney’s severe angles and sharp-breaking loops produced crowd-pleasing rallies and more often than not, points for Reed.
Scenes from the California Open

Photos by Kingston Gee ©2004
Barney J. Reed vs. Tahl Leibovic
Semifinals

Tahl had played brilliantly all weekend, composed, poised and confident, but he entered this match actually saying, “I’ve already lost.” The source of this discontent was the referee’s ruling that Tahl’s racket was “unplayable” due to a small tear in the rubber near the edge. Forced to hurriedly reshoe his gear, Tahl said he entered the match without a good glue job. Facing Reed, no due to a small tear in the rubber near the edge. Forced to hurriedly reshoe his

the end was sincere from both. Reed by scores of 7,7,5.

on more even terms, but the shots at his forehand rarely made it back over the net. It’s clear that even at this elevated level, Fan generates more topspin than opponents expect or can handle. especially on his initial attack. It’s a

Fan Yi Yong vs. Shao Yu

Now it was Shao Yu’s turn to attempt to answer the question, “How do you beat Fan Yi Yong?” It would seem that one answer has to include, “Do not serve short to the middle.” Serving from his backhand, Shao fell victim to Fan’s ability to disguise his intentions on the return. Balls would rocket to the forehead corner, the backhand corner, or seemingly effortlessly come short with wickedly heavy topspin. In backhand exchanges, Shao was significantly outplayed. It’s funnier to Barney than to his discouraged opponent, but the handshake at

Barney Reed vs. Fan Yi Yong

Barney had a plan, and it was a dangerous plan in his effort to dethrone the defending champ. “I’m going to serve long, try to open up the looped point, keep him from slipping the serve,” Barney confided when asked. It’s with no irony at all that I say it worked, even though Barney could not take a game from Fan. At least Barney forced Fan to win in a different way than he had his previous matches. When he could force Fan into a counter-looping game, Barney was very much “in the point, and shot clean winners into the angles created as Fan gave ground. What was obvious, however, was how devilishly hard it is to force Fan into that type of exchange. “His serve,” Reed said afterward, “is world class. We don’t often get to see serves that good in this country.” Barney did not aid his own cause when leading 5-1 in the third game, he muffed two serves, and let Fan off the hook, finding only one more point in that game. Fan deserved the hearty handshake and the congratulations to the California Open Champion, Fan Yi Yong! And thanks to all the participants, volunteers and spectators who made this a memorable launch to what promises to be a fabulous season on the 2004 STIGA North American Tour!
JUNIOR
OF THE MONTH:

SOPHIA DAN DAN YI

By Tommy Perkins

Age/DOB: 17, Jan. 2, 1987
Local Club: San Gabriel Valley T.T.C.
Equipment: Yasaka Extra Gatien blade, Xushaofa 999 on backhand, Xushaofa 998 on forehand.
Style of play: Defensive chopper
Highest & Current rating: 2171

At what age did you start playing Table Tennis?
When I was 7.

What or who got you started in the sport?
My father. he wants me to be a strong girl, so he got me into sports. But he wants me to practice judo more than ping-pong.

Who are your coaches?
My former coach was Coach Min Shi Li, and my current coach is Coach Grace Lin.

What drives you to keep training and why are those motivational factors important to you?
Actually I don’t know! I don’t know if I even like to play ping-pong, but I can’t stop. Maybe because I am a national team member and that feeling keeps me going.

Who do you practice with? How often? What techniques are you trying to improve?
Right now I practice with three boys from the USA cadet team, and with my coach, Grace Lin. Usually I practice 1-2 times a week. Currently, I am trying to improve my forehand loop and attack, and my backhand flip.

Who is your toughest opponent?
Sara Yuen, she beat me so badly at the 2002 North American Championships. That tournament was the first time I was selected and sponsored by USATT. But last year I became familiar with her game as she did with mine. Every time we play each other it comes down to the fifth or seventh game.

Do you enjoy the competition? Why?
I do enjoy the competition because I can improve a lot from it.

What are your table tennis goals? Non-Table Tennis?
I have not set any table tennis goals yet. But I hope my level will be 2250 by the end of this year. My non-table tennis goals are abundant. First and foremost, I hope to improve my English so I can speak, write, and read it fluently. Then I hope to go to a good college.

How do you plan on achieving those goals?
I will practice some more. I will probably go to my hometown of Changsha, China to practice in the summer. Hopefully going to China will increase my playing level to my goal of 2250.

What training have you had internationally? What do you think of international competition?
I have gone to Hungary, Canada, Sweden and China. I think international competition is very good because you can see so many different styles. In the U.S., we don’t have a lot of choppers. But in other countries they do. And you can play with a lot of high-level players in international competitions.

What upcoming tournaments will you be playing in?
I hope to play in the North American Championships.

Who are your Table Tennis role models? Life role models? Why?
My table tennis role model is Joo Se Hyuk because he is not only a chopper but he is good at attacking and looping too. I like his style. My life role model is my father. He is a good father and I love him.

Besides table tennis, what are your hobbies?
I like shopping. I shop every week with my sister. I think every girl likes to shop.

How does table tennis fit into your future plans? How would you describe the sport?
My future plan is to be a part of the U.S. Women’s Team. Right now I don’t think I am ready, but I will do the best I can. Playing sports including table tennis can make people strong. Therefore, sports is very important to me because when I was little I spent half of my time in hospitals. I wasn’t very strong, so I got sick very easily.

How do you feel about Table Tennis in the U.S.?
Table tennis in the U.S. is not a very important sport. The association doesn’t have a lot of money like other countries. Other countries also have a special place for National Team Training.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2004
Attacking Medium-Length Serves: Former World #1 Jean-Michel Salive

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

Photos by Diego Schatz © 2004
The table tennis serve has spawned much discussion, repeated rule changes, occasional controversy — and great technical advances in the sport. Because of its complexity, very specific strokes were developed to deal with relatively slow, but sometimes extremely spinny balls. While the server's intention is to put the ball into play without allowing an attack, the receiver will try to attack whenever possible. Very short serves, or fast, well-placed ones initially were a safe solution, and at moderate playing levels, they still are, because they provide variety and keep the receiver from being able to "cheat" by moving early. At higher levels, though, the flip has become so strong, that even a relatively good short serve can be very dangerous. Long serves are usually deadly at the top level, because those players are such exceptional athletes, that they can reach practically any ball and power it back. So what's left? Since many short serves and most long serves are no longer safe, a carefully measured medium-length serve developed as an alternative. It is just long enough to raise a question in the receiver's mind whether the ball will bounce twice or clear the table after the first bounce. When the receiver cannot commit to an attack until he's sure, such a serve can usually force a weak receive.

Since early in his career, Jean-Michel Saive has made it a high priority to optimize his receiving game, because he understood that he who attacks first has a distinct advantage in this sport. His long-time coach Wang Da Yong shared that interest. Before he moved to Belgium, he coached the Beijing Team, and I played under his guidance when I was 16 and 17 years old. His focus on receiving was clear then, but, as he told me later, when he started working with Saive, it became the first priority. Saive is now legendary for his outstanding receiving game, and it is one of the reasons why he is still competitive despite his relatively long career.

Part of the concept Wang and Saive developed was to design a technique that would allow Saive to surprise his opponents by attacking serves that should be safe. This meant creating a way to attack medium length balls whether or not they clear the table after the first bounce. With a "classic" stroke, one that features opening the racket face before contact, this was impossible. There was always the possibility of hitting the edge of the table. Saive developed a convex stroke (seen from the front), the trajectory of which starts close to horizontal — making it harder to swing hard at a ball still over the table — and shortly before contact curves upward, clear the edge of the table, and then slightly closes for follow through.

Several factors make this possible: The fact that the racket angle is more open at contact than during the backswing helps with the lift. A quick "snap" at contact is very important, and the equipment plays a big role. Soft sponge allows the ball to sink in deep into the rubber, which increases not only the lift, but also the spin, and speed glue helps provide the necessary speed.

The sequence above shows Saive attacking such a medium ball. From his ready position, he first skips forward (frames 1 - 10). He always does that when he has recognized that the ball is not very long and will not jam him. By frame 11, he has decided that he can and will attack the ball. He steps to his right with his right leg — very close to the table. His backswing (13) is bigger than I would recommend, but it shows how relatively high he starts the stroke. From there he can swing forward close to horizontally, slightly bend the stroke upward, clear the edge of the table (14), continue forward and contact the ball while it's still over the table. Even if the serve was flawlessly placed and would have bounced on the white line, he can rip it.

This receiving technique is actually also very useful at club levels, because a server's insufficient depth control often produces medium length serves when he tries to serve short. It is quite risky, though. Despite his effort in building a stroke that avoids contact with the table, I have seen Saive damage his rubber by hitting the edge more often that any other player. Obviously, there is also the potential for a nasty hand injury. Therefore, I recommend you start practicing this technique very carefully, without much of a backswing, focusing mostly on a clean, crisp contact. You can still make the shot, just less severe. But it will help you develop the precision and confidence you need to turn this into a shot your opponent has to worry about.

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